

7 Signs to Discern False Prophets

The following is part two of my article “7 Signs That Help Discern Between Flaky and False Prophets.” As already stated in the first part of this article, by flaky, I am referring to a prophetic leader who has serious flaws in their ministry, but their heart and motive is generally right before God. By a false prophet I am referring to a person who is not only erroneous in some of their methodology, but in their motive and ambition. This is the kind of person I believe Jesus was referring to when He told His followers to beware of false prophets who come in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves (Matt. 7:15)

1. They prophesy to people based on information they receive on social media.

I have heard of so-called prophets who will google the names of pastors and people they know they are going to minister to and then prophesy to them things already written about them online. Furthermore, they also go on the social media pages of the people they will minister to and garner specific personal and ministerial information about them. Unfortunately, most people are so gullible and so desperate to receive a word from the Lord they will likely not correlate what they wrote online with what they are hearing from the so-called prophet—or they will just think it was a confirmation of what they already wrote, sensed or said about themselves (on social media).

A person who gathers personal information to prophesy it to others is a false prophet in my book.

2. They prophesy based on conversations they have had with others.

I have had one so-called (apostolic) prophet visit our church

in the 1980s who would spend a long time asking me about specific people in our congregation before he ministered prophetically in our church service. The accurate words he gave were based on the natural information he received in our conversations. He was way off when he attempted to prophesy over people without having previous knowledge about them. He did this twice to me; after the second time, I strongly corrected him, and he never did this again, but eventually he tried to usurp my authority as the lead pastor—showing his true colors as a false prophet. (I should have known even before he attempted this because of the bad fruit he manifested with the false prophetic ministry in which he operated.

3. The false prophet's staff secretly convey information to them that they prophesy.

I have seen exposes on television regarding so-called prophets secretly wearing ear pieces so that their staff can feed them information about people as they are conversing with them. Obviously, this intentional deceptive method of operating in the prophetic demonstrates that this person does not depend upon the Lord to give him supernatural words of knowledge or wisdom; thus, exposing himself as a false prophet.

4. They prophesy for financial gain.

False prophets who itinerate try to discern who in the congregation has the most money and or are the most vulnerable. Their motive is to endear themselves to these people by giving them a prophetic word, getting their cell phone number, striking up a friendship and hitting them for money on a regular basis

Prophets who operate like this are false prophets since they objectify people and use their gift for financial gain.

5. They put extrabiblical revelation on par with the Bible.

Any so-called prophet that insists that their so-called revelation is equal to Scripture is a false prophet. Any person who teaches that they have "special revelation" that is greater than the sacred writings of the prophets and apostles of the Bible is a false prophet. Any person who says they have been caught up to heaven and have received additional chapters or books of the Bible to teach is a false prophet.

The sacred, accepted, canon of the 66 books of the both the Old and New Testament is already settled. God does not take it lightly when we add to His book (See Prov. 30:5; Eccl. 12:12; Rev. 22:18,19).

6. They point people to themselves.

Scripture teaches us that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus and that if someone is truly inspired by God, they will lift up Jesus as Lord (See 1 Cor. 12:3, Rev. 19:10).

Contrary to these instructions, false prophets use their gifts to point people to themselves more than to the Lord. Anyone who promotes, exalts and points to himself (no matter how accurate their prophetic words are) is either already a false prophet or on the road to becoming one. Such a person needs to repent since they are guilty of promoting idolatry in the church and trying to share the glory of God in a way that displeases Him (see Isa. 42:8)

7. They lead people away from biblical orthodoxy.

On occasion, I have heard of famous preachers who have said the Lord showed them things that go outside the bounds of biblical orthodoxy. (For example, several have said God told them that all people go to heaven whether they believe in Jesus or not or that there are many roads or religions that lead to heaven.)

Any preacher or person who says the Holy Spirit taught them

something that clearly disagrees with Scripture is a false prophet. The apostle Paul even said that if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than the gospel they have preached, let him be eternally condemned (Gal. 1:8,9).

In conclusion, it is not my desire for this article to cause unnecessary judgement towards others. There may even be new believers who may fall into some of the above points out of ignorance. It is my (already stated) objective to help develop discernment in the body of Christ, so they can know the difference between the flaky and the false, and to encourage Christ-followers to know the Scriptures and glorify God, in whom they trust, connect with, financially invest in and follow.

The apostle Paul even said, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). If I or any other spiritual leader doesn't follow Christ in the way we act, teach or live, do not follow us in that particular area.

May the Lord increase our discernment, and may the church test the spirits without quenching the Spirit (see 1 Thess. 5:19-22).