

Teacher: John Burton

Teaching Title: Exposing False Prophets (short)

- I. False prophets are among us
 - a. *“And the LORD said to me: “The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds.”* (Jeremiah 14:14, ESV)
 - i. Lies, deceit, worthless
- II. What makes a false prophet?
 - a. There are two types of false prophets.
 - i. The first type is comprised of people who have invited a spirit of divination into their lives.
 1. The gift, which enables them to prophesy, comes from an evil spirit and has nothing to do with God.
 2. The gift is from hell and these people have let their hearts turn to evil.
 3. What is important to note: although the word is coming from a spirit of divination, it can still be accurate!
 4. Acts chapter 16 illustrates this principle through a false prophetess who has the right word, but the wrong spirit.
 - a. It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bondservants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment (Acts 16:16-18).
 - ii. The second type of false prophets is the group of people who receive a call on their lives to be a prophet or prophetess from birth or after they receive Christ, yet they later fall away from God.
 1. Interestingly, in Romans 11:29, it states that the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.
 2. Even if we fall away from God, we would still be able to operate in the gifts.
 3. However, this gift would not be in our control but would be turned over to the hands of the evil one.
 4. In Numbers chapters 22 through 24, we read about a false prophet named Balaam.

5. It is clear in the Scripture that Balaam is getting his prophetic revelation from God, but he is trying to use his gift to curse God's people so he can make money.
6. Balaam has a gift from God but a heart from hell.

III. Jeremiah Johnson

- a. "The true prophetic is passionately concerned with equipping a people to live a simple and authentic lifestyle of repentance, holiness and the fear of God."
- b. What kind of "prophets" then should we all be listening to?
 - i. Listen to the prophets who are burdened for the state of the Church and are consistently calling for prayer, repentance, holiness, and the fear of the Lord.
 - ii. Listen to the prophets who are encouraging and strengthening the church by preaching the gospel and making disciples.
 - iii. Listen to the prophets who are teaching the people how to hear God for themselves. Look for those who offer mentoring, training.
 - iv. Listen to the prophets who are preparing the Bride for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - v. Listen to the prophets who are loving their spouses and families well. Character and integrity will always be more valuable in the sight of God than prophetic accuracy.

IV. Naming names

- a. Our biblical model is to expose darkness, not people.
 - i. *"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."* (Ephesians 5:11, ESV)
 - ii. If we aren't careful, a curse can come upon us.
 1. *"Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant." (Genesis 9:20–26, ESV)*
- b. I very, very rarely do.
 - i. I believe the primary call is to expose false teaching and let God deal with false teachers.
 - ii. We live in a nasty heresy-hunter generation that is out to defame any who dare believe differently than they do.

iii. Today people are calling out all sorts of people who are imperfect yet incredible men and women of God.

1. Look at Moses:

a. *“Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. And they said, “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it. Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting.” And the three of them came out. And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. And he said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed. When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. And Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother’s womb.” And Moses cried to the LORD, “O God, please heal her—please.”” (Numbers 12:1–13, ESV)*

i. Moses interceded! He didn’t attack or expose.

c. Paul mentioned 9 people according to my count. Just 9 in all of his ministry.

i. Facebook “discernment ministry” (no such thing) people do this every week it seems.

ii. Hymenaeus and Alexander:

1. Mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:19-20.

2. Paul handed them over to Satan to teach them not to blaspheme 1.

iii. Philetus:

1. Also mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:17-18.

2. He spread false teachings about the resurrection, causing trouble among believers 1.

- iv. Jannes and Jambres (not explicitly named in the New Testament, but tradition identifies them as the magicians who opposed Moses in the Old Testament):
 - 1. Mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:8.
 - 2. They resisted the truth, just as false teachers do 1.
 - v. Alexander the coppersmith:
 - 1. Mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14.
 - 2. He did Paul much harm and opposed his teachings 1.
 - vi. Demas:
 - 1. Mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:10.
 - 2. He deserted Paul, preferring the world over the gospel 1.
 - vii. Phygellus and Hermogenes:
 - 1. Mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:15.
 - 2. They turned away from Paul and caused trouble 1.
 - viii. Certain men from Judea:
 - 1. Mentioned in Acts 15:1-27
 - 2. They troubled believers by insisting on circumcision for salvation.
- V. The Bible tells us to watch for error
- a. According to John, there is a way to discern the difference between a true prophet and a false prophet.
 - i. In the Book of First John, he gives us guidelines.
 - ii. The first verse of the text warns Christians to not become false prophets by believing the wrong spirit.
 - iii. This caution is sobering. Many Christians do not believe that evil spirits can influence them.
 - iv. One of the greatest deceptions in the church today is the idea that Christians cannot be deceived by the devil.
 - v. The following Scripture passage clearly dispels that myth.
 - 1. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world (1 John 4:1-3).
 - b. Scriptures
 - i. We see God warning us of false teachings way more than false teachers.
 - 1. We see direct confrontation way more than warning others.
 - ii. *“For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”* (Jude 4, ESV)

- iii. *“For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”* (Matthew 24:24, ESV)
- iv. *“I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.”* (Romans 16:17, ESV)
- v. *“For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.”* (Titus 1:10–11, ESV)
- vi. *“As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,”* (1 Timothy 1:3, ESV)

VI. Activation

- a. A very well-known minister (Shawn Bolz) prophesying over man who was overwhelmed by the promises he was hearing.
 - i. He looked him up online and revealed the info in the prophecy.
 - ii. Another well-known minister did the exact same thing.
 - iii. Such prophecy can be devastating.
 - iv. People (inappropriately) change their entire lives due to a prophetic word.
- b. What false words have been spoken over you by:
 - i. Others
 - ii. Yourself
- c. Spend time asking the Holy Spirit to correct and heal.
- d. Forgive others and yourself.
- e. Write out true words the Holy Spirit is speaking about you.
- f. Use Scripture if you'd like.
 - i. Prophecy over yourself with life-giving truth.