

By their fruits ye shall know them: Mat. 7:15-24 **Beware of false prophets**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. **Ye shall know them by their fruits**¹... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father**... whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, **which built his house upon a rock**. Central to the work of God is the will of God. The work of God is not done as seems best to one, but according to the plan of the master architect, God.

False prophets don't follow God's will, but manufacture their own "vision from God": According to **1 John 2:17**, salvation is based on submitting to the will of God. In **2 Thess. 2:10**, we see involved in salvation a profound love of the truth as a requirement of salvation. According to **John 7:15-16**, one can recognize the true doctrine of God only because one desires to fulfill the will of God. In **John 9:31**, the commentary is made that God only hears the prayers of those who are fearful (respectful) of God and do His will. **Titus 1:13-14** teaches that the man of God has to confront the incorrect and correct it². **Lam 2:14** "Thy prophets... have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for these false burdens and causes of banishment." In contrast to true prophets, these false prophets fabricate their own "vision from God" that is not really from God at all.³ They also have the tendency to be exaggerating **Jude 1:16; 2 Pet 2:18; Rev. 2:1-3**.

The fruit of their doctrine is evil: What are the good fruits of the Spirit of God? According to **Gal.**

¹ **Proverbs 20:11** Every child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

² **Jude 1.3** "earnestly contend for the faith." **Micah 3:5** "the prophets that make my people err." **2 Tim 1.7; Rev. 21:7-8** no cowards in heaven. **Titus 1:13; 2:15**.

³ **Jer. 14:14; 23:16, 21; 29:8-9**. These false prophets as a character trait despise authorities. **Jude 1:8-9**.

5:22-23, the fruit of God's indwelling is love⁴, joy⁵, peace⁶, patience⁷, longsuffering⁸, gentleness, goodness⁹, faith, meekness¹⁰, and temperance¹¹. **1 Cor. 13:4-5** Love suffereth¹² love, and is kind¹³; love envieth¹⁴ not; love vaunteth¹⁵ not itself, is not puffed¹⁶ up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity¹⁷, but rejoiceth in truth.

What should be the example of a man of God?

God has made being an example to the flock an essential part of the work of God, and in the church we can discern between good and poor leaders by their example of holiness and piety¹⁸. **Hebrews 13:7** Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their

⁴ **Love** – the intense desire for another person, Such that one will sacrifice of his self for the other. True love is seen by the desire to please God and others. Gal 5:15-21 presents the opposite of true love in the things that cause division, friction, and contention between men.

⁵ **Joy** – When one by meditation and reflection recognizes the mercy of God applied in his own life.

⁶ **Peace** – The character of tranquility, calm, order, and the absence of anxiety and hyperactivity because of fear. This is especially noted when there is every reason for the opposite.

⁷ **Patience** – The absence of hurry, worry, and anger towards others when there are problems.

⁸ **Longsuffering** – To support for a long time the weaknesses and provocations of others, which comes by consideration and meditation of what God has done for you.

⁹ **Goodness** – A disposition to always be doing well towards others.

¹⁰ **Meekness** – Being soft and indulgent towards the weak and erring, with patience suffering the injuries others heap upon us without revenge or anger. Gal. 6:1 The opposite of anger.

¹¹ **Temperance, Self-Control** – Contingency, or the governing and controlling of one's self by submission to the will of God. To be moderate in regard to the sensual or base appetites.

¹² Has patience, being able to wait and take a lot.

¹³ Shows its useful, benevolent.

¹⁴ Envy, to affect one's self (for the worse) over something, or to be zealous over someone.

¹⁵ To put one's self first over everything and everybody.

¹⁶ To think more of one's self that is correct.

¹⁷ Seeks the beautiful and pleasant for everybody. ©

¹⁸ Their ministry, preaching, and teaching should produce piety in the hearers. 1 Tim 6:4; Tit. 1:1; 2 Tim 3:5.

conversation. (not just their beliefs, but also what their beliefs have produced in the people that have sat under their example and teaching). **1 Peter 5:1-5** continues with "neither as being lords... but being ensamples to the flock... clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble. **1 Cor. 16:15-16** exhorts us to submit ourselves to leaders that "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints... that helpeth with us, and laboreth". When you cannot say in all honesty, "I want to be like my pastor"¹⁹ then you should find another church. False prophets always maintain double standards, one for them, and another for everybody else. The example or perfect model is really Christ, and God's ministers clothe themselves with the meekness and gentleness of Christ (**2 Cor 10:1**). Mean ministers are usually arrogant, proud²⁰, and want to exalt themselves over others (**Mark 12:38-40**), always boasting²¹. False prophets are usually contentious²², they like to argue and cause divisions (the real root meaning of the word "heresy"). In the end analysis, they usually think more of themselves than one should. They overly estimate their own understandings, opinions, and doctrine carrying things to make a second "law" of God that nobody can violate without reaping God's wrath. **1 Cor 8:1** "knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." **Titus 3:10** "A man that is an heretick (causes divisiones), alter the first and second admonition reject". Always reject unreasonable men. They are not of God.

Their authority is not solely the Word of God²³: God limits our foundation for teaching to be only

¹⁹ 1 Tim 4:12; Tit 2:6-8; 1 Cor; 4:16, 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Ts 1:6

²⁰ Isa 14:12-15; 2 Thes 2:4 Prov 8:13; Isa 13:11; 1 Sam 2.3.

²¹ Boasting – Psa 10:3; 12:3; Pro 27:1; 1 Cor 13:4.

²² Paul restricted the ministry to only men that are **not** "strikers" or "brawlers" 1 Tim 3:3; Tit 3:2. These words mean somebody who is always ready with debate, argument, fighting, heated discussion. Somebody that always has something to say, to respond, something always to correct in others. Somebody who always affirms his opinion or position without ever freely or easily admitting wrong. Hardly ever will they let anything pass without using it to boost their pride in own intelligence and keenness.

²³ 2 Tim 4:2 "Preach the Word".

the Bible, not to other things²⁴. False prophets don't like to follow **Neh 8:8**, which states the basis of expository preaching, (1) read the word, (2) explain the word (exposition), and (3) apply the word so that the people really understand what the Word of God says and how it relates to them. But false prophets are known for entertaining the people right well without really staying in or without correctly interpreting the Word of God. We should "let none of (God's) words fall to the ground" **1 Sam 3:19**, and **Tit 1:9** "holding fast the faithful word", and **Tit 2:1** "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine". False prophets speak things which "are contrary to sound doctrine" **1 Tim 1:10**. False prophets walk in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully **2 Cor. 4:2**. "I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house... I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." **Acts 20:20, 27**. False prophets want to enslave the brethren.; These false teachers want to present themselves as "one of the good brethren" **Acts 20:30**, but they work drawing away (literally "dragging") the disciples after them using perversions²⁵ of the Word of God to achieve what they want. **Galatians 5:1** identifies these false teachers as people who try to steal liberty (**5:13**) from the brethren and subject them to slavery under themselves, where they will have the control over the lives and pocketbooks of their followers.

These false prophets steal money from the brethren: First let's clarify that it is the obligation²⁶ for every believer to economically sustain the man of God ministering among them. Having established this, if a minister is lacking his daily sustenance (for a normal lifestyle, and not a life of luxury, and here we would use the common average lifestyle of the people in his church as "normal"), then the believers under his ministry are responsible. We have to keep this in a biblical

context²⁷, pastors and missionaries in local churches, and then it is a sin on the part of that congregation where they labor, when they live in need and the congregation does not respond. Now understanding that ministers are paid a just salary, God marks all the ministers that want more than what is just as being a wolf in disguise. The requirements for a minister are **1 Tim. 3:3** "not greedy of filthy lucre... not covetous", **1 Pet 5:2** "feed the flock of God... not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind" **Titus 1:7** "not given to filthy lucre 11 teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake" For example Paul showed this in his own life when he said "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel" **Acts 20:33**. And in **1 Thess 2.5** "Neither at any time used we flattering²⁸ words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness". In **Ex.18:21** one of the requirements for the leaders of the people of God was that they had to be "men of truth, hating covetousness." Also in **Deu 16:19** we see the standard, "thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous."

Tendency to be cruel and hard: **Eze 34:4; Jer. 23:1-4; Isa 40:11; John 10:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:19**. They do not sacrifice themselves for the sheep, living better and demanding luxuries, but they do demand that the sheep sacrifice themselves for the leaders. **Eze 34:2-3; John 10:10-13**.

They do not have integrity: **2 Chronicles 19:7, 9** "let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it... Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart." **1 Kings 9:4; 15:5; Acts 13:22; Psalm 78:72**.

²⁷ We have an overpopulation of "ministers" and "missionaries" that in the Bible we never see God approving of these ministries or types of ministries. The New Testament establishes a structure of the work of God being exclusively local churches, and no other type of ministry. Everything has to be brought to this foundation, a local church, where each minister has to respond in doctrine and conduct to his own particular local church, and they sustain him economically, and discipline him if he needs it.

²⁸ "Flattering" – the art of pleasing others by the skillful use of recommendations and compliments, associated with saying false or unnecessary or insincere compliments **2 Pet 2:3, 14**.

Marks of a False Prophet

How to recognize a bad minister

By David Cox

[ch19] v1 ©2006 www.coextracts.com

This can be freely copied if unaltered.



1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Definition: "False prophet or Teacher" Somebody who twists, perverts, or manipulates, or incorrectly represents the Word of God in giving a message that God did not want to give. This is whether this is their specific purpose or not, or whether the person is conscious of what he is doing or not. This tract is an explanation of what the Bible presents of a false prophet (preacher) or teacher. These marks allow us to identify them, and it is not necessary that they have all marks to be bad. The Christian needs to be alert to these marks to shun these evil workers and not fall in their traps and influence.

Taken from the book
"Marks of False Prophets and Teachers" by David Cox.

²⁴ Titus 1:13-14; 2 Thess. 2:10-13.

²⁵ **Perverse** to distort or incorrectly interpret.

²⁶ Mat 10:10; Luke 10:7; 1 Cor 9:7, 14; 1 Tim 5:17; Gal. 6.6.