

## Wolf in Sheep Clothing

Matthew 13:34 *“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.”*

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Matt 7:15-16 *“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?”*

I dare say this is one of the most known parables of the many spoken by our Lord. This parable deals with deceit. There are very few people who have not been party to deceit at some time in their life. You may have seen something that at first appearance looked genuine but proved to be false. You may have at some point in your life heard words that sounded as truth but were not truth.

I am confident there is a false church in this age, and that it has been here through the ages. The false church has a steeple and stained glass. The false church has pews and members. The false church has a pulpit and a podium. The false church sings and names God as its object of worship.

If there is a false church, there must be false prophets. Christ pinpoints these false prophets in this verse of scripture. As I have lived my life in and around the ministry of the Lord, few Christians ever come to the realization of the truth Jesus wants us to see in this single verse. An acquaintance once said to me “it does not matter what a person believes as long as they are sincere.” Christ surely did not teach such a liberal view. Christ believed and knew and taught us there are false prophets.

I, for one, would like to trust everyone. I despise doubt, especially regarding the Lord's work. Many have been hurtful by placing themselves in a seat of judgment and being the determining factor as to who is right and who is wrong. You and I have both been exposed to folk who, in the Lord's work, make a career of studying folk to

determine who is and who isn't genuine. Do you know someone who sizes up a person the first time they see them? Five minutes after meeting them, they can tell you this is the real thing or it is false. I will say emphatically God has not given anyone that kind of spiritual wisdom.

I sure wish all things were genuine. However, deceit comes into play. Deceit is akin to magic. Everyone has sat and watched as a magician deceived them "right before their very eyes." The work of a magician is called "illusion" though it is actually deceit. In this verse we have a wolf dressing in the garment of the sheep. The wolf is a false prophet with a plan to deceive. The wolf owns a Bible, attends church and stands before folk to teach. Modern religion gladly accepts wolves.

In previous verses 13 and 14, the Lord spoke about how only a few find their way into the gate leading to everlasting life. These false prophets have as their main goal to lead others into the fold. They desire to get themselves in and to get you in. Listen to John 10:1 "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber*" and John 10:12 "*But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.*" Please note that the favorite hangout for a wolf is the sheepfold. He hangs around any place where sheep are located. Wolves even attend church!

A sheep has no worse enemy than a wolf...enemy number one! As a saved person, you have no worse enemy than false prophets. If you know a true prophet who preaches the Gospel, you ought to thank God daily. If you know a true church that you are a part of, you ought to thank God.

Take a look at the deceit. The wolf and the sheep are very nearly the same size. Therefore, the same clothes would fit both. They both have 4 legs. They both have a head. If dressed alike, they may be perceived as the same creature! Zechariah 13:4 speaks of false prophets and says "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath*

*prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:”* Luke 20:46 reads “*Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes...*” A sheep is a rough-garmented animal. A wolf is a smooth-garmented animal. Much else is the same. Thus, the wolf only needs to change clothes to be like the sheep. So, do you see how easy it is for a false prophet to be born? Just change clothes. Does that not explain why this planet is infested with false prophets? They are everywhere. As easy as it is for one to become a false prophet, I say there are some where you work and some where you live and some where you buy groceries. False prophets are not just at church, though that is their favorite place, for there they will find the most sheep.

What does a false prophet teach? As said above, the Lord made it clear how to get into heaven. Christ said you must enter the strait gait and walk the narrow way. However, a false prophet can sneak you in, so he will tell you how to get in. He will say “you don’t have to enter the strait gate. You don’t have to be washed in the blood. You don’t have to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” II Peter 2:1-2 “*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*” Blood deniers are false prophets. The liberal, sin-condoning crowd is filled with false prophets.

How is the false prophet revealed? It often takes a lot of time- too much time. Sometimes it takes so much time it is too late. Verse 16 says the true test is by the *fruit* they bear. I am not wise at knowing tree types. My father could look at a tree, even with no leaves, and tell the type. He grew up in the forest, for his father was a logger. I may not know an apple tree is an apple tree by looking at the tree. But, as soon as apples come on the tree, I know the tree type! There is not always time to wait for the *fruit* to appear. Yet, Christ says it is only by their fruit that they can be known. While you are waiting for the fruit to appear, the wolf can get you. So, there are some things that can be done to avoid the wolf. *First*, find a true prophet and hang around him. Find a fruit-bearing, Gospel-preaching prophet and sign-up and stay real close. *Second*, watch out for the hireling!

“Send me an offering and I will send you a bottle of oil that will heal you and make you rich.” This is a lie. *Third*, try the spirits as spoken in I John 4:1 “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*” You have the ability to pray just as does a true prophet. Pray to God and ask for wisdom. *Fourth*, read and know the Bible. Too many just read it. If you know the Word, you can expose the false prophet. The greatest single reason for getting caught by the wolf is ignorance of the Bible.

Allow me to share a few Biblical examples of false prophets:

- \* The Devil himself and his agents: II Corinthians 11
- \* In Israel: Ezekiel 13:1-10, 22
- \* Balaam: Numbers 31:16, Revelation 2:14

There are many important points in this lesson, but here are some highlights:

- \* A false prophet, a wolf, is a sheep’s worst enemy
- \* All a wolf must do to become a sheep in the eyes of men is change clothes.
- \* The best defense is to stay near a true prophet and surround yourself in God’s Word.