

GNITN

#1,158

False Prophets: Put Down the Stones, Pick Up Discernment

What About False Prophets?

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ([Matt 24:11](#), NKJV)

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. ([Matt 24:24-25](#), NKJV)

We have all read and maybe reread these verses and kind of just let them be seen as something that will not affect us personally, however they probably have touched you in one form or fashion either directly or indirectly. There are so many videos, books, and teachings available where a false prophet has proclaimed things that seem to be right around the corner. The problem is that we are so unfamiliar with the real moving of the genuine, we can't discern the false. The closer we get to the end times it is incumbent upon us to grow in our understanding of the prophetic because, like birth pains, these false voices will only grow in number and influence both in and outside the church.

One Caution: Shut Down All Prophets

A common but incorrect response to false prophets and prophecies is to just shut down all prophecies and other gifts of the Spirit in the church. While it may stop the false it will also quench the real and do a great disservice to the Body of Christ both locally and globally. A better approach is detailed in Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians where he told them this:

Do not quench (suppress or subdue) the [Holy] Spirit; 20 Do not spurn the gifts and utterances of the prophets [do not depreciate prophetic revelations nor despise inspired instruction or exhortation or warning]. 21 But test and prove all things [until you can recognize] what is good; [to that] hold fast. ([1 Thess 5:19-21](#), AMPC)

Another Caution: Stone Them

I'm sure you may have heard that prophets have to be 100% accurate or they are to be stoned as in killed. This view is shared by many, mainly because of a few verses in the Old Testament like this one:

"But any prophet who fakes it, who claims to speak in my name something I haven't commanded him to say, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die." ([Deut 18:20](#), MSG)

And this one:

The prophet who tries to lead you astray must be executed, for he has attempted to foment rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you out of slavery in the land of Egypt. By executing him you will clear out the evil from among you. ([Deut 13:5](#), TLB)

Interestingly, the Bible doesn't mention stoning as a punishment anywhere. It is presumed that stoning was used when Jesus mentions it in this verse:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! ([Luke 13:34](#), NKJV)

Even in this verse He doesn't say false prophets are stoned, just those true ones who are sent to Israel. And His point was how the Jews killed true prophets not false ones. So how are we to deal with a false prophet now?

Don't Listen To Them

"If there is a prophet among you, or one who claims to foretell the future by dreams, 2 and if his predictions come true but he says, 'Come, let us worship the gods of the other nations,' 3 don't listen to him. For the Lord is testing you to find out whether or not you really love him with all your heart and soul. 4 You must never worship any God but Jehovah; obey only his commands and cling to him. ([Deuteronomy 13:1-4](#), TLB)

In the next verse, [Deuteronomy 13:5](#), the admonition is not that they are accurate but when they are to discern if they are using it as a way to draw them away from worshipping the true God. So rather than use accuracy as the standard, it is actually what they say about God that makes the difference. It is what their hearts and lives show us. So, we must test them period. And we shouldn't kill them, as even some today advocate. Shun them? Of course.

How Do We Test?

Beloved, do not put faith in every spirit, but prove (test) the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. ([1 John 4:1](#), AMPC)

The best thing we can do is know what a real prophet and prophecies look like. But we need to also test the fruit of those claiming to be prophets. Are they arrogant, demanding of the spotlight and hard to get along with? Do they belittle those who oppose them and are not willing to embrace correction? Do they spend more time in public displays and rarely in prayer? While Satan's "prophets" may appear even like an angel of light, they cannot duplicate the true gifts of the Spirit. They love to put on a show, but what are they like under that mask of spirituality:

For such men are false apostles [spurious, counterfeits], deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles (special messengers) of Christ (the Messiah). 14 And it is no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light; 15 So it is not surprising if his servants also masquerade as ministers of righteousness. [But] their end will correspond with their deeds. ([2 Cor 11:13-15](#), AMPC)

Wolves In Sheep's Clothing

Beware of false prophets, who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside they are devouring wolves. ([Matt 7:15](#), AMPC)

So much for the angels of light, right? Jesus is very blunt about this topic because He would later call Himself the Good Shepherd. He knew that such false prophets would turn and be harsh to His flock in the long run. As with Paul, Jesus admonishes His followers to see their fruit because they can't hide that under close scrutiny. Peter would address this issue as well:

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. 2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. ([2 Peter 2:1-3](#), NASB)

All For Show

A sure sign of false prophets is their desire for the spotlight. In their book, [Keys to the Apostolic and Prophetic: Embracing the Authentic-Avoiding the Bizarre](#), the authors say this:

"Sensuality" is appealing to our senses and our lusts. It may include a desire for certain entertainment, performance and dazzling displays. This is not to say that media special effects,

fog machines, videos, movement, and sound and lighting are automatically wrong; however when the sole purpose is to draw attention to please or fulfill the senses (the meaning of sensuality), it crosses a line. Because of sensuality, the true way to God will be diminished and even blasphemed, which basically indicates an irreverence towards God or sacred things.

False prophets will tend to be in it for money, too. No matter how slick the presentation or the “show” we must dig deeper and see if they are genuinely doing things for God. Discerning shepherds of the flock should be able to recognize that the line has been crossed.

The Fruit Of The Spirit

We see the opposite of the fruit of the spirit in the previous verses in **Galatians 5** just before the real fruit is mentioned:

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ([Gal 5:19-21](#), NASB)

Note the serious problems with relationships in this list. To be sure, a false prophet or teacher will have a life full of broken and dysfunctional relationships. If they are filled with the fruit of the Spirit, the things that make for strong, healthy relationships are all listed:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ([Gal 5:22-23](#), NASB)

Deal In Love

Leaders that see that a person who wants to flow in the prophetic is off at times, but see that they are sincere, need to lovingly, but firmly counsel with them to see why that is happening. To shut them down without addressing them is not a good thing. However, if they refuse wise counsel, then their true hearts are seen. It will then be up to God to find a way to reach them. Hopefully such a prideful person will be detected by the next church they try and “minister” in quickly and that they will repent.

What About Accuracy?

This must be addressed since the best test of a prophecy is did the word come to pass. It should be noted that just because a prophet missed it so to speak, they are not automatically considered a false prophet. There are many prophecies that don’t come to pass because it was conditional, or the interpretation was off. We must be careful not to label anyone a false messenger until all the timelines are met and not just the human ones no matter how much we want to use that as our barometer for accuracy. Still, there comes a time when a false prophecy must be dealt with. Again, do we kill them like they did in the Old Testament? Of course not, and to take that approach belies a lack of Biblical understanding. But open and frank discussions when a prophet does make a mistake can’t be avoided either.

Growing In Discernment

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon is quoted as saying that discernment is not telling right from wrong but knowing the difference between right and almost right. As we get closer to the end times, the father of all lies will use such refined deception that it will deceive even the elect if that were possible. We must develop a checklist of sorts to discover if a prophet is true or false. We must discern whether a person who is almost right is basically good at heart and can

receive Godly instruction and correction or are they taking us for a deceptive ride masquerading as true ministers of light.

Some Considerations

We should notice things like are they scriptural, are they people of prayer and intercession, do they live holy lives, are they humble, do they desire and actively seek covering and accountability, do they deliver hard words with humility or with a haughty or judgmental spirit, do they deal with the devilish push back from “entering” the devil’s territory or do they run when all hell breaks loose? Also, do they take corrections with humility, promote unity among the saints, do they respect the other roles of the five-fold ministry or do they act they are higher than the others and are they real servants not wishing to be in the spotlight or do they expect special treatment and require honor from others for the great service they provide? These are just a small listing of what to look for in discerning true from false prophets.

False Prophets Will Fill The Void

If there is a lack of true prophetic ministry even secular poets will notice it as evidenced by a [song](#) you may recognize by *Simon and Garfunkel*:

*Fool, said I, you do not know, silence, like a cancer, grows
Hear my words and I might teach you, take my arms then I might reach you
But my words, like silent raindrops fell, and echoed in the wells of silence
And the people bowed and prayed to the neon god they'd made
And the sign flashed its warning in the words that it was forming
And the sign said the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls, and whispered in the sounds of silence*

Silence from true prophets will leave a void that will be filled inevitably by false ones. Here are how the authors of *Keys to the Apostolic and Prophetic* summarize this vacuum:

Paul Simon recognized that the prophetic words, when they are not spoken, create a silence that grows like a cancer, even resulting in the neon gods of idolatry. In this voiceless emptiness, people cannot hear what God is saying. They cannot dwell in His well of Truth. Their only hope is to take human “wisdom” and man-made “prophecy” off the graffiti walls. This has happened in our society today. People are reading and believing garbage.

There Is Hope

If the church locally and as a whole removes the stigma of prophets and restores the respect for this gift and role in the church, we will see a healthy working model for others to follow. We must also have classes in our Bible colleges and universities to teach about this role and of course avenues like Sunday School classes that illuminate these topics so those who are either afraid or disdainful of prophets and prophecy can get the full picture before relegating this role and gift to the scrapheap of biblical ignorance. Yes, mistakes will be made, but it is better to put out such fires than resurrect these helpful and necessary flows of the Spirit from the dead.