

Nine Ways to Recognize False Ministries

by Dick Iverson

Positive

Jeremiah 23:4

"I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.

Amplified – ". . . neither shall any be missing or lost."

Isa 52:7-8

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the LORD brings back Zion.

Negative

Isa 56:10-12

His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough. And they are shepherds who cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own territory. "Come," one says, "I will bring wine, and we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; tomorrow will be as today, and much more abundant."

Ezek 34:2

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"

The Reality of False Ministries

False: Contrary to the truth or fact; deceptive; counterfeit; artificial; not real or genuine.

1. False ministries are always mingled among the true; therefore, they must be discerned (I John 4:1-3). Wheat and tares are sown together. They are manifest at harvest time (Matt 13:24-30; 36-43).
 - They had them in Old Testament times (Deut 18:20-22).
 - They had them in New Testament times (Rev 2:2).
2. False ministries fall into two categories.
 - Those from without (Acts 13:6; 20:29; Gal 2:4).
 - Those from within (Matt 7:15; Acts 20:30; I Jn 2:19).

3. False ministries are of various types in the New Testament.
 - False Apostles (II Cor 11:13; Rev 2:2).
 - False Prophets (Matt 7:15; 24:11,24; Mark 13:22; Luke 6:26; Acts 13:6; II Peter 2: 1; I John 4:1).
 - False Shepherds, Hirelings (John 10:12-13).
 - False Teachers (I Peter 2:1; I Tim 6:3-5).
 - False Brethren (II Cor 11:13; Gal 2:4).
 - False Christs or Anointed Ones (Matt 24:5,24; Mark 13:22).

4. False ministries will be prevalent in the end times.
 - Matthew 24:24-25 - *"For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand."*
 - I Timothy 4:1 - *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron."*
 - II Timothy 3:13 - *"But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."*

5. False ministries will culminate in the manifestation of the "lawless one" and THE false prophet who will have all power and manifest lying signs and wonders (II Thess 2:8-12; I Jn 2:18; Rev 13; 16:13-14; 19:20; 20:10).

Warnings to God's Church Leaders and Saints

- Ezek 34:2 - *"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"'*
- Ezek. 34:4 (Amplified) – *"... you have ruled them harshly and brutally."*
- Mark 13:5 - *And Jesus, answering them, began to say: Take heed that no one deceives you.*
- Matt 24:11 - *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. Amplified – "lead them into error."*
- 2 Tim 3:13 - *But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*
- Rev. 2:2 (NIV) - *I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.*

1. False ministries usually will come in as an "angel of light" claiming to have a special revelation from God.

2 Cor 11:13-15 - *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

2. False ministries usually attack and criticize the spiritual leadership of the local church.

- Eph 4:11-13 - *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*
- 2 Tim 3:6-7 - *For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
- 2 Pet 2:10 - *And especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries.*

3. The false minister usually has a message of doom and use fear to promote their message.

- Phil 4:7-9 - *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*
- 2 Cor 4:2 - *But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*
- Job 13:7 - *Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him?*

4. False prophets and deceivers usually claim that they have been sent to you by God as His special messenger and usually come from a distant place.

- Gal 2:4 - *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),*
- Jer 48:10 - *Cursed is he who does the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood.*
- Rom 16:18 - *For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*

5. False ministries usually have a rebellious, unteachable spirit and will recognize no authority over them.

- 2 Pet 2:10 - *And especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries.*
- Titus 1:10-11 - *For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert*

whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

- *Titus 1:10-16 (NIV) - For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach-- and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

6. False ministries and deceivers will have the supernatural (gifts of the Spirit) without the corresponding fruit of the Spirit.

- *Matt 24:24 - For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*
- *Eph 6:11-12 (Amp) – Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood – contending only with physical opponents – but against the despoticisms, against the powers against (the master spirits who are) the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere.*

7. False ministries who drift in and out of the church congregation have no roots, no spiritual ties, no affiliation with a local church, no pastor who can vouch for them, no reputation that can be verified.

Matt 24:24-26 - For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. "See, I have told you beforehand. "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

8. False ministries have a love of money, a covetous spirit.

- *2 Pet 2:3 - By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*
- *2 Pet 2:3 (KJV) - And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

9. False ministries and deceivers have little respect for the local church and local church government (eldership).

- *Mt. 16:18 – “I will build my church . . .”*
- *Heb 3:6 - But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

- Eph 5:30-32 (KJV) - *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*
- Heb 3:6 - *But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*
- I Jn 4:1-3 - *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. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*
- Matt 24:26 - *"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it."*
- Matt 7:22-23 - *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"*
- Jude 8 (Amp) – *In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.*

False Ministries will be Judged by God

God will judge False Ministries (Jer 14:14-15; 23:15; II Cor 11:15; II Peter 2:17).

- He will take His people out of their hands (Ezek 34:10).
- He will remove their prophetic revelation (Micah 3:6).
- He will no longer respond to their cry (Micah 3:6-7).
- He will bring swift destruction (II Peter 2:1,3).