

Did Jesus Warn About False Teachers? Should We Listen to Men or to God?

Jesus explicitly warned His disciples about the danger of false teachers and false prophets. He cautioned that many would arise, leading people astray, and emphasized the need for discernment. True believers are called to listen to God's Word above human tradition or authority.

Jesus said:

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” (Matthew 7:15, LSB)

False teachers often appear outwardly righteous but inwardly are deceptive and destructive. Jesus also warned that in the end times many false prophets would arise:

“Many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:11, LSB)

The Lord taught that true and false teachers could be recognized by their fruits—their character and their teachings:

“You will know them by their fruits.” (Matthew 7:16, LSB)

The apostles also carried this warning forward. Paul, for example, said:

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” (2 Corinthians 11:13–14, LSB)

Given these dangers, Scripture exhorts believers not to blindly follow men but to listen to God and test all teachings against the Word.

Peter and the apostles, when commanded by religious authorities to stop teaching about Jesus, responded boldly:

“We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29, LSB)

This principle stands firm: obedience to God's truth must take precedence over human authority, tradition, or popularity.

Jesus also rebuked the Pharisees and scribes for elevating man-made traditions over the commandments of God:

“But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commands of men.” (Matthew 15:9, LSB)

True worship and faithful discipleship demand loyalty to God's commands as revealed in Scripture, not to human ideas or leaders who depart from biblical truth.

Thus, Jesus' warnings and the consistent testimony of the Scriptures call believers to vigilant discernment. We must listen to the voice of God through His Word, test all teachings, and follow the path of truth, knowing that it leads to eternal life.

Referenced Scriptures (LSB):

- Matthew 7:15 — “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”
- Matthew 24:11 — “Many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray.”
- Matthew 7:16 — “You will know them by their fruits.”
- 2 Corinthians 11:13–14 — “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”
- Acts 5:29 — “But Peter and the apostles answered and said, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”
- Matthew 15:9 — “But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commands of men.”