

## Trojan Horses in the Church: A Preface



According to the legend of the Trojan Horse, the Greeks sought to conquer the city of Troy, on the west coast of Asia Minor, around 1200 B.C. When early attempts failed, the Greeks devised a crafty scheme to enter the city by deception. They built a massive wooden horse, which they offered as a gift to the victorious Trojans. Armed soldiers hid inside, intent on destruction.

Virgil described the scene in *Aeneid*, Book 2 as translated by John Drydan.

“By destiny compell’d, and in despair,  
The Greeks grew weary of the tedious war,  
And by Minerva’s aid a fabric rear’d,  
Which like a steed of monstrous height  
appear’d ...:”

**Notice the warning they received.**

“[...] Laocoon, follow’d by a num’rous crowd,  
Ran from the fort, and cried, from far, aloud:  
*‘O wretched countrymen! What fury reigns?  
What more than madness has possess’d your brains?...  
Trust not their presents, nor admit the horse.’*”  
(Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Book 2)  
(trans. John Dryden).

The trusting Trojans brought the horse into their city, not realizing that enemy troops lurked inside its hollow center. Under the cover of darkness, the Greek soldiers left their hiding place and captured the city of Troy.

In similar fashion, deceivers invade the Church of Jesus Christ today. Hidden in a disguise of positive energy and religious styling, they contribute to the spiritual decline of the Church through skillful misleading and betrayal.

Jesus warned believers of this danger in the Sermon on the Mount:

*“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. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not*

*forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:15-20*

This passage provides a very clear warning: "Beware of false prophets." They have existed covertly in every generation. In fact, we find in the Scriptures that this is a common warning.

The Old Testament describes at least four stalwart men of God who warned of the dangers of deceptive religious leaders. In Deuteronomy 13, Moses talked about the false prophets to come. Elijah made a spectacular appearance on Mount Carmel when he single-handedly slew hundreds of the evil prophets of Baal. We cannot forget Jeremiah, who frequently warned about them and gave some clues that described them and Ezekiel cautioned about them, as well. Throughout the Old Testament the Bible issues warnings about false prophets and teachers.

Jesus frequently spoke out against the Scribes and Pharisees, who were His contemporaries. Paul, the distinguished apostle, followed His example and warned against them. In his letter to the Galatians, he identified some of their characteristics. He wrote to his friend, Timothy, and spoke against the deceiving teachers present in the church under Timothy's care. The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ contains strong warnings about untrustworthy teachers and leaders and how to identify them. Of the seven letters to the churches, six contain corrections about the false doctrine, errors, and treacherous teachers present in those churches.

The warning from the Lord Jesus provides a pertinent message for us. His admonition was necessary in that day, and is critically needed today. False prophets abound in the Church. They hold prominent positions of leadership as pastors and teachers. They profess to follow Christ but preach unbiblical messages that captivate the minds of the unwary and lead them astray. They write books and promote their counterfeit teachings using television, radio, and the internet. Their influence thwarts conformity to God's word. The Church today faces great injury because of their presence and influence.

Counterfeit leadership has weakened the Church, resulting in the disrespect of the world around us. The Church commands no fear and should be ashamed because of its inability to respond to public mockery of the Lord Jesus, the very Savior of the sinners.

The spiritual decline of the Church under the influence of misleading teachers grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit, and contributes to the ineffectiveness of the Church. We have replaced God's glorious, manifest presence with hype and emotionalism, pathetic substitutes for the real presence of God. Multitudes of the people who make up the congregations of our massive churches believe they have experienced salvation, but have instead followed heresy. They sit in comfort and confidence in beautiful church buildings, and they are lost.

Because of the prevalence of false prophets and teachers and their detrimental influence upon the Church, Christ-followers and His Church must heed

*Wolves in Sheep's Clothing*

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the warnings of Christ. They must identify fallacious leaders, and refuse to follow them.

These studies warn of a contemporary Trojan horse. "Trust not their presents nor admit the horse!" The lessons presented in these studies provide Biblical evidence of the causes and conditions that give rise to false prophets. We will study the canons of Scripture as we examine the characteristics of misleading preachers and teachers. These studies will provide a Biblical course of action that will protect you and the Church from these current and damaging fallacies.

May the Holy Spirit use these studies to correct the Church and to call it to the revival it so desperately needs.



## Chapter One

### False Prophets: They Tell Us What We Want to Hear



*"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:1-4*

**T**his section from 2 Timothy 4 describes the conditions and causes among Churches that give an open door to false teachers who have a form of

godliness but deny the power thereof. These conditions permit them to foster their fallacies and errors, and enable them to step into the vacuum where they can assume positions of leadership and lead people astray. Those same conditions exist today, infecting the professing Church of Jesus Christ.

This passage of Scripture continues what actually begins in chapter 3 where Paul reminded Timothy of those in the Church who would love themselves, would not follow the truth, and would try to draw others away from the truth, *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."* 2 Timothy 3:5 Paul responded to his young protégé, Timothy, concerning some of the difficulties that he faced. He wrote to instruct him on how to handle the conditions in the church where Timothy was pastor. He counseled him on how to live a godly life in his church and how to lead his people. The counsel that Paul gave to Timothy warns today's Church.

#### Professing Believers May Disavow Sound Doctrine

*"They will not endure sound doctrine."* 2 Timothy 4:3 Paul states—and he says to them very clearly—*"There is going to come a time when people among you will disavow sound doctrine. They will go after that which is false, and they will not adhere to that which is true."*

What does it mean when it says they will not endure sound doctrine? It means, very literally, they won't stand for it. They will not put up with it. They want something else.