



False Teachers

Jesus solemnly warns us in Matthew 7:15-20, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.” In Matthew 24:24 He adds, “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.” Together these passages urge constant vigilance: deception can wear a convincing religious appearance and even perform impressive works, yet the true character of any person is revealed by the fruit of their life.

In the church today many congregations rarely open the Bible, some deny the virgin birth of Christ, and shockingly, some openly question whether Jesus truly rose from the dead. Such clear departures from core Biblical truth show that these groups should not even be called Christian churches; yet people are still misled because the buildings look familiar, the music is polished, and the leaders speak with confidence. Outward form without the substance of God’s Word is precisely the “sheep’s clothing” Jesus warned about. That is why we must read the Bible for ourselves rather than rely solely on someone else’s interpretation. Acts 17:11 praises those who “received the word with great eagerness, examining God’s Word daily to see whether these things were so.” Likewise, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares, “All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.” We must test every teaching against God’s Word.

We are therefore called to speak the truth boldly and refuse to let false voices shape our communities. We are not spectators; we are commanded to proclaim the Gospel. Jesus Himself said, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Paul charged Timothy, “preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2). Silence in the face of error only allows deception to spread; faithfulness requires us to declare the pure Gospel and correct what is false.

Finally, we must remain continually mindful of false teachers and false prophets, testing everything by the standard of God’s Word. As 1 John 4:1 urges, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21 adds, “But examine everything carefully; hold

fast to that which is good.” Jesus’ warnings are not ancient history; they are urgent calls for discernment, personal study of God’s Word, and courageous proclamation of the truth until He returns.

Study Questions:

1. Jesus describes false prophets as coming “in sheep’s clothing” yet being “ravenous wolves.” How do we distinguish between genuine spiritual appearance and true spiritual fruit in leaders or teachers today? What specific “fruits” should we examine in light of this passage? (Matthew 7:15-20)

2. Jesus warns that false Christs and false prophets will perform great signs and wonders capable of misleading even the elect, if possible. Why does the ability to perform impressive signs not automatically authenticate a teacher or movement? How should this affect the way we evaluate claims of spiritual power? (Matthew 24:24)

3. Jesus states that “every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit” and that trees that do not bear good fruit are cut down. In what ways might a church or teacher appear healthy outwardly while still producing bad fruit? How does this challenge our tendency to judge by numbers, buildings, or popularity? (Matthew 7:16-20)

4. The Bereans were commended for examining the Scriptures daily to see whether Paul’s teaching was true. How does this example confront the practice of many modern churches that rarely open the Bible or treat human opinion as equal to God’s Word? What practical habits help us become more like the Bereans? (Acts 17:11)

5. All Scripture is inspired by God and equips us for every good work. If a church denies core doctrines such as the virgin birth or the bodily resurrection of Jesus, how does this passage help us evaluate whether that church is still functioning as a true Christian church? Why is personal knowledge of the Bible essential rather than relying solely on leaders and teachers? (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

6. We are commanded not to believe every spirit but to test the spirits because many false prophets have gone out into the world. What concrete methods can we use to “test the spirits” in sermons, books, podcasts, or social media teachings? How do we balance humility with the responsibility to discern? (1 John 4:1)

7. Jesus commands us to go and make disciples, teaching them to observe all that He commanded. How does this Great Commission challenge the idea that we can remain passive spectators while false teaching shapes their communities? What does active obedience look like in a culture of compromise? (Matthew 28:19-20)

8. Paul charges Timothy to “preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort.” In what ways might silence or fear of conflict allow false voices to dominate a church or community? How does this verse call us to courageous, patient proclamation of truth? (2 Timothy 4:2)

9. We are told to “examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.” How does this command apply when a church maintains an outward Christian appearance yet questions or denies fundamental truths of the Gospel? What is the difference between healthy questioning and destructive unbelief? (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

10. Jesus warns both of subtle deception (sheep’s clothing) and of spectacular deception (great signs and wonders). Which form of false teaching do you think is more dangerous in the church today, and why? How should both warnings shape our prayer and vigilance? (Matthew 7:15 and Matthew 24:24)

11. These passages emphasize the sufficiency and authority of the Bible for testing every teaching. If a teacher or church claims to be “Spirit-led” yet consistently contradicts clear Biblical teaching, how should we respond? What safeguards can protect us from being misled by charismatic personality or emotional experience? (2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Acts 17:11)

12. Jesus says trees that do not bear good fruit are cut down and thrown into the fire, and John commands us to test the spirits. How should the seriousness of these warnings affect the way we choose churches, teachers, and spiritual influences? What personal or corporate practices of testing and accountability would help the church remain faithful? (Matthew 7:19-20 and 1 John 4:1)