

The Anatomy of a False Prophet **Matthew 7:15-23**

Jesus ends His sermon on the mount with these words...this is a great place to end our Red Letter Living series. As we grow closer to the coming of the Lord, I feel we will need to be mindful of this warning and it's command: Watch Out!

I. The Command Examined, v 15, "Watch out for false prophets."

He did not say watch out for fellow believers, evil men, government conspiracies or tidal waves...but false prophets.

Watch out means: to be on guard...

False prophet...what is a false prophet? One who is trying to represent the Lord who is neither a follower nor a representative of God Himself.

II. The Characteristics Exposed, v15-19

1. An Aggressive Posture, v15, 'come to you.' Usually preying on young, immature, confused or hurting believers.

2. A False Spiritual Pretense, v15 'in sheep's clothing' they look like the real thing, talk like the real thing, quote the real thing. However, they probably don't know this about themselves.

3. A Camouflaged Intent, v15 'inwardly ferocious wolves.' They have another agenda, another gospel, a deviant plan, and a damned future.' They may not even realize that they themselves have even deceived themselves...camouflaged to themselves, too.

III. The Direction Eternalized, v21-23

1. Though they may use the Lord's name, they do not know Him, v21

2. Though they may have appeared to do God's will, they have done theirs, v21

3. Though they performed in a religious setting, abounding with spiritual activity, they had no Holy Spirit power. V22

4. Though they acted like they actually knew Jesus, Jesus says He does not know them. V23

5. Though expecting heaven as their reward, hell will be their residence.

IV. The Defense Explained, v16-20

You are to be a fruit inspector! Bad fruit always reveals itself to the discerning inspector:

1. What do their teachings say?
2. What is the source or source of their authority?
3. What is their path toward redemption?
4. What do they believe about the person of Jesus Christ?

Expose Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, etc....

So, how can you prepare yourself for handling false prophets?

1. Know what the Word of God teaches
2. Know what you believe
3. Learn how to defend the gospel
4. Refuse to follow the crowd
5. Resist the emotional substitute for truth: If I feel it, it must be real and true!
6. When you hear someone preach ask the following questions:
 - a. Are his points biblical anchored or psychologically based?
 - b. Is he accurately interpreting the Scripture?
 - c. Does he sound like a positive motivational speaker or one prophet?
 - d. When you hear his message, do you want to get right with God or just believe more in your ability?
 - e. Does he make the gospel plain?
 - f. What does your counterfeit detector say within?
 - g. Does he teach and preach what you want to hear or what you need to hear?

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