

Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets – Part 1

Deception: When Darkness Masquerades as Light

1. Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed...

- Last meeting we talked about Jesus being the one true light that came into the world and what it means for us believers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world that Jesus spoke of in **Matt. 5:13-16**.
- We also discussed the warning Jesus gave about our salt losing its flavor and how conforming to the world can make us less salty, lukewarm, and dim our light making us less effective and having less power and impact on the world. We also discussed being born again and how the Holy Spirit can help us be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
- As we read in **Phil. 2:12-16**, we are to be shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people and we are to be firmly holding onto the Word of life and offering it to everyone. We cannot do this if our salt has lost its flavor and our light is dim because of conforming to the world.
- We also talked about the cost of being His disciple, the cost of following Jesus, living in the light, not loving this world, and loving one another. **Lk. 14:25-35, 1 Jn. 1:1 – 4:21**.
- Now we are going to dig into another warning: Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets.

2. This is a warning: Beware of False Light, False Teachers, and False Prophets

- a) Let's start with continuing where we left off about the light of Christ being in us and how we are to let that light shine which we read about in **Lk.11:33**. Let's read this in more context and discuss. **Lk. 11:33-36 (NLT, AMP)**. Also, in **Mat. 6:22** sandwiched between "where your treasure is, there your heart is" and "no one can serve two masters" referring to God vs. money. I find it interesting that Mathew put "your eye being like a lamp" between those two scriptures.
- b) **Lk. 11:34** and **Mat. 6:22** talks about our eyes being like a light to our body. It can be healthy or bad. ~ Discuss this, what does this mean?
- c) **Lk. 11:35 Expositor's Bible Commentary**: *"Good eyes admit (allow) light, bad ones do not. Jesus implies that the individual is responsible for receiving light. The eye is thus a "lamp," not in the sense that it emits light, but that through it the body receives light. ...if we think we can generate our own light, we must beware lest that inner "light" prove to be darkness."*
- d) **Lk. 11:35 Believers Bible Commentary**: *"The men Jesus was addressing thought themselves to be very wise. They supposed that they had a great deal of light. But the Lord Jesus warned them to consider the fact that the light that was in them was actually darkness. Their own pretended wisdom and superiority kept them from Him."*
* Worldly wisdom can be a false light; light that is actually darkness.

- e) *"When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy, your body is filled with darkness."* I also like to think of this as the eye being a receiver and what it is receiving can affect your whole body. Be careful what you are looking at and how you are perceiving it. This ties into discernment.
- f) **Lk. 11:35 Got Questions Commentary:** *"Here our Lord describes the eye as a lamp which lights the entire body. Our eyes are the entrance to our hearts and minds and, as such, they provide a doorway to our very souls. When He referred to "good" eyes, He meant eyes that not only see well, but also perceive well. It is not only what we see, but how we perceive what we see that makes the difference between godliness and ungodliness, between light and darkness. Bad eyes lead to bad perception, but if our eyes are good, our whole person will be illuminated. If we are in a lighted room, we see everything clearly. We can move around obstacles and locate whatever we're looking for. But walking in darkness results in stumbling, falling, and groping for some secure thing to hang on to. ... The Bible tells us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. That's his great deception—to make people think they've found the light when in fact it's the darkness of false light. His intention is to blind us to truth and corrupt our minds, and he uses our eyes to gain entrance to our hearts. He parades before us all manner of evil, from the deluge of pornography on the internet to the endless barrage of the world's goods that appeal to our materialistic impulses. He deludes us into believing that these things will make us happy, fulfilled people, when all the while they are robbing us of the very joy we long for. He wants us to allow more and more darkness into our minds through the books we read, the movies we watch, and the images we allow our eyes to linger upon. In that way, the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ is obscured to us.*
- g) **Lk. 11:35 (combination of several commentaries):** *Jesus gives a serious caution: we must ensure that what we think is light within us is not actually darkness. This warning highlights the danger of self-deception or misplaced confidence in beliefs that may not align with true spiritual truth. It urges self-examination and discernment to avoid being misled by false teachings, impure motives, or incorrect understanding that can masquerade as light. - We are not to let the light within us become spiritually darkened which implies ignorance or error to the Truth of God's Word. ... This verse emphasizes the importance of allowing God's light to fully penetrate every aspect of our lives."*

3. Warnings about being deceived by false teachers which can produce false light, that light you think you have which can be darkness.

- a) Warnings about being deceived by false prophets and false teachers: **2 Tim. 4:3-4 (AMPC), Col. 2:8-10 (NLT).**
- b) **Deception is Satan's favorite weapon of choice.**
- c) Satan is the father of lies and there is no truth in Him: **Jn. 8:44 (NLT).**
- d) Satan transforms himself into an angel of light: **2 Cor. 11:12-15 (NKJV).**
- e) The god of this world has blinded the unbelievers' minds [that they should not discern the truth]: **2 Cor. 4:4 (NLT).**

- f) The false teaching problem is not a new thing. Paul was addressing this problem with Jewish believers that were straying from the truth and going back to the law. There is also a warning to the false teacher: **Gal. 1:6-10, 5:5-10 (AMP)**.
- g) Beware of false prophets who are disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves: **Mat. 7:15 (NLT)**. - Something I have been experiencing and witnessing through conversations and debates with some fellow Christians who are being deceived by false teaching is that because they are being deceived by false light and false teaching, they can be wolves and not even realize it. When someone is deceived, they are believing a lie. I've heard this said this way which I think explains it well: *"Satan's best operatives are the ones that are themselves deceived sincerely."*
- h) False teaching is like tares being sown among the wheat. It is hard to tell the difference between the two. In the context of this study, I am referring to truth vs. falsehoods regarding the word of God. There is a lot of twisting of the scriptures going on right now and it is accelerating. Let's read this parable about the wheat and tares. Parable of the wheat and tares: **Mat. 13:24-29 (ESV)** *"but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."* Further explained in **Mat. 13:36-43 (ESV)**.
- i) **BibleRef commentary on the "tares"**: "The enemy's attack takes the form of sabotage. He sows a second round of plants, weeds, mixed right in with the wheat. It's possible that this was a known form of vandalism, and that the people listening to Jesus had seen or heard of this very thing happening before. Scholars suggest the audience likely would have imagined the weeds to be an inedible type of ryegrass called "darnel" or "tares." Prior to modern sorting techniques, this was a difficult weed to manage. It looks almost exactly like wheat, at first. By the time it can be clearly distinguished, it's already fully rooted in the ground.
- j) **1 Jn. 4:1-3 (ESV & AMP)** - Discerning false prophets: do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.
- k) **1 Jn. 4:1 Believer's Bible Commentary**: *"Having mentioned the Holy Spirit, John is reminded that there are other spirits abroad in the world today, and that the children of God need to be warned against them. Thus he cautions the believer not to trust every spirit. The word spirit here probably refers primarily to teachers but not exclusively so. Just because a man speaks about the Bible, God, and Jesus does not mean that he is a true child of God. We are to test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. These are people who profess to accept Christianity, but teach another gospel altogether."*

Homework:

Read the following scriptures in their full context and do your own cross referencing. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal truth to you as you read. The Holy Spirit is the teacher and will guide you into all truth (**Jn. 14:26, 16:13**).

The Light in you, the believer: **Lk. 11:33-36**

Warnings about being deceived by false prophets and false teachers: **2 Tim. 4:3-4 (AMPC), Col. 2:8-10 (NLT)**.

Satan is a Liar Jn. 8:44 (NLT) and a deceiver. He transforms himself into an angel of light:
2 Cor. 11:12-15 (NKJV)

Discerning false prophets: **1 Jn. 4:1-3 (ESV & AMP)**