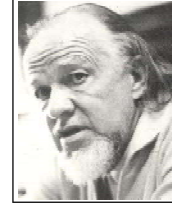


Reading: Matthew 7:15-27

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves” (Mt 7:15)

One of the significant warnings Jesus served in His Sermon on the Mount was against false prophets who cannot be identified easily (Mt 7:15). Dr. Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), that great Christian thinker, said, “If we do not make clear by word and practice our position *for* truth and *against* false doctrine, we are building a wall between the next generation and the Gospel!”



The acid test of any doctrine is its fruit, outcome or result (Mt 7:16-20; Lk 6:43,44). An important question we must ask is, Does this doctrine emphasize the Scriptures or just feelings and experiences? Growth in Christian life means growing in faith. The Tabernacle presents a beautiful portrait. There is sunlight in the outer court, candlelight in the inner court and no light in the innermost place or the Holy of Holies. One cannot walk by sight but only by faith in the All Holy Place (2 Cor 5:7).

Apostle Peter had the most exciting experience of being with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and witnessing the descent of glory on Him and hearing the voice of the Father. But in order to prove Christ’s Messiahship he places the “more sure” word of the prophetic Scriptures above all visions and voices (2 Pet 1:16-21). There are simply too many preachers today claiming “infallibility” of their visions and voices and so-called trips to Heaven and they almost threaten people of divine judgment and displeasure if they don’t believe them. On the other hand, look at the humility of a man like Paul, with all his visions and revelations. See how many times he says, “I do not know, God knows; I do not know, God knows!” And his boasting was in his “infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions, distresses and weaknesses!” (2 Cor 12:1-11). His conclusion was, “I am nothing!” I would rather follow such a man than the many arrogant boasters on modern pulpits.

Our God is a God of miracles, and we do need and have signs and wonders today. But Martin Luther (1483-1546) said, “Any teaching which does not square with the Scriptures is to be rejected even if it showers miracles every day!” Prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit but no prophecy should be accepted before it is “judged” as to its agreement with the teaching of the Scriptures (1 Cor 14:29). I believe in visions and voices though I never had one or heard one, but I place them only next to the written Word of God (Jer 23:28,29).

Almighty God,

We worship You as the God of Eternity. We worship You as the God of Revelation. We worship You as the God of Communication. We worship You as the One who never changes. Thank You, O God, for speaking to our forefathers through the holy prophets. Thank You for speaking to us in these last days through Your Son. Thank You that He became Your incarnate Word. Thank You for the Bible which is Your written Word. Men will wither away like grass, but Your Word stands forever. Heaven and earth will pass away but Your Word abides forever. O glorious Word!

Father God, we worship Your holy Name because You have magnified Your Word above all Your Name. Your Word is perfect, and it converts our soul. Your Word is sure, and it makes us, who are simple, to become wise. Your Word is right, and it rejoices our heart. Your Word is pure, and it enlightens our eyes. Your Word is clean, and it endures forever. Your Word is true and righteous altogether. Yes, Lord, it is more precious than gold and much finer gold. It is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. It warms us when we grow cold and low in our spirits, and it warns us when we grieve You. What a blessing and what a companion! Thank You, Lord!

Father God, we thank You for the sixty-six books of the Bible. Thank You for the characters who inspire us. Thank You for the Psalms which uplift us. Thank You for the Proverbs which protect us. Thank You for the prophecies which prepare us for the future. Thank You for the biography of Jesus which teaches us how to walk on this earth pleasing You. Thank You for the Epistles which exhort, encourage and edify us. What more do we need, O God, to guide us in this world of darkness and uncertainty? We praise Your holy Name!

Father God, we pray that You keep us safe from too many strange voices and strange fires all around us. Fill us with the spirit of discernment to identify wolves in sheep's clothing. May Your Spirit interpret the Scriptures for our understanding so we can stand firm on this solid rock against dashing floods. Teach us to wield His Sword, even Your Word, effectively against the tempter. Raise among us, O God, teachers to expound sound doctrine so we may escape the enemy's deceptions. Let's never miss or ignore the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd. In His Name we pray, Amen!

*(Psa 19:7-11; 90:1,2; 102:27; 119:105; 138:2; Heb 1:1-3; 2 Pet 1:19-21; Mt 7:15; 24:35;
1 Pet 1:24,25; 2 Tim 3:16,17; 4:3-5; Eph 6:17; Jn 10:3,11,14)*