

[Edited notes *Empty Words and Empty Hearts* by John MacArthur] Heretics openly defy God's word. They stand blatantly against the truth. They are flagrant and open--easy to detect. They fool no one. You'll hear the heretic say things like, "That's not true," or "That's a lie." The bible says they are made manifest (1 Jn 2:19).

Apostates knew the gospel but walked away from it. They may have been reared in the truth of God's word or they may have been around the truth but in the fullness of their understanding they turned and rejected it. The apostate is flagrant and open--he also rejects the truth. He has denied the faith (Heb 10:26). He is apostatized--departed from the faith--again easy to spot. He denies the truth of God's word. He lives the life of a dog and a pig--in vomit and in mire (2 Pe 2:22). He, too is made manifest (1 Jn 2:19).

The deceiver is *not* as easy to detect (Mt 13:24--30). He never comes out against the truth. He will not acknowledge that he is a heretic. He may be living the life of a hypocrite (knowing he's lost) or he may be deceived himself (believing he is saved). 2 Ti 3:13. He is a wolf in the garment of a shepherd or a wolf in sheep's clothing. He comes into the sanctuary unawares as Jude puts it (Jud 1:4). The false teacher or false disciple is subtle. He may or may not be discovered for who he really is. A false shepherd woos others toward himself--reproducing another hell-bound devil like himself; while the Holy Spirit tries to woo him toward himself. Individuals chose a false shepherd or The Good Shepherd.

False teachers and false disciplines talk about: Jesus, the cross, the bible, the church, the Holy Spirit, etc. They mingle with true Christians. They sit in the pew or they speak in the pulpit. The bible warns against them (2 Pe, 2:1, Gal. 2:3-4). They seem like Christians but it is a guise. We should not be surprised for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Co 11:14); therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (2 Co 11:14--15).

False teachers and false disciples are hidden among us (Jud 4). They are: pleasant, nice, positive and affirming. They seem to be Christians. They speak like Christians--they say all of the right things. It's not what they say--it's what they do not say. They don't discuss the doctrine of sin. They don't discuss: mourning, meekness or brokenness. They will discuss only happy things. Their lives appear clean. They may live a double life or they may lead lives superficially clean; but, looking deep down they are depraved. They look good on the outside--they must so as to maintain their reputation. They are very good at hiding their real selves. Superficially, they are appealing. Even after they are found to have sinned great sins, they'll ask for forgiveness--but then go right on sinning again. They get right back in the saddle doing their thing.

They will say to the Lord one day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" Mt 7:22. But, the Lord will reply to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" Mt 7:23. To know means to know one on an intimate level (e.g. a personal relationship).

It's bad enough that they go to hell but they bring others along with them. Believers are to have no fellowship with them (Mt 18). The apostle John wrote: If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds (2 Jn 10–11).

We know men by their fruits (Mt 7:20). Did you know that grapes don't grow on thrones and figs don't grow on thistles? Mt 7:16. But, you can stick them there (Jud 12). Look closely, are the grapes taped on? That vine did not produce that grape. They are: filth, scabs, spots on your love feasts (Jud 12).

We, on the other hand, are partakers of the divine nature. We have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Pe 1:4).

They escaped external pollution of the world but they have not cleaned up the corrupted inner man (Mt 15:19, 20). They may know that they are lost but they do nothing about it (Jas 1:22). Jesus said: Blessed are those who hear and obey God's word (Lk 11:28).

The pollution--the ashes of the world are washed off but they've never done anything about the internal corruption. They never got a new heart. Their hearts remain stone (Eze 36:26). They are hypocrites. They are like whitewashed tombs--beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead man's bones and all sorts of impurity (Mt 23:27).