

God Gets the Glory!

Jude 24-25

“Now to Him who is able”

“To protect you from stumbling”

“To make you stand in the presence of His glory”

“Be glory, majesty, power, and authority”

How Do We Discern Apostasy/False Teaching?

1. The Fruit Test

First, the test of the fruit of their lives.

Jesus says in Matthew 7:15-20 (HCSB) *“Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You’ll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you’ll recognize them by their fruit.”* Be a “fruit inspector.”

1 Thessalonians 1:5 (NASB) *“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”* Paul goes further in the next two chapters basically teaching “judge us by our lives.”

It is vital to be an active part of a real live, flesh and blood, in-person church. Be wary of the internet teacher; don’t put all your eggs in that one basket.

2. The Doctrine Test

Second, the test of sound doctrine. An example would be the doctrine of the incarnation:

1 John 4:1-3 (HCSB) *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. But every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist; you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now.”*

In other words, if someone denies that Jesus Christ is the God-man (God in the flesh), he’s a false teacher or a false prophet. This is but one example to sound doctrine.

1 Timothy 6:3-4 (ESV) *“If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,”* In this test, we measure the doctrines that are being taught by the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and by their implications for godliness.

3. The Scripture Test

Third, the test of submission to Scripture.

1 Corinthians 14:37-38 (NLT) *“If you claim to be a prophet or think you are spiritual, you should recognize that what I am saying is a command from the Lord himself. But if you do not recognize this, you yourself will not be recognized.”* That’s Scripture; we must submit to it; if not, we are a false teacher and not recognized.

1 John 4:6 (HCSB) *“We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.”*

Everyone says true things from time to time, even the devil himself. But that doesn’t make them reliable teachers. The apostles elevated their teaching to the level of a test of truth. They mostly wrote the New Testament, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Let us test everything with Scripture.

4. Gospel Test

Fourthly, the test of the gospel itself.

Galatians 1:8-9 (HCSB) *“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than what we have preached to you, a curse be on him! As we have said before, I now say again: If anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him!”*

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*
It is faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone!

Galatians 5:2-3 (HCSB) *“Take note! I, Paul, tell you that if you get yourselves circumcised, Christ will not benefit you at all. Again I testify to every man who gets himself circumcised that he is obligated to keep the entire law.”*

To explain, if you insist on law-keeping as a way of justification before God, you’ve got to keep it all, and you’ve got to keep it perfectly. Not gonna happen!

Our Best Protection

The best way to protect ourselves from false teachers is to be part of a healthy, Bible-preaching church, and to be prayerfully saturated with the Bible every day. We should never elevate any book, sermon, or podcast above Scripture. We should put the focus directly on Jesus and His gospel of good news.