

False Prophets

“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets” **Luke 6:26**

Read **Jeremiah 23:9-32**

There is much talk today concerning the prophetic ministry. It is a ministry that is very much needed in the church and indeed society in general, but we need to understand that where there is the true prophetic ministry, there is also the counterfeit, or false. Satan after all is the counterfeiter and the father of lies – see **John 8:42-45**.

We see from our reading in Jer. that false prophets speak flattery to the flesh, they please people’s ears, boosting self-esteem, and in doing so become popular. True prophets like Jeremiah are the opposite, they are more concerned about pleasing God than man (see **Gal.1:10** and Paul’s response). They sacrifice popularity for truth. We see the message of repentance ring out, which is heeded brings blessing. Theirs is a message of both judgement and hope as the Lord looks at our hearts, there is no shortcut to the blessing. (Look also at Jesus’ words to the churches in **Rev.2-3**). They speak the truth in love, and indeed out of true love – **Eph.4:15**.

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Another characteristic we see in our reading is that false prophets also ‘borrow’ words from one another instead of getting it directly from God Himself (v30). Compare this to the true that spend time in the council (presence) of the Lord, hearing His voice, and proclaiming His word to His people, and good fruit is the result. Spend time talking and reflecting about this now.

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You could say they are the prophets of Baal, idolatrous, that turn people's hearts away from the truth and indeed God Himself. It is very subtle, but then again Satan masquerades as an angel of light! Read **1 Kings 18:16-40** and the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

Discuss

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In closing once again, there is a great need in the church today for true prophets of the Lord to rise up and speak forth His word. People that are more concerned about the Lord and His truth, than popularity contests or big cheques!! (see **Micah 3:11**). The prophetic is a building ministry, but sometimes you need to tear down what's there before you can build on a right and true godly foundation.

To close read **Jeremiah 1:10. cf. 18:5-10 & 31:28; Ezra 5: 1-2, 6:14; 1 Cor.3:10-16**

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