

What Every Believer Needs to Know about False Ministries

Introduction

My goal is to equip the body of Christ. I don't see myself as superior and as I teach this, I pray that I myself will not be deceived or go into error. It's not beyond any of us. In addressing these issues, it must be done with a spirit of humility. As we discuss this topic it's important for me to say that I love miracles and am continuously trusting God for more. He does raise the dead. Wherever the counterfeit is present we know that the real thing is about to manifest. He wants us all to experience the truth of this love. False ministries are not limited to whatever you have experienced recently but can range from new age talk show hosts that say they are Christian to traditional churches that have placed more weight on the traditions of men than the Word of God. It also includes the traditional African churches that are syncretistic in beliefs as they mix ancestralism and animism with aspects of Christianity.

The New Testament adequately addresses false ministries. It's not a new thing.

2 Peter 2:1-22

¹ *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; ¹¹ yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. ¹² But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish. ¹³ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. ¹⁴ With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! ¹⁵ They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness. ¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.*

¹⁷ *These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. ¹⁸ For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for “people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.” ²⁰ If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. ²² Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.”*

From this passage we see about 10 characteristics of false ministries: 1. they are often prophets or teachers, 2. they lie and fabricate, 3. they are greedy, 4. they use people, 5. they can be amongst true believers, 6. they attract unstable people, 7. they have immoral lifestyles, 8. they are boastful, 9. they give people false hope, and 10. they will be judged by God.

22 Things Every believer should know about False Ministries

1. False ministry is not limited to one type of ministry gift

The bible speaks of false apostles, false prophets, false teachers, false shepherds etc. There are different ways of guarding against the different ministries.

This is important because some people say that someone is a true man of God because they have deep teachings and don't prophesy in an ungodly way. However, they could be a false teacher. On the other hand, some prophesy through divination but their teaching is good, so they are a false prophet even though their teaching might not be too problematic.

Some are false teachers not because of all their teaching but just some of it. We are blessed by one book and then think we must follow all their teachings. Sometimes the enemy works through them by enticing people through the good material and then at a certain point, years down the line they begin to teach false doctrines like universalism and ultimate reconciliation. Good teaching does not validate someone's prophetic ministry. Some can teach well but still prophesy with a spirit of divination like a sorcerer or fortune teller.

False Apostles: Rev 2:2 - *I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.*

False Prophets: Mt 7:15 - *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*

We are drawn to false prophets because they tell us what we want to hear. They identify with us. They preach in support of the idols of our heart. Hence, they wear sheep's clothing.

False Teachers: Mt 16:11-12 – ¹¹ *How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* ¹² *Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

Jesus warns us to guard against certain teaching. This requires us to be alert.

It's important to understand that the Pharisees were part of the religious system, yet Jesus warned about them. False teachings can be in very well-established sophisticated churches, denominations and movements. They are not limited to tiny dubious looking churches on street corners.

2. False ministries will be judged by God

Ezekiel 13:9

My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the council of my people or be listed in the records of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

It's not your job to send them to prison etc Let God do what He will do. Our job as pastors is to warn the flock. Be careful, don't jump to conclusions based on what only one person says.

2 Cor 13:1-2

¹ *This is the third time I am coming to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."* ² *I already warned you the second time I was with you. So now in my absence, I warn those who sinned earlier and everyone else: If I return, I will not spare anyone,...*

1 Tim 5:19-21

¹⁹ *Do not entertain an accusation against an elder, except on the testimony of two or three witnesses.* ²⁰ *But those who persist in sin should be rebuked in front of everyone, so that the others will stand in fear of sin.* ²¹ *I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels to maintain these principles without bias, and to do nothing out of partiality....*

3. All ministries are to be tested

1 John 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.

The purpose of this teaching is to assist the church in testing these spirits. Don't feel bad doing this.

False ministry is widespread.

4. All ministers must go through the character test

Titus 1:6-9, 16

*⁶ An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷ Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸ Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it....
¹⁶ They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

It's interesting how the test for eldership was more to do with character than gifting. People will be judged based on what they do, not who they claimed to be. Today leaders are relaxed about character. They don't seem to mind whether their leader lives apart from his wife for months on end. Their followers are just interested in consuming not producing.

Revelation 19:9-10

⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." ¹⁰ At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."

Daniel 5:15-17

¹⁵ The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. ¹⁶ Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom." ¹⁷ Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

- He had no selfish ambition. He could not be corrupted.