

False Spiritual Leaders, Part 1

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Matthew 23:1-12.

B. The Bible warns people to stay away from false spiritual leaders. (Galatians 1)

II. To the crowd and disciples.

A. Jesus warns people to stay away from false teachers because they damn men's souls.

B. Jesus prepared the way for His followers to do the true spiritual work. (Acts 5:28)

C. The Pharisees are denounced publicly.

1. The bulk of leadership was comprised of Pharisees.

2. They were committed to the law. (Nehemiah 8)

D. Five elements that false leaders lack.

1. Authority.

a. They sat in the "seat of authority" whether they had the right to do so or not. They were usurpers.

b. They did everything they could to prevent Jesus from taking that seat. (John 16, Jeremiah 14:14, Isaiah 40:10, John 10:1-2)

c. God is the only authority.

2. Integrity.

a. Often false teachers would teach the truth although they would not do it. The Word of God is not corrupted even in the mouth of false prophets.

b. Unredeemed people cannot restrain evil. (Ephesians 2:10, Romans 7, II Peter 2)

3. Sympathy.

a. The false teachers were loveless.

b. They pile people under morality without helping people out of it. (Mark 12:40, I Timothy 4:3, I Peter 2:3, Isaiah 10:1, Ezekiel 34, Revelation 6:14, Matthew 11:28)

4. Spirituality.

5. Humility.

III. To the Pharisees.

IV. To the lost of Israel.

Application questions:

1. Which marker of a false teacher strikes you the most? What stands out to you about it?

2. What things might make identifying a false teacher difficult? Explain.

3. How does Jesus respond to false teachers? Why is it important that we respond to false teachers appropriately?
