

Beware False Teaching

by Wayne Goff

We live in an age in which a multitude of thoughts, ideas, and plans are viewed as “**right**” by mankind. It seems that *the only idea* rejected is the idea that truth is narrow, finite and definite. However, experience and common sense tell us that truth is narrow, finite and definite. We are taught at an early age that two plus two equals four. We are required to drive down the right side of the highway to avoid serious injury and death. The United States Postal Service requires the “right” price for mailing letters and packages. All of these things are narrow, finite, and definite. Life would be difficult if every man chose his own “right” answer to these issues.

So while mankind wants life to be simple, easy, and broad, God’s Word warns against such a view religiously. Ephesians 4:14 says that we should learn the truth *“that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”* Do not be “children” in understanding, for they are easily led astray. Do not be like *the waves of the sea*, tossed back and forth with every wind of false doctrine. False teachers will come with **great craftiness and deceitfulness** and lead away the unsuspecting.

As followers of Jesus Christ, He is our “*Shepherd*” and we are His “*sheep*” (Jn. 10). He leads us in paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake (Ps. 23:3). We know we are His sheep, His true disciples, because He goes before us, and we follow Him, because we know His voice (Jn. 10:4). We will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, because we do not know the voice of a stranger (Jn. 10:5). The voice of Jesus can be heard, believed, and obeyed as we read His last will and testament -- **the New Testament** (Heb. 8:10-13).

The world is in a constant state of flux and change. What is viewed as “**right**” today may well be “**wrong**” tomorrow. Man is a fickle creature, and he changes regularly. The Old Testament often uses the idea of **ocean waves** or **the seas** to describe man’s temperamental disposition. It cannot be trusted for eternal things because it is not stable.

A common warning against false teachers is found in the solemn words of 1 Timothy 4:1-3. *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”* The warning contains several points worthy of our attention:

1. Men will listen to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. Satan has enlisted unsuspecting men and women to be his minions. They espouse his false doctrine and deceive many. The message is one of ease and comfort, but it is a message of lies.
2. The lies are spoken in hypocrisy. These minions of Satan are not what they appear to be. They are play actors, liars, who deceive many for their own gain, whether it be financial, power or control. Their consciences are seared over; they have no heart or soul.
3. These false teachers condemn what God calls good, and proclaim good that which God calls evil (Isaiah 5:20). It would be comical if it were not so serious that when gospel preachers come to town to proclaim the Good News and the Truth, that it seems to the world that *“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too”* (Acts 17:6). No, the world was upside down already, thanks to the lies and deceptions of Satan. But mankind has lived upside down so long that he now believes it is right side up!

Dear friend, study the New Testament of Jesus Christ and learn the truth. Jesus said the truth shall make you free (Jn. 8:32). Free from the ever-changing, troublesome, alarming ways of the world. Let Jesus be the anchor of your soul, and give you the peace of mind you desire (Jn. 16:33; Heb. 6:19).

