

Beware of False Prophets

Introduction

Matthew 7:15-23

Introduction

1. **In Jesus' sermon on the mount He warned men of the danger of false prophets.**
 - A. **In the *Pulpit Commentary*, W. F. Adeney said:** "It is not enough for Christ to spread His own wholesome teaching; He must warn against the dangerous influence of bad teachers".
2. **Jesus knew this would be a real problem and would continue to be so in all the ages.**
 - A. **We should listen to Jesus' advice about these false prophets and do what we can to avoid them and their influence.**

The Danger of False Prophets

1. **False prophets do exist.**
 - A. **Some might believe that all those false prophets perished in the first century - But they did not!**
 - B. **There are plenty of men who are false prophets and false teachers today whose doctrines will lead men to damnation.**

2. Why do false teachers pose a threat to our soul?

A. Because they try to get you to believe a lie - not the truth.

John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

B. Jesus taught and warned of "blind guides" of "blind men", telling us that both would fall into the pit of damnation.

Matthew 15:14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

1) In the *Matthew Pulpit Commentary*, P.C. Barker warned, "Let intention be what it may, if the fruit is bad, the prophet is a false prophet".

C. The false teachers that were discussed by Jesus in the 7th chapter of Matthew were apparently good, honest, and sincere.

1) They called Jesus "Lord" and did many wonderful things. Notice:

Matthew 7:21-23

2) The text indicates that they expected to enter heaven.

3. The appearance of false teachers.

A. What does a false teacher look like - or act like?

B. Do they make some special announcement such as:

-- "I am a false teacher. I am here to lead men to hell. I want to announce my intentions beforehand so that I will be honorable."

1) No they don't!**C. False teachers appear in sheeps clothing and will even transform themselves into apostles of light.**

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

- 1) They will look like good, righteous men. In our day, false teachers appear so sweet spirited (until one challenges what they teach).**

4. The test of false teachers.**A. Jesus told us exactly how to test false teachers - by their fruit.**

- 1) This would mean then that the following are not criteria for testing whether or not a man is a false teacher:

-- Appearance, Personality, Reputation, Claims, Professions (Lord, Lord)**
- 2) None of these things is a legitimate means of determining a false teacher. Only his fruit will stand the test.**

Fruit Which Needs to Be Judged

1. He will claim to receive revelation from God.

A. True Prophets are men who receive divine revelations from God; false Prophets claim to receive revelations which they never received from God.

- 1) They will say: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?"**
- 2) How many times have you heard TV evangelists claim to have received revelations from God?**
 - a) When men begin claiming to receive messages from God, especially in an age when revelation has ceased - you can surely detect he is a false prophet.**

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

Jude 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

2. He will preach a "wide gate".

A. Jesus had stated earlier:

Matthew 7:13-14

- 1) **When men preach a "wide gate" they are false teachers.**
- 2) **A wide gate makes entrance into the kingdom of heaven easier and/or other than Jesus revealed.**
 - a) **The conditions for entering in at the narrow gate are: Hearing; Believing; Repenting; Confessing; Being Baptized; and being Faithful until death.**
 - b) **When men teach that you can be saved without complying with these conditions, they are false teachers!**

3. He will preach a "broad way".

A. This implies that you can live any manner of life you choose and still be approved of God.

- **Abortion**
- **Social Drinking**
- **Divorce and Remarriage for any reason**
- **Immodest Dress**
- **Any other law contrary to God's**

4. **He may even lead an immoral life.**
 - A. **Usually they are full of covetousness. Often times he preaches what he does because of financial gain.**
 - B. **Some have perceived godliness as a means of gain.**

1 Timothy 6:5-6 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

- 1) **They become teachers who tickle the ears of those who pay them.**
5. **A false teacher will leave a path of destruction in the churches with which he labors.**
 - A. **Paul wrote of this in Galatians 1.**
Galatians 1:6-10
 - B. **False teachers raise questions which will undermine faith, leading disciples away from the truth.**
 - 1) **When they are opposed by those that uphold the gospel of Christ, then dissension, and division will result.**
 - 2) **That is why false teachers will leave a trail of churches torn apart by their false teaching (fruit).**

NOTE*** A false teacher may not manifest all of these attributes. He may do only two or three.**

Conclusion

1. It is our soul that we must consider.

A. Never be intimidated from testing whether or not what a person is teaching is from God. The Lord charged: "Beware of False Prophets".

-- **Therefore we should:**

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

-- **God fearing men will search the scriptures to see if the things taught are so as they did in the first century.**

Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

2. Each of us are responsible for our own soul. If we allow some false teacher to deceive us, he will lead us into eternal damnation.

A. Therefore, we must not trust our soul to someone else.

B. We must exercise our right to test every teacher to see if what he teaches is from "heaven or from men" (Matthew 21:25).

3. Remember the words of Jesus, **"Beware of False Prophets."**

