

RECOGNIZING FALSE TEACHERS

2Peter 2:1-3

INTRODUCTION:

- A. God's people have always been plagued with the problem of false teachers. Elijah face 450 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1Ki 18); Micaiah refuted the word of 400 of Ahab's "yes men" (1Ki 12); and now it is no different
- B. New Testament abundantly warns that false teachers will arise today. "THE TIME WILL COME." 2Tim 4:3,4
- C. One problem today is that we are not being sufficiently warned about false teachers even in the Lord's church
- D. The Bible not only warns us that false teachers will come, but also tells us how to recognize them. Let us look at several ways to recognize false teachers

DISCUSSION:

I. THEY COME IN UNAWARE

- A. Ever know a teacher of error who admitted that he was a false teacher and not to be listened to?
- B. The manner in which they come Jude 4; 2Pet 2:1; Matt 7:15 Oh, how crucial this is!
- C. Brethren are not on as close guard as they should be
 - 1. We must try the spirits 1Jhn 4:1
 - 2. Naiveness will destroy a congregation
 - 3. False teachers will have a field day
- D. False teachers will come, and secretly; we are foolish if we do not believe it can and will happen in "our" fellowship 1Pet 5:8

II. THEY SPEAK ENTICING WORDS

- A. If a false teacher sounded like one, no one would listen
- B. His speech is beautiful, he sounds good, he is persuasive, he is very gifted Jude 16; 2Pet 2:3
- C. Deceives hearts of "simple" (Thayer: "fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one") Rom 16:18
- D. Like sheep led to slaughter, the flock follows the wolf, because he has persuaded them Col 2:4

III. THEY ARE OUTWARDLY BEAUTIFUL

- A. If false teacher lived a riotous life, he would gain no real religious following
 - 1. His life appears to have so many virtues that people say, "Oh, he is such a kind, humble, sincere man. Surely he could not be a false teacher!"
 - 2. But, we must not be deceived Col 2:18
 - 3. Jesus says they look like sheep Matt 7:15
- B. Determine false teacher by their teaching, not necessarily by his life, if message not from Bible, it matters not how nice he is, still a false teacher

- C. Correct, if possible, because of love for soul Acts 18:26
- D. Regardless how good he may seem, if he won't repent, he must be marked, avoided and withdrawn from Rom 16:17; 1Tim 6:3-5
 - 1. Appear as ministers of righteousness 2Cor 11:14,15
 - 2. But they will be damned Gal 1:8,9

IV. THEY TEND ONLY TO GRATIFY THE FLESH

- A. Not only do false teachers satisfy their own desires Rom 16:18; 2Pet 2:3 but Col 2:23 indicates their teaching satisfies flesh more than it fills spiritual needs.
 - 1. Barnes: "There is nothing to ennoble and elevate the soul, the only effects is to satisfy or please the flesh," (Barnes' notes, Col p. 272)
 - 2. Application: Gymnasiums, "multi-purpose" buildings, food, fun, frolic; satisfying flesh
- B. So confused we don't know what "the church", "the spiritual institution of God" is
 - 1. Can't distinguish holy and profane Ezek 22:26
 - 2. Church buildings now FOR social and recreational activities instead of a place for work and service
 - 3. We lose the young because false teachers teach by action, example, and "program", that the church exists to serve them; that the church is social, and that's what they will always want
- C. May we be given the wisdom to see through this flesh - satisfying "brand" of Christianity

V. THEY WILL HAVE MANY FOLLOWERS

- A. Few things the Bible teaches is more tragic
 - 1. Many shall follow immoral way 2Pet 2:2
 - 2. Even from leadership Acts 20:30
- B. They look and sound so good; preach what people want to hear, and provide what people want Isa 30:10
- C. Is it surprising that the churches with the pleasing message, fellowship halls and gymnasiums are usually very large?

CONCLUSION:

- A. Has God really spoken to Oral Roberts, Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, Jim Baker, Joel Osteen, Jerry Falwell, Kenneth Copeland and many others as well as women?
- B. The Bible tells us how to recognize and avoid them. We must be able to recognize teachers of error.
- C. Remember what Paul said in Gal 1:6-12