

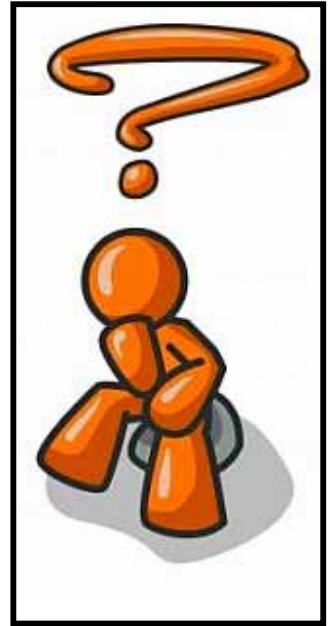
What About... "Fake" Theology?

BY DR. JERRY A. COLLINS

We have all heard of the "fake" news controversy. Fake news is not just false news, it's **the intentional manipulative manufacturing of actual news to create a false narrative**. This political gerrymandering has ignited a firestorm within the mainstream media and political circles. The advent of the fake news cycle prompts some questions: What about fake theology within the church and evangelicalism? Is fake theology being promoted by false teachers? Are believers deceived by false narratives about Christ?

The Bible Warns of Fake Theology

The Bible is filled with warnings about fake teaching that's an intentional manipulative manufacturing of actual biblical and theological truth to create a false narrative. There were fake apostles in Corinth who were *deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ* (2 Corinthians 11:13). Earlier, in verses 5-9, Paul argued that these fake apostles had appealed to the Corinthians, who had become sympathetic of them in at least three ways. **First**, these fake apostles had associated themselves and their mission with the original apostles in hopes of deriving their same authority. **Second**, they assumed a superiority in eloquent speech. For Paul, what he said was way more important than how he said it. **Third**, they were financially supported by the Corinthian church. But Paul and his associates had supported themselves.



Paul identified **fake brethren** as those whose fake theology attempted to legitimize performing the Mosaic Law. They were *secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Jesus Christ, in order to bring us into bondage* (Galatians 2:4). These fake brethren had pressured Titus to be circumcised (v. 3, see also Acts 15:1). They were like spies infiltrating the ranks, intruding without invitation to (1) spy on their freedom in Christ, and (2) to make these believers slaves to the Law's rules and ceremonies. This imposition was strongly countered by the apostle in verses 16-22. Paul aggressively argued against the fake brethren's false teaching of the need to perform the Law.

The Apostle Peter exposed **fake teachers** who promoted fake theology, denying the redemptive work of Christ.

*There will also be **false teachers** among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in greed they will exploit you with **false words*** (2 Peter 2:1-3).

False theology existed in Israel's day but also in the first century. Fake teachers appeared from within Israel (Jere-

miah 28:1ff). They will also appear from within the church, secretly introducing heresies (fake theology) to exploit people. Their stories, fabricated. Their motivation, greed.

The Apostle John warned of **fake spirits** who taught false theology about Christ's deity.

*Beloved, 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...every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world* (1 John 4:1-3).

The Spirit of God must be distinguished from fake spirits because of a proliferation of such false teaching in the world. How does one do this? The one who advocates Jesus' incarnation is from God. Every spirit that does not is not from God. This simple formula exposes the spirit as that of antichrist, which John says had already infiltrated the world. Now that Christ has come, the spirit of the antichrist will promote false news about Jesus' incarnation and earthly mission, creating a false narrative.

Jesus made it quite clear to His disciples that they could expect fake teachers in their day. *Beware of the false proph-*

ets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15).

Speaking of the future Tribulation, Jesus declared, *many false prophets will arise and will mislead many (Matthew 24:11).* In verse 24, He states, *for false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.* There will be many who are deceived by numerous fake prophets during the Tribulation. Misinformation will be broadcast by these fake prophets, who are literally everywhere. Jesus warned His disciples ahead of time not to be fooled or deceived by their fake theology.

A **fake prophet** advocating false theology is active all the way through the Tribulation. In John's vision, he witnessed their activity and ultimate demise.

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (Revelation 19:20).

This fake prophet will manufacture a fake narrative by miraculous demonic power, deceiving many in the process. This power will be unable to deliver him when Christ returns. Both the beast and the false prophet are captured, each cast into the lake of fire.

There is yet one more attempt at fake theology when **Satan** is released from the bottomless pit at the end of the Millennium to *deceive the nations* to fight against Christ and *to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore (Revelation 20:8).* John declared:

...fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false [fake] prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:9-10).

Satan's deception ends when he is cast into the lake of fire.

Fake apostles, brethren, teachers, spirits, and prophets will promote fake theology, false teaching, deception, and lies, until God wipes it all out. In every generation one must be vigilant about fake teachers, fake theology, false teaching, and fake narratives.

Lessons about the Machinations of Fake Theology



Fake theology is false because it masquerades as truth. The false apostles disguised themselves as real apostles. The false brethren secretly sneaked their way into the church. The false prophets covertly introduced destructive heresies. A false spirit refused to confess Jesus Christ as God. The beast and false prophet conned people by performing miraculous signs. Satan deceived the nations. Jesus said fake prophets were wolves in sheep's clothing. Fake theology is not a full denial of the truth but a compromise with it, by mixing truth with lies. This way it disguises the intent to deceive.

Fake theology is designed to teach falsehood. The point is to replace the truth with a lie. The false brethren desired to bring Paul and his companions into bondage to the Law. Peter said false teachers maligned the truth to exploit people. The beast and false prophet performed signs so people would worship them. Satan gathered an army to destroy Christ and His rule. Jesus said false Christs will arise to mislead even the elect if possible. Falsehood replaces the truth. Once people are deceived, that falsehood becomes the new fake narrative, based in lies.

Fake theology is evidence of a hatred of truth. False teaching is justified by attacking the truth with fake alternatives. Fake theology opposes one's *liberty in Christ* so as to control people through performing religious rituals. Fake teaching promotes heresies that deny *the Master who bought them*. Christ's death paid for all sin, but fake theology denies this payment by Christ. False theology does not confess Jesus' incarnation and the miraculous ministry it represents. Any other Jesus, one certainly not incarnated, is a fake Jesus.

Identifying fake narratives requires discernment and knowledge of the truth of God's Word (Hebrews 5:14).

Don't be duped by fake theology