

Who Exactly Are the False Prophets and False Teachers?

I've come under a lot of fire recently for not naming names in articles in which I call out specific examples of false doctrine and destructive heresies in the church.

I would expect the gay agenda to attack me for calling homosexuality a sin, but it puzzles me how some Christians are so quick to pummel me with virtual stones for calling out **false gospels** that are hyped-up, watered-down, seeker-friendly, mixed with compromise, humanistic, self-help-centered and New Age-principled that insist there is no hell, proclaim all will go to heaven in the end and give masses a license to sin.

Some are accusing me of being on the wrong side of the gospel. Others are pronouncing shame on me. Still others are accusing me of reading my Bible for information only. Others say I'm bringing division or complaining. Others say I need to keep my mouth shut—that I'm deceived. Of course, I'm also getting a flood of email privately, thanking me for sounding the alarm. In fact, the flood of positive email far outweighs the criticism. But I'm not doing this to win the approval of man. And I'm not intimidated by the anger of man.

Who Exactly Are These False Teachers?

So, who exactly are the **false prophets** and **false teachers** spewing different gospels and centered on another Jesus that I spoke about in my previous article?

I'll tell you that if you can answer me this: Who were the men who "crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness," whom Jude talked about in his letter to the church (Jude 4)? Who were the ones Jude pronounced woe on—the ones

who went the way of Cain, ran greedily in the error of Balaam for profit and perished in the rebellion of Korah (v. 11)? Who were the “spots” in the love feasts (v. 12)?

You can’t tell me because Jude never named them.

What about the false teachers Peter pointed out? He called these depraved false teachers “spots and blemishes” who were “carousing in their own deceptions,” having “eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls.” He called them out for having “hearts trained in covetous practices.” He called them accursed children (2 Pet. 2:13-14). He marked them as those who “have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (v. 15). And he called them out for promising liberty when they themselves were slaves of corruption (v. 19).

Tell me, who were they? You can’t tell me because Peter never named them.

And let’s not forget the false apostles Paul pegged. He called these false apostles “deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.” And then he dared to say that it was no wonder, since Satan himself transforms into an angel of light. Paul went on to say that it’s no great thing if Satan’s ministers, these false apostles, “also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Tell me, who were they? You can’t tell me because Paul never named them.

When Is It Right to Name Names?

There is a time to name names and there is a time not to name names. Paul named Phygellus and Hermogenes as ones who turned away from him (2 Tim. 1:15). He also named Demas, who forsook him because he “loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10). But

keep in mind that this was a personal letter warning his spiritual son rather than a letter to the entire body of Christ warning of **false gospels**.

John named Diotrephes in a letter to the local church at Gaius. He said, "Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church" (3 John 1:9-10). But keep in mind that John did this from a disciplinary stance in that single church body, not as a warning to the universal church about **false gospels**.

Jesus issued warning after warning about **false prophets** and **false teachers** and false Christs and wrong doctrine. We don't know the names of the ones He was warning about. He often shared the principles these false ones taught, but He didn't always. For example, Jesus didn't tell us what doctrines the false Christs and false prophets who will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive would be propagating (Mark 13:22). He told us so we could be ready and discerning.

When Jesus pronounced woe on the scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites, He explained why they were worthy of woe, but He didn't follow up His list of woes with a list of names (Matt. 23). He clearly outlined the reasons for the woes, but that doesn't automatically paint every Pharisee with the brush of guilt.

Jesus called out Satan by name, but He wasn't in the habit of calling out specific people. I believe that's because Satan is the one influencing the **false prophets** and **false teachers** and false Christs and wrong doctrine. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph.

6:12).

Follow the Holy Spirit

So, why did those who scribed the Bible choose to name names sometimes and not other times? Could it be possible they were led by the **Holy Spirit**? If the Scripture is Spirit-inspired, and it is, then these men were led at times to name names and at other times not to name names.

The same holds true today. I've named names and been criticized for it. I've declined to name names and been criticized for it. I've named names and been thanked for it. Makes no difference to me. I'm not here to win man's approval. I've been delivered from the man-pleasing spirit.

It's the fear of the Lord that drives me to write these warnings. I'm staying true to my prophetic calling. These warnings coming through my pen—and the pen of many others—are not what is bringing division to the body. Rather, the people preaching error (or not living right) are causing the controversy. When we expose the error, we are pointing people back to Jesus and toward true unity.

I refuse to stand by and watch this cancer grow in the body and then turn a blind eye as many are led astray. I refuse to whitewash a **false gospel** in the name of unity. That's called compromise, and there's a price to pay for taking that route. I'm willing to pay the price for standing for truth. I don't want to pay the price for compromising God's calling on my life. Do you? Amen.

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including *The Spiritual Warrior's Guide to Defeating Jezebel*. You can email Jennifer at @ or

visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.