

Matthew 7:15-20
The Subtlety of False Prophets

Introduction:

Our passage before us describes for us the enemies of God's people, the church. They are depicted by Jesus as wolves. The imagery displayed by our Lord was easily understood since a large portion of the people in His day were employed as herdsmen or shepherds. The prophet Ezekiel makes mention of the wolves who desire to devour God's people. (Ezek. 22:27; Zeph. 3:3) The apostle warns the Christians at Ephesus, "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock... they will distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30)

I. Avoiding the Narrow Gate

A. Jesus the true Prophet – John 4:6-29

B. Identifying a False prophet:

1. Appearance – pleasing and pleasant, "sheep's clothing"
2. What they avoid – What they do not say that is troubling – John 3:36

C. The Testimony of the Old Testament:

1. They speak "lightly and slightly" – Turn To: II Peter 2:1-3 "maligned" – (Gk blasphemeo) Jer. 6:13,14; 8:10,11
2. Absence of doctrine – Matt. 5:6, Concealing the prominent doctrines – Turn To: II Peter 2:4-9; 3:5-13
3. No doctrine of sin – (II Cor. 5:21)

II. Producing Bad Fruit

A. What they produce in their lives is what they are.

1. In due time it's bound to show
2. We admit we are slow to see these things

B. Principles in Testing Fruit:

1. The very nature of a person is changed. V.17 gf. Gal. 5:22; II Cor. 5:17; II Pet. 1:4; Eph.2:3; II Cor. 6:11
2. The person perseveres especially in the midst of trial. (Puritans called this "temporary believers." Why have they not continued on? Because their very nature has not changed. Matt. 5:3
3. The person's character will be humble (humility) I John 2:16 (Lloyd- Jones)

Finally:

God is the ultimate Judge. He is never deceived – Turn To: Galatians 6:6-10

