

# False Prophets and the Broad Way - Part 3

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen warns against false prophets who disguise themselves with correct doctrine while seeking to exploit the faithful for personal gain.*

**Duration:** 9:52

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:15-24, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 4:1

**Topics:** "False Prophets", "Discernment"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the topic of false prophets, exploring how Jesus warned about them in Matthew 7 and the characteristics that identify them, emphasizing the importance of discerning beyond outward appearances and focusing on their intentions and actions. It highlights the deceptive nature of false prophets who may appear righteous but have selfish motives, seeking personal gain from those they deceive, drawing parallels to wolves in sheep's clothing preying on the vulnerable within the church community.

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## Transcript

You know, we read that in Matthew 24, that towards the end of his life he spoke about false prophets as coming and deceiving people in the last days. But the first time he spoke about false prophets, I think was in Matthew chapter 7. I didn't look up the concordance, but it's probably the first reference to false prophets in the New Testament. And if that is the first reference to the false prophets in the New Testament, it's very significant where it comes and the context in which it comes, because then we understand how to identify a false prophet.

Anyway, one of the ways in which to identify a false prophet. It's in Matthew 7, verse 15. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing.

When you talk about false prophets, you know the word prophet, let's call it a preacher. You understand that better today. You know, otherwise people think a prophet is a guy with a beard and a robe.

A prophet can come in a suit and a tie. It's not his dress. A preacher, a false preacher who comes to you in sheep's clothing.

The sheep's clothing is again the doctrine. The doctrine can all be correct, but inside he's a ravenous wolf. Now to me that's one of the first marks of a false preacher or a false prophet.

It's the first time Jesus spoke about it, remember. He's got the right doctrine. So when I'm looking for a false prophet, I'm looking for a man with the right doctrine.

I want to look around and see who's preaching the correct doctrine. Because false prophets are usually found among such people. I'm not looking for the people who are preaching false doctrine.

There are no false prophets there, because they're already preaching a wrong doctrine and we won't accept them. If somebody comes here with the Gita or the Quran, you're not going to accept them. The false prophet will come with the Bible.

The false prophet will talk about being born again. The false prophet will talk about being baptized in the Holy Spirit. The false prophet will talk about speaking in tongues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and miracles and healings.

He'll talk about all types of things which he claims to have done, but which you never see him doing. You notice that? He'll talk about somebody over there whose eyes were open and somebody else whose ears were open. But it never happens in front of you.

Jesus was never like that. He never spoke about something that happened there or something that happened there. He did things right in front of people.

And that's why he's a true prophet. The doctrine is right, but there are ravenous wolves inside. Now what is a wolf? Why does a wolf, I mean think of this, a wolf dressing up like a sheep.

Why does he do that? Why would a wolf put on a sheep's clothing? As far as I can see, there's only one reason. He wants to get in among the sheep and pretend that he's a sheep. He looks nice on the outside and he knows that 99% of the sheep will be fooled.

And they are being fooled. Because they see the right doctrine and he speaks the same language as the rest of us. And he believes in the same doctrine and he nods his head and says the same things.

And he looks so spiritual and he sits here. But inside, he's a wolf. Now what does a wolf come into the midst of sheep for? Only for one reason.

What can I get out of the sheep for myself? What can I get from these sheep for myself? Can I get some meat from them, bite some of them and eat some of them? The only purpose with which a wolf comes into the midst of the sheep is to take something for himself from the sheep. He wants his dinner. He wants his lunch.

And he's going to get it from the sheep. And he's a ravenous wolf means he's not just an ordinary wolf. He's a wolf who's really hungry.

Ravenous. That's the meaning of ravenous wolf. Yeah, they are people wanting to exploit you.

That means, how does this apply to a preacher? He's going to come into the church and speak the right language and the right doctrine but all the time in the back of his mind is what can I get out of these people for myself? Usually some material thing. Can I make some profit by being in the church and speaking the right language? There are so many preachers today who if they were in a secular job I'm talking about full time workers in India who never did one days of secular job in their life. If they were doing a secular job they would not even earn 10% of what they are earning today as preachers.

That's what I mean. Their colleagues who are doing secular jobs are earning 10% of what they are getting. But they are in the Lord's work.

Now when Jesus came from heaven to earth he did not get 10 times more on earth than he had in heaven. Or it may not be a preacher like that. And you see these preachers they take these poor wolves and many of these people from whom they collect this is very simple poor people who are fooled by all the verses this preacher preaches to them and threatens them with verses like if you don't give to God you'll be cursed or promises them blessing like if you give to God he will bless you.

And there are verses in the Bible about that mostly in the Old Testament. And when they don't give to God they give to this man's pocket. So that's one type of ravenous wolf.

Now when Jesus came into the temple the people who were making money there were not preachers. They didn't preach. They were doing business in the temple to make money from the poor people who came from Galilee and distant places.

They sold sheep and doves in the temple and made a profit for themselves. Now you say what's wrong in making a profit for yourself when you do some work? Absolutely nothing if you do it in the marketplace. But everything is wrong if you come to the church and do it.

Do you think those money changers understood that? Do you think the people selling doves and sheep understood that? Nobody objected to them. They say the temple is a good place because we can make contact with people who believe the same thing and we can sell these things there. In fact if we sell in the marketplace it may be a little more difficult but if we sell in the church people will trust us.

We can make some profit. These are the deceivers. There are lots of people doing that today.

They are taking advantage of their contacts in the church to make money for themselves doing business. See at the same time when these people were selling sheep and doves in the temple there were other people selling sheep and doves in the marketplace in Jerusalem. Jesus never went there and disturbed anybody there.

He didn't go to the marketplace and drive out people. No, no, no, no, no, no. He would have gone to the marketplace and said that's good that you fellows are making a profit here.

Because that is the place to make a profit. Not the church. And I have seen through the years and I've seen it in our church also people who seek to take advantage of their contact with people in the church to do some business to make profit for themselves.

And it's good to do business.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/false-prophets-and-the-broad-way-part-3/>

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