

Title: **Nine Marks Of A False Prophet**
Text: Matthew 7:15
Subject: Indictments Against False Prophets
Date: Sunday Morning - July 27, 1997
Tape # T-92
Reading: *Ezekiel 13:1-16 and 22:25-31*

Ezekiel 13:1 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; 3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! 4 O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. 5 Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. 6 They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made *others* to hope that they would confirm the word. 7 Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith *it*; albeit I have not spoken? 8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I *am* against you, saith the Lord GOD. 9 And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD. 10 ¶ Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and *there was* no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered *mortar*: 11 Say unto them which daub *it* with untempered *mortar*, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend *it*.

Ezekiel 22:25 *There is* a conspiracy of **her prophets** in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. 26 **Her priests** have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed *difference* between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. 27 **Her princes** in the midst thereof *are* like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, *and* to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. 28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered *mortar*, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. 29 **The people** of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. 30 And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. 31 Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Introduction:

It is my deep and ever increasing conviction that faithfulness to the glory of God and to the souls of eternity bound men and women place a threefold demand upon the shoulders of every man who stands to speak to men in the name of God. I carry upon my heart this morning what the old prophets used to call “*The burden of the Word of the Lord,*” an awesome threefold burden...

1. We must proclaim to men and women the necessity of, and press upon their hearts the urgency of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

___Paul writes, “*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*” How can I plead with your hearts. “*Except ye repent, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God.*” Will you hear me? The wrath of God is upon you! If you die in your present condition, if you die as a God hating rebel, hell will be your portion forever. If you die without Christ, you will spend eternity without Christ! If you die without grace, without hope, without life, you will spend eternity without grace, without hope, without life! If you die with hell in your heart, you will spend eternity suffering the hell of God’s indescribable wrath in your heart, in your mind, and in your body. It may very well be that you will meet God in judgment before this day is over. I beseech you therefore in God’s name, I pray you in Christ’s stead - “***Be ye reconciled to God!***” May God grant you life and grace by his Spirit and give you faith in Christ this hour. It is written, “***Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.***” Yet, I know that no sinner will ever be saved apart from that knowledge of the gospel of the glory of God which is revealed, imparted, and given to sinners through the preaching of the gospel.

2. Therefore we must proclaim to this generation the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ.

Our Lord said, “*Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free.*” Sinners are saved by the knowledge of the truth; and Christ is the Truth. **You cannot be saved if you believe the devil’s lie.** I do not suggest and the Word of God does not teach that a person must be a learned, educated, well-read student of the Bible to be saved. I do not suggest and the Word of God does not teach that a person must believe a specific creed, be a part of a specific church, perform specific deeds, or experience specific emotions in order to be saved. **However, the Word of God does teach and I am declaring that salvation is the result of a specific, God given knowledge, knowledge which comes by the power of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel.**

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 **How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent?** as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all

obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 **So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

SAVING FAITH IS A HEART KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN HIS TRUE CHARACTER, AS HE IS REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL. Faith is more than knowledge; but faith is not a leap in the dark. Faith is walking in the light! Some things are essential to a saving knowledge of Christ. If you would b saved...

A. You must know God in his true character.

- Sovereignty
- Holiness
- Justice

B. You must know yourself in your true character.

- Lost
- Depraved
- Dead
- Helpless

C. You must know the Lord Jesus Christ in his true character.

- As Both God and Man
- As The Sinners' Substitute
- As The Almighty Savior
- Sovereign Dominion and Intercession

D. You must know what happened at the cross.

There is no salvation apart from the knowledge of ***“HOW that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”***

- Sovereignty
- Substitution
- Satisfaction
- Success

E. You must b reconciled to God in your heart.

There is no salvation to be had apart from the reconciliation of your heart to God as God. In the light of these things, the third burden upon my heart ought to be obvious to anyone with spiritual discernment who is aware of the antichrist, free will, works religion which permeates and engulfs the world in which we live.

3. We must lift up our voices and proclaim to this generation our Savior's solemn warning - "Beware of false prophets!"

Matthew 7:15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.

It is my intention today to do what I can to echo that warning to you and to all who may hear this message. I know that some people will say, "You must not judge or condemn another person's religion. Only a bigot refuses to go along with and respect the religion of another man. We ought to treat all men as our brethren. We must never get the idea that we are right and others are wrong."

There are just a couple of problems with that pretentious, sugarcoated, straddle-the-fence, effeminate mentality. **We are not all brethren; and we are not all right!** The fact is, if I am preaching free grace and the man down the road is preaching free will, we are not both right, we are not brethren, and we are not both the servants of God! Therefore...

Proposition: Our Lord demands that, if I would be faithful to him, faithful to his Word, and faithful to your souls, I must prophesy against those prophets of deceit who would destroy your souls by their doctrine. - "**Beware of false prophets!**"

We read Ezekiel 13 earlier. In that book alone, the Lord God demanded on thirteen separate occasions that Ezekiel prophesy against the prophets of his day. **Nothing in all the world is more dangerous and deadly than a false prophet.** More warnings are given in the Word of God about false prophets and false religion than about any other thing. We will be wise to hear and heed those warnings. - "**Beware of false prophets!**"

Proverbs 19:27 "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction *that causeth* to err from the words of knowledge."

Isaiah 5:20 "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Isaiah 8:19-20 "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? (20) To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, (2) And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; (3) Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for **the LORD your God proveth you**, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (4) Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. (5) And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn *you*

away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee."

Let me speak frankly. I fear that the vast majority of people have for a refuge a refuge of lies. **Their religion is a false religion, based upon a false faith and a false gospel. They have a false peace and a false assurance which has been given to them by a false prophet.** That which they think, hope, and presume is their salvation will prove in the end to be their damnation. Is that not exactly what our Lord tells us?

Matthew 7:21-23 "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 which is in heaven. (22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

"Beware of false prophets!" A false prophet is not necessarily an outwardly wicked man. In fact, that is rarely the case. The false prophet does not wear a sign saying, "Beware of me. I am a false prophet." Oh, no. They come as wolves in sheep's clothing. They appear to be very nice, sweet fellows. They are so sincere, so concerned, so anxious to see men saved, so intense. That makes them all the more dangerous. **Please hear me now.** It does not matter how sweet, likable, well dressed, and zealous a preacher is. If he does not preach the gospel of Christ, the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace flowing to sinners through the blood of the crucified Son of God, he is a false prophet; and all who follow him will follow him to hell. - ***"Beware of false prophets!"***

In this day of religious darkness, deceit, and delusion, you will be wise to hear the warning I give you as God's messenger to your soul, and take it seriously. How I wish I could say or do something to jar you in your very soul! May God the Holy Spirit shake your soul, awaken you, and cause you to hear the Word he has written to show sinners the way of life in Christ.

"Beware of false prophets!" We simply must not ignore our Lord's warning. Men and women enter the wide gate and get on the broad road that leads to everlasting destruction in hell by listening to and following the teachings of men who do not preach the truth, men who preach another gospel. These false prophets usually preach half truths; and that is worse than an out and out denial of truth, because people who would never believe a man who openly denies the Bible will believe the half truths of men who hold a Bible in their hand and claim to believe it. Therefore, as I bring this message to a close, I want to show you from the Word of God **Nine Marks Of A False Prophet**. I want you to give me your undivided attention for just a few minutes and carefully follow me through the Scriptures. I want you to check everything I say with the Word of God. If what I say is not clearly revealed in this Book, then do not hear me today and do not hear me ever again. But if what I have to say comes directly out of this Book, you must either hear me now or wish you had heard me when judgment day comes. **Here are nine marks by which false prophets are identified.**

I. False prophets are men who preach for covetousness (Jer.6:13).

Because they preach for gain, they handle the Word of God deceitfully. They can be bought, intimidated, and persuaded to trim their message.

Jeremiah 6:13 "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one *is* given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely."

Any man who can be pressured by other men not to openly preach the gospel with boldness, clarity, and distinctiveness is a false prophet. Any preacher who is motivated, governed, or constrained in his preaching by what he imagines is the will of the people to whom he preaches is a false prophet. God's servants do not take into consideration the reaction of men to their message.

II. False prophets give men and women peace and assurance when God has not given it (Jer. 8:11).

Jeremiah 8:11 "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace."

Churches today are filled with people going to hell, people whose only hope is a decision which was made for them by a slick *soul-winner* (soul-destroyer), to which they simply nodded their heads or signed their names. How many of you still rest your hopes upon a decision someone else made, a prayer someone else wrote, and an experience someone else had? How many of you accepted a proposition, instead of surrendering to the sovereign Lord?

Illustration: "She's even lost assurance of her salvation. I just had to stay and help her."

Rolfe Barnard used to say, "The only person who will give assurance to a lost man is another lost man." Barnard was exactly right.

III. False prophets make it far easier for people to get saved than our Lord did (Luke 13:23-24).

Today sinners are invited to take a walk down the Romans Road to salvation, lift their hands, sashay down an aisle, kneel at an altar, say the sinner's prayer, and say "I believe in Jesus" in order to *get saved*. Getting a sinner to say "I accept Jesus as my personal Savior" is as foreign to the New Testament as getting a sinner to say "I accept Mary as the mother of God!" You saying it will not make either lie true! There is something more to this business of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ than most people think. You listen to me, now. No one ever got saved by...

- walking down an aisle.
- kneeling at an altar.
- saying the sinners' prayer.
- getting baptized.
- signing a decision card.

- or joining a church!

Salvation comes only to those who by the grace of God enter into a living, vital union of life and faith with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 13:23-24 "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, (24) Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

IV. False prophets make the way of salvation and life much broader than our Lord made it (Matt. 7:13-14, 21-23).

According to most of the Baptists and others of our day, Judas, Demas, and Diotrophes are all in heaven today, because they all made a decision to follow Jesus at one point in their lives. But the Scriptures speak otherwise.

Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (14) Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Matthew 7:21-23 "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 which is in heaven. (22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

V. False prophets also make salvation much cheaper than our Lord does (Luke 18:18-27; 14:25-33).

If you asked me, "Don, What does it cost to be a Christian?" My answer would be - Nothing from you, but all of you! That is exactly what our Lord told those who came to him, wanting to be numbered among his disciples.

Luke 18:18-27 "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? (19) And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none *is* good, save one, *that is*, God. (20) Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. (21) And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. (22) Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, **Yet lackest thou one thing:** sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. (23) And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. (24) And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (25) For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (26) And they that heard *it* said, Who then can be saved? (27) And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Luke 14:25-33 "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, (26) **If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.** (27) And whosoever doth not **bear his cross**, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? (29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, (30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (31) Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. (33) **So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.**"

Faith in Christ involves surrender to Christ as your Lord. Until you have surrendered to him, you have not believed on him. To believe him is to trust him as your Lord...

- to save you.
- to possess you, yours, and all that you have for his own glory.
- to rule you.
- to dispose of all things as he sees fit.

Illustration: Lee's Surrender at Appomattox

VI. False prophets make sin an outward act rather than an inward principle (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

If sin is something I do, then all I have to do to get better is quit doing certain things. That is exactly the principle upon which all false religion operates. That is why legalism is found and appears to work everywhere in the religious world outside the kingdom of God.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (3) Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Sin is not something I do. It is what I am. It is not my behavior, but my being that is abhorrently evil. Because my problem is inward more than outward, I need regeneration not reformation.

VII. False prophets also make godliness an outward act, form, and religious performance rather than an inward principle of the heart (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Luke 16:15).

2 Timothy 3:1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers,

incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (4) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (5) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Luke 16:15 "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

Our Lord says, "*Rend your heart, not your garments!*"

VIII. False prophets give men and women a proposition to consider, a program to join, or a performance to do, rather than pointing them to a Person to trust for the saving of their souls (Isa. 45:20-25).

Isaiah 45:20-25 "Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save. (21) Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me. (22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. (23) I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. (24) Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. (25) In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

IX. False prophets will never preach that salvation is by the pure, free, sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ the Lord alone (Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9-10).

They may use the words "grace" or even "free and sovereign grace," but before they get done talking, you will understand that they mean to say, *Sinners are saved by God's free and sovereign grace in Christ, as long as they do this duty, perform these works, keep those laws, feel this feeling, or go through that experience.* Such workmongers are drunk with the wine of Babylon's fornication. They are false prophets. Will you hear this preacher? Will you hear the Word of God? Salvation is...

- In Christ alone!
- By grace alone!
- Through faith alone!

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast."

2 Timothy 1:9-10 "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before

the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:"

Any sinner, anywhere who meets God's terms of salvation will be saved. God's terms of salvation are repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Bless God, if you meet those terms you are saved. But those terms will not be lowered. **Repentance** is neither more nor less than the dethronement of yourself and the enthronement of the Son of God in your heart. **Faith** is neither more nor less than utter confidence in the obedience and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for acceptance with God.

I have some bad news for you. **You simply cannot and will not meet God's terms.** You cannot and will not repent. You cannot and will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But I have good news, too. **God Almighty gives repentance and faith to chosen, redeemed sinners by the almighty, irresistible operations of his saving grace.** Salvation is a miracle of grace. "*Salvation is of the LORD!*" Unless God saves you, and saves you without any contribution of any kind from you, you will not be saved.

Is there a sinner under the sound of my voice who is asking "**Pastor, how will I know if God saves me?**"

- He will, by his Holy Spirit, convict you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.
- He will cause you to know your need of righteousness, redemption, and mercy.
- He will cause you to see that righteousness, redemption, and mercy are in his Son.
- He will graciously force you and make you surrender to his dear Son as your Lord, crying out to him from the depths of your soul for mercy - "*God, be merciful to me, the sinner!*"
- He will cause you to look to Christ alone for everything your soul needs.

If God has done for you what you could not and would not do for yourself, if he has given you life and faith in Christ, confess him as your Lord and Savior by believers' baptism. It is written, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.*" "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!*"

Indeed, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ God has saved you and you shall be saved forever! God help you now, for Christ's sake, to believe.

AMEN.