

False Teachers - cont.

The Issue At Hand

This issue that has been among us over “Who is a false teacher?” began all the way back in the late 1980’s when brother Homer Hailey’s false teaching on marriage, divorce, and re-marriage was made public by him in his preaching. Later, he published his false views in a book titled, *The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come to God* (Nevada Publications, 1991). When some faithful brethren began to call brother Hailey a “false teacher”, a few of his supporters began to push back. Brother Ed Harrell, for example, questioned the accuracy of labeling brother Hailey as a “false teacher” (“Homer Hailey: False Teacher? *Christianity Magazine*, Nov. 1988, pp. 326-329).

Most brethren believe that false teaching (error) must be exposed and denounced. However, not all brethren today believe the person teaching the error should be called a “false teacher.” Some brethren believe that a “false teacher” requires two things: (1) to teach that which is false; and (2) to do so with the intent to deceive. Thus, according to them, a “false teacher” is determined by what is in his heart, not solely upon what he teaches. - *Chris Reeves* [continued next week]

- Word of the Week -

“Devotion” (Gr. *eusebeia*), translated “godliness” in the New Testament, means reverence, respect, or piety shown to God. Today it often means “loyalty”, but originally it meant respect for God. Christians need to exercise (train) themselves unto godliness (1 Tim. 4:7). Let us always show respect for God and his word, even though others around us today do not.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

False Teachers and False Teaching - Part I

But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

- 2 Peter 2:1 -

The Apostle Peter wrote that there would be “false teachers” in the New Testament church and they continue unto this day. Let us make a study of what the Bible says about false teachers, so that we can truly understand the subject and take heed.

Our Attitude Toward False Teaching

The foundation of the Lord’s church is teaching. Jesus sent his apostle into all the world to teach and to preach (Mt. 28:18-20). The church began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 with teaching and it continues to this day with teaching. Thus, when false teaching is done today by anyone, in or out of the church, it attacks the very heart and core of the Lord’s church.

Because false teaching is so serious, there are many warnings and predictions of false teachers and false teaching in the New Testament. Jesus, Paul,

Peter, John, and others warned of false teachers and the need to refuse them (Matthew 7:15; 24:4-5; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Peter 2:1ff; 1 John 4:1ff).

The Christian is to be able to recognize false teaching (1 John 4:1-6; Revelation 2:2). He or she is able to read the Bible, know the truth, and recognize what is false. There is no substitute for studying and knowing God’s word (2 Timothy 2:15ff). This is not just for the preacher, the elders, or the Bible class teachers, but for all Christians.

Christians are to have no fellowship with false teaching or its teachers (Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:11-12; 2 John 9-11). Rather, Christians are to expose and reprove false teaching (Galatians 2:5; 1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:18; Titus 1:10-11; 3 John 9-10; Jude 3; Revelation 2:6).

False teachers can come from within the church and from without, so do not be a Christian that is deluded or deceived by them (Ephesians 4:14; 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:13; 1 John 3:7). There can be some truth mixed in with error; yet, the error, if believed and practiced, will still destroy you.

It is true that some people will believe false teaching. Sincerely believing a lie will

still condemn you (1 Kings 13:18ff; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). And, it must be remembered that ignorance and deception do not excuse us from believing what is false (Acts 3:17).

How to Identify False Teachers

False teachers cannot be identified by...

- Appearance (Matthew 7:15; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
- Speech (Romans 16:17-18; Acts 24:1-9)
- Numbers (2 Timothy 2:15-18; 2 Pet. 2:1-2)
- Claims (Matthew 7:21-23)

False teachers can be identified by...

- Their audience (1 John 4:5-6; 2 Timothy 4:3-4)
- Their fruit (Matthew 7:17-18)
- Their authority (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 4:2)

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