

Protecting From False Teachers

Detailed Outline

Part 1 of 4

Introduction

A. I want to inject a dose of awareness of false teaching. I want to see an increase of sensitivity and discernment of aberrant theology. I want us to be aware of false teaching and the methods of Satan.

1. Satan's kingdom depends on and relies on deception.
2. It is a world of lies. His power is in his lies.
3. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said of this chapter that of all the chapters in the Bible, this is the most terrible. *"Anyone who enjoys reading a chapter like this must surely be abnormal."*

B. Some Context

1. God has inspired his Word and his Word is Truth, because he is the Truth.
2. There is hardly anything more offensive to God than the misrepresentation of His truth.
3. Satan is a liar and his full-time job is to distort the Truth.
4. One of his methods of distorting the truth is by raising up false teachers and false prophets to contradict and distort the Word of God.

"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44 ESV)

"And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." (2 Cor. 11:14)

I. False Prophets Come from within the Ranks of Christians.

A. "There will be false teaching."

1. This is a prophetic guarantee.
2. We are told that false teaching will only be on the increase!
3. False teaching won't diminish, it will gain momentum!

B. False teaching will be part of the Church.

1. Peter is saying the same thing as Jesus.

"And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray." (Matt. 24:11)

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." (Matt. 7:15)

- a) Jesus holds back his most fiery statements for those who pervert the truth.
- b) He has no tolerance for false teachers.

2. Peter is saying the same thing the other apostles said.

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world...” (2 John 1:7)

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.” (1 Tim. 4:1)

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

“As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:9)

“I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.” (Acts 20:29-31)

3. Illustration: “Our Man in Damascus: Elie Cohn.” It’s a fascinating true story of espionage.

- a) Cohn grew up in Egypt as the child of Orthodox Jews. He fluent in many languages and possessed a ridiculous memory.
 - 1) The Israeli government recruited Cohen and sent him to Buenos Aires, Argentina to establish his cover as a Syrian immigrant. He was disguised as a wealthy, night-life loving, huge tipping, political guru with the Syrian people in Argentina.
 - 2) The government kept his bank account plump to keep his cover. He was eventually invited to Damascus, Syria and worked his way up the societal and political ranks to become a trusted confidant to the political leaders of Syria who were intent on destroying Israel, in fact his closest friend ended up becoming the president of Syria.
 - 3) He was the only civilian who joined the tour of officers along the Israeli border.
 - 4) Cohn was told by a minister of defense that the only way their military bases could be destroyed was by direct air attacks.
 - 5) One memorable day Eli Cohen was overlooking the Gohlen Heights that bordered Israel and suggested to the president that he plant groves of Eucalyptus trees near all of their the military stations to disguise the secret activity that was going on.
 - 6) Cohen was discovered not long after that and hanged. But, during the six day war that followed shortly after the Israeli Air Force had little problem knocking out all of Syria’s military in the Gohlen Heights...they were all marked with Eucalyptus trees...The Gohlen Heights today, are in the possession of Israel, because of an imposter, disguised as the real thing. He infiltrated the Syrian government from the inside out. His approach: Look like one of them, then lead them astray.

- b) The worst attacks come from within. The false teaching of Buddhism or Islam is not nearly as dangerous as false teaching that comes from within our own ranks.

II. False Prophets Secretly Bring in Destructive Heresies.

A. They are undercover, secret.

1. This means that they will be inconspicuous.
2. They don't all wear purple shirts that say, "I'm a false teacher."
3. When they give their testimony, they don't usually say, "Oh, and by the way, I also don't think that Jesus' death was sufficient."

B. Secret Heresies

1. The heresies they bring in sound pleasant.
2. Heresies aren't like vinegar, YUCK! Heresies aren't generally repulsive.
3. They almost always strike a chord. They almost always sound good and true.
4. They almost always sound similar to Christianity, and many people fall for it.
5. It has all the same lingo and feels and smells the same, but it's an imposter gospel.
6. It isn't obvious. It isn't flagrant. It isn't noticeable.
7. They are inconspicuous. They are camouflage. They are secret.

"For certain people have crept in unnoticed..." (Jude 4)

C. "Destructive Heresies"

1. Why would Peter say "destructive" heresies? Because they are destructive!
2. To mess with the Person of Jesus or to mess with the Work of Jesus is destructive eternally.
3. It matters what you believe!
4. If a person is led to believe that the "more sure" word of the Bible isn't true, then they will be destroyed.
5. The tendency might be to ignore, or downplay heresy. But Peter does the exact opposite! He exposes it!

D. Application: It's not wrong to call destructive heresy "destructive heresy."

1. It isn't wrong to call false teaching "false teaching."
2. It isn't wrong to point out false gospels, false teaching, and false teachers.

III. False Prophets Deny the Master Who Bought Them.

A. This doesn't mean that Christ died for unbelievers.

1. Unless you are a universalist, you would have to agree that Jesus didn't atone for the sins of everyone. If He did, then why would there be a hell?

2. He also didn't just die to make it possible for people to be saved. No, when he died, He actually saved people. He actually procured forgiveness of sins.
3. A universalist would say that Jesus didn't actually atone for anything.
4. Look, all of us will pay for our sins:
 - a) Either Jesus will pay for them, or we will pay for them for eternity in hell.
 - b) If Jesus atoned for the sins of false teachers and unbelievers, then why would they have to atone, again, for their sins, if Jesus already died for them?
 - c) It doesn't make sense.
 - d) No, Jesus died for the Church, as John says.
 - e) If he atoned for the sins of the whole world, then the whole world would be saved.
 - f) In one sense he died for the sins of the world, but not in the same way that He died for the elect.
 - g) Nonetheless, if you call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus, you can be saved.
 - h) Salvation is for ALL people! Repent and trust in Christ!

B. What Peter is saying is that their lives reject their Master that they profess to know.

1. They are frauds. And their lives and lifestyles are the proof of such a denial.
2. They are not sub-par Christians on a journey.
3. They aren't believers who have accepted Jesus as Savior, but haven't submitted to his Lordship.

C. Such a life is another indication of a false teacher and false teaching:

1. There is a denial of the Lordship of Jesus, in their LIVES. There is a lip-service, but there is no substantial obedience.
2. Most likely, a false teacher will outwardly speak in glowing terms of the gospel, the inerrancy of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement, active sanctification, the physical return of Christ, and give their pledge of allegiance to all of the doctrines of the Bible.

D. The Tell-Tale Signs of an Imposter

1. His or her life doesn't match.
2. They speak of Jesus as Lord, but they live like they are the Lord.
3. Their lives reveal the fact that they are unsaved, unregenerate.
4. There is no real interest in submitting to Jesus as Lord.