

## HOW TO IDENTIFY A COUNTERFEIT

### 2 PETER 2:1-22

INTRODUCTION: Today we will be looking at counterfeit Christians, counterfeit prophets, counterfeit preachers and counterfeit teachers 2 Peter 2:1-3. The word “counterfeit” means “not to have the real thing.” In the Bible being a counterfeit prophet brought death by stoning: Deuteronomy 18:20-22. We all know that it is a sin to tell a lie. But it is a much more serious sin to teach a lie. When you tell a lie and teach a lie about God or His Word it is much worse because you may damn a soul to hell.

#### I. FALSE PROPHETS AND FALSE TEACHERS!

2 Peter 2:1: Peter said just as there were false prophets in the Old Testament there will be false teachers in the New Testament times. There are truly only two kinds of religion: There is true religion and there is false religion. 2 Peter 2:1: the “you” in that verse means in the church! It is really amazing the false teaching so many in the “Church” will follow: 2 Corinthians 11:3-4; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. These false teachers will be teaching “heresies.” 2 Peter 2:1: The word “heresy” means “to divide.” Heresy in the church must be dealt with. It is always better to be divided by the truth than to walk in unity in error. 1 Timothy 4:1.

#### II. HOW DO YOU SPOT A COUNTERFEIT?

How can we know from the Word of God who is a false prophet or teacher? We will look at five tests from the Scriptures to identify truth from error.

1. The Source Test! This test examines the basis of his or her teaching. Do they have a revelation or foundation other than the Bible? Revelation 22:18-19: God has given us no other source of revelation for today other than the Bible!
2. The Worship Test! Do they believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, virgin born and the Son of the only Living God, Co-equal and Co-eternal with God the Father and do they worship Jesus Christ? Exodus 34:14 and yet Jesus was worshiped over and over: Matthew 2:1; Matthew 4:10; Matthew 8:2; Matthew 9:18; Matthew 28:16-18. Jesus accepted the worship because He is God Almighty.
3. The Subject Test! Is the primary subject of the teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ? 1 Corinthians 2:1-2. The Bible is all about the good news of Jesus Christ and Him crucified! John 5:39; Galatians 1:8-9.
4. The Savior Test! This is the salvation test. Do they teach salvation by grace or do they try to mix works like baptism or tithing or any other work as necessary for salvation? When anyone adds any other work other than faith in Jesus Christ as necessary for salvation you are taking the “whosoever” out of the Bible. Romans 10:13.
5. The Sanctification Test! Do they teach that Christians should live a holy life? If your teacher does not teach holiness of life for the believer there is something rotten in their teaching: 1 Peter 1:15-16. Our God is a holy God and He demands that those called by His name strive to be holy as well.

#### III. IDENTIFIED BY THEIR METHODS!

First, we identified false teacher by their message and now we will identify them by their methods. 2 Peter 2:2-3; 2 Peter 2:1. False teachers can be hard to spot unless you know very well what proper doctrine is. The Devil’s people are very clever in making their counterfeit teaching look real. Rat poison is 98% good grain and only 2 % poison, but that 2 % is enough to kill the rat. False teachers use gospel words but give them another meaning entirely. We need

to watch for immorality in the lives of false teachers: 2 Peter 2:2. False doctrine and immorality go hand in hand: Jude 4. These false teachers love to teach that Calvary covers it all so let's live in sin: Romans 6:1-4. These false teachers call themselves prophets, priest, pastors, bishops, cardinals, and popes, yet they live in sin and lead others to do the same right along with them. Matthew 7:21. Our God promises that one day these false teachers will have to give an account for what they have done: 2 Peter 2:4-9. We need to examine our faith to be sure we are following the Scriptures for our salvation and for our lives: 2 Corinthians 13:5. There truly is not salvation except through Jesus Christ: Acts 4:12.