

### 300. "Beware of False Prophets!"

**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.** *Matt. 7, 15.*

False prophets generally appear in sheep's clothing, that is to say, in outward appearance they cannot be distinguished from true prophets. The special mark of a false prophet is his false teaching, his erroneous doctrine. The Lord's command is: Preach My Word; proclaim My will! Now, if a preacher deviates from the Word of God, if he either adds something thereto, claiming that God had commanded or forbidden things of which we find nothing in the Bible; or if he takes therefrom, saying that God did not mean this or that which is clearly set forth in the Scriptures; if he distorts the Word of God to make it conform to the dictates of human reason, – he is a false prophet. We must therefore class with the false prophets not only all those who teach rank infidelity, but also all those Christian ministers who do not strictly abide by the divine Word, no matter what Church they represent, even if they style themselves Lutherans. They are false prophets in every point in which they deviate from the revealed truth of God's Word.

It is a dangerous thing to tamper with any of the doctrines of our Christian religion, because one error is sure to bring on others. Nor is it true that errors in minor doctrines count for very little as long as we hold on to the great central truths of the Christian religion. Of course, there is a difference as to the harm done to a man's soul. The central doctrines, such as the doctrine of the deity of Christ and His redemption, of justification by faith without the deeds of the Law, no one can deny without losing his faith. In others it is possible to err without necessarily losing one's faith. It is possible for a man to err in some things and still, with a fortunate inconsistency, to cling to Christ and His redemption. But nevertheless it is a dangerous thing to falsify any doctrine, because every false doctrine, no matter how insignificant it may appear, involves, in the last analysis, a denial of Christ. Every error in doctrine robs God of the honor belonging to Him and bestows it upon man. Thus every false doctrine is a dangerous thing.

### Prayer.

Dear Father in heaven, since, alas! I have lived to see the time foretold by Thine own Son in which false Christs would rise and show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect, I pray Thee that Thou wouldst graciously guard and keep me from error and false doctrine. Preserve me in Thy truth – Thy Word is the truth – that I may adhere to it and steadfastly confess and believe it to my last hour. Because every false doctrine endangers the soul, Thy dear Son has warned me against it when He said, "Beware of false prophets!" Let me heed this warning for the sake of Thy glory And my soul's salvation. Amen.

Take not Thy saving Word away,  
My soul's true comfort, staff, and stay;  
Abide with me and keep me free  
From all false doctrine graciously.

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