

#28

The Leaven Of False Doctrine

During the Passover Feast the Israelites were to eat no leavened bread or to even have any leaven in their homes. The punishment of neglecting this command was to be cut off from Israel. Moses writes: "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." (Exodus 12:15)ⁱ

Leaven was symbolic of false doctrines and heresies that would cut them off from the kingdom of God. This can be seen in Jesus' instruction to his disciples. He said: "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." The disciples misunderstood what Jesus meant and he said further: "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (Matthew 16:6, 11-12)ⁱⁱ

The apostle Paul makes it clear that a little false doctrine corrupts the whole. He writes: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Gal 5:9; see also 1 Cor 5:6) This is why the Israelites were commanded to purge their homes of leaven during the week of Passover. It was symbolic of purging their lives of false doctrines and heresies that could lead them to eternal separation from God which leads to eternal damnation, which is eternal death.

The instructions and warnings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are equally applicable to the word of God. A little false doctrine leaveneth or corrupts the whole word of God and can lead the unwary reader into eternal damnation. Isaiah wrote: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20) According to the Isaiah's inspired words, if a Bible has false doctrines, it has no light. The Apostle John writes: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." (1 Jn 2:22) He further writes: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (2 Jn 7)

The flesh that John is referring to is our flesh. We have a risen and living Saviour in Jesus Christ who comes into our flesh through the Holy Spirit when we invite him in. The Apostle Peter says that Jesus is a light that shines in a dark place which is our hearts; he writes: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the **day star arise in your hearts:**" (2 Pe 1:19) We know that Jesus is the day star that arises in our hearts because John tells us that Jesus is the day star in Revelation 22:16; he writes: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and **morning star.**"

God Ministry Gifts God Ordains On His True Servants

Ephesians 4:11-14 – ¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the

sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

False Teachings

2 Timothy 2:15-18 – ¹⁵ Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; ¹⁸ Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Romans 16:17-18 – ¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸ For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Beware of Deceivers

2 Timothy 3:13 – But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Beware of False Believers

Titus 1:10 & 16 – ¹⁰ For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision... ¹⁶ They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Beware of Teachers of Lies

1 Timothy 4:1-8 – ¹ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate^a concerning the faith.

Beware of False Apostles

1 Corinthians 11:13-15 – ¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Beware of False Prophets

Matthew 24:11-12 – ¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

1 John 4:1-3 – ¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. ² Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: ³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

2 Peter 2:1-2 – ¹ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Matthew 17:15-20 – ¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Beware of False Christs

Matthew 24:24 – For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Mark 13:21-22 – ²¹ And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: ²² For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Luke 21:7-8 – ⁷ And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? ⁸ And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

Discerning The True From The False

Luke 4:4 – ⁴ And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Isaiah 8:20 – ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no **light in them**.

1 John 4:1-3 – ¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. ² Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ **is** come in the flesh is of God: ³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ **is come in the flesh** is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Deuteronomy 18:22 – When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Summary

God has his faithful servants. God bestows ministry gifts on his servants. Among others, these gifts include: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. But there are also false believers, liars and deceivers. These people demonstrate false gifts of Apostles, Prophets and Teachers in order to deceive God's followers. God's faithful should have nothing to do with these deceivers and liars. They will mix truth and error but the error is like leaven which affects everything they teach.

In order to identify these liars and deceivers, God's believers must know his word. Deceivers and liars will reveal themselves by teachings that contradict the word of God. If they speak contrary to the word of God, "it is because there is no **light in them**." The word of God warns:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." (1 Timothy 4:1-2) "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Peter 2:2) At this time men "will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:3-4) These "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:12-17) "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such *serve not* our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17-19) If we identify these deceivers we shall "henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Ephesians 4:11-15) "Take heed that ye be not deceived." (Luke 21:7-9) for "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24:8-13) They "shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matthew 24:24-26) These deceivers "profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." (Titus 1:9-16)

i See also Exodus 12:19-20; 13:3, 7; 23:18; 34:25; Leviticus 2:11; 6:17; and Deuteronomy 16:3-4.

ii See also Mark 8:15 and Luke 12:1.