

September 2012

We Must Recognize and Avoid False Teachers

Dear Brethren:

Down through the centuries false prophets have been used by Satan to subvert the church of God. These false prophets, or false ministers, are not interested in serving God and obeying Him. They are motivated by their own covetousness and human lust for position, power and prestige.

The work of deceiving spirits is evident in the church today. Satan's own ministers, who appear as ministers of righteousness, are teaching his lies. They are not following Jesus Christ. They have wormed their own way into the church of God and have seated themselves on doctrinal boards and have assumed teaching positions in churches. They work from within as an official part of the church organization. Using subversive tactics, Satan's ministers have subtly and skillfully taken control. Under their control, the Truth of God is changed little by little into a lie. The doctrines are so cleverly worded and so skillfully presented that even staunch believers cannot detect it.

How They Use the Word of God

Satan's tactics are not new. He and his ministers have used the same methods time and again throughout history. The church in Corinth, which the Apostle Paul raised, was confronted with these same influences. These deceivers were using cunning tactics. Paul exposed exactly how these false teachers were accomplishing their deceitful work.

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the TRUTH commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God (2 Corinthians 4:1-2) [emphasis mine] (*King James Version*).

Satan has succeeded in blinding the minds of believers, but he also aims to seduce and deceive those who profess to believe the gospel. Look around you and see what is happening to those who once believed the truth. Satan stirs up false teachers and false ministers to blind the minds of true believers with false doctrine through skillful, deceitful handling of the Word of God.

Because they know how to twist the truth, their false doctrine looks and sounds blessedly true. What can be wrong? Yes, the Word of God is the Truth, but handling it deceitfully produces error. Their interpretation of God's Word is backed by clever arguments of philosophy and theology with intellectual-sounding words. They appear to be words of wisdom and logic, but they are truly Satanic and diabolical. They are not dividing the word of Truth honestly; the scripture is being used, but dishonestly.

This is precisely what certain men are doing who have seated themselves on doctrinal boards and have assumed teaching positions. There is no such thing as a "doctrinal board" in the Bible. Using the same devious instruments, Satan and his ministers long ago succeeded in apostatizing the Christian assemblies. Professing churches of God need to be aware of the subtle methods that Satan uses to carry out his mission. We need to be on guard against this craftiness.

Blind Lead the Blind

It is the blind leading the blind when true believers willingly follow ministers and teachers who have departed from the truth of the gospel and are teaching the doctrine of men, as seen often today. Jesus said in Matthew 16:6–12 to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." This has to do with their teaching and doctrine. Jewish leaders taught that their human traditions were greater than the commandments of God. This is what many ministers are doing with the Word of God. Jesus said that they are *hypocrites*. They worship God in vain, as the Bible says:

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as
doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:8–9, *New King James
Version*).

By handling the Word of God deceitfully, false teachers lead the people into spiritual blindness. Because they are walking in blinding darkness, they do not perceive that they are headed for a dangerous fall. They are like the man who built the ship, Titanic. The man believed in his own mind that even God Himself could not make the ship sink. But alas, the ship sank, killing many people.

Many believers in the New Testament time—both in the first century and today—foolishly followed blind leaders into spiritual darkness and apostasy. When the ministers started to change the doctrine, the brethren accepted these false teachings; they rejected the true teachings which God revealed to the church at the beginning. The church was moving into dangerous spiritual waters. They were on the verge of losing the truth of God by embracing false doctrine. What was the spiritual condition of the church when it

broke up like the Titanic? Many people seemed to recognize what happened in the Worldwide Church of God in the 1990s, but thought the problem started then. They did not realize that long before, there were those Jude said had crept into the church.

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt [as the people were called out of spiritual Egypt], afterward destroyed those who did not believe (Jude 4–5, *New King James Version*).

These false teachers and false apostles had succeeded in infiltrating the church of God by the 1970s and were actively changing the true teaching of Jesus Christ and perverting the gospel.

We in the church of God today must heed the warning and take decisive action; we must reject all evil deceivers and their false doctrines! We must get back to the full truth of God as contained in the Scripture; we must do it with all our hearts and all our minds, in full faith and in love of God, before it is too late and we become helpless. Some people in the church will come to know this much later, but by then it may be their point of no return.

Let us ask God to grant us the following:

1. Ears to hear.
2. Hearts to repent.
3. Courage to stand for the Truth.
4. Duty to defend the faith once delivered to the saints.
5. Love for the brethren (Hebrews 6:18–20).

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Your fellow servant in the race,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isaya Owak', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Isaya Owak