

We understand from the numerous warnings given in both the Old and New Testament that False Prophets will never cease to be a threat among God's people. When the ancient Israelites wanted to know how they could be recognized, the reply Moses gave could not have been clearer:

*If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken of it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it.*

*(Deuteronomy 18:22)*

Notice Moses did not say that if what a Prophet says takes place, he is genuine. Anybody claiming to be a spokesman for God might make some accurate predictions sometimes, by just using common sense or some kind of inside knowledge. Yet this would not be proof of his credentials. A true Prophet proved himself by *always* making correct predictions.

This standard should be the very same for evaluating anyone calling himself a Prophet today. However, the New Testament offers an additional sign to look out for when identifying the counterfeit. Jesus Himself said:

*You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.*

*(Matthew 7:16-18)*

This passage has been interpreted in two different ways. Some interpret the *bad fruit* to be a reference to moral conduct and belonging to the False Prophet. Other commentators interpret the bad fruit to be the fleshly passions and worldly cravings their message produces in those who follow them!

Another New Testament warning against deception in the Church and how to deal with it comes from the Apostle John in his First Epistle. He wrote:

*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

*(1 John 4:1-2)*

Here John is saying that behind false prophecy there is an evil spirit trying to influence the minds of people. But *how* do we test them, or what is the standard to measure them by? They must be tested by the Holy Scriptures, which were inspired by the Spirit of God! The Apostle Paul gives the very same advice to the Church at Corinth. He wrote:

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

*(1 Corinthians 14:29)*