

What Saith the Scripture?

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from the series

What the Bible Says About...

What the Bible Says About False Teachers

"But there were False Prophets also among the people,
even as there shall be False Teachers among you,
who privily shall bring in damnable heresies,
even denying the LORD that bought them,
and bring upon themselves swift destruction"
(2Peter 2:1).

by Tom Stewart
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Preface

God has promised that False Teachers and False Prophets will be among us, so we have the utmost reason to be thoroughly grounded in the Scriptures that we might rightly mark and avoid them. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). And, before we become overly alarmed that the Great Shepherd would allow His Flock to come in contact with such wolves "in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15), we should be reminded that God must prove and refine His people that we might better glorify Him, for He is worthy. "1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). Our part is to understand who is a False Teacher and take the appropriate action, while God's part is to sustain us by His Omnipotence, until He takes us Home to Heaven. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding Joy" (Jude 24).

Caveat: Potentially, Any Teacher Can Become a False Teacher!

Every Christian *ought* to be a teacher of the Way of Jesus Christ, i.e., "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19); consequently, every Christian can potentially become a False Teacher, e.g., even the Apostle Peter taught by his wrong example the necessity to be "justified by the works of the Law" (Galatians 2:16), when he withdrew from eating with the Gentiles, because he feared the opinions of the legalists and Judaizers. "For before that certain came from James, he [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles: but

when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision" (2:12). True, there is a Spiritual Gift of Teaching that specially enables certain individuals in the Body of Christ to teach, i.e., "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11); however, False Doctrine spreads inside the Professed Church and to the unchurched without observing the technical distinction that it was taught by a so-called specially gifted prophet, teacher, or ordinary Professing Christian. "My brethren, be not many masters [Greek, *didaskalos*, teacher], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1). We must determine in our heart that we will do whatever is necessary to stay our course as an ordinary or Spirit gifted teacher of the Way of Christ, and we, like Peter and Paul, will be blessed with the certainty of Heavenly Reward. "7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the LORD, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His Appearing" (2Timothy 4:7-8). By Promise and Faith, we can avoid the pitfalls of becoming a False Teacher, i.e., "And the things that thou hast heard of Me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2Timothy 2:2); just as by Grace and Perseverance, we will not apostatize from our Faith in the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a Good Work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Contending for the Faith Demands the Identification of False Teachers

It is not for simply personal reasons that we must be able to identify, mark, and avoid False Teachers, but that we would obediently and "earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3). If the Gospel is to spread and take hold of mankind in all of its Power and Purity, then we must strive or contend valiantly "for the Truth" (Jeremiah 9:3) as it "is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:21) against all that would hinder or destroy the Gospel and the Faith that all men should have toward the LORD, Who gave us the Good News of Redemption, Forgiveness of Sins, New Birth, Power Over Sin and Sinning, and Present Certainty of Eternal Life. In short, our "LORD Christ" (Colossians 3:24) has committed to us the defense and propagation of the "Truth of the Gospel" (Galatians 2:14) of the "Grace of God" (Acts 20:24), i.e., the "Gospel of your Salvation" (Ephesians 1:13), and *continually* gives us "all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness" (2Peter 1:3) by means of innumerable, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (1:4), which *enables us to live like Christ*. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature" (1:4). Remember that even the Apostle Paul had to face off with an erring and backslidden Peter, who was *temporarily* a teacher of False Doctrine, when Paul had to contend for the purity of the Faith that is necessary to justify and sanctify the Church. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Galatians 2:11). You will also notice that Paul's conduct was manifestly blessed by the Holy Spirit to regain and restore Beloved Brother Peter, for at a later time the Apostle Peter lovingly refers to Paul: "15 And account that the Longsuffering of our LORD is Salvation; even as our Beloved Brother Paul also according to the Wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2Peter 3:15-16).

Ours must be primarily a contending *for* the Faith with the understanding that it will naturally and secondarily cause us to be *against* the false teachings and deceptive conduct of False Teachers, who are deceiving not simply the Flock, but a world of Lost Sinners. "29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). The False Teachers that will arise among us *can* be:

(1) Backsliders, e.g., the Apostle Peter (Galatians 2), that will certainly and ultimately repent, i.e., "1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are Spiritual, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2), or even

(2) Deceived and Never-Been-Saved Sinners calling themselves True Teachers, who eventually repent and become truly saved, e.g., former Catholic priest, Charles Chiniquy [read his memoirs, "[Fifty Years in the Church of Rome](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Fifty.Years.Church.Rome.html)" (1886) -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Fifty.Years.Church.Rome.html> --], i.e., "1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master [Greek, *didaskalos*, teacher] of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:1-10), however, most False Teachers will be

(3) Lost, Damned, Never-to-be-Saved Deceivers, e.g., "that woman Jezebel" (Revelation 2:20) of the Church of Thyatira that taught fornication and idolatry, who will play out their role as haters of God, opponents of the True Saints, only to be used by God to magnify Himself, i.e., the "wrath of man shall praise" (Psalm 76:10) His Name, when He judges them (and, He will), i.e., the "LORD is known by the Judgment which He executeth" (9:16).

Christian Parents Must Especially Be Teachers of Their Own Children

Additionally, it is the Christian parents' greatest privilege to teach their own children how to live a godly, productive life; and even more importantly, they are required before God to train them in much the same way a vine must be directed on a trellis to fill out all of its potential. "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:7). The

Way of Christ in this world would not only survive but flourish, if Christian parents would fulfill their jobs as the teachers of their children. "5 For He established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: 6 that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children... 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and My servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Psalm 78:5-6; Ezekiel 37:25). Their children will go right, do right, and continue to do so even when they are old. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). The degree to which Christian parents perceive their responsibility to be teachers of their own children is the degree to which their children may begin their sojourn in this world with *more* than an even opportunity-- in fact, the certainty-- of succeeding in this world, and in the world to come. "18 Therefore shall ye lay up these My Words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19). "8 This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). What truly Christian parent would thoughtfully deny their children this opportunity of being taught by themselves, even more, how could Christian parents disobey the LORD by refusing to teach their own children of the Way of Christ? "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD" (Ephesians 6:4).

A Distinction: Teachers Teach Doctrine, While Prophets Prophesy Prophecy

Why not simply lump together False Prophets and False Teachers, since both teach False Doctrine? "But there were False Prophets also among the people, even as there shall be False Teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the LORD that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2Peter 2:1). As you can see from this Second Epistle of Peter, Scripture observes a distinction between teaching and prophesying, i.e., both False *and* True Teachers emphasize *indoctrination*, while False *and* True Prophets or Preachers are looking for a *particular action or response* to their message from the audience. "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it" (Habakkuk 2:2). Even the experience of most schoolchildren makes plain that only those scholars who have a willingness and desire to learn, have a chance to learn. "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the Doctrine" (John 7:17). For this reason, the teacher's first objective with his pupils is to secure their willingness to be taught, i.e., "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power" (Psalm 110:3), which is the prime function of the New Testament ministry of the Holy Spirit. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). A True Teacher will do whatever is necessary to cultivate a right relationship with the Holy Paraklete, a True Teacher's most trusted ally. "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). A False Teacher cannot obviously rely on the assistance of the Holy Spirit, but any Christian can detect a False Teacher with the help of the Spirit. "To the

Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). It is the function of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the meaning of the Scriptures, and thus prevent False Doctrine. "But the Anointing [the Holy Spirit] which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1John 2:27).

The ability of the True Teacher to teach the Truth is based upon his prior experience with the doctrine he teaches, i.e., based upon the willingness and submission that he himself must have demonstrated to the LORD to master the Doctrine that he professes to teach. "9 Whom shall He teach Knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand Doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:9-10). In particular, we are to be careful of attaching ourselves to teachers who:

(1) do *not* teach what the Scriptures say, i.e., "20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not" (Revelation 2:20-21), or

(2) do *not* practice the Truth they profess to teach, i.e., "1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men" (Matthew 23:1-5).

In contrast to the False Teachers that teach False Doctrine, False Prophets prophesy False Prophecy. "And many False Prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). To prophesy (Greek, *propheteuo*) is:

(1) to speak forth God's Word by Divine Inspiration, i.e., "For the Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2Peter 1:21),

(2) often to give a prophecy, which is a foretelling of the certainty or prediction of the timing of a future event, i.e., "10 Of which Salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when It [He] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow" (1Peter 1:10-11), and

(3) *not* restricted to the *foretelling* of time sensitive events, but also embracing the *forth-telling* of Divine Counsel about every aspect of the Almighty's relationship to man, i.e., "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1Corinthians 14:31).

Obviously, not all that was divinely prophesied was recorded in the Canon of Scripture that we now receive as the Holy Bible, e.g., all that Jesus spoke during His earthly ministry was *not* recorded. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did [and said], the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the Books that should be written. Amen" (John 21:25).

A prophet (Greek, *prophetes*) is an individual chosen by God:

(1) to speak by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the message from God that is to be received as His Very Word-- as with the inspired Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, i.e., "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1Thessalonians 2:13),

(2) which extends (with understandable caution and gravity) to the Uncommon Gift of Prophecy of Modern Prophets, who must *never* contradict the "More Sure Word of Prophecy" (2Peter 1:19) of the already established Canon of Scripture, i.e., "17 And it shall come to pass in the Last Days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18), but

(3) includes the More Conventional Concept of the Gift of Prophecy, as represented by Paul to be given sovereignly by the Spirit to selected individuals, specifically, to "some [as], evangelists; and some [as], pastors" (Ephesians 4:11), who are likewise enjoined by the same apostle, "Follow after Charity, and desire Spiritual Gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy [i.e., preach]" (1Corinthians 14:1).

Prerequisites of Identifying False Teachers

Any True Christian has the ability to mark and avoid False Teachers and their False Doctrine, *if* they:

(1) Are Right With God-- which is implied in the title, True Christian-- "7 Nevertheless I tell you the Truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. 8 And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment... 13 Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come" (John 16:7-8, 13),

(2) Listen for the leading of the Holy Spirit, i.e., "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14), and

(3) Obey the voice of the Spirit of God, which is to be true to our honest understanding of

the Word of God, i.e., "And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee, saying, This is The Way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21), which produces in us actions that are consistent with the totality of Scripture, i.e., for the "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

Though we could enumerate a list of the True Doctrines "which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1), e.g., a statement of [What We Believe](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/What.We.Believe.html) -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/What.We.Believe.html> -- at [WhatSaithTheScripture.com](http://whatsaiththescripture.com), it is more important for the honest and sincere Christian to compare "Spiritual things with Spiritual" (1Corinthians 2:13) for himself, and thereby arrive at a personal understanding and an accurate picture of what is and what is not False Doctrine, and who is and who is not a False Teacher. "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2Corinthians 5:10). In the end, if we honestly doubt that a doctrine is taught in the Scriptures, or we are doubtful about the veracity of a Teacher, then we are obligated not to believe it or trust them. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of Faith: for whatsoever is not of Faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). We will not only further establish our Faith, but we will also resist False Teachers and their doctrine, if we stand upon the certainty of the "more sure Word" (2Peter 1:19) that we *already understand*. "So then Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Characteristics of False Teachers

When examining the following list of "Characteristics of False Teachers," remember that it will require the hard work of godly thinking or Spiritual Discernment for you to apply those characteristics to the appropriate circumstances, i.e., "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). Also, it will take *only one* of those characteristics (accurately applied) to positively label a False Teacher, i.e., "Every tree is known by his own fruit" (Luke 6:44).

The following are *only a few* of the "Characteristics of False Teachers" that may help us to identify them:

(1) **False Teachers seek to captivate the affections of their audience.** In other words, they appeal most often to our fleshly senses and desires, i.e., sensuality, and not to the necessity of doing right because God said it.

- "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them" (Galatians 4:17).
- "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts" (2Timothy 3:6).
- "3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not... 18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean

escaped from them who live in error" (2Peter 2:3, 18).

- "14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication... 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Revelation 2:14, 20).

(2) **False Teachers most often desire to control us by advocating some peculiar action or tradition** (e.g., circumcision for the Early Church) which is only their glorying over us-- and, over God!

- "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the Law: to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24).
- "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).
- "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision" (Titus 1:10).

(3) **False Teachers are like clouds without water.** They are not what our physical eyes perceive, but they are Spiritual Death yawning its mouth to swallow us.

- "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (Jude 12).

(4) **False Teachers are like clouds carried with a tempest**, in that they are like a whirlwind that attempts to break us away from what we already know and already have the certainty of believing.

- "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest [Greek, *lailaps*, whirlwind]; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2Peter 2:17).

(5) **False Teachers are deceitful**, which is demonstrable when they do not retract their False Doctrine in Light of the Truth that you have unearthed from the Scriptures and have honestly presented to them. [Warning: Do *not* attempt to argue anyone into submission to the Word of God. Instead, prayerfully, tactfully and meekly present the Truth of the Scriptures, if allowed; and, let God give the increase, "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth" (2Timothy 2:25), for the "servant of the LORD must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2:24)].

- "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2Corinthians 11:13).
- "Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in My name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jeremiah 14:14).
- "How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart" (Jeremiah 23:26).
- "For they that are such serve not our LORD Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18).
- "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).
- "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you" (2Peter 2:13).

(6) False Teachers attempt to destroy the Faith of some by the spread of False Doctrine, because they are also deceived about its truthfulness, or from some other selfish motive. [Note: Honest mistakes about doctrine versus self-deception can be discerned from their willingness or lack of willingness in doing what they admit to be the known Will of God, i.e., "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17). Be as charitable as you can before marking them as a False Teacher, however, in any event, deny them whatever opportunity you rightly can from spreading their doctrine. "Let not an evil speaker be established in the Earth" (Psalm 140:11).]

- "Who concerning the Truth have erred [Greek, *astocheo*, to deviate from, miss (the mark), i.e., purposefully, therefore, sinfully], saying that the Resurrection is past already; and overthrow the Faith of some" (2Timothy 2:18).

(7) False Teachers misrepresent the character and conduct of God through the spread of False Doctrine, which can be seen by the fact that God hates their False Doctrine.

- "14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:14-15).

(8) False Teachers promote the unprofitable and vain through their spread of False Doctrine, because they are wicked fools.

- "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9).
- "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with Grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Hebrews 13:9).

(9) False Teachers are avoided by the Godly, because their False Doctrine demands the expenditure of Faith upon the endless, profane, deceptive, and vain.

- "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in Faith: so do" (1Timothy 1:4).
- "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1Timothy 6:20).
- "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).
- "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).
- "Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:16).
- "For thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed" (Jeremiah 29:8).

(10) False Teachers are loved by the wicked, because they spread False Doctrine.

- "3 For the time will come when they will not endure Sound Doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2Timothy 4:3-4).

(11) False Teachers are believed by the Wicked, because they spread False Doctrine.

- "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2Thessalonians 2:11).

(12) **False Teachers do not correctly understand, teach, nor abide in the Doctrine of Christ.** [Note: The Antichrist abides not in the Doctrine of Christ, because He claims to be the Substitute, Vicar, or Replacement for Christ on Earth; likewise, willful misrepresentations about the Person and Work of Christ come from False Teachers.]

- "7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist... 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2John 7, 9-10).

(13) **False Teachers are known by the reproach they bring upon True Religion.**

- "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of" (2Peter 2:2).

(14) **False Teachers can be identified by the perverse things that they speak.**

[Warning: You will *not* know what is perverse unless you know what is true from the Word of God-- and, *not* by studying what is perverse. "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19).]

- "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

(15) **False Teachers may generally be identified by the large crowds that they attract.**

- "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of" (2Peter 2:2).
- "For many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:5).

(16) **False Teachers will especially be found in these Latter Times.** Conversely, True Teachers will be more the exception from the crowd.

- "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the Latter Times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1Timothy 4:1).

(17) **False Teachers pervert the Gospel of Christ**, thereby forbidding the Godly from entering the Kingdom of God, and inviting the Ungodly into Heaven without the need of repenting.

- "6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the Grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7).

(18) **False Teachers shall be known and exposed to all in the End;** but, in the meantime, their folly can be seen in that they "despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7), "hate knowledge" (1:22), and "make a mock at sin" (14:9).

- "But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (2Timothy 3:9).

(19) **False Teachers are cruel.**

- "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29).

(20) **False Teachers are deceitful.**

- "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2Corinthians 11:13).

(21) **False Teachers are covetous.**

- "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:11).
- "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2Peter 2:3).

(22) **False Teachers are ungodly.**

- "4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only LORD God, and our LORD Jesus Christ... 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities" (Jude 4, 8).

(23) **False Teachers are proud and arrogant.**

- "3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to Wholesome Words, even the Words of our LORD Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness; 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings" (1Timothy 6:3-4).

(24) **False Teachers are corrupt and reprobate.**

- "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the Faith" (2Timothy 3:8).

(25) **False Teachers use flattery to control the deceived.**

- "For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 12:24).
- "For they that are such serve not our LORD Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18).

(26) False Teachers can be identified by their encouragement to forget God.

- "Which think to cause My people to forget My Name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten My Name for Baal" (Jeremiah 23:27).

(27) False Teachers promise, abuse, and try to destroy Christian Liberty.

- "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2Peter 2:19).
- "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only LORD God, and our LORD Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).
- "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Galatians 2:4).

(28) False Teachers promise Spiritual Peace to the Wicked.

- "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

(29) False Teachers most often shrink from persecution.

- "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).

(30) False Teachers are characteristically proud.

- "3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to Wholesome Words, even the Words of our LORD Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness; 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings" (1Timothy 6:3-4).

(31) False Teachers often explain away or minimize the Future Resurrection of the Righteous.

- "Who concerning the Truth have erred, saying that the Resurrection is past already;

and overthrow the Faith of some" (2Timothy 2:18).

(32) False Teachers promote strife.

- "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question" (Acts 15:2).

(33) False Teachers are thieves at heart.

- "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal My words every one from his neighbour" (Jeremiah 23:30).
- "1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber... 8 All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them... 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:1, 8, 10).

(34) False Teachers teach vanity.

- "Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:32).

Conclusion

When we obey the Scriptures to mark and avoid False Teachers, i.e., "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17), we must also be sure that we are observing the warning, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). Before we can help someone else with their problem, we must not be guilty of the same ourselves. "3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?... 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (7:3, 5). Jesus did not tell us that we should never judge, only that we should "judge Righteous Judgment" (John 7:24). Our priorities in dealing with False Teachers should be:

(1) Fidelity to the LORD Jesus Christ as He represents Himself in the Scriptures, i.e., "Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering; (for He is Faithful that Promised)" (Hebrews 10:23),

(2) Maintaining our own Personal Holiness in a landscape that encounters False Teachers, i.e., "Having therefore these Promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God" (2Corinthians 7:1),

(3) Preserving our Brethren in the Faith from becoming the prey of False Teachers, i.e., "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1Thessalonians 5:14),

(4) Reclaiming both the victims of False Teachers, and even the False Teachers themselves, when it is possible, "20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most Holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 keep yourselves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life. 22 And of some have Compassion, making a difference: 23 and others save with Fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 20-23), and

(5) Refusing to the end to give ground to those False Teachers, who steadfastly refuse to yield to the Truth, i.e., "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith" (2Timothy 4:7).

Maranatha!