

Who is a false Teacher? - Part 1

(www.voicewithvision.org)

A Study from Jude & II Peter 2

Defend the Truth

These are days of conflicts and wars. There may not be a world war going on, but wars are being fought in many places. Lives are being lost. The nature of such attacks are different from the ones the world saw in the past. Nations no longer attack their enemies openly, but use small groups to covertly infiltrate the enemy country and attack them from the inside to destabilize them.. The attacks that most countries fear the most are, attacks that happen from enemies who infiltrate and launch an attack from inside the country. It is this attack which is very dangerous and also hard to detect.

The body of Christ today also faces a similar kind of attack from the enemy. He no longer attacks us openly like he did before. Now his strategy is covert operations. The attack comes from inside. Many people have infiltrated the body of Christ to harm it from the inside. The church needs to be vigilant in order to discern them.

If there is anything Satan hates, it is God's word. Because God's word is truth, and since he is a liar, he hates the truth. The believer's weapon against him is also God's word.

Satan tried for a long time to stop God's word from reaching His children. That was overcome through the prayers of many and the courageous work of a man of God named Martin Luther. Now God's word is in all our hands. But Satan never gives up. Since he could not stop God's word from reaching us, now, his strategy is to corrupt the word that is in the hands of the believer.

The danger the body of Christ faces today is corruption of the word of God. If anything impure is added to something that is pure, it results in that which is pure being corrupted. If dirty water is added to pure water, it results in the pure water being corrupted.

Satan does the same by mixing the the pure truth with counterfeits. His strategy is to twist the truth and corrupt God's word. Because he knows that if he can corrupt the truth, then he can corrupt the believers who hear it. People who hear corrupt teachings are of no threat to Satan, because the truth is not in them. They may make a lot of noise, but Satan can't be scared by your shouting, he only fears the truth, the pure word of God!

This is the corruption of the truth that Jude is asking believers to defend against (verse 3). It is from these mutilators of truth that Jude asks us to defend the truth from. It is the duty of every believer to defend the truth from people who twist it. In order for you to defend the truth, you should know the truth. If you do not know the truth, you cannot discern the truth from the false.

This call to defend the truth is a call to people who know the truth. This is not a license for everyone to take potshots at each other. There is a lot of judging, mudslinging and condemning going on in the body of Christ by people who say, are defending the truth. But in the process all they do is offend people by their indiscriminate judging of everyone and everything they do not like or understand. The call is to defend the truth, not to offend people.

Before you start to defend the truth, examine your motives and intentions. Do not act in your flesh to defend the truth. You should do it with God's love in your heart. At the same time it should be done forcefully, with the intention to expose the lie. Do not do it if you are not led by the spirit of God. But when you are led by the Spirit of God to defend the truth and in the process if someone gets hurt, there is nothing you can do. Here, the priority is to do what God wants you to do, not trying to be nice to everyone.

Read God's word thoroughly, pray about it, then, when the Holy Spirit leads you , do as He tells you to do. Anything that comes out of the flesh will not accomplish anything Spiritual. The battle is not against people, it is against the corruption of God's word. Our duty is to present the truth. When truth comes, all lies will have to disappear. Where there is light, there is no darkness.

The main partners of Satan in this scheme of deception are false teachers. Who are they?

In II Peter 2:1 Peter says *"But there were also false prophets in Israel , just as there will be false teachers among you"*.

False teachers are like the false prophets of the old testament. In the Old testament times, God communicated mainly through prophets. These were the people who carried God's word to His children. But in our times, since we have the written Word of God, God communicates mainly through His written word. God uses teachers to

teach His written word to the people in the church.

Like he used false prophet in OT times, Satan now uses a group of teachers who twist God's word. It is these twisters of God's word who are called false teachers.

Who are they?

Paul says about such people in II Corinthians 11: 13,14, *"They have fooled you by disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. But I am not surprised! Even Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder his servants can also do it pretending to be godly ministers"*.

The Corinthian church had them. These people were not from some cult outside the church . They were inside posing as apostles and preaching and teaching, disguising as ministers of God! The same thing is happening today. Many who preach and teach the Bible in the body of Christ these days are false teachers, disguised as ministers of God.

There are many of them.

Jude and Peter say one thing about them that will help understand who these false teachers are.

"It would be better if they had never known the right way to live than to know it and then reject the holy commandments that were given to them (II Peter 2:21).

"They are not only dead but doubly dead, for they have been pulled out by the roots" (Jude 12).

These two verses confirm that these false teachers are backslidden ministers of God. These people are dead twice. They were dead once and were alive in Christ. They become believers and serve God. Then as time passes , they give in to material things and the lust of the things of this world, and without anyone noticing, they die a second death, slowly inside. This second death is hard to notice. Because everything on the outside would seem alright, but on the inside they are long dead.

This was the case with many false teachers who were later exposed. They continued to "minister" until they were exposed. Many people who used to watch their TV shows, kept watching without suspecting anything wrong, until the day they were exposed. Also Jude compares them to Balaam, Cain and Korah (verse 11) who did follow God and then rebelled because their heart was not right. They all have one thing in common. They all knew God and his holy commandments, but rejected it in their hearts. On the outside they will look like ministers of God, but on the inside they are dead to God and the leading of His Holy spirit. They are like Balaam who blessed the Israelites in public but, after blessing them he also encouraged them to worship idols and to rebel against God (Num. 31:16).

In brief, false teachers are:

- Teachers who are inside the body of Christ. They teach in Churches like any other teacher.
- They are backslidden ministers, who once lived right and did things for God the right way. Due to the corruption in their heart, they slowly deteriorate to this sorry state. Many of them still think they serve God.

They are extremely dangerous because they operate from inside the church and stealthily infuse materialism into the body of Church, slowly turning people away from God and His holy commandments.

How to recognize them?

Twist, Money and Pleasure

"They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their master who bought them" (II Peter 2:1)

"In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money" (II Peter 2:3).

"They are shameless in the way they care only about themselves. They are like clouds blowing over dry land without giving any rain, promising much but producing nothing" (Jude 12).

"..In the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to enjoy themselves in every evil way imaginable. Now they are here, and they are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They live by natural instincts because they do not have God's spirit living in them" (Jude18,19).

This is how they are. They teach their destructive heresies cleverly. Their main intention to teach is to get hold of your money, and they do it successfully. They are shameless in the way they care about themselves and build empires for themselves. Their intention in all these is to enjoy themselves in all evil way imaginable.

There are many such people in the body of Christ today. Many of them come on TV every day. They are the ones who teach how to be "Prosperous". The only prosperity they know is the prosperity that comes from the world, because that is where their heart is. Their teachings are clever heresies. Since they teach clever heresies, it is difficult for many people to identify them.

They teach God's word with a twist. There will be a twist in their teachings. If you are not vigilant and if you do not know God's word, you will never find out the twist. People who do not have strong grounding in the truth will find it difficult to discern the twist. Their teachings are laced with moral advices and shrewd techniques on how to be a winner in life, in this world. Their teachings always appeal to the natural and the flesh. Their teaching can never feed the spirit, instead it feeds the flesh.

If you want to know how they teach their clever heresies, let me give you an example:

A "prosperity preacher" on TV talked about being obedient to God's servant. He used the example of Elijah and the poor widow from I Kings 17. He said how the Lord blessed the poor widow after she gave the prophet some food. The message seemed normal and was about obedience. Then , after some time, the twist came. This is the twist.

He asked people to come and give him money. Because he was a man of God , if they came and gave him money ,then they can share the blessing that flowed through "his anointing". He said "Just like the poor widow was blessed by the anointing that flowed through Elijah, you will also be blessed by the anointing that flows through me by giving me your offerings. I was blessed by Mr. So&so as I gave him money and as he laid his hands on my head. Now, as you give me money, that blessing that I received from Mr. So&so will flow through me and will come to you. Whoever wants this blessing, if they give money and become partners of this ministry will receive the blessing that flows through the anointing."

Dear beloved, this is twisting God's word. This is a pyramid scheme invented by these people to make themselves rich. It is true the widow was blessed when she gave in spite of her poverty to the prophet of God. God likes it when we give sacrificially to meet the needs of His servants. And God blessed her for her action based on faith. Also, God always takes care of the needs of His people. This is the truth the Spirit of God wants to convey through that particular passage. This is the pure message from that passage. The widow gave to meet the legitimate needs of a prophet of God, not to satisfy the material cravings of a false teacher. God blessed her for her obedience and sacrifice.

Can you see the twist here? Do you see the truth from the false? This is the deception they are bringing into the church to deceive people. The reason they twist God's word is because they do not have the Spirit of God in them to teach the truth (Jude19). So they substitute the truth with the twist. Unsuspecting people who are not strong in the Word of God fall easy prey to their clever twists.

As Peter says, *"In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money"* (II Peter 2:3). The result of the twist is always to get hold of the money. It is money that motivates their preaching. Whatever they preach, it will always lead to money. They invent many schemes like this pyramid scheme to lure unsuspecting people (II Peter 2:14). They are greedy for money and the possessions. They unashamedly keep asking for money in all their messages. They are never satisfied with whatever they have. They are the greedy ones who constantly find out schemes to grab hold of your money. They have an unsatisfying desire for money.

They are the ones who make the Lord's house into a market place. (*"Don't turn my Father's house into a market place"* (John 2:16)). Their "ministry" would resemble a commercial enterprise more than a ministry. Their life style resemble CEOs of corporations than that of a minister of the Lord Jesus. Their life is filled with all kinds of luxuries. They do not know what simplicity, humility, meekness mean. All they know is luxury.

They say they preach Jesus , but I wonder which Jesus they preach. Do they preach the Jesus, who being the son of God gave up everything and humbled himself to be born in a manger? I was disgusted to hear one of these "Million Dollar" preachers say the following " Jesus was born in a manger because there was no room for them in the Inn, otherwise He would be born in a nice Hotel".

They are so dead and corrupt that they do not see the significance of the message here. Jesus was Son of God, if God wanted, He could have found a place for them in the Inn or God could have taken Joseph and Mary somewhere comfortable for Jesus to be born. But it was God's sovereign plan for Jesus to be born in that manger. God wanted His Son to be born there to show to the world the nature of God's Kingdom. It is not a kingdom of this world. It is not a Kingdom with values and riches of this world. It is a kingdom based on values and riches of heaven. In God's kingdom love, humility, meekness and simplicity are valuable things than gold and silver or mansions and palaces. Their mind is so filled with the things of this world that they can never understand

these truths.

They do not know the Jesus the Bible talks about. They do not preach the Jesus who walked everywhere on his foot instead of in a chariot, even though everything in this world belongs to him. They do not know anything about the Jesus who had to borrow a colt to enter Jerusalem, even though all animals and birds were created by Him. They do not know of the Jesus who even after his death was laid in a borrowed grave, even though every piece of land on this earth belongs to Him. He lived such a humble life , giving up everything, to set us an example to follow.

But the Jesus they know , preach and teach is a Jesus whom they have invented. Their Jesus is the one who gives millions in cash, hands out luxury cars, private jets and takes them first class all over in 5 star comfort. They do not preach, teach or even know the Jesus of Nazareth whom the Bible talks about!!

Paul warns the Corinthian church and tells them not to believe people who preach some other Jesus. *"You seem to believe whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach about a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed (II Corinth. 11 : 4).*

If anyone does not preach Jesus and His cross , but instead preaches a different Jesus who wears designer suits, lives in mansions and goes in luxury cars, then Beware, they are false teachers, they preach the counterfeit gospel. God's word is very clear about them. If you know the truth, you will also know who they are.

Remember, not all who carry the Bible know the Bible, not all who pronounce the name of Jesus know Jesus. People who sit in His presence to learn of His ways and walk in His ways, like He did in this earth are the ones who know Him and His word.

Do not be fooled by catchy phrases , clever schemes and empty promises. Peter says these false teachers are *"like dried-up springs of water or as clouds blown away by the wind - promising much and delivering nothing (II Peter 2:17).*

Yes, they make promises of "good life", "painless life", "life in mansions and 5star comfort" but as Jude says, they may promise much , but can deliver nothing. All they can deliver is their loud mouthed bragging *"They are loud mouthed braggarts"* (Jude 16) . The only people who will have all they promise is, them and their families . *"They are shameless in the way they care only about themselves. They are like clouds blowing over dry land without giving any rain, promising much but producing nothing"* (Jude 12).

Yes, they are the ones who take your money and promise you "prosperity", as they live in luxury. While they enjoy all the pleasures, they also accuse you of "lack of faith" because, you still live in poverty.

God is calling His children these last days not to associate with these false teachers. Please read God's word thoroughly and the Spirit of God will reveal the deception that is lurking in the body of Christ . Accept anyone's preaching or teaching after checking it thoroughly with God's word. Do not get carried away by emotions, rather compare anything and everything a preacher or a teacher says with God's word. Anything that contradicts the letter and the spirit of His word needs to be discarded.

Conclusion

Dear beloved, the reason for me writing these things is to help you differentiate and discern the wheat from the chaff. This corruption has already deceived many people in the body of Christ. Paul as he writes to Timothy says *" Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from what we believe; they will follow lying spirits and teachings that come from demons. These teachers are hypocrites and liars. They pretend to be religious but their consciences are dead."* (I Timothy 4: 1,2). These lying spirits and teachings from demons have infiltrated the church. Be on guard. Cling to the pure word of God. May be Lord keep you from all deceptions.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation, Copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.*

No portion of this message is to be copied or used unless kept in its original format the way it appears. It may be reproduced only in its entirety for circulation as "freeware," without charge. Articles can be reproduced in portions for personal use, any other use is to have the permission of the author, and this includes all of its content with the exception of a few brief quotations. The author can be contacted at raj@voicewithvision.org