

# TEACHING

## False prophets and teachers

### Study 4 (2 Peter 2) Introduction

False prophets and teachers have always been around to deceive the elect if it were possible but in these last days these false prophets and teachers are multiplying like flies in the professing Christian Church. In Matthew chapter twenty-four the Lord Jesus Christ warned the faithful believers about the spiritual seduction and deception that would be a conspicuous feature of the very last days before His Second Coming. Today we see this deception in the Church on a scale unparalleled in the history of the Christian Church.

While there are other signs that indicate we are in the last days this sign of spiritual deception clearly reveals that we are in the very last days. Paul tells us that in the last days these false prophets and teachers will be saying things that are taught by demons. "The Spirit clearly says that in latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

There are religions in the world that teach people not to marry or to eat certain types of food and Paul clearly tells us

that these things are doctrines of demons. When we look at all of the sexual problems among the Roman Catholic Clergy today we can clearly see the results of this doctrine of enforced celibacy, a doctrine the Bible says is a doctrine of demons. However the real danger is the spiritual seduction creeping into the mainline protestant and evangelical denominations and spreading like wild-fire through the Charismatic and Pentecostal denominations and churches.

The seductive nature of false prophets and teachers is that they claim to be genuine believers and they are very much in the character of Judas Iscariot. He was very close to Jesus and to the other apostles and only Jesus knew what he was really like. The other apostles could not see through Judas at all. Like the apostles he was able to perform signs, miracles and wonders yet he never really belonged to the Lord. The Lord Jesus told us that many will profess to be His followers and do many signs, miracles and wonders in His name but in the end be rejected because they do not do His will. (Matthew 7: 15-21) Obviously they are not genuine shepherds but 'hirelings' who are only in the work for self-praise, self-gratification, or for a successful career or just in it for money.

False prophets and teachers always multiply in the Church just before persecution comes. This was the case in 586 BC in the time of Jeremiah just before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. Also in 70 AD it was the same thing happening

just before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. In Europe just before the Black Death struck Christianity as a religion was permeated with false teaching, false doctrines and lavish and self-indulgent living from Pope to priest to the person in the street. Countless millions died right across Europe. In the book of Revelation when the plagues are poured out millions upon millions will die again. The 'Babylon' of this world will be overthrown! (Revelation 18)

In these last days there is coming a judgment on all false religions including apostate Christianity. The 'system of the beast' that has infiltrated the professing Christian Church will turn on the false Church and destroy it with fire and this will be at God's direction. Rome itself will burn with fire, probably by thermonuclear warheads. (Revelation 17:16-18) The 'scarlet woman' may ride on 'the beast' right now but suddenly 'the beast system' will buck her off and devour her! In that day the false prophets will not escape. The Church in the West today is heading for persecution and God will use this to purify the Church.

'Babylon' is well and truly entrenched in the Church in the West and there are already distinct signs of the great apostasy that will bring the antichrist to power and ultimately to be worshipped as God in the Church. The false prophets and teachers today especially the TV money preachers with their counterfeit signs, miracles and wonders coming out of America are using the 'image of the beast' (the Television) to prepare the way for the ultimate deception of the antichrist that will be perpetuated on a lukewarm, self satisfied, materialistic and backslidden Church. Peter like the other apostles felt compelled and burdened to warn faithful believers about false prophets and teachers who were already around but would multiply in the Church especially after he had gone to be with the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Himself spoke about the tares among the wheat. Tares look just like wheat until you get up close and then you can see the difference. This is why we must closely examine all prophecy, teaching and doctrine because outwardly and superficially it may sound okay but if we know God's Word then we will be able to rightly divide the Word of Truth to distinguish truth from error. Jude as well as Peter tell us about these false prophets and teachers and when we see the lengthy descriptions given of these people the Holy Spirit is showing us just how important it is to be aware of this kind of spiritual seduction within the Church and to discern from God's Word what these people are really like. God Himself said, "My people perish for lack of knowledge." What then does the Holy Spirit tell us about these false teachers and prophets.

### 1. They are Deceivers.

*(Vs 1-2) "But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who brought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute."*

Spiritual deception is never brought about by outright lies but by mixing truth with error. When Peter describes them as, "secretly introducing destructive heresies" he tells us that these false teachers are laying error and truth side by side. It is in fact a mixture of truth and error. It may taste like a 'spiritual gourmet meal' but in fact it is laced with 'spiritual arsenic.' It may look good, feel good and taste good but it is a 'deadly' spiritual poison. Jude writing about these people said, "For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you" (Jude 4a). These false teachers may not deny Jesus publicly with their mouth but they deny Him by the way they live and

by the way they encourage others in the Church to be just like them.

## **2. They are greedy for money make up stories to get money.**

*(Vs 3a) "In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up."*

Just watch TBN and you will see many false prophets and teachers peddling their false teachings and doctrines to get money. Many claim visions and revelations that the apostles themselves never claimed to have had. Much of their so-called 'theology' is psychology and secular motivational strategies re-packaged as Christianity. Most of them are always emphasizing wealth and prosperity and appealing for money.

## **3. They are motivated by their own sinful passions and desires and despise authority.**

*(Vs 10-11) "This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of their sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord."*

These people cannot be restrained. Restraining them is like trying to restrain the wind or the foaming sea in a storm. They are not under authority but are laws unto themselves and curse all who oppose them. Watch the video of Benny Hinn calling down God's judgment on those who seek to expose his false teaching! These people think that they are untouchable. Paul calls them "Super apostles masquerading as angels of light" when in fact they are messengers of Satan. Jude tells us that they are dreamers who pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings."

They have no concept of holiness before the Lord and that without holi-

ness no man shall ever see the Lord! These people have no shame their consciences being seared as with a hot iron, they are past feeling." Paul writing to Timothy describes these kinds of people as, "having a form of godliness without power." They are 'lovers of themselves, lovers of money and lovers of pleasure.' They wear expensive clothes, drive around in limousines, wear expensive jewellery, stay in 5 star hotels and fly personal jets all over the world to preach their brand of the gospel all at the expense of Christians. They not only denigrate the true gospel and despise the word of God but they dishonour the name and character of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are 'an accursed brood!'

## **4. They are void of spiritual truth.**

*(Vs 11-12) "But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish."*

These false teachers claim revelation that goes beyond scripture and forget Paul's warning, "not to go beyond what is written." (1 Corinthians 4:6b) These people are moved only by their need for self-gratification. By instinct they are children of depravity and corruption. Their doctrines in fact deny the work of the cross. The fundamental doctrine of the prosperity preachers where the work of the cross is concerned actually teach that Jesus became one flesh with Satan in hell and had to be born again before the work of salvation was completed. Benny Hinn has openly said this on TBN.

## **5. They practice sin openly.**

*(Vs 13-14) "They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are*

*experts in greed-an accursed brood."*

These false teachers do not restrain their appetites for the things of this world. Their mind is on earthly things and 'their god is their belly.' Jude tells us that they are "blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm-shepherds who feed only themselves." These are leaders who are perfectly at home in this world. They are slaves of depravity and passions. Not only that but they love the adulation of women. They are past masters in the art of spiritual seduction and sadly many women in the Church support them financially. These men "worm their way into homes through television and gain control over weak willed women, who themselves are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires." Satan will always go for the women first as he did with Eve. He hasn't changed! If he masquerades as 'an angel of light' how much more will his servants do the same things.

#### **6.They love money.**

*(Vs15-16) "They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey-a beast without speech- who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophets madness."*

Balaam was a false prophet; actually he was more of a sorcerer. He loved money and prophesied for money and also led the Israelites into immorality. When the armies of Israel entered the Promised Land they killed Balaam. The lust for money, the lust for pride and the lust for women will often go hand in hand. Every servant of God must always watch out for the three 'G's'. 'The Girls, the Gold and the Glory!'

#### **7. They do not have the Holy Spirit nor can they produce what they promise.**

*(Vs 17) "These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them forever." Jude also said concerning them, "They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted-twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever."*

These leaders are always promising revivals of one kind or another but the revivals never come. Just watch them on TBN. Indeed they are truly the prophets of Baal! They are trying to make the fire fall but they can't! In many cases they are offering up 'strange fire' that is not permitted in God's word. Those who do this come under the direct judgment of God. (Leviticus 10:1-2) (Numbers 3:4) Also these men are always talking about 'transferring' their anointing. Just watch the video of a well-known AOG leader take off his yellow jacket and call pastors to the front to touch his coat to receive his anointing. Watch many AOG pastors rush forward to get this 'so called anointing'. God's word forbids this kind of thing and those who do this also come under His judgment in this matter! (Exodus 30:30-33)

These men have no spiritual fruit being "uprooted" and "twice dead". They were once spiritually alive but are now spiritually dead! They were once joined to Christ their head but have now severed their ties with Him and are no longer under His authority. As the writer to the Hebrews says, "It is impossible for those who have been once enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are cru-

cifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

#### **8. They are great boasters and appeal to the desires of the flesh in others.**

*(Vs 18) “For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.”*

Young converts and naive Biblically ignorant Christians are the specific targets of these false teachers and prophets. Many young believers today are sitting in churches that go along with these false teachers. Their pastors know that these teachers and prophets are not Biblical men but say nothing for fear of losing people or becoming unpopular with their congregations. Jesus spoke plainly about these kinds of leaders when he said that they love the praises of men more than they love the praises of God. They have their reward only in this life i.e., the praises of men but there is no reward to come only blackness, darkness and a raging fire that will “eternally torment them in the presence of the angels and the Lamb.”

These men entice the undiscerning naive believers into following their doctrines and lifestyles. They are past masters at enchantment. Watch Rodney Howard Brown on video hyping people up to laugh and to lose control and calling this revival. When some converted Gypsies saw this on video they actually said this is what they used to do before they knew the Lord. It was called “duckering” i.e., using the occult to get money out of people. Paul tells us in Timothy that not only are these false teachers deceiving others but deceiving themselves as well and believing their own publicity. They are following the lustful desires of their sinful natures and not even realizing it. This is a tragedy because most of them started out as honest ser-

vants of the Lord but through pride and rebellion they have gone into the occult like King Saul did when he rebelled against the Lord.

#### **9. They promise others freedom while being slaves to sin themselves.**

*(Vs 19) “They promise them (i.e., those who are just escaping from those who live in error) freedom, while they themselves are slaves to depravity-for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.”*

These false teachers are enslaved to greed, lust, money and self-aggrandizement in the eyes of others. Their teaching is void of holiness and righteousness. Instead of encouraging Christians not to be attached to the things of this world they are encouraging them to be at home in this world. Listen carefully to the teaching of the faith prosperity teachers on TV and you will see this clearly if you have the ‘eyes of your heart enlightened’ to see the truth. Unfortunately many today don’t want to see these things but have “itching ears to hear what they want to hear” and chase after those teachers who appeal to the desires and appetites of the flesh.

#### **10. They were true believers at one time but have committed apostasy.**

*(Vs 20-22) “If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred commandment that was passed onto them. Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”*

Apostasy means not only a deliberate turning away from Biblical truth and standards of living but also turning oth-

ers away through false teaching. This is what false teachers and apostates do. Through their teaching they turn others away and lead them into living below the standards set out in the New Testament. Many who follow these false teachers know the truth in their deep minds but choose to follow the desires and appetites of their sinful natures spurred on by the false teachers they are listening to. These people are those who have “once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age.” They can no longer be brought back to repentance because they are “crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace” in the eyes of the world. A good tree bears good fruit but a bad tree bears bad fruit. Faithful teachers produce good fruit but false teachers produce false fruit. True success is not measured in numbers or by “bums on seats!”

These false teachers once knew the truth but their pride and arrogance has led them into deception and error and into “confusion and into every evil work.” They are worse of than they were before they were saved. There is no doubt that sinners who reject salvation will suffer eternal torment but those who have known the truth and the way of salvation but have turned away from the truth and turned others away as well will suffer a worse torment. Imagine a dog licking up its own vomit or a pig wallowing in the mud. This is how God describes those who have turned their back on the sacred commandment that was passed on to them to, “love the Lord their God with all of their heart, with all of their soul, with all of their mind and with all of their strength and their neighbour as themselves.” These false teachers have allowed their old nature to control their whole lives and consequently have deliberately kept on sinning after they have received the knowledge of the truth and for them no sacrifice for sins remains but

only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”

It is absolutely essential that we receive the new nature from God. Trying to reform our old nature is like washing a pig and dressing it up in nice religious clothing. Because by nature it is a pig it will inevitably go back to wallowing in the mud unless there is a fundamental change in its nature. The same is with a dog unless there is a change in its nature it will go back to its vomit. This is why we must be born again and continue to walk in the Spirit moment by moment of every day because the days are evil. In this way we will be clothing ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and making no provision for the flesh.

We can choose to walk in the Spirit or in the flesh. God gave us the capacity to do this when He saved us. If we sow things into our lives according to the desires of the Holy Spirit we will live spiritually but if we sow things into our lives according to the desires of our fallen sinful nature then from that nature we will die spiritually. So then because the Lord Jesus Christ has opened up a new and living way through His blood into God’s presence let us continually draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled (by the blood of Jesus) to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water (the water of the word of God) Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more since you see the day (the Day of the Lord) approaching.