

Beware of False Prophets

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The Bible warns against false prophets. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:11,12). "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

These passages tell us that there will be many false prophets, and that they will come under disguise so as to deceive many. It is also stated that *iniquity*-lawlessness, working without law or authority – will abound and many would lose their zeal and love. Because of all this we are to try the spirits to determine whether or not they are of God.

1 John 4:6 tells us how to know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. "We" (apostles) "are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." To try the spirits (messengers, teachers) we must have the revelation by the apostles. If one does not receive what the apostles taught, he is not of God and is the spirit of error. If he does receive what the apostles taught he is of God and is the spirit of truth, Verse 1 tells us that many false prophets are gone into the world and we should try every spirit to determine which is of God.

These false prophets are not said to deny that Christ came in the flesh, although this might be a part of the teaching of some of them. False teachers will appear among disciples with damnable heresies. "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 (2 Pet 2:1,2).

These false teachers were said to "privily"(secretly) bring in damnable heresies. These false and destructive doctrines would go so far as to deny the Lord that bought them. However, the heresies they would teach would lead many after their evil ways with the result that the "way of truth" would be evil spoken of. This is deception.

False brethren are unawares brought in that they might take disciples back into bondage. "And that because 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: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:4,5).

False brethren, like false teachers, are deceivers and their intent is to lead away from the Lord those who are serving the Lord. And in each case the "way of truth" or the "truth of the gospel" is that which is the real objective of these false brethren. Since Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), teachers and brethren who speak against the truth are speaking against Christ, thus antichrist. We must watch and pray.

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