

False Teachers - cont.

associated? He writes “almost”, then makes the case for always.

Smith: “As used in the New Testament the label ‘false prophet’ is virtually always tied to the teaching which destroys the very core of the personhood and mission of Jesus Christ” (p. 201).

My answer: Note his words “virtually always”.

Smith: “Being a ‘false teacher’ is not simply about *doctrine* but about *character* as well” (p. 205).

My answer: As noted above in my previous articles, “false” is used at times in the NT without reference to character.

“We are fallible men of faith, incomplete in our understanding, prone to error, and wrong about a number of things. But we are not false prophets, and we are not false teachers” (p. 206).

My answer: If this is the case, you should stop teaching (Jas. 3:1ff).

- Chris Reeves -
[continued next week]

- Word of the Week -

“Elect” (Gr. ἐκλεκτός), meaning choice or chosen, is an encouraging word. Christians are “chosen of God” (Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1). Think about what that means. It’s a wonderful thing to know that God “chose” or “elected” you to be his child by giving you the plan of salvation to obey to be that child. Let’s go out this week remembering that we are “chosen”!

Warfield Blvd. church of Christ
290 Warfield Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37043

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For More Information Call
(931) 647-1324

Published and Edited By
Chris Reeves
(615) 389-3250
chrisreevesmail@gmail.com
TheGoodTeacher.com

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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 3

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 -

Answering Some Question

If a brother teaches falsehood or error, can we call him a “teacher of falsehood,” “teacher of error,” “false preacher” or “false doctrine teacher”? Can we use “false teaching” but not “false teacher”? Is the result the same?

If false character is necessary for one to be a “false teacher,” then why did Peter not use the words “false character” in 2 Peter 2:1?

If a brother teaches what is false and is not a “false teacher,” is he a “true teacher”? What is accomplished by removing the label “false teacher” from the brother who teaches error, if his error will cause him and those who follow to be lost?

Are Hymenaeus and Philetus “false teachers;” nothing is said of their bad character (2 Tim. 2:17-18)? And, how many of the character traits found in 2

Peter 2:1ff have to be applied before one is labeled a “false teacher”?

Answering Some Arguments

(from the book “Who Is My Brother?” by F. LaGard Smith)

Smith: “Perhaps most subtle and most insidious of all is the bogus connection which is automatically made between *false teaching* and *false teachers*” (p. 197).

My answer: Teaching is connected to teachers. The Holy Spirit chose “false teachers” instead of “false _____” in order to focus on teaching.

Smith: “Equating false teaching with false teachers would mean that everyone who has ever taught something that is doctrinally incorrect is a false teacher” (p. 197).

My answer: True. Apply this line of reasoning to other labels such as “Adulterer.” Are there some who commit adultery, but are not “adulterers”?

Smith: “The label ‘false teacher’ ... is laden with baggage” (p. 197).

My answer: This is precisely why many brethren want to stop using it. They don’t want their friends who are false teachers

to be disfellowshipped.

Smith: “Once a person has been wrongly marked as a false teacher, it is almost impossible to remove the label. There is a permanent staining of one’s reputation. You might as well just call him a wife-beater or child-molester” (p. 198).

My answer: We are talking about one rightly marked as a “false teacher”, not wrongly marked. What is a man who beats his wife and molests his children? Is he wrongly marked?

Smith: “Ephesians 5:11 ... Romans 16:17-18 ... 2 John 9-11” (p. 199-200).

My answer: F. LaGard Smith dismisses Eph.5:11 saying it is talking about deeds not teaching; he dismisses Rom.16:17-18 saying it is talking about teaching *and* doing; he dismisses 2 Jn.9-11 saying it is talking about false teaching concerning the deity of Christ. See Eph.5:9; Rom.16:18b; 2 Jn. 4-5.

Smith: “As we shall soon see, ungodly behavior is almost invariably associated with the false teacher...” (p. 199).

My answer: Is it “almost” or always