

Detecting Religious Imposters

Matthew 7:15-20

Look out for false prophets.

Distinguishing Traits:

1. They are like wolves in sheep skin.

...in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ferocious wolves...

a. They are deceptive. *sheep's clothing*

2 Cor. 11:12-14; 2 Peter 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:6;

b. They are dangerous. *wolves*

Acts 20:28-31 & 2 Cor. 11:13-14

- They present a personal message rather than God's Word.
1 Cor. 14:29ff.; Jer. 23:28; Col. 2:18f.; 1 Jn 2:20f.; 2 Pet. 1:20-2:3
- They prioritize personal experience above God's Word.
Mark 13:22; Col. 2:16-19 and the book of 1 John

2. They are like trees bearing toxic fruit.

...grapes from thorn bushes...bad tree – bad fruit...

a. They are deceptive: Good fruit is more than good deeds.

Matt. 7:22; Luke 6:43-45

Good fruit is Christ-like character produced by truthful teaching.

b. They are dangerous: Beautiful fruit may be very bad.

“bad” in _____ and _____

Exemplified in 1 John:

- 1) 1:8-10 They won't acknowledge _____.
- 2) 2:4 They don't keep God's _____.
- 3) 2:9 They don't _____ the brethren.
- 4) 2:18-19 They don't _____ with the church.
- 5) 2:22-23 They don't recognize _____.
- 6) 4:1-6 They gain an audience with the _____.
- 7) 5:10-12 They don't teach salvation by _____.

Challenge: Beware of *spiritual leadership* without:



_____ **Matthew 7:14 & 29**



_____ **Jeremiah 6:10, 14**



_____ **Ezekiel 22:26-28, 30**

