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“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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WHY I BELIEVE IN THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST

By Daniel Chamberlin

The doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is an important, biblical, historical truth. It is one that needs to be reaffirmed in our day.

Let us define the issue. The question I seek to answer is, “Is the relationship of Father and Son eternal and essential in the Godhead; or is it temporal, incarnational and pertaining only to the economy of redemption?” I believe the Scriptures teach the former: that the paternal-filial relationship in the Godhead stands from eternity. The Son is eternally the Son. He is eternally begotten, or generated, of the Father. There is no point in eternity in which the Son began to be the Son, and there is no point in eternity in which the Son was not begotten of the Father.

Obviously, our earthly ideas of begetting must be set aside when we consider the eternal existence of the Persons of the Godhead. There is no posteriority; each Person is coeternal. There is no subordination; each Person is coequal. There is no sexual reproduction. Some have jested, “Who was the eternal mother?” But such sophists will soon be asking, “Who was the mother of Adam or the angels?” After all, they too are called sons of God (Luke 3:38; Job 1:6, etc.). We creatures want to think of our Creator in terms of our own limitations. But the finite can never fully comprehend the infinite. Eternal concepts are unfathomable for creatures of time. We simply must be content to believe what
(Continued page 2, left column, bottom)

IDENTIFYING FALSE TEACHERS

By Wayne Camp

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 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.

INTRODUCTION

SOME WAYS IN WHICH YOU WILL NOT IDENTIFY FALSE TEACHERS

You will not identify false teachers by the fact that they do not use the Bible. False teachers use the Scriptures but they twist them to suit their own purposes. **2 Peter 3:16 As also in all his**

epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. They pervert the word of the living God. **Jeremiah 23:36 And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man’s word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.**

False teachers deride the word of God, and put a wrong sense upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel. **Galatians 1:6-7 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:** (See FALSE TEACHERS Cont. P. 7, Top L. Col)

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Scripture says about this admittedly complex subject. The Father and Son and Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal, and at the same time these personal distinctions are sustained.

Why is this subject important?

1. We ought to be faithful to the Scripture in what is revealed to us. Certainly there is much about God that is incomprehensible to us. Furthermore we all have our individual "blind spots" and must be patient with one another. But we must go as far as we can in the knowledge of the Holy.

2. The glory of Christ is a paramount doctrine. If Scripture reveals Him as the eternal Son, then it is detracting from His glory to believe otherwise.

3. The Sonship of Christ is vitally involved with our salvation, as the following verses declare:

(1) ***John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***

(2) ***John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.***

(3) ***John 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.***

(4) ***John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.***

(5) ***Acts 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.***

(6) ***1 John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.***

Error concerning His Sonship implies error about salvation altogether.

4. Our whole Christian experience, our whole walk with God, is based on the Trinity (John 16:23-24; 1John 5:5, 13). A lack of clear definition of the Persons in the Godhead will lead to a lack of clarity in our own personal experience.

Though some good men have denied this doctrine, let us endeavor, as Isaac Backus said, to "leave good men and bad men out of the question, and inquire: What saith the Scripture?"

What Scripture Says About Eternal Sonship

1. ***John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of***

the Father,) full of grace and truth. His glory as eternal Logos is the same as His glory as only begotten Son. Compare 1 John 1:1-3 where three terms are used to speak of the Second Person of the Tri-unity for hitting on page 300 and some more space fill in—“Word, eternal life, Son”—without any apparent distinction.

2. **John 1:18** *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Under the title of “Son” He is in the bosom of the Father. That is, He possesses perfect and intimate knowledge of God the Father.

3. **Matthew 11:27** *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* The knowledge between the Persons as Father and Son is exclusive and is essential to their Being. It is not an acquired knowledge, as is ours by revelation.

4. **Hebrews 7:28** *For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* God’s oath was made to the Son, appointing Him to be the great High Priest. Christ is not the Son because He is the High Priest; rather, He is the High Priest because He is the Son. He is not the Son because He is Mediator; rather, He is Mediator because He is the Son. His eternal glory as the Son qualifies and fits Him for the office.

5. **John 17:5** *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Christ’s glory as the Son with the Father was His before creation.

6. **John 17:24** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.* The Fatherly love for the Son pertains to the realm of eternity and is without beginning.

7. **Colossians 1:16** *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that*

are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and I don’t know if I have enough players and have to be pieced together you’ll have to have a piece of together go back and do that on a for him. In the context, the “him” is the “dear Son might get some label on” of the “Father” (v. 12-13). Under the designation of “photo should print this out taking the lead in the week doing it really the printer nine Son” He created all things, including things in heaven. Therefore, His Sonship is not a created relationship, but one of eternal standing.

8. Some verses speak of the **Father** sending the **Son** into the world.

(1) **John 5:23** *He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.*

(2) **1 John 4:14** *And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.* This implies that He was the Son before He was sent. We never read that the Father sent into the world the One who became the Son.

9. Similarly, we read of **God** sending His **Son** into the world or giving His **Son**.

(1) **1 John 4:9-10** *God sent his only begotten Son into the world.* The wording here, as elsewhere, points to the Son existing as the Son prior to His arrival into this world.

(2) **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.*

10. Again, we read of the **Father** sending **Christ**:

(1) **John 10:36** *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

(2) **John 16:28** *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

(3) **John 20:21** *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Fatherhood necessitates Sonship in the deity. There was a Father already existing as Father who sent Christ. Therefore, there must have been a Son existing as Son before He came into this*

world. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 8:6 speaks of God's Fatherhood as synonymous with His Godhood. ***But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.***

11. ***Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*** His being made of a woman did no more make Him to be the Son than did His being made under the law. Consider the parallel construction of John 1:14 ***And the Word was made flesh.*** Inasmuch as He was the Word before He was made flesh, He was the Son before He was made of a woman. Similarly we read in Romans 8:3 that ***God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.*** He was the Son before He took human flesh.

12. ***1 John 3:8 the Son of God was manifested.*** Consider the parallel construction of ***1 Timothy 3:16 God was manifest in the flesh,*** and ***1 John 1:2 the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*** In each case the thing said to be manifest existed before its manifestation.

13. ***John 11:4 This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*** The glory of God as God and the glory of the Son as God is one and the same.

14. ***Acts 9:20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*** The newly converted Saul of Tarsus preached Christ in His highest glory in terms of Sonship. He was the One who had confronted him, spoken to him and blinded him with His glory while he was en route to Damascus.

15. ***Matthew 4:3, 6 If [or since] thou be the Son of God...*** The devil was seeking to flatter Christ by calling Him by His loftiest name. If it were merely an incarnational name bespeaking humiliation, it would have defeated the devil's purpose to call him "Son of God."

16. ***Matthew 28:19 baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*** If we understand "Father" and

"Holy Spirit" to be eternal Persons in those designations, then it follows that the same is true of the Son. The same order is given in 1 John 5:7 ***For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*** The One who is essentially the "Word" is essentially the "Son."

17. ***1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*** The true God is the One who is defined in terms of Fatherhood and Sonship.

18. ***Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*** His Sonship is spoken of as the height of His glory, not the depth of humiliation in His incarnation. If incarnational Sonship is true, we would expect the verse to read, ***"Because he was a Son He learned obedience..."*** But the verse intends a contrast of His glorious Sonship with the depth of His humiliation in incarnational sufferings.

19. ***John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*** It does not say, "making himself inferior to, or subject to, God." That would not have angered the Jews. The Father-Son relationship in the deity is not one of superior-inferior, but rather of **equality**. Christ's Sonship is an essential perfection (i.e. perfection in the very essence of the divine Being, not a mere incarnational, incidental feature).

20. ***Hebrews 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*** This quotation from Psalm 45 is the Father speaking to the Son long before His incarnation.

21. ***Proverbs 8:22-24 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth.*** Wisdom personified is Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). These verses speak of His

being possessed, set up and brought forth from eternity.

22. **Proverbs 30:4** *who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?* Here the Son of God is referred to long before His incarnation. He is spoken of as creating the earth along with the One who must necessarily be considered as His "Father."

23. **Micah 5:2** *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* The "goings forth" here most naturally refers to origin or **generation**. It is said to be from **everlasting**, hence the concept of "eternal generation."

Objections to the Doctrine

Objection 1. "What about Luke 1:35, ***And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God?***"

Answer: This verse does not say that Christ's incarnation made Him to become the Son of God. Instead, it tells us why He is *called* by that title. Following the method of this objection, we might also say that His resurrection made Him to become the Son, according to Acts 13:33 ***God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*** I understand Paul here to refer to the **human** nature of Christ being "begotten" in resurrection from the grave. The other citations of Psalm 2:7 in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:5 ***For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?*** and Hebrews 5:5 ***So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee***) seem to refer to the **divine** nature which was begotten on the eternal "day" or "eternal now." This is the same idea that is in view in the context of Psalm 2:7. Perhaps this same distinction of human and divine natures in the

Person of Christ accounts for the phraseology of Isaiah 9:6 ***For unto us a child is born [humanity], unto us a son is given [deity].***

Romans 1:4 tells us that His resurrection ***declared Him to be the Son of God.*** So did His birth. These earthly acts proved and acknowledged Him to be what He already was, but they did not constitute Him as such.

Objection 2. Some object on the ground that we do not find the terms "eternal Sonship" and "eternal generation" in Scripture. But this argument is only employed when it is convenient. Lack of biblical terminology to define a doctrine does not necessarily determine the validity of the doctrine. The terms "trinity," "penal substitution" and "church perpetuity" are not used, but these principles are certainly found in Scripture. While we ought to use Scriptural terminology as much as we can, the use of non-biblical terminology is no solid objection.

Objection 3. Some stumble at the doctrine because they think it implies some inferiority in the Person of Christ. But Sonship in the essential divine relationship does not imply such. The Son and the Spirit are equal in glory to the Father. As to their essence they are eternally self-existent; as to their Persons they are eternally derived—the Son from the Father, and the Spirit from the Father and the Son. There is order in the Trinity, but not inferiority.

In the economy of redemption, the Son did assume a subordinate, submissive role in His state of humiliation and death. But this humbling did not make Him the Son. It made Him a Servant (Philippians 2:7), but not a Son. The concepts of Servant and Son are very distinct.

Concluding Observations

The doctrine of eternal Sonship spares us from confusion in the Trinity. Without Father, Son and Spirit as eternal designations we have no biblical way to differentiate the Persons of the Trinity. What is there to know about the Trinity apart from these designations? Without them we are left with featureless, indistinguishable Persons in their essential

glory. The Father could have been the Son or the Spirit, etc. In fact, we could not rightly speak of the "First Person" or "Second Person" or "Third Person." There would be no identifiable structure in the Trinity at all. If there is any differentiation between the Persons, it must be essential and eternal, not merely economical and temporal.

You got it from blood checked revelation for the glory of the triune God and for the preservation of His glorious gospel!

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YOUR ENEMY!

By Joseph Alleine

"I myself, the Sovereign Lord, am now your enemy!" Ezekiel 5:8

Unconverted sinner! You are not only against God—but God is against you! As there is no friend like Him—so there is no enemy like Him. As much as heaven is above the earth, omnipotence above impotence—so much more terrible is it to fall into the hands of the living God, than into the paws of bears and lions, yes, furies or devils! God Himself will be your tormentor! Who or what shall deliver you out of His hands? Sinner, I think this would go like a dagger to your heart—to know that God Himself is your enemy! Oh where will you go? Where will you shelter yourself?

The infinite God is engaged against you! He hates all workers of iniquity. Man, does not your heart tremble to think of your being an object of God's hatred? "As surely as I live, when I sharpen My flashing sword and begin to carry out justice, I will bring vengeance on My enemies and repay those who hate Me!" (Deuteronomy 32:40-41)

The power of God is mounted like a mighty cannon against you. Sinner, the power of God's anger is against you—and power and anger together make fearful work. There is no escaping His hands—no breaking loose from His prison.

"O consider this, you who forget God, lest He tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!" (Psalm 50:22)

Submit to mercy. Let not *dust* and *stubble* battle against the Almighty. ***"Woe to him who strives with his Maker!" (Isaiah 45:9)***

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More details will be published later.

(FALSE TEACHERS Continued From Page 1)
7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. False teachers who have transformed themselves as the apostles of Christ can be expected to use the word of God but they will use it in a deceitful way.

You will not identify false teachers by the fact that they do not preach in the name of Christ. **Matthew 7:21-22 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?** They will say, "Lord, Lord." They will preach and prophesy in the name of Christ. They may cast out demons in the name of Christ. They may do what appear to be wonderful works in the name of Christ.

We must remember that their wonders and works are lying wonders. **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**

False teachers will not be identified by the fact that they do not act like true God-called preachers. False teachers will do everything they can to convince you that they are God-called men preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ. They will transform themselves as apostles of Christ. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15 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.** False teachers will have a form of godliness. **2 Timothy 3:5-8 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 concerning the faith.

False teachers will not be identified because they are not spiritual. All unregenerate people are spiritual. **Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.** John clearly indicates that false teachers are spiritual. **1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.** The spirituality of false teachers comes from demonic spirits. **1 Timothy 4:1 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.** The spirituality of false teachers is the result of their being deceived by these demonic spirits. **2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.** That same evil spirit, Satan, who works in the children of disobedience entered into Judas Iscariot, who was certainly a false apostle. **Luke 22:3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.**

False teachers will not be identified by the fact that they cannot tell convincing stories about the miracles they have worked. False teachers follow the example of their father, the devil who is the father of liars. **John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

False teachers are adept liars. **1 Timothy 4:1-2 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and he and he doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.** Before I started preaching I recall hearing A. A. Allen, a leading Pentecostal preacher playing on the radio, that he ran out gas out in the desert but after he got down on his knees by his gas spout and prayed and gas began to run out of this tank and spill out on the ground. This false teacher was later found to be an alcoholic and was charged with abusing a young

girl.

Oral Roberts claimed that out in the desert he saw a 90 foot Jesus who told him to build a hospital in Oklahoma City with 777 rooms when there was a surplus of hospital rooms in the city. Allegedly Jesus told him this hospital would cost 100 million dollars. He ran out of money long before the hospital was complete. He came back and told the people on his TV program that the same 90 foot Jesus had appeared to him again and told him that he, Jesus Christ, had made a mistake and had not taken inflation into consideration. He had told Mr. Roberts that he needed to raise another \$400 million. Oral built his hospital but no more than 70 rooms were ever occupied. Eventually he had to sell it and I understand it is now an office building. When a false teacher tells such a tall tale it is easy to catch him in his lie. Jesus who knows all things did not make a mistake. Mr. Roberts made the mistake when he blamed Jesus for such an error. Roberts was the typical lying false teacher.

Paul warned of the lying of these false teachers. **1 Timothy 4:1-2** *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.*

Jeremiah exposed the lying of these false teachers. **Jeremiah 23:14** *I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. Jeremiah 23:32* *Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.*

Paul warned the pastors of the church in Ephesus that there would arise false teachers among them who would speak perverse things (lies). **Acts 20:30** *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

Do not be deceived by the fantastic lies of false teachers; they can be very convincing and can deceive with their good words and fair speeches.

Romans 16:18 *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.*

FALSE TEACHERS CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY THEIR IMITATION OF THE SIGNS AND MIRACLES WORKED BY THE APOSTLES.

Other than those worked by Christ, in New Testament times most, if not all, of the miracles of the New Testament were worked by apostles and were called signs of an apostle. **2 Corinthians 12:12** *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.* The primary purpose of miracles in New Testament times was to approve and authenticate the message of Christ and his apostles. The miracles of Jesus were designed to approve him before men. **Acts 2:22** *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.* God approved the apostles before men by miracles and signs. **Hebrews 2:3-4** *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?* Also, the preaching of the apostles was confirmed by the miraculous signs they worked. **Mark 16:20** *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.* It should be remembered that the primary purpose of miracles in New Testament times was not the healing of the bodies of those who were healed. As already pointed out they were given to authenticate and approve the preaching of God's men. Today we judge what one preaches by the word of God. They did not have the completed word of God, therefore God works miracles and signs denied them to bear witness of his approval of their work.

God approved the preaching of Paul and Barnabas by miraculous signs. **Acts 14:3** *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word*

of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. Acts 19:11-12 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Satan is the great imitator of the work of God. In Old Testament times Satan often enabled false teachers to imitate the miraculous work of God's men. The sorcerers and magicians of Pharaoh were enabled to imitate the miracle of Aaron's rod being turned into a serpent. *Exodus 7:10-12 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.*

When Moses turned the water to blood the magicians of Egypt were able to imitate that miracle. *Exodus 7:20-22 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. 22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.*

In New Testament times false teachers also imitated the work of the apostles of Jesus Christ. *2 Peter 2:1-2 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.*

False prophets transform themselves as apostles of Christ. *2 Corinthians 11:13-15 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. One way in which they transform themselves as the apostles of Christ is by working miracles, signs and lying wonders. *2 Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.*

There are many warnings in the New Testament about false apostles working miracles. Jesus warned us of these satanic imitators of the apostles of Christ. *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.* John speaks of these satanic imitators and the book of Revelation. *Revelation 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

Not only do these false teachers imitate the miracles of the apostles of Christ. They also imitate the preaching of the apostles of Christ. We should remember that false preachers preach another Jesus and another gospel. *2 Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*

The other gospel which the false apostles preach is actually a perversion of the true gospel of Christ. *Galatians 1:6-9 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* These ministers of Satan can

sound so genuine and come so close to preaching the truth that sometimes even God's people will be misled. That was true in the church at Galatia. This caused Paul to lament what happened to the Galatians. **Galatians 3:1** *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*

THE MANNER IN WHICH CHRISTIANS SHOULD TREAT FALSE TEACHERS.

If you wonder how God feels about false teachers you need only look to the law. Under the law of Moses false prophets would be put to death. **Deuteronomy 13:1-5** *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.*

Paul expressed very strong feelings about false teachers. He desired that these false teachers be accursed or cut off. **Galatians 1:8-9** *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* Paul wanted to be sure that the Galatian brethren understand how serious he was about this matter. Therefore, he repeated himself to emphasize the

seriousness of false teachers and their gospel.

What is to be our actions and attitudes toward false teachers and their doctrines? We are to withdraw from, refrain from having anything to do with false teachers for they speak perverse doctrines. **1 Timothy 6:5** *Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.* We are to shun and avoid false teachers. **2 Timothy 3:5-7** *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.*

Consider what the apostle John said about our treatment of false teachers. Should we bid God's blessings upon them? Not according to the inspired message of John. **2 John 10-11** *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*

We are to treat false teachers as ravening wolves. **Matthew 7:15** *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* The Greek word for ravening is *har'-pax* [ἄρπαξ]. The word appears five times in the New Testament. It is translated *ravening* one time. It is translated *extortioner* four times. Jesus looked upon false teachers as ravenous, robbing extortioners. He had no kind words to say about false teachers.

Paul was no kinder than Jesus when it came to false teachers. He taught us that we should consider them to be dogs and evil workers. **Philippians 3:2** *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.*

We are try them and their teaching by the word of God. **1 John 4:1** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* We should be careful whom we believe. We should be careful about what we believe. We must judge them and their teaching as well as their practice.

If you do not like the idea of judging false teachers and what they preach, how about inspecting their fruit. We are to inspect their fruit. **Matthew 7:15-20** *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.

We are to *mark* them. **Romans 16:17** *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.* The Greek word that is translated *mark* is *skopevw*. It means to look carefully at them, to scope them out. To avoid (*ἐκκλίνω*) false teachers means to shun them, refrain from having anything to do with them.

Remember that the ways of false prophets are pernicious. **2 Peter 2:1-3** *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. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.* Their ways are destructive. Their doctrines are damnable. They themselves are headed for damnation.

GOD'S PREACHERS SHOULD FAITHFULLY EXPOSE FALSE TEACHERS AND THEIR PERNICIOUS DOCTRINES.

Old Testament preachers faithfully exposed false teachers. Solomon called on his readers to refuse to listen to false teachers. **Proverbs 19:27** *Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.* Isaiah pleaded with Israel to avoid those who cause them to err from the truth. **Isaiah 3:12** *As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.*

Isaiah was very bold in his denunciation of false teachers. **Isaiah 8:19-20** *And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? 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.*

Jesus did not hesitate to denounce false teachers and warned his hearers of the danger of their doctrines. **Matthew 7:15** *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* He declared that there would be many such false teachers. **Matthew 24:11** *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.* Jesus warned that these false teachers would be very deceptive. **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.*

Other New Testament preachers warned of false teachers. Peter warned of false teachers. **2 Peter 2:1-2** *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.* The apostle John warned of false teachers. **1 John 4:1** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* Jude warned of false teachers who had crept in secretly. **Jude 3-4** *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

All good ministers of Jesus Christ of Jesus Christ will expose false teachers and their pernicious doctrines. **1 Timothy 4:1, 6** *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; 6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

CONCLUSION

My dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, let me admonish you to avoid false teachers. Don't listen to them. Draw back from them. Avoid them. Judge them by the word of God. Don't be deceived by their teaching. Regardless of how convincing they may sound don't be led astray or confused by them. In these last days they continue to multiply. Sometimes they are even in the Lord's true churches. False teachers even arise among those who appear to be true ministers of Jesus Christ. Shun all false teachers no matter how large a following they have. Satan is the master deceiver; his ministers are not far behind him. They lie, they deceive, and they transform themselves as apostles of Christ. I cannot warn you too strongly about this matter.

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