

Beware of Captors!

by Wayne Goff

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.” (2 Peter 2:19)

False, Pseudo-

The word “*false*” appears twenty-eight times in the New Testament and almost always translates the Greek word “*pseudo-*” (prefix). Jesus and the apostles repeatedly warn brethren against false teachers, false prophets, and false brethren! When Satan cannot keep one from believing in Christ, then he attempts to get him to believe in a *false* teacher of Christ!

Jesus warned His disciples to “*take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*” (Matt. 16:6). “*Leaven*” represented their false teaching (Matt. 16:12). The majority followed after these professed Bible scholars, and yet they were wrong!

Again Jesus warned, “*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves*” (Matt. 7:15). Now Jesus warns that these false prophets will *appear* to be faithful disciples (“*sheep’s clothing*”), when in reality they are false teachers (“*ravenous wolves*”). Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24), Jesus said that “*false prophets*” would deceive many (v. 11). Is there anything more sad than that someone should lose their soul while *honestly believing* that they are following Christ?! Jesus even said that “*false christs and false prophets*” would “*show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect*” (Matt. 24:24).

The apostle Paul listed among his many trials and tribulations “*in perils among false brethren*” (2 Cor. 11:26). Even the great apostle could be duped *for a time* into believing some brethren were true! “*And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),*” (Gal.2:4).

The Solution

Dear reader, have you been deceived by a false teacher whom you thought was a faithful disciple of the Lord? None of us wants to think that we might be so gullible, but the sad fact is that we do sometimes get led astray. So **how** can you tell the difference?

First, realize that false teachers use carnal tactics to entrap their followers. They appeal to them on the basis of pride, higher knowledge, or more professed dedication. They speak disparagingly of faithful preachers, elders and churches, while subtly promoting their own agenda. Study carefully 2 Peter 2:15-19. These boasters are “*wells without water*” who “*speak great swelling words of emptiness*” and “*allure through the lusts of the flesh.*” Ironically, brethren can be attracted by *the carnal appeal* of these people — they carry themselves as someone important, they crave a following, and they prey on those with ego problems as well as those who lack sufficient ego to be an independent thinker.

Second, you must stay very close to the Word of God. You must not only *listen carefully* to the message of all religious speakers, but also carefully search the Scriptures to see if it is so (Acts 17:11). “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (1 Jn. 4:1). Now the sad truth is that too many brethren lack the desire to study the Word sufficiently to avoid being trapped! So these false teachers, who are themselves “*slaves of corruption*” (2 Pet. 2:19), overcome you with carnal, egotistical means, and bring you into “*bondage.*”

Study now the *characteristics* of a faithful gospel preacher/teacher (1 Thess. 2:1-13): no deceit, no unclean doctrine, pleasing God rather than men, not covetousness, not using flattering words, not glory-seekers, not power hungry, but sacrificing their time, talent and energy to save souls. Just be sure you haven’t been enslaved by a *pseudo* teacher!

313903