

Summary

Jesus warned that many would come in His name and mislead many—especially in the last days. Today's message explains how false teachers and destructive heresies are infiltrating the church through social media, YouTube, and popular pulpits.

We break down why spiritual discernment is more important than ever; the rise of false teachers and how they subtly distort the truth; how to mark and avoid false teachers (Romans 16:17); what it means to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 1:3); and the difference between doctrinal error, false doctrine, and damnable heresy. We also evaluate specific teachings such as Calvinism, the pre-tribulation rapture, the Seven Mountain Mandate, and more.

This is not a call to cynicism, but to clarity and courage. We must protect the flock, uphold sound doctrine, and stay centered on Jesus—the spirit of true prophecy.

Why This Series Is Important

a) An Influx of Content

- Jesus said that many would come in His name and mislead many.
- He said many false prophets would arise and mislead many—not a few, but many.
- Perhaps even the majority of Christians will be misled in the end times.
- This danger is amplified by social media and YouTube, where heresy is easily accessed.

b) Discernment Is Needed

- Unless you are equipped from Scripture to discern, you will be deceived.
- Discernment must be based on a deep familiarity with the authentic Word of God.
- As bank tellers train with the real to recognize the counterfeit, so must we.

c) My Responsibility as a Shepherd

- Equip you to discern false prophets and teachers.
- Help you judge rightly without dishonoring true messengers.
- Guard you from both naivety and cynicism.
- Point you to Jesus as the center of all true prophecy.

The Rising of False Teachers in the End Times

a) Beware of Deception

- 2 Peter 2:1 states, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."
- 2 Peter 2:1 warns that false prophets arose among Israel, and false teachers will infiltrate the church.

- Peter draws a historical parallel: deception is not new but a repeated pattern.
- False prophets in the Old Testament (e.g., Hananiah in Jer. 28, Ezek. 13, Jer. 23) serve as the precedent.
- In the New Covenant, deception shifts from false prophets to false teachers due to the change in how God primarily communicates—from prophets to teachers.

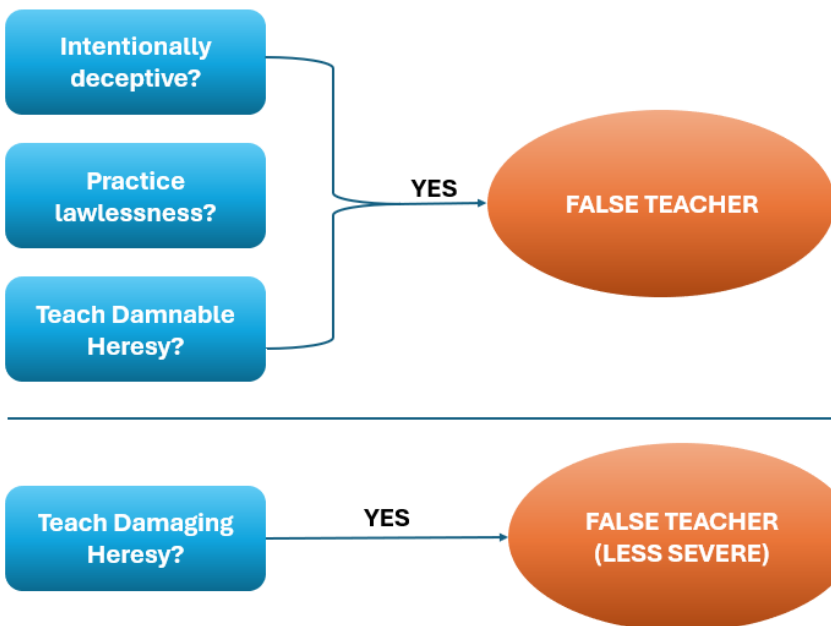
b) Characteristics of False Teachers

- They twist Scripture and deny Christ.
- They subtly distort truth, often mixing error with partial truths.
- Their influence comes from within the church, making their deception more dangerous.
- Their goal is to exploit grace and weaken doctrinal foundations.
- The church must remain anchored in the written Word and exercise ongoing discernment.

c) Three Things That Can Make a Teacher False

1. They move from being deceived to intentional deception.
2. They practice lawlessness.
3. They teach damaging or damnable heresy (2 Pet. 2:1).

d) How to Discern False Teachers



e) Mark and Avoid

- Romans 16:17 states, "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them."

- “Keep your eye on” means “to observe, watch carefully, look out for, keep an eye on.”
- This word implies deliberate and discerning observation, not just noticing but examining closely with the intent to identify.
- The English word “scope” (as in telescope, microscope) comes from this root.
- “Turn away from them” means “to turn away from, avoid, shun.”
- This word conveys a decisive action of separation—turning aside to avoid influence or association.
- Paul lovingly urges the Roman believers to be alert and discerning. He admonishes them to watch carefully for people who cause divisions and lay traps that could lead others into doctrinal or moral failure.
- These behaviors are contrary to the sound teaching they had already received. Once identified, they must turn away from such individuals—not debate or accommodate them, but distance themselves to protect the church.
- The KJV translates this as “mark and avoid.”

Contend Earnestly for the True Faith

a) Overview of Jude

- Jude 1:3 states, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”
- Jude originally intended to write a letter on shared salvation, but was compelled to urge believers to contend for the faith.
- “The faith” refers to the unchanging body of truth delivered once for all by the apostles.
- This apostolic faith must be upheld against false teachings, cultural revisions, and spiritual compromises.

b) Characteristics of Contending Earnestly

- Contending is not passive belief but active defense of truth.
- Requires clarity, courage, and gentleness in confronting error.
- Demands discernment, vigilance, and biblical grounding.
- Essential for both present faithfulness and future generations.

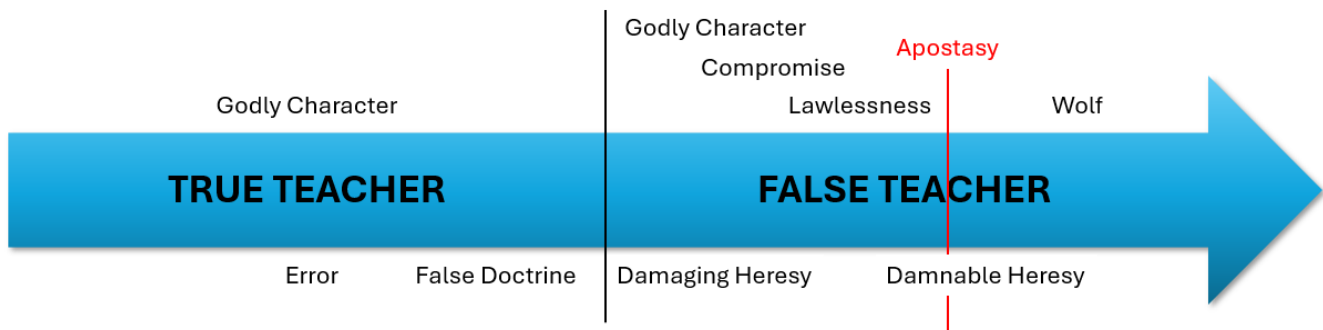
The Written Word Is the Unshakable Standard

a) Knowing God’s Word Is Vital

- Peter said we have the prophetic word made more sure (2 Pet. 1:19).
- The prophetic Word, affirmed by apostolic witness, is the supreme authority for truth and discernment.

- Scripture—not personal experience or subjective prophetic encounters—is the plumbline of truth.
- The apostolic gospel is preserved, sufficient, and ensured by God’s sovereignty to be infallible.
- Voddie Baucham said, “If we don’t know the Bible, if we don't know doctrine, if we don't know theology, it is virtually impossible for us to identify false prophets.”
- Scripture enables discernment between true and false teachers, and between Christ and counterfeits.

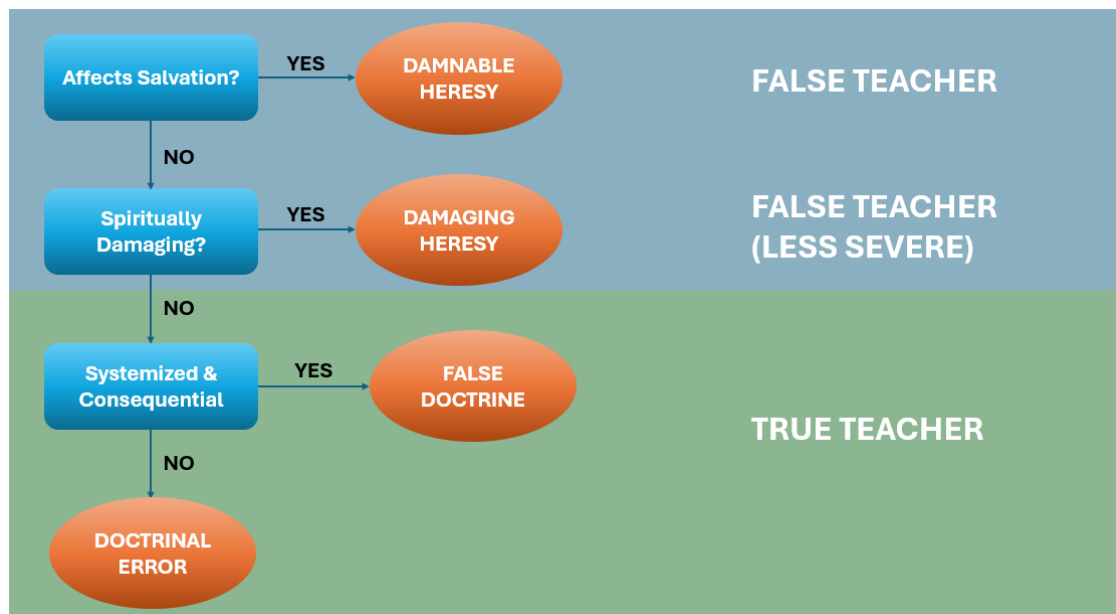
The False Teaching Spectrum



a) Explanation

- Understanding the difference between doctrinal error, false doctrine, damaging heresy, and destructive heresy helps us discern the severity and spiritual impact of different kinds of theological deviation.
- While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, there are important distinctions—especially in how Scripture and church history treat them.

b) How to Discern Different Kinds of Error



1 – Doctrinal Error

a) Definition

- A mistake in understanding or interpreting a biblical truth, but it doesn't necessarily undermine the gospel or one's salvation.
- It may arise from ignorance, immaturity, or poor interpretation, and often can be corrected with proper teaching.

b) Characteristics

- Often unintentional
- May not be widely spread or systematized
- Usually found in secondary issues (non-essential doctrines)
- Does not affect salvation or foundational Christian belief
- Doesn't lead to spiritual harm, ruin, or eternal damnation

c) Examples

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at salvation, not at a "second blessing" later.
- All believers must speak in tongues to prove they have the Holy Spirit.
- The coming antichrist kingdom will be a revived Ottoman Empire or Roman Empire.
- The antichrist will be Muslim or European.
- In Revelation 12, the woman is Israel and the manchild is Jesus.
- The breaking of the seals in Revelation 6 takes place during the Great Tribulation.
- Christians have authority to "bind" every problem or situation with a declaration.
- It's possible to achieve total sinlessness in this life.
- Every OT promise (like prosperity in the land) applies directly to modern believers.
- How much should the church be involved with politics.
- A pre-wrath rapture.
- We existed in heaven before we were born and were given a choice to come to earth and overcome in order to be the bride.
- The Nephilim in Genesis 6 were the offspring of fallen angels and women.

2 – False Doctrine

a) Definition

- Error in interpretation that has been turned into a systematic doctrine.
- These doctrines contradict biblical truth and can mislead people spiritually.
- It goes beyond a simple error—it introduces distortion of key biblical teachings and often leads people away from truth or godliness.

b) Characteristics

- Contradicts Scripture more clearly
- Can lead to confusion, legalism, or licentiousness
- Can leave people unprepared for the times or for the Lord
- Often systematized and taught as truth
- Does not affect salvation directly

Example 1: Calvinism

a) Teaching Summarized

- Summarized by TULIP
- T = Total depravity
- U = Unconditional election
- L = Limited atonement
- I = Irresistible grace
- P = Perseverance of the saints

b) What Makes It a False Doctrine

- God didn't preselect a remnant before time and creation who would be unconditionally saved.
- Jesus died for the everyone—not just the elect.
- God gives people freewill to accept Him or reject Him.
- Scripture doesn't teach eternal security.

c) Are Those Who Teach It False Teachers?

- Many Calvinist teachers that I've heard focus on the gospel and not the Calvinistic elements.
- Many don't emphasize unconditional election or divine determinism.

- These are not false teachers.
- They are true teachers who teach elements of a false doctrine.

Example 2: Wesley Arminianism

a) Teaching Summarized

- Justification is a pardon for past sins only.
- We are saved initially by faith alone, but final salvation is by works, obedience, and sanctification.
- We must overcome everything Jesus listed in Revelation 2-3 to be finally saved.
- Taught in the United Methodist church, Wesleyan church, the Church of the Nazarene, Pentecostal Holiness Church, and in various streams of Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

b) What Makes It a False Doctrine

- Scripture teaches that Christ's righteousness is credited to our account and therefore we are declared righteous.
- We don't go in and out of justification each time we sin and repent.
- Doesn't give the believer any assurance of salvation.
- Creates a life of rigorous confession.
- Works are required to maintain salvation.

c) Are Those Who Teach It False Teachers?

- No—because this is not a damnable heresy.
- Thankfully, these teachers are strong proponents of holiness and entire sanctification. They also firmly reject once saved, always saved.

Example 3: Pre-Tribulation Rapture

a) Teaching Summarized

- Before Jesus comes with His church at the second coming, He will come for His church in a secret rapture prior to the last seven years of this age.
- The church will not face the antichrist or be on the earth during the Day of the Lord judgments.
- The church will experience the judgment seat of Christ and participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb during the 7-year tribulation period.

b) What Makes It a False Doctrine

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is the clearest rapture passage and it teaches plainly that the rapture takes place after the resurrection of the dead.

- Revelation 20:4 shows that some of those who will be resurrected were killed by the antichrist, making the pre-tribulation rapture untenable.
- Scripture clearly teaches that the rapture will take place after the tribulation.
- The pre-tribulation rapture teaching leaves people unprepared for the time leading to the Lord's return.
- It could potentially help lead to a great falling away when people expected to be raptured out before the trouble hits and that doesn't happen.

c) Are Those Who Teach It False Teachers?

- This is a bit trickier than it might seem.
- If someone teaches a pre-tribulation rapture with humility—saying, “This is what I believe, but I could be wrong. We should all be prepared to face tribulation. Pray and seek the Lord about what Scripture truly teaches”—that kind of posture is relatively harmless.
- If someone teaches a pre-tribulation rapture with a dogmatic attitude—insisting they're right and all other views are wrong—and pressures others to adopt this view, the situation becomes more concerning.
- I still wouldn't consider them a false teacher.
- But if they also teach “once saved, always saved,” then they could potentially get close to crossing the line to becoming a false teacher.
- Together, these two doctrines can potentially become a damnable heresy—especially for those living in the end times who may face the Antichrist's reign.
- Believing both could lead someone to fall away from the Lord when real pressure comes.

Example 4: The Seven-Mountain Mandate

a) Teaching Summarized

- It's a teaching in some charismatic circles that Christians are called to take dominion over seven key areas of society in order to bring about cultural transformation and prepare the way for Christ's return.
- It's rooted in the idea that God has given the church a mandate to influence and rule over these "mountains" or spheres.
- These seven mountains are: 1) religion, 2) family, 3) education, 4) government, 5) media, 6) arts & entertainment, 7) business.
- These areas are viewed as cultural strongholds that Christians must "invade" or influence.
- Believers are encouraged to pursue leadership in these spheres to establish God's rule.
- Some proponents link this mandate to the fulfillment of the Great Commission or the ushering in of the kingdom of God on earth.

b) What Makes It a False Doctrine

- Nothing in the Bible remotely supports this idea.
- While we are called to be salt and light in culture, nowhere are we called to invade or to exercise dominion in these areas.
- George Eldon Ladd expressed the truth: the kingdom is both now and not yet.
- The truth is we influence culture as salt and light, but we don't exercise dominion in it, invade it, or take it over.
- But the seven-mountain mandate promotes a form of Christian dominionism, seeking political or cultural control.
- It's more about worldly power than Christ-like servanthood.
- The movement is sometimes associated with self-appointed prophets and apostles claiming divine authority to direct cultural transformation.
- These "prophets" and "apostles" believe they can make decrees and it will change culture and brings God's will to earth.
- This is a modern-day expression of post-millennialism—that God's kingdom will come on the earth in fullness through the church.
- That's why there's an overfocus on politics, revival, signs, wonders, and miracles.
- The focus is on external transformation rather than internal transformation.
- Scripture stresses internal readiness hastens the Lord's return, but the seven-mountain mandate emphasizes external transformation as the catalyst instead.
- The church taking dominion of mountains of culture could lead to what the church was like during the Dark Ages.

c) Are Those Who Teach It False Teachers?

- If someone distorts the Scriptures this much to promote the seven-mountain mandate, I question their ability to interpret Scripture in general.
- While I don't think some who teach the seven-mountain mandate makes them a false teacher, I wouldn't trust anyone who promotes this idea with any other teaching.
- Therefore, I wouldn't listen to anything else they had to say. But that's just me.

Example 4: Replacement Theology

a) Teaching Summarized

- It's the belief that the church has replaced Israel in God's prophetic agenda and that the promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament now apply spiritually to the church, not literally to ethnic or national Israel.

- Israel was God's chosen people, but because of their unbelief (especially rejection of Christ), they have been set aside.
- The church is now the "new Israel," inheriting God's covenant blessings.
- Old Testament promises to Israel (land, kingdom, etc.) are fulfilled spiritually in the church rather than literally for the Jewish people.
- There is no future prophetic role for ethnic or national Israel in God's redemptive plan.

b) What Makes It a False Doctrine

- This idea is not taught in Scripture.
- Contributes to anti-Semitism by devaluing the Jewish people's role in redemptive history.
- Spiritualizes too much of the Old Testament, ignoring the plain meaning of prophetic promises.
- Keeps people blinded to God's prophetic plans for Israel and distorts biblical prophecy.
- Distorts the clear meaning of biblical prophecy since much of it has to do with God's prophetic plans for Israel.
- The truth is God has clearly spoken through the Old Testament prophets, in many ways over many years, of His prophetic plans for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. But His prophetic plans can only be fulfilled in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

c) Are Those Who Teach It False Teachers?

- No—but I wouldn't listen to what they had to say about biblical prophecy, the end times, or Israel.

Example 5: Amillennialism

a) Teaching Summarized

- A view of biblical prophecy that teaches there will not be a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth, as described in Revelation 20.
- Instead, it interprets the "millennium" symbolically and believes it is happening now—spiritually—through Christ's reign from heaven.
- The millennium is symbolic of the current church age, which began with Christ's resurrection and will end at His return.
- Christ is reigning now from heaven over His kingdom, and Satan is currently "bound" in the sense that he cannot stop the spread of the gospel (Revelation 20:1–3 is seen as symbolic).
- There is no future earthly reign of Christ before the final judgment.
- The second coming, resurrection of the dead, final judgment, and new heavens and new earth all occur at the same time at the end of the age (a "one-stage" return of Christ).

b) What Makes It a False Doctrine

- It allegorizes clear prophecies.

- Interprets Revelation 20 and other prophetic texts symbolically rather than literally.
- Undermines the plain meaning of Scripture, the expectation of a literal reign of Christ on earth (Rev. 20:1–6), and promises made to Israel about land, peace, and restoration (e.g., Isa. 11; Zech. 14).
- It overlooks the future role of Israel, spiritualizing God's promises to Israel, applying them exclusively to the church.
- It diminishes the hope of Christ's literal reign. Rather than expecting Christ to return and reign bodily from Jerusalem, amillennialism teaches He is already reigning from heaven.
- This greatly minimizes Christ's coming kingdom and earthly reign, leading to complacency and weakening watchfulness and urgency.
- It conflates the church age with the kingdom age since amillennialism often sees the current church age as the fulfillment of kingdom promises.
- It often leads to Replacement Theology, teaching that the church has permanently replaced Israel in God's plan.
- The truth is Jesus Christ will return after the great tribulation, He will setup His kingdom in Jerusalem, and will literally rule the earth for a thousand years. During this time, every prophetic promise made to Israel will be fulfilled.

c) Are Those Who Teach It False Teachers?

- No, but I wouldn't listen to what they had to say about the book of Revelation or biblical prophecy.

Example 6: Partial Preterism

a) Teaching Summarized

- Partial Preterism is an interpretation of biblical prophecy that teaches many (but not all) end-times prophecies were fulfilled in the first century, particularly with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70.
- It stands in contrast to Futurism (which sees most prophecy as yet to be fulfilled) and Full Preterism (which sees all prophecy—including the second coming and resurrection—as already fulfilled, a view considered heretical).
- Matthew 24 (Olivet Discourse) and much of Revelation were fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Rome destroyed Jerusalem.
- The "great tribulation" already occurred in the first century as judgment upon apostate Israel.
- The "man of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2) and beast (Revelation 13) refer to first-century figures such as Nero or other Roman emperors.
- The "coming of the Son of Man" in passages like Matthew 24:30 is interpreted as a coming in judgment, not the final second coming.
- They still affirm that the bodily return of Christ is still future, the resurrection of the dead and final judgment are future events, and that salvation through faith in Christ and other core doctrines of Christianity.

- People find this view appealing because it fits Jesus' time statements (e.g., "this generation will not pass away," Matt. 24:34), it makes sense of the urgency and expectation seen in the New Testament, and it avoids the speculative excesses of some modern futurist interpretations.

b) What Makes It a False Doctrine

- It weakens the expectation of Christ's future return by redefining some "coming" passages.
- It reinterprets clear future events as past, often claiming that events like the coming of the Son of Man (Matt. 24:30) or major judgments in Revelation already happened in A.D. 70.
- This leads to confusion between Christ's judgment on Jerusalem and His future judgments upon the earth, confusing prophetic timelines.
- A tendency to spiritualize or downplay physical, global events described in Scripture (e.g., the resurrection of the dead, the visible return of Christ, cosmic signs).
- It can redefine the nature of Christ's return and weaken the urgency of our hope in His appearing (Titus 2:13; Acts 1:11).
- It undermines prophetic warning for the future tribulation.
- By saying that the great tribulation already occurred in A.D. 70, Partial Preterism can lead believers to:
 - Be unprepared for future deception, persecution, and the rise of the Antichrist.
 - Disregard end-time warnings in Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation as irrelevant or fulfilled.
- Jesus, Paul, and John gave these warnings to prepare believers in all generations—especially those in the last days (2 Thess. 2:3–4; Rev. 13).
- It dismisses a literal fulfillment of prophecies that seem to refer to global cataclysmic events (e.g., the sun darkened, stars falling, etc.).
- It opens the door to Full Preterism, which is a heretical denial of the future resurrection and second coming.
- Leaves people unprepared for the events leading to the Lord's return.
- Makes biblical prophecy virtually irrelevant because people believe it was already fulfilled.
- The truth is Matthew 24 is a prophecy of the future that hasn't yet been fulfilled, the book of Revelation was written in 95 A.D., and this book hasn't been fulfilled either. These are all prophecies that will be fulfilled in the future.

c) Are Those Who Teach It False Teachers?

- No—but I wouldn't listen to what they had to say about the book of Revelation or biblical prophecy.