

How to Recognize False Teachers in the Church

Pastor Rick Renner, in a recent teaching uploaded to YouTube, delves into the book of Jude to address the danger of false teachers infiltrating the church.

Renner, using detailed Greek translations, warns that the epistle is as relevant today as it was in the first century, exposing leaders who “defile the flesh, despise authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.”

In Jude 8, Renner explains, these “filthy dreamers” justify their immoral actions and show utter disregard for spiritual authority. “They derogatorily speak debasing, nasty, shameful, ugly words toward those in authority who are worthy of honor and respect,” he says, highlighting how such teachers belittle and disrespect those in leadership positions, a practice that continues all too frequently today. Especially with the advent of social media.

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Renner then contrasts this behavior with that of Michael the Archangel, described in Jude 9. In a fierce dispute with the devil over Moses’ body, Michael remains respectful and refrains from hurling insults. Instead, he simply declares, “The Lord rebuke you.” Renner emphasizes, “Even Michael... did not dare cross the line and get into judgment,” showing that true spiritual leaders must uphold respect for God’s authority, even in confrontation.

Moving to Jude 10, Renner explains how false teachers arrogantly speak about things they do not understand. He draws attention to the Greek term “blasfemo,” which means slander or speaking with the intent to harm someone’s reputation. These

leaders act on natural, base instincts, which Renner likens to animals, saying they “do not belong in the pulpit—they belong behind the bars in a zoo.”

Renner’s teaching includes an analysis of Jude 11, where he notes that these individuals, like Cain, have abandoned the truth for greed. “They’ve given themselves fully to the error of Balaam,” Renner states, adding that they are morally adrift and corrupted by their pursuit of financial gain. He issues a dire warning to believers saying that embracing error leads to total spiritual ruin. “Those that embrace error don’t stop with one little error,” he says, “they go to the next level... until they lose their bearings completely.”

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Christians today must be equipped with biblical discernment to recognize and guard against false teachers who distort the truth for personal gain. By staying rooted in Scripture, we can detect teachings that stray from God’s Word and hold fast to sound doctrine. As Renner warns, these leaders may appear spiritual but are driven by greed and immorality, making it crucial for Christians to test everything against Scripture.

The Bible instructs us clearly in the matter, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world,” (1 John 4:1).

By relying on God’s Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can protect ourselves from deception and remain steadfast in truth.

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