

Beware Of False Prophets **Matthew 7:15-20**

Introduction

1. It has often been surmised that Jesus spoke more about error than truth.
2. As the Devil shows, error does not have to come in the form of a brutal lie (Genesis 3:2ff).
3. Deuteronomy 13:1-3 | 2 Peter 2:1-3
Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24

I. Their External Front (v. 15)

A. False teachers appear in sheep's clothing.

1. The serpent was not in his snaky form (Genesis 3:1, 14 see also 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15).
2. Consider Romans 16:18.
 - a. Self serving can never be God serving.
 - b. They use "good words." Some today even use *good works* or *good ideas*.
 - c. They deceive.

B. Why might Jesus and Paul (Acts 20:28-30) have described false teachers as wolves?

II. Their Evil Fruit (vv. 16-18)

A. Jesus' warning against judging (verse 1) is often misunderstood. "We must judge ourselves, and judge of our own acts, but not make our word a law to everybody. We must not judge rashly, nor pass judgment upon our brother without any ground" (Matthew Henry).

B. **By their fruits ye shall know them** (*apo tōn karpōn autōn epignōsesthe*). From their fruits you will recognize them." The verb "know" (*ginōsko*) has *epi* added, fully know. The illustrations from the trees and vines have many parallels in ancient writers (Robertson's Word Pictures).

C. Jesus uses very polarizing words like "good," "evil," and "corrupt." Why is such preaching no longer tolerated in many pulpits?

III. Their Eventual Fate (v. 19)

- A. "Nothing so much prevents men from entering the strait gate, and becoming true followers of Christ, as the carnal, soothing, flattering doctrines of those who oppose the truth" (Matthew Henry).
- B. See the similar wording of Matthew 3:10; Luke 3:9; and Matthew 15:13, 14.
- C. The false teacher will face the same end as the non-believer (Matthew 25:41). We must go to the rescue (Jude 23).

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Beware	Error	Fruit	Know
Front	Fate	Fire	Sheep
Matthew	Jesus	Good	Evil
Wolves	Acts	Paul	Peter
Cut	Cast	Destroy	Eternal