

False Teachers



Their Presence

Expect them.

- **Matthew 24:11 HCSB** Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.
- **2 Peter 2:1 HCSB** But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.
- **Acts 20:29-31 HCSB** I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. (30) And men from among yourselves will rise up with deviant doctrines to lure the disciples into following them. (31) Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

No matter where you go you will encounter them.

- **Acts 13:5-8 HCSB** Arriving in Salamis, they proclaimed God's message in the Jewish synagogues. They also had John as their assistant. (6) When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came across a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. (7) He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear God's message. (8) But Elymas, the sorcerer, which is how his name is translated, opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

The Difficulty in Identifying Them

Sometimes they are difficult to spot at first glance. They are sneaky.

- **2 Peter 2:1 HCSB** But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.
- **Jude 1:4 HCSB** For certain men, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into promiscuity and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

We are told that the problem will only get worse as the end of the age comes closer.

- [Matthew 24:24-25 HCSB](#) False messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. (25) Take note: I have told you in advance.
- [Mark 13:22-23 HCSB](#) For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the elect. (23) And you must watch! I have told you everything in advance.
- [2 Timothy 3:13 HCSB](#) Evil people and imposters will become worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- [2 Timothy 4:3-4 HCSB](#) For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will accumulate teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new. (4) They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths.

The disguises of the false teacher

They come looking like sheep – like brothers in the Faith.

- [Matthew 7:15 HCSB](#) "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves.

They will look like healthful wheat but actually be mere weeds – deliberately planted by the enemy to keep us from producing all we can for the Master.

- [Matthew 13:25 HCSB](#) But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and left.

They will look like messiahs, saviors, prophets and teachers. They will seem to have all the answers to your problems.

- [Matthew 24:24 HCSB](#) False messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

They will look like angels of light, fellow servants of righteousness.

- [2 Corinthians 11:13-15 HCSB](#) (13) For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) And no wonder! For Satan himself is disguised as an angel of light. (15) So it is no great thing if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their destiny will be according to their works.

They may even do great works, prophesy, cast out demons or do miracles!

- [Matthew 7:22-23 HCSB](#) On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' (23) Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! **Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!**'

So how can we recognize these camouflaged enemies? What should we look for? It's like a martial arts teacher. If you really want to know how to fight you don't listen to their philosophy. You see if they or those who follow their precepts can fight! In the same way we check out the "fruit" of those who claim to be spiritual teachers – the end results of their true heart-felt beliefs. We examine their attitudes, their speech and their behavior first...not their teachings.

- [Matthew 7:16-20 HCSB](#) You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? (17) In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. (18) A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither

can a bad tree produce good fruit. (19) Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (20) So you'll recognize them by their fruit.

- Luke 6:44-45 HCSB For each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs aren't gathered from thornbushes, or grapes picked from a bramble bush. (45) A good man produces good out of the good storeroom of his heart. An evil man produces evil out of the evil storeroom, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

As a good tree inevitably produces good fruit and a bad tree bad fruit, so what is hidden deep in person's heart inexorably oozes out their mouth or their works. We may say "But by the time we see the outward signs, much damage may be done!" This is true, though all things can be healed and reconstructed through the power of the Ruach' ha Kodesh, the Holy Spirit. However, though we cannot read minds, Hashem can and His Holy Scriptures can give us insight into man's innermost workings.

- Hebrews 4:12-13 HCSB For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart. (13) No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

So using the Scriptures, let's examine the signs of a false teacher.

The evil motives of false teachers

Filled with inordinate pride they seek recognition, adulation, attention, titles, personal power and success. These kind of people are not looking out for the best interests of the flock but for their own. They are concerned that THEY be recognized, THEY be comforted, THEY be listened to.

- Matthew 23:6-7 HCSB They love the place of honor at banquets, the front seats in the synagogues, (7) greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi' by people.
- Galatians 6:12 HCSB Those who want to make a good showing in the flesh are the ones who would compel you to be circumcised--but only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

They are materialistic and greedy, seeking secular rewards and financial gain. They are preoccupied with their own comforts. Sometimes the gain they look for is not actual money but influence and high regard (see above).

- Philippians 3:18-19 HCSB (18) For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. (19) Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things,
- 1 Timothy 6:3-5 HCSB If anyone teaches other doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, (4) he is conceited, understanding nothing, but having a sick interest in disputes and arguments over words. From these come envy, quarreling, slanders, evil suspicions, (5) and constant disagreement among men whose minds are depraved and deprived of the truth, who imagine that godliness is a way to material gain.
- Titus 1:10-11 HCSB For there are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those from Judaism. (11) It is necessary to silence them; they overthrow whole households by teaching for dishonest gain what they should not.

Their lifestyle

They walk after the flesh

- [Romans 16:17-18 HCSB](#) Now I implore you, brothers, watch out for those who cause dissensions and pitfalls contrary to the doctrine you have learned. Avoid them; (18) for such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
- [2 Peter 2:10 HCSB](#) especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority. Bold, arrogant people! They do not tremble when they blaspheme the glorious ones;
- [Jude 1:8 HCSB](#) Nevertheless, these dreamers likewise defile their flesh, despise authority, and blaspheme glorious beings.
- [2 Peter 2:1-2 HCSB](#) But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves. (2) Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.

They are bold and arrogant.

- [2 Peter 2:10 HCSB](#) especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority. Bold, arrogant people! They do not tremble when they blaspheme the glorious ones;
- [2 Peter 2:18 HCSB](#) For uttering bombastic, empty words, they seduce, by fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error.
- [Jude 1:16 HCSB](#) These people are discontented grumblers, walking according to their desires; their mouths utter arrogant words, flattering people for their own advantage.

They despise authority but long to be considered authorities.

- [2 Peter 2:10 HCSB](#) especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority. Bold, arrogant people! They do not tremble when they blaspheme the glorious ones;
- [Titus 1:10 HCSB](#) For there are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those from Judaism.
- [Jude 1:8 HCSB](#) Nevertheless, these dreamers likewise defile their flesh, despise authority, and blaspheme glorious beings.

Not satisfied with personally rejecting biblical authority, truth sound scholarship and factual evidence they go on to cause divisions.

- [Proverbs 6:16-19 HCSB](#) Six things the LORD hates; in fact, seven are detestable to Him: (17) arrogant eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, (18) a heart that plots wicked schemes, feet eager to run to evil, (19) a lying witness who gives false testimony, and one who stirs up trouble among brothers.
- [Proverbs 16:28 HCSB](#) A contrary man spreads conflict, and a gossip separates friends.
- [Romans 16:17-18 HCSB](#) Now I implore you, brothers, watch out for those who cause dissensions and pitfalls contrary to the doctrine you have learned. Avoid them;
- [1 Corinthians 11:18-19 HCSB](#) (18) For, to begin with, I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. (19) There must, indeed, be factions among you, so that the approved among you may be recognized.

Note: *so that the approved among you may be recognized.* Paul is being sarcastic. He's saying that each was trying to show by external wealth how much more spiritual they were and thus division had inevitably come.

- **1 Timothy 6:3-5 HCSB** If anyone teaches other doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, (4) he is conceited, understanding nothing, but having a sick interest in disputes and arguments over words. From these come envy, quarreling, slanders, evil suspicions, (5) and constant disagreement among men whose minds are depraved and deprived of the truth, who imagine that godliness is a way to material gain.
- **Titus 3:10-11 HCSB** Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning, (11) knowing that such a person is perverted and sins, being self-condemned.
- **James 3:16 HCSB** For where envy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every kind of evil.
- **Jude 1:19 HCSB** These people create divisions and are merely natural, not having the Spirit.

They love to talk about irrelevant things. They love to consider themselves authorities on certain subjects but though they accumulate a lot of data on the matter, their darkened minds keep them from understanding the Scriptures true import.

- **1 Timothy 1:3-7 HCSB** As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach other doctrine (4) or to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies. These promote empty speculations rather than God's plan, which operates by faith. (5) Now the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. (6) Some have deviated from these and turned aside to fruitless discussion. (7) They want to be teachers of the law, although they don't understand what they are saying or what they are insisting on.
- **2 Timothy 2:14 HCSB** Remind them of these things, charging them before God not to fight about words; this is in no way profitable and leads to the ruin of the hearers.
- **2 Timothy 2:16 HCSB** But avoid irreverent, empty speech, for this will produce an even greater measure of godlessness.

They twist truth to the point of blasphemy:

Of the nature of the Messiah

- **Galatians 1:6-7 HCSB** I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from Him who called you by the grace of Christ, *and are turning* to a different gospel-- (7) not that there is another *gospel*, but there are some who are troubling you and want to change the gospel of Christ.
- **2 Peter 2:1 HCSB** But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.

Of personal purity

- **2 Peter 2:14-19 HCSB** having eyes full of adultery and always looking for sin, seducing unstable people, and with hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! (15) By abandoning the straight path, they have gone astray and have followed the path of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, (16) but received a rebuke for his transgression: a speechless donkey spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. (17) These people are springs without water, mists driven by a whirlwind. The gloom of darkness has been reserved for them. (18) For uttering bombastic, empty words, they seduce, by fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error. (19) They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them.

Of the Second Coming

- [2 Peter 3:3-4 HCSB](#) First, be aware of this: scoffers will come in the last days to scoff, following their own lusts, (4) saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they have been since the beginning of creation."

Their morals

Though they try to give an appearance of holiness, even “hyper holiness”, in their hearts they are actually adulterous. They are slaves to corruption. The Bible says they have “eyes full of adultery.” Even if they don’t actually commit adultery, they likely have a problem with pornography or with lustful thoughts. They follow their sensual desires, indulging the flesh. They appeal to worldly, sensual appetites, enticing the unstable.

- [Jeremiah 23:14 HCSB](#) Among the prophets of Jerusalem also I saw a horrible thing: They commit adultery and walk in lies. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, and none turns his back on evil. They are all like Sodom to Me; Jerusalem's residents are like Gomorrah.
- [2 Peter 2:2 HCSB](#) Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.
- [2 Peter 2:10 HCSB](#) especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority. Bold, arrogant people! They do not tremble when they blaspheme the glorious ones;
- [2 Peter 2:14 HCSB](#) having eyes full of adultery and always looking for sin, seducing unstable people, and with hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!
- [2 Peter 2:18-19 HCSB](#) For uttering bombastic, empty words, they seduce, by fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error. (19) They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them.
- [Jude 1:4 HCSB](#) For certain men, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into promiscuity and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
- [Jude 1:18 HCSB](#) they told you, "In the end time there will be scoffers walking according to their own ungodly desires."

They prey on women.

- [2 Timothy 3:6-7 HCSB](#) For among them are those who worm their way into households and capture idle women burdened down with sins, led along by a variety of passions, (7) always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

They are covetous

- [2 Peter 2:14 HCSB](#) having eyes full of adultery and always looking for sin, seducing unstable people, and with hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

They are liars

- [Jeremiah 23:14 HCSB](#) Among the prophets of Jerusalem also I saw a horrible thing: They commit adultery and walk in lies. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, and none turns his back on evil. They are all like Sodom to Me; Jerusalem's residents are like Gomorrah.
- [2 Peter 2:2 HCSB](#) Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.

- [2 Peter 2:19 HCSB](#) They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them.

Their methods

They introduce damnable heresies

- [Romans 16:17-18 HCSB](#) Now I implore you, brothers, watch out for those who cause dissensions and pitfalls contrary to the doctrine you have learned. Avoid them; (18) for such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
- [Galatians 1:9 HCSB](#) As we have said before, I now say again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him!
- [2 Peter 2:2 HCSB](#) Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.
- [1 Timothy 4:1-3 HCSB](#) Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, (2) through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared. (3) They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods that God created to be received with gratitude by those who believe and know the truth.

They “walk in lies”. Do not live what they try to impose on others. What they claim, they do not portray in their lives. The Word of God is not comprised of mere human words to be bandied about like a ball among some baseball players. When applied effectively and humbly to one’s life it is a life-changing power! Therefore someone whose life is not characterized by a humble, teachable spirit has obviously not yet come face to face with the Living God!

- [Jeremiah 23:14 HCSB](#) Among the prophets of Jerusalem also I saw a horrible thing: They commit adultery and walk in lies. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, and none turns his back on evil. They are all like Sodom to Me; Jerusalem's residents are like Gomorrah.
- [Matthew 7:21-27 HCSB](#) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' (23) Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! **Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!**' (24) "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. (25) The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. (26) But everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. (27) The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was great!"
- [John 14:15 HCSB](#) "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

They oppose the truth. Truth cannot reside in an untruthful vessel. Wisdom cannot be possessed by those who oppose it. So as Jacob deceived his father and in turn was deceived by Laban, deceiving others, they are in turn deceived.

- [2 Timothy 3:8 HCSB](#) Just as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men who are corrupt in mind, worthless in regard to the faith.
- [2 Timothy 3:13 HCSB](#) Evil people and imposters will become worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- **Romans 1:18-22 HCSB** For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, (19) since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. (20) From the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what He has made. As a result, people are without excuse. (21) For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. (22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools

They are mockers and have nothing of real substance to say.

- **Titus 1:10 HCSB** For there are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those from Judaism.
- **Jude 1:18 HCSB** they told you, "In the end time there will be scoffers walking according to their own ungodly desires."
- **Jude 1:12-13 HCSB** These are the ones who are like dangerous reefs at your love feasts. They feast with you, nurturing only themselves without fear. They are waterless clouds carried along by winds; trees in late autumn--fruitless, twice dead, pulled out by the roots; (13) wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shameful deeds; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever!

Note: *wandering stars*. Sailors typically used stars by which to gain their direction. A wandering star was thus a terrible affliction. It would lead you to cast your ship upon the reefs, all the while thinking you were on track.

They grumble against authority but flatter those whom they consider potential followers.

- **Romans 16:17-18 HCSB** Now I implore you, brothers, watch out for those who cause dissensions and pitfalls contrary to the doctrine you have learned. Avoid them; (18) for such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
- **Jude 1:16 HCSB** These people are discontented grumblers, walking according to their desires; their mouths utter arrogant words, flattering people for their own advantage.

The teachings of false teachers

They are usually guilty of over-emphasis. They are either “stoics” or “epicureans”. They love extremes. There is no middle ground with them. They either overemphasize grace or asceticism.

- **Romans 3:5-6 HCSB** But if our unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, what are we to say? I use a human argument: Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath? (6) Absolutely not! Otherwise, how will God judge the world?
- **Romans 3:8 HCSB** And why not say, just as some people slanderously claim we say, "Let us do evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved!
- **Romans 6:1-2 HCSB** What should we say then? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may multiply? (2) Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- **Romans 6:15 HCSB** What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Absolutely not!
- **Galatians 5:13 HCSB** For you are called to freedom, brothers; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.
- **Jude 1:4 HCSB** For certain men, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into promiscuity and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

They seduce with false humility and spirituality. They persuade by substituting humanistic philosophy, psychology and sociology for the message of the Word.

- [Colossians 2:4 HCSB](#) I am saying this so that no one will deceive you with persuasive arguments.
- [Colossians 2:8 HCSB](#) Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.
- [Colossians 2:18 HCSB](#) Let no one disqualify you, insisting on ascetic practices and the worship of angels, claiming access to a visionary realm and inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.
- [Colossians 2:23 HCSB](#) Although these have a reputation of wisdom by promoting ascetic practices, humility, and severe treatment of the body, they are not of any value against fleshly indulgence.

If they hold to ascetic teachings (which they usually fail to apply to themselves) their requirements are harmful to people's basic needs (i.e forbidding marriage or certain foods). They do this because they are trying to exert control over people and use these as standards to determine how much influence they actually possess.

- [Colossians 2:18 HCSB](#) Let no one disqualify you, insisting on ascetic practices and the worship of angels, claiming access to a visionary realm and inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.
- [1 Timothy 4:3 HCSB](#) They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods that God created to be received with gratitude by those who believe and know the truth.
- [2 Peter 2:1 HCSB](#) But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.

They introduce controversial questions and arguments over minutiae.

- [1 Timothy 6:3-5 HCSB](#) If anyone teaches other doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, (4) he is conceited, understanding nothing, but having a sick interest in disputes and arguments over words. From these come envy, quarreling, slanders, evil suspicions, (5) and constant disagreement among men whose minds are depraved and deprived of the truth, who imagine that godliness is a way to material gain.

They end up either implicitly or explicitly denying some aspect of the nature of the Son of God.

- [Galatians 1:6-7 HCSB](#) I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from Him who called you by the grace of Christ, *and are turning* to a different gospel-- (7) not that there is another *gospel*, but there are some who are troubling you and want to change the gospel of Christ.
- [1 Timothy 6:3 HCSB](#) If anyone teaches other doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness,
- [2 Peter 2:1 HCSB](#) But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.
- [2 John 1:7 HCSB](#) Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

- [Jude 1:4 HCSB](#) For certain men, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into promiscuity and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

They profess to speak for God, claim direct revelation, and elevate their own revelations over the Word.

- [Deuteronomy 13:1-3 HCSB](#) (1) "If a prophet or someone who has dreams arises among you and proclaims a sign or wonder to you, (2) and that sign or wonder he has promised you comes about, but he says, 'Let us follow other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us worship them,' (3) do not listen to that prophet's words or to that dreamer. For the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul.
- [Jeremiah 23:25-32 HCSB](#) "I have heard what the prophets who prophesy a lie in My name have said: I had a dream! I had a dream! (26) How long will this continue in the minds of the prophets prophesying lies, prophets of the deceit of their own minds? (27) Through their dreams that they tell one another, they make plans to cause My people to forget My name as their fathers forgot My name through Baal worship. (28) The prophet who has *only* a dream should recount the dream, but the one who has My word should speak My word truthfully, for what is straw *compared* to grain?"--the LORD's declaration. (29) "Is not My word like fire"--the LORD's declaration--"and like a sledgehammer that pulverizes rock? (30) Therefore, take note! I am against the prophets"--the LORD's declaration--"who steal My words from each other. (31) I am against the prophets"--the LORD's declaration--"who use their own tongues to deliver an oracle. (32) I am against those who prophesy false dreams"--the LORD's declaration--"telling them and leading My people astray with their falsehoods and their boasting. It was not I who sent or commanded them, and they are of no benefit at all to these people"--*this is* the LORD's declaration.
- [Colossians 2:18 HCSB](#) Let no one disqualify you, insisting on ascetic practices and the worship of angels, claiming access to a visionary realm and inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.

They upset, savage, steal or scatter the sheep. Their primary goal is to have the sheep follow them, but if they can't directly gain them into their own flock they will content themselves with misleading the sheep.

- [Jeremiah 10:21 HCSB](#) For the shepherds are stupid: they don't seek the LORD. Therefore they have not prospered, and their whole flock is scattered.
- [Jeremiah 23:1-2 HCSB](#) "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" *This is* the LORD's declaration. (2) "Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds who shepherd My people: You have scattered My flock, banished them, and have not attended to them. I will attend to you because of your evil acts"--the LORD's declaration.
- [Acts 20:29-30 HCSB](#) I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. (30) And men from among yourselves will rise up with deviant doctrines to lure the disciples into following them.

The Scriptures use many illuminating metaphors to describe them. They are described as:

- ravaging wolves disguised in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15)
- foolish blind men attempting to guide the blind (Matthew 23:16-22)
- irrational animals--creatures of instinct born to be caught and destroyed (2 Peter 2:12)
- blots and blemishes (2 Peter 2:13)
- springs without water (2 Peter 2:17)

- mists driven by a whirlwind (2 Peter 2:17)
- A dog returning to its own vomit (2 Peter 2:22)
- a sow, after washing itself, wallowing in the mud (2 Peter 2:22)
- unreasoning animals who fail to even live by instinct (Jude 1:10)
- dangerous reefs (Jude 1:12)
- waterless clouds carried along by winds (Jude 1:12)
- trees in late autumn--fruitless, twice dead, pulled out by the roots (Jude 1:12)
- wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shameful deeds (Jude 1:12)
- wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 1:12)

What are we to do?

Do not be gullible. Have a healthy sense of suspicion.

- **1 John 4:1-3 HCSB** Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **(2)** This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. **(3)** But every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist; you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now.

Be careful.

- **Colossians 2:8 HCSB** Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.
- **Titus 3:9 HCSB** But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

They have seared their consciences and are thus capable of any kind of lie. They will twist the Scriptures to make them say anything they like. They will change their story from person to person. This is why it is useless to continue dealing with these fools. Better to get them out of your presence and away from your loved ones as soon as possible.

- **1 Timothy 4:1-2 HCSB** Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, **(2)** through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared.

Silence them.

- **Titus 1:11 HCSB** It is necessary to silence them; they overthrow whole households by teaching for dishonest gain what they should not.

Expose them.

- **Ephesians 5:11 HCSB** Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead, expose them.
- **1 Timothy 4:6-7 HCSB** If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. **(7)** But have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness,
- **2 Timothy 4:2 HCSB** proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.

Reject them

- **Titus 3:10-11 HCSB** Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning, (11) knowing that such a person is perverted and sins, being self-condemned.

Avoid them

- **Romans 16:17-18 HCSB** Now I implore you, brothers, watch out for those who cause dissensions and pitfalls contrary to the doctrine you have learned. Avoid them; (18) for such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Excommunicate them.

- **Proverbs 22:10 HCSB** Drive out a mocker, and conflict goes too; then lawsuits and dishonor will cease.
- **Titus 3:10-11 HCSB** Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning, (11) knowing that such a person is perverted and sins, being self-condemned.

It is right to practice biblical unhypocritical judgment.

- **Matthew 7:1-6 HCSB** "Do not judge, so that you won't be judged. (2) For with the judgment you use, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (3) Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye but don't notice the log in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and look, there's a log in your eye? (5) Hypocrite! First take the log out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (6) Don't give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them with their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces.

It is right to expose false teachers.

- John exposed the Pharisees as vipers (Matthew 3:7).
- Jesus exposed the Pharisees (Matthew 12:34; 23:23-24).
- Paul exposed Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8).

It is all right to publicly identify them.

- Paul named Peter Publicly (Galatians 2:11-14).
- Paul named Demas (2 Timothy 4:10).
- Paul named Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:18-20).
- Paul named Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17).
- Paul named Alexander the Coppersmith (2 Timothy 4:14-15).
- Paul named Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8).
- John named Diotrephes (3 John 9-11).
- Moses, Peter, Jude and John named Baalim (Numbers 22-25; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14).
- Nathan named David (2 Samuel 12:7).
- Hanani named King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 18:1; 19:2; 21:1-6).

Those who peddle error and by their actions scatter the Lord's flock are to be dealt with in the following manner:

- We are to MARK them (Romans 16:17).
- We are to SEPARATE from them (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- We are to HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP with them (2 Thessalonians 3:6).
- We are to WITHDRAW from them (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

- We are to TURN AWAY from them (2 Timothy 3:5-7).
- We are to REBUKE them (Titus 1:13).
- We are to REJECT heretics (Titus 3:10).
- We are to TRY them (1 John 4:1).
- We are NOT to RECEIVE them (2 John 10,11).

If the person claims to be a brother that makes it WORSE not better. Our decision to discipline such action should be much stronger and confident for that fact.

- [1 Corinthians 5:5-13 HCSB](#) (5) turn that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord. (6) Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast permeates the whole batch of dough? (7) Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, since you are unleavened. For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. (8) Therefore, let us observe the feast, not with old yeast, or with the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (9) I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- (10) by no means referring to this world's immoral people, or to the greedy and swindlers, or to idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world. (11) But now I am writing you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother who is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a reviler, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. (12) For what is it to me to judge outsiders? Do you not judge those who are inside? (13) But God judges outsiders. Put away the evil person from among yourselves.
- [Hebrews 12:6 HCSB](#) **for the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every son whom He receives.**
- [1 Peter 4:17 HCSB](#) For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

Don't let them slow down your ministry of evangelism.

- [2 Timothy 4:5 HCSB](#) But as for you, keep a clear head about everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Their Ultimate Punishment

It will be swift.

- [2 Peter 2:1 HCSB](#) But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.

It will be sure. It is just as sure as the punishment of the fallen angels; just as sure as the punishment delivered to the antediluvian world; just as sure as Sodom and Gomorrah's fall.

- [2 Peter 2:3-9 HCSB](#) In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation, *pronounced* long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep. (4) For if God didn't spare the angels who sinned, but threw them down into Tartarus and delivered them to be kept in chains of darkness until judgment; (5) and if He didn't spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, when He brought a flood on the world of the ungodly; (6) and if He reduced the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes and condemned them to ruin, making them an example to those who were going to be ungodly; (7) and if He rescued righteous Lot, distressed by the unrestrained behavior of the immoral (8) (for as he lived among them, that righteous man tormented himself day by day with the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- (9) then

the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,