

# A Scriptural Study on False Teachers and their False Teaching. How to combat them?

## **Fourth lesson from the Letters of 2nd Peter, 2nd and 3rd John**

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The Bible is full of warnings against false prophets. Jesus said, “*Take heed that no one deceives you. Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many*” (Matt. 24:4, 11). The context of this statement is the last days before Christ returns to the earth; Jesus was emphasizing that false prophets will multiply during that time. Paul, Peter, John, and Jude also warned us about the inevitability of false prophets rising up. Great Apostles Peter and John and Paul were alarmed that false teachers were beginning to infiltrate the churches. They called on Christians to grow and become strong in their faith so that they could detect and combat the spreading apostasy. They strongly stressed the authenticity of the Word of God and their return to Lord Jesus. John identifies them as those “who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh” and describes them as deceivers and antichrists (2 Jn 1:7). The short letter of 2 John is written in part to warn believers against the influence of false teachers. It is important to understand the doctrine that John was defending. In saying, “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh,” John affirms that Jesus is both fully God and truly man. He also addressed this issue in 1 Jn 4:2, telling his readers how to identify false teachers and the spirits who drive them. The first test of a true teacher/prophet of God is that he proclaims that Jesus is God incarnate ( Jn 1:14). A godly teacher will teach both the full deity and true humanity of Christ. The Holy Spirit testifies to the true nature of Christ, while Satan and his demonic host deny that true nature.

**False Prophets in the OT:** In the OT, there were many false prophets who encouraged worship of other gods. Moses warned the Israelites against false prophets who had a large and enthusiastic audience and were very popular because they made the people believe that all was well. Ahab brought 850 pagan prophets to Mount Carmel to match wits and power with Elijah. Evil kings hated God’s prophets because they spoke against sin and idolatry and undermined their control over the people. With the wicked kings backing, many pagan prophets sprang up to counter the words of God’s prophets.

### **Identities of True and False Prophets:**

<b>False prophets</b>	<b>True prophets</b>
<b>Worked for political purposes to benefit themselves. They were hired for payment. Spoke messages for political gain.</b>	Worked for spiritual purposes to serve God and the people
<b>Held positions of great wealth</b>	Owned little or nothing.
<b>Gave false messages</b>	Spoke only true messages.

False prophets	True prophets
<b>Appealed to the people’s sinful natures and comforted their fears.</b>	Spoke only what God told them to say - no matter how unpopular.
<b>Motivated by self interest and a desire to be popular among the people.</b>	They are motivated by loyalty to God above all else.

**Jesus’ warning against false teachers:** In the New Testament, Jesus taught about false prophets in His Sermon on the Mount: “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit” (Matthew 7:15–18). Jesus went on to explain the grave consequences of being a false prophet: “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:19–23).

**What is false doctrine?** Doctrine is “a set of ideas or beliefs that are taught or believed to be true.” Biblical doctrine refers to teachings that align with the revealed Word of God, the Bible. False doctrine is any idea that takes us away from the truth of God’s word or contradicts or nullifies the doctrine given in God’s Word. False doctrine is that which opposes some fundamental truth or that which is necessary for salvation.

**Examples of false teaching**

- Any teaching about Jesus that denies His virgin birth is a false doctrine, because it contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture (Matt 1:18).
- The erasing of hell. The Bible describes hell as a real place of eternal torment, the destination for every unregenerate soul. A denial of hell directly contradicts Jesus’ own words (Matt 10:28; 25:46) and is therefore a false doctrine.
- The idea that there are “many paths to God.” This philosophy has become popular recently under the guise of tolerance. This false doctrine claims that, since God is love, He will accept any religious effort as long as the practitioner is sincere. Such relativism flies in the face of the entire Bible and effectively eliminates any need for the Son of God to take on flesh and be crucified for us (John 3:15–18). It also contradicts Jesus’ direct words that He is the only way to God (John 14:6).
- Any teaching that redefines the person of Jesus Christ. Doctrine that denies the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, His sinless nature, His actual death, or His physical resurrection is false doctrine. There are some ignorant groups/mainline denominations/sects/cults who mess up

with Christology. They claim to be Christians but they are false teachers as they fall into apostasy.

**False doctrine in the early church:** As early as the first century AD, false doctrine was already infiltrating the church, and many of the letters in the New Testament were written to address those errors (Galatians 1:6–9; Colossians 2:20–23; Titus 1:10–11). Paul exhorted his protégé Timothy to guard against those who were peddling heresies and confusing the flock: “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing” (1 Tim 6:3–4).

**False Apostles:** False apostles are people who pretend as Christian leaders, get other people to follow them, and then lead them astray. A true apostle is one who is “sent” by God as an ambassador of Jesus Christ with a divine message. A false apostle is a pretender who does not truly represent Christ and whose message is false. In 2 Cor 11, St. Paul addresses the problem of false apostles who invaded the Corinthian church. He describes the false apostles as “those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us (true apostles) in the things they boast about” (verse 12). The book of 2 Corinthians is one of Paul’s more “sarcastic” letters, as he contends with the church to recognize the error that had crept into their midst. He contrasts his selfless service with that of the “super-apostles” (verse 5) who were seducing the church with their smooth speech and apparent wisdom. These impostors were pretending to be true servants of Christ, but they did not know the Lord. They were deceivers, preying on gullible Christians in Corinth to profit themselves and boost their ego. Paul chides the church that they “even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face” (verse 20). He even compares these impostors to Satan himself, who also “masquerades as an angel of light” (verse 14).

Paul warned the Ephesian elders about false apostles as well: “I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29). They must have heeded his words, because in Revelation 2:2, Jesus commends the church at Ephesus for spotting the false apostles in their midst and rejecting them. False teachers and false apostles have been plentiful throughout the history of the church. They still infiltrate unsuspecting churches and have even led whole denominations into heresy and apostasy (see 1 Timothy 4:1–4). Scripture gives us clear warning if we will pay attention. First John 4:1 says, “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.”

### **How to identify false apostles?**

**False apostles deny any or all truths about the identity and deity of Jesus Christ.** In 1 John 4:3–4. We read, “and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God. This is the spirit of the antichrist that, as you heard, is to come, but in fact is already in the world. You

belong to God, children, and you have conquered them, for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”. 2 Tim 3:1-8 describes such teachers in more detail: “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

**False apostles distort or deny the Bible as God’s infallible, inspired Word (2 Timothy 3:16).**

In Galatians 1:8–9 Paul counters legalism with these strong words: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.” The inspired writings of the apostles are part of the Word of God, and no one has a right to change their message.

**False apostles refuse to make themselves subject to spiritual authorities, but consider themselves the final authority (Hebrews 13:7; 2 Corinthians 10:12).**

They will often adopt lofty-sounding titles for themselves,. This does *not* mean that every person carrying such titles is a false prophet, only that evil impostors love lofty titles and will self-title to gain a hearing.

**Super Apostles:** The “super-apostles” were false teachers who appeared to be superior to Paul in their manner and authority. Paul calls them “super” in a facetious manner. As Paul went throughout the Roman Empire preaching the gospel, others would come behind him and try to steal away the new converts. Often they would claim that the gospel that Paul preached was inadequate in some way and needed to be supplemented. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul wars against those who sought to add circumcision to the gospel and, in that context, he issues the following anathema: *“I am amazed that you are so quickly forsaking the one who called you by [the] grace [of Christ] for a different gospel (not that there is another). But there are some who are disturbing you and wish to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach [to you] a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, and now I say again, if anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one that you received, let that one be accursed” (Galatians 1:6–9).*

In Corinth, it seems that the people who came after Paul were attacking his person as a way to cast doubt upon his teaching. 2 Cor 11:5 *“For I think that I am not in any way inferior to these “super apostles”* 2 Cor 12: 11 *“I have been foolish. You compelled me, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I am in no way inferior to these “super apostles,” even though I am nothing”*. From the defense that Paul gives we can discern the types of things they were saying about him. The reason Paul chose to defend himself was not to retain his personal honor but so that nothing would detract from the gospel that he preached. A self-serving, boastful dictator may appear to be a “super-leader.” We have seen these types gain places of leadership in the world. However, they are only “super” based on worldly, outward appearances. To be truly great, they must serve the way Jesus did. To be true “super-apostles,” they would need to follow the

example of Paul, who was following the example of Jesus. Even today, it is tempting to judge ministers as successful (or not) based on prosperity, popularity, oratory, and their ability to command respect and a following. This may make them “super-ministers” by the standards of the world but not necessarily by God’s standards

**Apostasy and Heresy in the church:** *Apostasy*, from the Greek word *apostasia*, means “a defiance of an established system or authority; a rebellion; an abandonment or breach of faith.” In the first-century world, apostasy was a technical term for political revolt or defection. Just like in the first century, spiritual apostasy threatens the Body of Christ today.

The Bible warns about people like **Arius** (c. AD 250—336), a Christian priest from Alexandria, Egypt, who was trained at Antioch in the early fourth century. Arius was determined to emphasize the oneness of God; however, he went too far in his teaching of God’s nature. Arius denied the Trinity and introduced what appeared on the surface to be an inconsequential difference between the Father and Son. Arius argued that Jesus was not *homoousios* (“of the same essence”) as the Father, but was rather *homoiousios* (“of similar essence”). Only one Greek letter—the iota (ι)—separated the two. Arius described his position in this manner: “The Father existed before the Son. There was a time when the Son did not exist. Therefore, the Son was created by the Father. Therefore, although the Son was the highest of all creatures, he was not of the essence of God.” Arius was clever and did his best to get the people on his side, even going so far as to compose little songs that taught his theology, which he tried to teach to everyone who would listen. His winsome nature, asceticism, and revered position as a preacher also contributed to his cause.

**The danger of apostasy:** The apostate teaching is deadly. To fully identify and combat apostasy, we should understand its various forms and the traits that characterize its doctrines and teachers. As to the forms of apostasy, there are two main types: (1) a falling away from key and true doctrines of the Bible into heretical teachings that claim to be “the real” Christian doctrine, and (2) a complete renunciation of the Christian faith, which results in a full abandonment of Christ. **Arius** represents the first form of apostasy—a denial of key Christian truths (such as the divinity of Christ) that begins a downhill slide into a full departure from the faith, which is the second form of apostasy. The second form almost always begins with the first. A heretical belief becomes a heretical teaching that splinters and grows until it pollutes all aspects of a person’s faith, and then the end goal of Satan is accomplished, which is a complete falling away from Christianity.

**The Characteristics of Apostasy and Apostates:** Jude was a leader in the early church. In his New Testament letter, he outlines how to recognize apostasy and strongly urges those in the body of Christ to contend earnestly for the faith. In other words, Jude says that there will be a constant fight against false teaching and that we should take it so seriously. Jude makes it clear that every Christian is called to this fight, not just church leaders, so it is critical that all believers sharpen their discernment skills so that they can recognize and prevent apostasy in their midst.

After urging his readers to contend earnestly for the faith, Jude describes **eighteen unflattering traits of apostates**: they are ungodly (Jude 1:4), morally perverted (verse 4), denying Christ (verse 4), ones who defile the flesh (verse 8), rebellious (verse 8), people who revile angels (verse 8), who are ignorant about God (verse 8), those who proclaim false visions (verse 10), self-destructive (verse 10), grumblers (verse 16), faultfinders (verse 16), self-satisfying (verse 16), people who use arrogant words and false flattery (verse 16), mockers of God (verse 18), those who cause divisions (verse 19), worldly minded (verse 19), and finally (and not surprisingly), devoid of the Spirit/unsaved (verse 19).

Paul tells us in his letter to Titus, *“To the clean all things are clean, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is clean; in fact, both their minds and their consciences are tainted. They claim to know God, but by their deeds they deny him. They are vile and disobedient and unqualified for any good deed”* (Titus 1:15–16). Through their unrighteous behavior, the apostates show their true selves. Unlike an apostate, a true believer is someone who has been delivered from sin to righteousness in Christ and who refuses to continue in sin (Romans 6:1–2). The apostle John signifies this is a mark of a false believer: *“They went out from us, but they were not really of our number; if they had been, they would have remained with us. Their desertion shows that none of them was of our number.”* (1 John 2:19).

**Heresy**: A basic definition of heresy, according to *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, is “adherence to a religious opinion contrary to church dogma.” A second definition is “dissent or deviation from a dominant theory, opinion, or practice.” Heresy has existed in every age, but during the 12th century, the Catholic Church took unprecedented action against it. As the power of the Catholic Church increased in Europe, dissenting voices of other Christian groups became more troublesome. In 1184 Pope Lucius III issued a decree that a convicted heretic was to be handed over to secular authorities for punishment. Over the next several decades, the church increased the severity of punishment for heresy, ultimately making it a capital offense under Pope Gregory IX. During this time, the Dominicans became the principle agents of the Inquisition, a special court given authority to judge intentions as well as actions. When heresy was suspected in a village, an inquisitor was sent to preach a sermon calling for the villagers to come forward with reports of heresy. This was a “general inquisition” that included a period of grace for anyone who would confess. This was followed by a “special inquisition” that might include coercion, false witnesses, and torture to obtain a “confession.” Those identified as heretics were then ordered to do penance, which might consist of mandatory church attendance, pilgrimage to a shrine, loss of property, or imprisonment. Heretics who refused to repent were sentenced to death. The Inquisition continued in most areas of Europe until the 15th century.

**Regarding biblical Christianity, what is heresy?** Second Peter 2:1 says, “There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who ransomed them, bringing swift destruction on themselves” From this verse, we see that heresy is anything that denies the teaching of Jesus.

**How does the Bible deal with heresy?** Titus 3:10 says, “*A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject*”. When a person in the church departs from biblical teaching, the correct response is to, first, try to correct him, but if he refuses to listen after two warnings, have nothing more to do with him. Excommunication is implied. The truth of Christ will unify believers (John 17:22-23), but heresy, by its very nature, cannot peacefully co-exist with the truth. Of course, not every disagreement in the church is heresy. Having a different opinion is not wrong, but when the opinion is divisive or maintained in defiance of clear biblical teaching, it becomes heretical. The apostles themselves disagreed at times (Acts 15:36-41), and Peter once had to be rebuked for divisive and legalistic behavior (Galatians 2:11-14). But, praise the Lord, through an attitude of humility and submission to the God of truth, the apostles worked through their disagreements and set an example for us.

**How do we guard against heresy?** Philippians 2:2-3 is a good starting point: “*Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*” As we submit ourselves to the authority of God’s Word and deal with one another in love and respect, divisions and heresies will be diminished.

### **How to guard ourselves against false teachers and their teaching?**

**Know the Bible Truth:** Jesus warns us that “false Christs and false prophets” will come and will attempt to deceive even God’s elect (Matt 24:23-27). The best way to guard yourself against falsehood and false teachers is to know the truth. Any believer who “correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15) and who makes a careful study of the Bible can identify false doctrine. For example, a believer who has read the activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Matt 3:16-17 will immediately question any doctrine that denies the Trinity. Therefore, step one is to study the Bible and judge all teaching by what the Scripture says.

**Beware of False Teachers:** John is writing to “the elect lady and her children” (2 John 1:1). This lady was engaged in a ministry of hospitality. In the name of Christian love (verse 6), this kind-hearted woman was receiving itinerant preachers into her home, providing room and board for them, and sending them on their way with her blessing. John writes this quick note to her to warn her about the many false teachers who would gladly take advantage of her generosity. Her love needed to be tempered by truth. Boundaries had to be drawn. Hospitality should not be extended to charlatans (person who falsely claims to have special skill), hucksters (persons who sell items door to door) and the devil’s own emissaries. That’s why John tells her, “Anyone who is so “progressive” as not to remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God; whoever remains in the teaching has the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him in your house or even greet him” (2 John 9-10). And he tells her why: “for whoever greets him shares in his evil works” (verse 11). John gives the hospitable lady a litmus test: what does the traveling preacher teach about Jesus Christ? If he is presenting the full deity and full humanity of Christ, then he can be welcomed into her home as a guest. However, if the teacher mitigates, obscures, or equivocates on the fact that Jesus is fully man and

fully God, then the lady is to have nothing to do with him. Such false teachers are not to receive help from believers, not even so much as a greeting. To give material aid or spiritual encouragement to the purveyors of false doctrine is to partake in their wickedness (verse 11).

**What should be our response, then, when cultists or false teachers come knocking at the door?** It is not wrong to share the truth with them or to relate our testimony. We are called to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). However, we must be careful not to do anything that would give the appearance that we approve of their message. We should never invite them into our home for an extended stay, donate money to their cause, or allow them to conduct a “Bible study” with us.

Here are some things to remember: **First**, cultists are master deceivers who are well trained in techniques that will confuse those whose knowledge of Scripture is limited. Well-meaning and compassionate souls (like the elect lady in 2 John) can be coaxed to dialogue with cultists and then be fooled by them. **Second**, Christians are of Christ; cultists are anti-Christ (2 John 1:7), no matter how kind, sincere, and charming they may appear. **Third**, believers should not give the cultists or anyone else the impression that the cult has legitimate claims, doctrines, or opinions. **Fourth**, Jesus tells us to “watch out” for false teachers (Matthew 7:15), and Paul tells us to “avoid them” (Romans 16:17) and declares them to be “accursed” (Galatians 1:8). Therefore, we should build no close associations with those who teach a false gospel. **Fifth**, John tells the lady in 2 John not to “welcome” a false teacher. In other words, we are not to bless false teachers or wish them well.

**Judge your teachers:** As Christians, we are commanded against following teachers blindly but are told rather to “test everything; hold on to the good” (1 Thes 5:21). The Apostle Peter warns us in 2 Peter 2:1-3 that there will be false teachers in our day just as there were false teachers in his day. Among their false teachings is a denial of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross to take away sin, which is a common theme among cultists today. Another characteristic of false teachers is the greed which motivates them in everything they do. Paul offers a similar warning to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-31, calling the false teachers “savage wolves” who mercilessly attempt to destroy the faith of the sheep and draw them away from the Shepherd. Paul warned the church continually, pleading with them night and day to be on their guard against such deceivers.

**Become Mature Christians:** From these passages, we see clearly that we are to distinguish between true and false teachers. How then are we to do that? First, as Paul instructs the Ephesians, we are to “no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14). Rather, we are to “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” and we do this by “the knowledge of the Son of God” (v. 13). The knowledge of Christ can only be obtained through the Word of God, and it is by that Word that we distinguish between the true and the false. It is of utmost importance that Christians are well grounded in the Scriptures so that they are able to discern which teachers speak from God and

which are false in their proclamation. Only then can we reject what is false and “hold on to the good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

**Jesus is the Perfect Pedagogist:** Pedagogy is the discipline of study related to the field of education and teaching methods. The word is derived from the Greek *paidagogia*—“to lead a child”. In the Greco/Roman culture, a *paidagogos* was a slave responsible for the education of boys. *Paidagogos* was known as tutor, guardian or schoolmaster. Like Jesus the perfect teacher, we have to learn his teaching in the school of Christ, His mystical body (The church). All of us are learners.

The Bible illustrates several different teaching tools used in pedagogy, including music (Deut 31:19), parables (Mark 4:2), and teaching at home and everywhere (Deut 11:19). Good teachers recognize who needs the basics and who can go deeper into the material (Hebrews 5:12–13). And, using Jesus as an example, teachers can know how to alter their information and their delivery depending on whether they’re addressing a large crowd (Matthew 5), a formal education setting (Matthew 21:23–27), or a small group (Matthew 13:10–17).

**Jesus was the perfect teacher, a master of pedagogy.** Our Lord used illustrations (Luke 7:31–32), object lessons (Matthew 6:28), current events (Luke 13:4–5), and stories (Matthew 13). He utilized lecture and discourse (Matthew 24), engaged His students in dialogue (John 3), asked rhetorical questions (Luke 18:8), dispensed proverbs (Luke 7:45), and turned questions around to force His hearers to formulate an answer (Mark 10:18). He preached and taught; He modeled and corrected. He gave “homework” and followed up on it (Matthew 9:13; 12:7). He appealed to the text of Scripture (Mark 12:26) and to the emotions, conscience, and intellect of man (Matthew 11:18; John 8:7; Mark 12:37). He was unafraid to use hyperbole (Matthew 5:29), metaphor (John 9:5), and provocative language (Luke 13:32). Always, Jesus had the best interests of His hearers at heart; always, the subject of His teaching was the absolute truth of God.

The Bible has quite a bit to say about teachers themselves. Pedagogues should be experts in their field (Mark 1:22) but willing to be corrected if it means ensuring they’re teaching the right thing (Acts 26:24–28). They shouldn’t lord their position over others (Mark 12:38), although they do have authority over their students (Luke 6:40). Good teachers are kind and gentle, not resentful or argumentative (2 Timothy 2:23–25) and are ready to teach anyone who is willing to learn (Luke 2:46–47). Good teachers teach with wisdom (Colossians 1:28; 3:16), practice what they teach (Romans 2:21; Titus 2:6–7), and aren’t afraid to teach the truth, even if it’s hard to accept (John 6:60). The best teachers instruct others how to pass on the truth they’ve been taught, so the cycle of pedagogy continues (Titus 2:3–5).

Pedagogy is important because teaching is a serious calling that comes with great responsibility and accountability (James 3:1). Teaching is a spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:28) and one that is a requirement for a Christian leader (1 Tim 3:2). Christian teachers base their information on Scripture (2 Tim 3:16) because they recognize the difference between human teachings and

God's truth (Col 2:22). Because of their position and responsibility, good teachers in the church are worthy of double honor (1 Tim 5:17).

Through television and other means of mass communications, we are aware that many charlatans are parading as true Christian leaders, and that immature Christians have been "taken in" by their quackery and false interpretation of Scriptures. We should be so grounded in the Word that we will be able to discern truth from error. The foundation for our faith is and always will be the same Word of God that Peter preached. Jesus says to beware of those whose words sound religious but who are motivated by money, fame and power. We can tell them who they are because in their teaching they minimize Christ and glorify themselves. They are not connected to Christ. They dilute the Christian faith. They refuse to take sin seriously. Upon close examination it becomes clear that many nice sounding messages don't agree with God's message in the Bible. Only a solid foundation in God's word can equip us to perceive the errors and distortions in false teaching. The false prophets were an obstacle in bringing God's word to the people. As followers of Christ, we have no excuse for remaining ignorant of theology. When we know God's Word, "we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love". (Eph 4:14).

*"The problem is that there has always been a large market for false teachers, because most people do not want to hear the truth. They prefer to hear what is pleasant and flattering, even if it is false and dangerous, over what is unpleasant and unflattering, even if it is true and helpful." [John MacArthur]*

***2 Timothy 3: 13-17 But wicked people and charlatans will go from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But you, remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known [the] sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.***

***2 Timothy 4:3-4 Paul tells us, "Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.***