

The Sermon on the Mount  
(Lesson 21)

Introduction:

1. This lesson is a study of the Lord's warning against false teachers in Matthew 7:15-20.
2. We need to pay close attention to this warning because there are many teachers and preachers in the church today presenting things that are not true.
3. Unfortunately, false teaching is leading many into apostasy.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.15) JESUS SAID, "*BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS*"
  - A. We know what "Beware" means.
    1. When we see a "Beware of Dog" sign on a fence we understand that a dog is in the yard.
    2. This is a warning -- we need to stay out of the yard.
    3. If we do not heed this warning we may be bitten.
  - B. We are to beware of "false prophets."
    1. False prophets are those who claim to be speaking the Word of God.
    2. However, in reality they present things that are false.
    3. False teachers are also warned against in 2 Peter 2:1-3.
  - C. It seems that Jesus wants us to beware of a particular kind of false teacher.
    1. He warned against those who come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
    2. They have a wonderful outward appearance, but something else is inside (Matthew 23:28; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
    3. Certain false teachers can be very appealing because of their personalities and the attention they give.
    4. We must remember the Lord's instruction in John 7:24.
  - D. The Bible makes it clear that we are to beware of false teachers.
  - E. How can they be identified?
- II. (vs.16) JESUS SAID, "*YE SHALL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS*" (see vs.20)
  - A. Jesus talked about plants and the fruit they bear.
    1. Can you pick:
      - a. grapes from thorn bushes? (only a grapevine produces grapes)
      - b. figs from thistles? (only a fig bush produces figs)
    2. See vs.17-18
  - B. Teachers must be examined on the basis of the fruit that they bear.
    1. Their manner of life must be examined.
    2. Their teaching must be examined (1 John 4:1).
  - C. The Lord tells us to beware of false prophets and how to identify them.
- III. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO FALSE PROPHETS?
  - A. See vs.19
  - B. Unfortunately, those who follow their teachings will suffer the same fate.
- IV. OUR RESPONSIBILITIES
  - A. We must know the truth ourselves (John 8:31-32).
  - B. We must examine the things we are taught (Acts 17:11).
  - C. If one is determined to be a false teacher we are to have no fellowship with him.
    1. Romans 16:17-18
    2. 2 John 9-11
  - D. Do not listen to denominational preachers or read their writings.

Conclusion:

1. These matters are extremely serious.
2. We must be able to identify false teachers, and we must avoid them.
3. Let us remain faithful to God and His Word.