

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

by

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The Appearance of False Prophets

There is a grave spiritual threat abroad in the world today. It was foretold centuries ago, God's people being warned of it in the pages of the Holy Bible. II Pet. 2:1-3 states it in these words, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." The grave spiritual danger of which I speak is the presence and doctrine of false teachers.

I have chosen to share with you a series of studies dealing with that problem. We will gather our thoughts around a warning of Jesus, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" Matt. 7:15. In five studies we will examine Biblical testimony concerning the appearance of false prophets, the nature of false

prophets, the teachings of false prophets, the motive of false prophets, and the end of false prophets. Please keep your Bible and a note pad close at hand so you can follow step by step through the studies.

The appearance of false prophets is mentioned several times in the New Testament. Jesus warned, "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" Matt. 24:11. Again, He said, "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, the very elect" Mark 13:22. They will appear. Therefore, "Beware of false prophets" Matt. 7:15.

Why Do False Prophets Appear?

It would seem that with the completion of the Christian revelation, and the writing of the Holy Bible that would be enough to tell men all they need to know. Why would any person seek information in the spiritual realm which was not contained in the inspired Word of God?

The Bible gives the answer: "All men have not faith" II Thess. 3:2. It is as simple as that. Men who reject the revelation God has given in Holy Scripture must turn to other sources for religious guidance. That makes them prey to those who appear as men of God, but who are false prophets. If all people were Bible-believers, there would be no one to listen to the teaching of false teachers.

Where Do False Prophets Appear?

One might suppose a false prophet to be a part of some pagan religious cult, some movement that blasphemes God and rejects the Christian revelation with vehement denials. Not so. It is surprising to discover that false prophets rise up in the very congregations of those who confess the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Holy Scripture.

The Christian church in Ephesus was one of the finest congregations mentioned in the New Testament. In two years time, she had evangelized the entire state in which the city of Ephesus was located (Acts 19:10). She had been established by the ministry of Paul and was led by a group of elders whom the Holy Spirit himself had set over the congregation (Acts 19:1); (20:28). There was hardly a finer church to be found. Yet, there were false prophets among her. Paul said to the elders of that church, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" Acts 20:29, 30. False prophets can, and sometimes do, arise in a good church.

Paul warned the Galatian Christians of "False brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" Gal. 2:4.

Because a person is religious, therefore, does not mean he is true to the God of the Bible. Because a person is active, even a leader in a church, does not mean his teachings are true and trustworthy. False prophets may arise in the congregation of Christians.

How Do False Prophets Appear?

They do not come carrying placards announcing, "We are false prophets. Beware!" No, they rather appear as members of the flock of God, even though they are really wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). They are manifest by two infallible proofs.

First, a false prophet will not hold to the true doctrine of Christ. He "gives heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" I Tim 4:1. One aspect of that doctrine is to deny Bible

teaching that God has come in the flesh in the person of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (I John 4:1-3). Check any new teaching on that point, first of all.

Second, a false prophet will draw back from the practices of the church and go off on a tangent emphasizing some particular doctrine (I John 2:19). Be careful of any one whose teaching draws you away from the church of the Lord Jesus.

Do not follow any teacher, therefore, who has a different doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, nor who tries to draw you away to some sect which has been started since New Testament times.

Why Are False Prophets Dangerous?

They are dangerous! They are dangerous (according to Jer. 14:14) because they prophesy lies in the name of the Lord, and command people to do things God has not commanded. They are dangerous because they are ravenous wolves in their spirit, even though they appear as gentle lambs in their attitudes (Matt. 7:15). They are dangerous because they worship in vain, teaching the commandments of men as if they were the doctrines of God (Matt. 15:9). They are dangerous because they speak lies with a hypocritical spirit, and have no conscience to convict them of any wrong in sin (I Tim 4:2). They are dangerous because they lead people captive by their false and demonic doctrines (II Tim. 3:6; 2:26). They are dangerous. That is why repeated warnings are given concerning them in Holy Scripture.

What Should Be the Christian Response To False Prophets?

The Bible answers in very strong language. "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" Gal. 1:7-9. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" II John 10,11. The answer is clearly stated in God's word.

The Christian must have nothing to do with false teachers nor false teachings. He is not to receive their literature, nor listen to their explanations. He is not to share their fellowship, nor attend their meetings. He is to give himself to loyal devotion to the God who has spoken through Holy Scripture. His rule is that expressed by the prophet Isaiah, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" Isa. 8:20.

"Father, give us such devotion to the truth of God that the lies of Satan will have no appeal to our minds. Grant that your believing children may devote themselves to faithful study and obedience to the Word of God that they may find it a shield against all false doctrine. Magnify your holy name through the proclamation and belief of the truth. For Jesus' sake, Amen."

The Nature of False Prophets

Jesus gave this solemn warning to all the world: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" Matt. 7:15. He spoke of a problem which was current in Old Testament times, during His personal ministry on earth, through the church age, and will continue to the end of time. Every generation has its share of

false teachers in the field of religion.

What is a false prophet—a false teacher of religion—really like? What qualities mark his motives, teachings and work? The Bible gives a surprisingly detailed description. Let us look into the Scriptures to see how God describes the nature of false prophets.

Deceitfulness Is A Mark Of The False Prophet

He is not what he appears to be. He comes in the name of Christ, pretending to be a leader of spiritual religion, when in reality he is not. He is best described in II Cor. 11:13-15 in these words, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their work.”

How would that be manifest today? It is manifest by those who mix the true Christian doctrine with teachings which are not a part of Biblical revelation, and lead people away from Biblical religion as a result. It is manifest by those who interpret the Bible by preconceived opinions rather in view of its historical, grammatical, and logical order. It is manifest by those who use Bible terms—salvation, forgiveness, judgment—but place a different meaning on those words. It is manifest by those who claim to be ministers of Christ and teachers of the Bible but then deny the very doctrines the Bible sets forth. That kind of false prophecy is abundant today.

Living By The Senses Is A Mark Of The False Prophet

II Pet. 2:10 speaks of those who yield to their physical nature and indulge in passions that defile them. It is a description of teachers of false doctrines.

Observe that most of the heresies which arise have something in them which appeals to the flesh. It is denial of sin, or of judgment. It is a permission to live sensually in some area. It is some way that man is permitted to do what his fleshly nature wants, rather than living under the dominion of God. Such doctrines permit people to indulge themselves without paying the penalty. Their appeal is based on what the flesh-nature wants to do. They bait their hooks with wanton appetites of sense. They promise liberty, but they are the bondslaves of corrupt habits. They are polluted by the defilements of the evil world system which is controlled by Satan. Be careful of the religious system that appeals through “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” for those things are “not of the father, but of the world” I John 2:16.

The Bible says, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” Gal. 5:24. The Christian has no obligation to walk after the things the unregenerate flesh-nature desires, because those who are “in the flesh” cannot please God Rom. 8:5-13.

Irreverent Attitudes Is A Mark Of The False Prophet

“Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” II Pet. 2:10.

One who rejects the death of Jesus Christ as the basis of salvation for sinners may call it a “bloody religion.” Others sneer at doctrines of total depravity, the virgin conception by Mary, the idea of an infallible Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice, the reality of an eternal heaven and hell, and like doctrines distinctly taught in Holy Scripture.

The very idea of mortal men setting themselves up as the judges of what is right and what is wrong in Bible teachings! Not even angels manifest such irreverent attitudes, though they are

more powerful than men (II Pet. 2:11). False prophets are like animals without reason, acting by mere instinct, scoff at things they cannot understand (II Pet. 2:12). Rashness, and arrogance is a mark of the false prophet today. In self-will and presumption, they have no respect for that which is holy.

Preying on Immature And Unstable Believers Is A Mark Of The False Prophet

The apostle Peter wrote of them “beguiling unstable souls” II Pet. 2:14. They know how to win wavering souls to their purpose.

Watch the leader of the cult which is on the fringes of Christianity. He aims his appeal at new converts, or believers who have not grown in Bible knowledge and spiritual maturity. He is a parasite which preys on the immature and unstable. The Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus was to get the gospel into the hearing of those who have not heard and believed (Mark 16:15). People committed to Christ are busy in that ministry. The false prophet tries to convert those who have already been converted but are not yet mature. That is a mark of his identify.

“Unsaved” Is A Mark Of The False Prophet

What makes a person turn from the truth of God’s Word to some doctrine set up by a man who does not fully understand what the Bible teaches? The apostle Peter explained it by quoting an ancient proverb, which was current in his day, “the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” II Pet. 2:22. What does that mean? It means when one’s nature is unchanged, he will keep on doing what is natural to his old nature. The false prophet lives in the “flesh” rather than in the “Spirit” because he is not saved.

The nature of the hog is to wallow in the mud. It is the nature of man to satisfy the desires of his depraved flesh-nature. A man is the slave of anything that masters him. The false prophet is a slave to his old unregenerate nature because he has never been saved. It is as natural for the false prophet to turn to satisfying the flesh as for the hog to turn to wallowing in the mud.

Self Centeredness Is A Mark Of The False Prophet

Peter warned that motivated by greed, the false teachers will exploit you with their counterfeit and cunning arguments for the purpose of making profit from you (II Pet. 2:3). I have studied most of the religious cults which have arisen in our nation in the last 75 years. With but two or three exceptions, the founder of each cult became exceedingly wealthy through the offerings of its followers. “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” Rom. 16:18. They ruin whole households by turning the families away from the things of God, teaching things which they ought not to teach, and they do it for the sake of shameful, dishonest, sordid profit (Tit. 1:11).

No wonder Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” Matt. 7:15. Keep your Bible close at hand to judge all religious teachers. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” Isa. 8:20.

“Father, create in us such loyalty to the truth contained in Holy Scripture that no amount of persuasive argument could turn us from it. Let the law of God, written in our minds and hearts at our conversion, be the guide of all we believe and how we behave from henceforth. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.”

The Teachings Of False Prophets

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meat, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” I Tim. 4:1-3. “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect” Mark 13:22.

With such solemn words, God warns against the teachings of false prophets. He admonishes His believing children, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker” II Tim. 2:15-17. Since God says the teachings of false prophets are like a cancer which poisons the whole body, it is imperative that believers know some of the basic teachings of the false way that they may not be led from the belief of the truth. What are the major teachings of false prophets?

Asceticism Is Commonly Taught By False Prophets

I Tim. 2:3 tells of false teachers who insist it is wrong to be married and who demand their followers must refrain from eating certain foods. That is but one form of asceticism, which has been common in false religious systems since time immemorial.

The reason for false teachers forbidding marriage is not given. It may be because of the mistaken idea that the celibate state is more holy than the married state. It may be because of a mistaken idea that the flesh is so depraved its basic needs must not be met. Whatever the reason, there is no justification in Holy Scripture for the idea that marriage is any less holy than a nonmarried state. God instituted marriage and put His blessings on it. It is holy.

There is no Biblical basis for requiring people to refrain from certain foods, either for life or on certain days. The Bible plainly says, “Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with thanksgiving and prayer” I Tim. 4:4-5. Requirements about diet are unscriptural and are a mark of a false teacher.

Sensual Living Is Commonly Permitted By False Prophets

That does not mean every false teacher advocates open sexual immorality. Sensuality can be expressed in many other ways. Whatever pampers the body and permits its desires to be fulfilled is sensual. Any time the grace of God is used as an excuse for a person to behave improperly, that is a sign of a false teaching, according to Jude 4. The Bible warns about those who cherish vain dreams which lead to the course of action that defiles the body, rejects control of one’s desires, and causes irreverence toward celestial beings. (See Jude 8) That is sensual living.

Watch out for the religious system today which permits drinking of alcoholic beverages, overlooks violations of Biblical standards of sexual immorality, or approves styles of dress or actions which are appealing to the lusts of the unregenerated flesh. Those marks of sensual living are a sign of false teaching. The Bible says, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their old nature with all that it loved and lusted for” Gal. 5:24 (J.B. Phillips translation).

Rebellion Is Commonly Practiced By False Prophets

Sometimes that spirit of rebellion is manifest in the political and social areas of life. More commonly, it is rebellion against spiritual authority. False teachers hold different views from those taught in Holy Scripture and do not agree to the health-giving words of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor to the teaching which is in agreement with true godliness (I Tim. 6:3). They rebel against it.

Jude described false prophets as “filthy dreamers” who “defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities” Jude 8. What does that mean? It means the false teachers cherish vain ambitions and hopes. That leads them to pollute and defile their bodies. They reject any authority set over them, particularly spiritual authority. They scoff at angelic beings and deride what is majestic in the spiritual realm.

That spirit is manifest most evidently in an attitude toward the Bible. A religious group which must write its own book of faith, or must write an interpretation of the Bible so its adherents can have “the light of life,” is not of God. The Bible is the sufficient rule of faith and practice. I remember hearing the follower of a cult say, “I don’t care what the Bible says. I know what I believe and what I have experienced.” How tragic. The person who rejects the authority of Holy Scripture has rejected the Word of God and is in rebellion against God himself. Rebellion against plain teaching of Holy Scripture is a clear indication that a person or a movement is false.

Doctrine Contrary To Revealed Truth Is A Mark Of False Prophets

Regardless of the particular doctrine which is unique to a false teacher, he has “left the path of truth” when he turns from revealed doctrine as contained in the Bible (II Tim. 2:18).

The apostle Paul had a particular problem with heretics who claimed that the resurrection of the dead had already passed. They were even undermining the faith of some Christians by that teaching (II Tim. 2:18; I Cor. 15:12). He went to great lengths to teach about the resurrection of the believing dead (I Cor. 15), in an effort to refute that error.

Denial of the reality and danger of sin, denial of the standard of moral conduct taught in the Bible, denial of the doctrine of Christ, denial of eternal judgment or punishment for sin, those and kindred heresies abound today. They are the mark of a false prophet.

Denial Or Perversion Of The Bible Doctrine Concerning The Person And Work Of Jesus Christ Is The Primary Sign Of False Prophets

Jude wrote of some apostates who were “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” Jude 4. The incarnation of God in Jesus, and the atoning death of Jesus on the cross with His victorious resurrection out of death, is the heart of the Christian gospel. Therefore, that is the area Satan attacks with greatest effort. That is the area where false prophets are shown to be false.

Consider I John 4:1-3, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already it is in the world.” There is the key to determine the true from the false.

“Father, thank you for giving us warning of the presence of false teachers who would arise in the very ranks of professing Christians. Thank you for Holy Scripture by which we can judge the teachings of men and know whether they are of God. Make us students of the word,

giving us the powers of spiritual discernment, that we may walk in the truth of God every day of our lives. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

The Motives Of False Prophets

It is amazing to think that the sovereign God of the universe has given a revelation of Himself to mankind, written in a Book which was divinely supervised so that it contains no error, and that pure revelation has been preserved to the present day. That is amazing, and yet, that is exactly what we have in the Bible.

One would think that every human being would hold that divine revelation in highest esteem, read it with greatest interest, and obey its teachings with diligent zeal. But not so. Multitudes of people know almost nothing about what the Bible says. Multitudes more know but do not try to obey it. Yet others have rejected its revelation altogether and have turned aside to arrange a religious system of their own liking, even in contradiction to God's revelation.

Those who have turned aside from Biblical truth and founded a contradictory religious system are called "false prophets" in the Bible. A study of the Bible teaching on false prophets (or, false teachers if you prefer that term) must investigate the motive of those who turn aside. Why do men reject the Biblical revelation for the sake of some other religious system?

False Prophets Do Not Seek To Serve Christ

Consider this reading of Rom. 16:17-18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Notice the statement concerning the false teachers: "They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, the motive of false prophets has never been, or is it now, to glorify Jesus Christ.

Absence of a motive to serve Christ indicates a person is not saved. Paul wrote, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again" II Cor. 5:14-15. The Christian is overmastered by the love of Christ (who was willing to die for sinners) to such an extent that he can live only for Christ. The one who is saved ceases to live for himself, even while still living in the fleshy body, and lives for Him who died and was raised to life again.

The Bible issues this appeal, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" Rom. 12:1. It urges "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit" I Cor. 6:20. It insists, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" Rom. 6:13. It is only as a person cleanses himself of all defilement of flesh and spirit that he can be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" II Tim. 2:21.

False Prophets Work For Their Own Personal Advantage

Look again to Rom. 16:18, "They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly . . ." That is a plain way to say the false teacher is a slave to his own appetite and works to satisfy his desire for base advantage. What personal advantages come to those who

promote false religious doctrines?

Some find a perverted religion a way to make money. “Motivated by greed for money, they exploit people, trained on their credulity, with counterfeit arguments and cunning fabrications.” See II Pet. 2:3. The Bible warns that “the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” I Tim. 6:10. That is exactly what has happened to the majority of those who depart from the faith with some false teaching. I have mentioned before that most of the people who begin a new religious movement grow wealthy from it.

Some find perverted religion a way to gain fame and power. Paul dealt with that issue in Gal. 6:12-13, saying those who insisted on circumcision in the early Christian context were doing so only in order that they may have a basis for boasting. It inflates the depraved ego of man to be a part of a movement where people praise and obey the leader.

Some find perverted religion a way to follow what they think is right. The Bible speaks of men “deceiving and being deceived” II Tim. 3:13. That means many people in false religions sincerely think they are right. They have been misled, deluded, and overcome by deceit. Therefore, they follow what they think is the right way, without checking it out by the Bible to see whether it is so. That is the greatest tragedy of all. It means the devil has blinded the eyes of a person so that the truth of God has been shut out by a depraved will. There is no cure for such a deception except a return to the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice.

False Prophets Are Controlled By Demonic Forces

Does that statement sound too hard? It cannot be otherwise. There are but two forces at work in the spirit world: God and Satan. The person who is being taught of God, and follows that teaching, is not a false prophet. The person who is a false prophet is not being taught of God. There is no other alternative, therefore, but to say the false prophet is being directed by the devil.

The Holy Spirit told us expressly by divine inspiration that some people will desert the faith, because they continuously give their minds to subversive doctrines inspired by deluding spirits and demonic lies. Read I Tim. 4:1-9. Of course that is the source of all teaching that denies the true doctrine of God’s Word. There can be no other source of false doctrine.

God warned of that problem, through the writings of the Apostle Peter: “There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them . . .” II Pet. 2:1. He explained further through the Apostle John, “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist . . .” I John 4:3. “He is the antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” I John 2:22.

The source of all non-Biblical religious teaching is revealed. Whatever is not of God, in agreement with the revelation contained in the Bible, is from the devil and is the doctrine of demons. The Christian must not listen to it, nor encourage in any way the person who promotes it. Being demonic, it can work harm only to the person who accepts and follows it.

Take warning. The devil is your enemy. He will use any device he can, even using some religious teaching and some religious organization, to keep you from the full truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ. No good ever comes to a person by rejecting the revelation of truth God has given and recorded in the Holy Bible.

“Father, how much we need the help of God is the spiritual warfare we face. Thank you that help is available. Keep our motives pure. Help us to discern the truth or error in the religious teachings we hear, that we may be your willing and profitable servants all of our lives. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.”

The End of False Prophets

What will the world be like as the end of the age draws near? God answers in words recorded in II Tim. 3:1-9, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.” That is not a complimentary picture, but it is a valid description of the days in which we live. Those conditions will grow worse and worse as the end of the age approaches.

What does that have to do with the false prophets of which we are studying? It pictures their powerful influence over society, on the other hand. It sets out their ultimate end, on the other hand. What is the end for the false prophets?

False Prophets Will Be Rejected Of The Lord

Jesus said, “Many will say to me on that day (of judgment), Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” Here is a group of people who have been very active in religion: prophesying, exorcising demons, and doing wonderful works in the name of the Lord. Surely they must be some of God’s dearest servants. Not at all. Jesus said, “Then will I profess unto them. I never knew you (at no time did I recognize you): depart from me ye that work iniquity” Matt. 7:22-23. How strange that Jesus would reject people who were so busy (and seemingly so effective) in religious service. The reason the Lord rejected them was because they were not His true disciples.

A person can perform religious service in the name of Jesus Christ without being a true Christian. That is what false prophets do. In the Old Testament, the false prophets spoke in the name of the Lord the same as did the true prophets. In the New Testament, the false teachers used the name of Jesus the same as did the true teachers. It is not only the words spoken, but the reality of a personal relationship with God which indicates whether one is truly a child and servant of God.

Jesus will reject all false prophets and condemn them to their faces. He will expell from His presence those who worked in lawlessness. That is the doom waiting the false prophets.

False Prophets Will Be Manifested As Men Of Folly

The Bible says of them, “Their success shall be short-lived while their shallowness, folly, and foolish behaviour will be made obvious to everyone” II Tim. 9:9. That is ahead for them.

Think of Simon, who lived in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:9-24). He had used magic and witchcraft and has so astonished the Samaritans that they all agreed he was “The Great Power” of God. His astonishing deeds were accompanied by his pretensions to be someone great. Philip came to that city preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and manifesting the true power of God. Simon was utterly astonished by the remarkable demonstrations of power which he saw in Philip. He even identified himself with those who were responding with faith in Jesus Christ. One day, Simon revealed his true self. He offered to pay the apostles for the power to confer the Holy Spirit by the laying on of his hands. They condemned him soundly, saying, “Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” He was ashamed before the very people whom he had sought hard to impress through the years. The ultimate end of every false prophet is to be exposed in his folly.

False Prophets Will Be Condemned In Judgment

The Bible teaches God has ordained a day in which He will judge the world according to true and right standards through Jesus Christ. False prophets, as well as all other people, are to be judged; none will escape. False prophets will be condemned in that day.

God warns, “Their punishment has been waiting a long time; their destruction is watching for them. God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and committed them to chains of darkness, to be kept under guard for judgment; and God did not spare the ancient world of Noah’s day, but brought a flood of waters upon it; and God did not spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but overthrew them unto extinction. Just so, God will reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” (See II Pet. 2:3-9).

Even Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, already understood about the appearing of God in judgment. Enoch said God would convict all godless people of their godless acts, which they committed because of their ungodliness. He would deal with them because of their defiant words which they spoke against Him. (Read Jude 1-25). God’s long-announced judgment will come.

There is no question the verdict that will be rendered. When the Lord judges every man according to his true works, the false prophets will not stand. “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment . . . the way of the ungodly shall perish” Psa. 1:5-6.

False Prophets Will Be Consigned To An Eternity In Hell

To them has been reserved “the blackness of darkness for ever” Jude 13. They will be separated from God forever. What a terrible fate!

Jesus foretold the dread day when all nations are gathered before Him. He will separate the righteous from the wicked as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. To the wicked He will say, “The curse is upon you; go from my sight into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his demons” Matt. 25:41. What a dread day. All those who are false will be so assigned.

Revelation, chapter 20, describes “the great white throne judgment.” It pictures the glorified Lord sitting upon the throne. All people are gathered before Him to be judged. They were judged every man according to their works. The account ends with these awesome words: “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” Rev. 20:15. That includes all the false prophets. Their end is to stand before that great judgment throne and to be consigned to eternal hell.

How can you be sure you are following the truth of God? How can you be sure you have

not been deceived by some false teacher? Turn to the Holy Bible. It is the inspired Word of God. It is the standard by which man is to strive. It tells you everything you need to know in order to determine your belief and your behavior in the will of God. Get in a Bible believing church, where the Bible is taught as the Word of God. Give yourself to personal study and prayer besides. God will lead you into full truth and keep you from the error of the wicked.

“Father, we thank you for the Bible. Thank you for the truth it reveals. Thank you for the protection it affords. Thank you for the guidance it gives. Thank you for the assurance it provides. Thank you, most of all, that in the Bible we learn the truth of God. Keep us committed as “people of the Book.” For Jesus’ sake. Amen.”