

## Heretics, Apostates and False Disciples

Men who worship falsely name the name of Christ but deny his power. It is his power that enables individuals to live the Christian life.

‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth,  
And honor Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.  
And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ” Mt 15:8-9

The apostle Paul wrote:

Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 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). Ga 2:3-4

The Christian has been freed from sin's dominion in his life. He is to stand in liberty given by Christ (Ga 5:1). Only the true gospel of Jesus Christ saves an individual (Ga 1:6-12).

There will be deception as we draw ever closer to the last hour. The apostle John wrote:

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. 1 Jn 2:18–19

The Lord has a purpose for allowing false teachers to draw false disciples toward them. Believers can know who is of the kingdom of heaven and who is of the kingdom of darkness as we near the Day of the Lord. Christ's disciples should withdraw from false witnesses and teachers (1 Tim. 6:4, 5, 11) and draw near to one another (Heb 10:25).

False worship is naming the name of Christ but not having true religion (Jas 1:27). False witnesses and teachers pervert the gospel (Gal. 1:6, 7; 1 John 4:1–6). Often they are deceived themselves (2 Cor. 11:13–15). Others know good and well that they are lost and choose to live lives of hypocrisy deceiving and being deceived (2 Ti 3:13). Their lives are dominated by lies and deceit (Prov. 14:5, 25). Their religion does not bear fruit (Matt. 23:5–7, 2 Cor. 11:13–15). God will not forget their wicked works (Am 8:7). They will be cast into the fire. Jesus said:

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (Mt 7:19).

He said that we would be able to know them by their fruits (Mt 7:20):

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit (Mt 7:15–17, ESV).

False prophets attack Christ followers like wild pigs:

Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces (Mt 7:6).

They are malicious toward children of light. Their hearts are unregenerate (Prov. 6:14–16, 18, 19); therefore, they are incapable of godlike love. Their hatred toward believers (1 John 4:20) is Satanically driven (1 John 3:12). They will grow worse and worse as God's age of grace comes to an end (2 Ti 3:13). They are under God's wrath because they suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18, 29). They bring judgment upon their own heads (Ps. 7:15, 16).

An apostate is one who knew the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and walked away from God (Jer. 5:23–31). False professors name the name of Christ but their wicked deeds show that they are not his.

James, Jesus' brother said:

But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works (Jas 2:18–19).

Men can profess faith all day long but their lives will not line up with their claim. Their horns will eventually show. Their works are described as: done in darkness (Isa 29:15), abominable (Ps. 14:1), deceitful (Pr 11:18), evil (Jn 7:7) and unfruitful (Eph. 5:11).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). Nelson’s quick reference topical Bible index (p. 661). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.