

Marks of a False Prophet

How to recognize a bad minister

By David Cox

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1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Definition: "False prophet or Teacher" Somebody who twists, perverts, or manipulates, or incorrectly represents the Word of God in giving a message that God did not want to give. This is whether this is their specific purpose or not, or whether the person is conscious of what he is doing or not. This tract is an explanation of what the Bible presents of a false prophet (preacher) or teacher. These marks allow us to identify them, and it is not necessary that they have all marks to be bad. The Christian needs to be alert to these marks to shun these evil workers and not fall in their traps and influence.

Taken from the book
"Marks of False Prophets and Teachers" by David Cox.

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By their fruits ye shall know them: Mat. 7:15-24 **Beware of false prophets**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. **Ye shall know them by their fruits**^[1]... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father**... whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken

him unto a wise man, **which built his house upon a rock.**” Central to the work of God is the will of God. The work of God is not done as seems best to one, but according to the plan of the master architect, God.


False prophets don't follow God's will, but manufacture their own “vision from God”:

According to **1 John 2:17**, salvation is based on submitting to the will of God. In **2 Thess. 2:10**, we see involved in salvation a profound love of the truth as a requirement of salvation. According to **John 7:15-16**, one can recognize the true doctrine of God only because one desires to fulfill the will of God. In **John 9:31**, the commentary is made that God only hears the prayers of those who are fearful (respectful) of God and do His will. **Titus 1:13-14** teaches that the man of God has to confront the incorrect and correct it^[2]. **Lam 2:14** “*Thy prophets... have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.*” In contrast to true prophets, these false prophets fabricate their own “vision from God” that is not really from God at all.

^[3] They also have the tendency to be exaggerating **Jude 1:16; 2 Pet 2:18; Rev. 2:1-3.**

The fruit of their doctrine is evil: What are the good fruits of the Spirit of God? According to **Gal.**

5:22-23, the fruit of God's indwelling is love^[4], joy^[5], peace^[6], patience^[7], longsuffering^[8], gentleness, goodness^[9], faith, meekness^[10], and temperance^[11]. **1 Cor. 13:4-5** Love suffereth^[12] love, and is kind^[13]; love envieth^[14] not; love vaunteth^[15] not itself, is not puffed^[16] up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity^[17], but rejoiceth in truth.

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What should be the example of a man of God? God has made being an example to the flock an essential part of the work of God, and in the church we can discern between good and poor leaders

by their example of holiness and piety^[18]. **Hebrews 13:7** *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* (not just their beliefs, but also what their beliefs have produced in the people that have sat under their example and teaching). **1 Peter 5:1-5** continues with “*neither as being lords... but being ensamples to the flock... clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*” **1 Cor. 16:15-16** exhorts us to submit ourselves to leaders that “*have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints... that helpeth with us, and laboureth*”. When you cannot say in all honesty, “*I want to be like my pastor*”^[19] then you should find another church. False prophets always maintain double standards, one for them, and another for everybody else. The example or perfect model is really Christ, and God's ministers clothe themselves with the meekness and gentleness of Christ (**2 Cor 10:1**). Mean ministers are usually arrogant, proud^[20], and want to exalt themselves over others (**Mark 12:38-40**), always boasting^[21]. False prophets are usually contentious^[22], they like to argue and cause divisions (the real root meaning of the word “heresy”). In the end analysis, they usually think more of themselves than one should. They overly estimate their own understandings, opinions, and doctrine carrying things to make a second “law” of God that nobody can violate without reaping God's wrath. **1 Cor 8:1** “*knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth.*” **Titus 3:10** “*A man that is an heretick (causes divisiones), alter the first and second admonition reject*”. Always reject unreasonable men. They are not of God.

Their authority is not solely the Word of God^[23]: God limits our foundation for teaching to be only

the Bible, not to other things^[24]. False prophets don't like to follow **Neh 8:8**, which states the basis of expository preaching, (1) read the word, (2) explain the word (exposition), and (3) apply the word so that the people really understand what the Word of God says and how it relates to them. But false prophets are known for entertaining the people right well without really staying in or without correctly interpreting the Word of God. We should “*let none of (God's) words fall to the ground*” **1 Sam 3:19**, and **Tit 1:9** “*holding fast the faithful word*”, and **Tit 2:1** “*speak thou the things which become sound*

