

“Beware of False Prophets”  
**Matthew 7:15-20**

**I. False Prophets are a reality (v. 15a).**

A. Because they pretend to speak for God, false prophets present a serious danger.

B. We are to be continuously guarding ourselves against false prophets.

(Genesis 3:1; Isaiah 30:9-11; Jeremiah 5:30-31; 14:13-15; 44:16; 2 Peter 2:1-2; Jude 3-4)

**II. False Prophets come in a deceptive manner (v. 15b).**

A. These false teachers will come to you disguised as a shepherd.

B. Although they may appear to be authentic on the outside, inwardly they are ravening wolves.

(Jeremiah 28:1-4; Zechariah 13:4)

**III. False Prophets can be identified by their fruits (vs. 16-20).**

A. The motivation for their work is not the Lord.

B. Their message will not be based on God’s Word.

(1 Samuel 3:10-18; Jeremiah 23:16; 25-28; Titus 1:9, 11)

**Scripture References and Notes**

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”

Titus 1:9

...holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

2 Peter 2:1-2

<sup>1</sup> But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. <sup>2</sup> Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned...

Jude 3-4

<sup>3</sup> Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. <sup>4</sup> For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

### **prophet**

προφήτης (prophētés)

(from *pró*, "beforehand" and *phēmi*, "elevating/asserting one idea over another, especially through the spoken-word") – properly, one who *speaks forth* by the inspiration of God; a *prophet*.

Jeremiah 14:13-15

<sup>13</sup> But, "Ah, Lord GOD!" I said, "Look, the prophets are telling them, 'You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.'" <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds. <sup>15</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who are prophesying in My name, although it was not I who sent them—yet they keep saying, 'There will be no sword or famine in this land'—by sword and famine those prophets shall meet their end!

Isaiah 30:9-11

<sup>9</sup> For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen To the instruction of the LORD; <sup>10</sup> Who say to the seers, "You must not see *visions*"; And to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right, Speak to us pleasant words, Prophecy illusions. <sup>11</sup> "Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."

Jeremiah 44:16

"As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you!

Jeremiah 5:30-31

<sup>30</sup> "An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: <sup>31</sup> The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their *own* authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?

Zechariah 13:4

Also it will come about in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive...

Jeremiah 28:1-4

Now in the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet, who was from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. <sup>3</sup> Within two years I am going to bring back to this place all the vessels

of the LORD'S house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. <sup>4</sup> I am also going to bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles of Judah who went to Babylon,' declares the LORD, 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.'"

### ravening

- ἄρπαξ (harpax)
- rapacious, ravenous; a robber, an extortioner.
- properly, *seizing*; a *sudden snatching* (like in a robbery).

Titus 1:9 (NASB)

...holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Titus 1:9 (KJV)

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Titus 1:11

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

1 Samuel 3:10-18

<sup>10</sup> Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening." <sup>11</sup> The LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. <sup>12</sup> In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them. <sup>14</sup> Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." <sup>15</sup> So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. But Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. <sup>16</sup> Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." <sup>17</sup> He said, "What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you." <sup>18</sup> So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him."

Jeremiah 23:16, 25-28

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>25</sup> "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!' <sup>26</sup> How long? Is there *anything* in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even *these* prophets of the deception of their own heart, <sup>27</sup> who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal? <sup>28</sup> The prophet who has a dream may relate *his* dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have *in common* with grain?" declares the LORD.