

Discerning Truth from Error

DEFINITIONS

1. **Truth** – That which corresponds to reality.
2. **Error** – That which does not correspond to reality.
3. **Heresy** – A belief or opinion claiming to be Christian but deviating from established Christian doctrine (e.g., rejecting the deity of Christ, Universalism, Gnosticism).
4. **Apostasy** – Abandonment of religious belief (i.e., falling away from the truth).
5. **Sectarian Group** – A religious group that radically departs from the mainstream Christian denominations in beliefs about the Trinity, the Incarnation, the return of Christ, sources of authority, etc.

IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES

- Matthew 5:15-20. Prophets are known by their fruit. True prophets are identified by their good character and by whether their teachings line up with the truth of God's Word.
- Matthew 24:3-28; Mark 13:3-22. In the last days false prophets and false messiahs will arise performing signs and wonders, but also teaching heresy.
- First Timothy 4:1-5. During the last days, some will fall away from sound doctrine and follow false teachings. This abandonment of God's Word makes a person insensitive to spiritual truth. False teachers embrace what God calls evil and reject what God calls good.
- First John 4:1-6. The spirit of error (also Antichrist) denies the person and work of Christ.
- Jude 1:3-4. Christians must not veer from the teaching of the apostles, who all were commissioned by Jesus to communicate truth to us.

DEMONIC LIES

The enemy is a master of deception. Through distortion, half-truths, and outright lies, he wages a vicious war against human beings.

- The enemy lies about God's character and God's motives.
- The enemy also seeks to prevent people from understanding who Jesus really is and what Jesus has accomplished.
- The enemy minimizes human sin.
- The enemy uses falsehood to sow seeds of discord among people, especially among Christians (see Ephesians 4:25).

Several common lies of Satan include the following:

1. The God of the Bible is _____. (mean, unfair, or unforgiving, etc.)
2. Jesus is not _____. (God, the Son of God, fully human, the Messiah, etc.)
3. There are many paths to God. If we are sincere, we will be saved.
4. Christians should not "judge" others. Compare Matthew 7:1-5 with John 7:24.
5. There is a better way to truth, which has just recently been discovered.

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SOME HELPFUL ADVICE

1. First, all Christians need to read, study, and meditate on God's Word every day. Watch "A Daily Diet of God's Word" (5-7-20) at <https://threeBibleteachers.com>.
2. Second, it is essential for believers to know, understand, and accept the identity of Jesus. Watch the 2020 Christ series at <https://threeBibleteachers.com>.
3. Third, we must trust the Holy Spirit to lead us into truth (John 14:26). Christians must depend on the Spirit for proper discernment (1 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 12:10).
4. Fourth, we must learn from Church History. Most heresies circulating today have been around since the inception of the church. When you encounter any new religious teaching, consider the following questions:
 - (i.) Did Jesus teach this?
 - (ii.) Did the apostles and the early church teach this?
 - (iii.) Was anything like this condemned by the church in ages past?
 - (iv.) Does this teaching even make sense
5. Fifth, cultivate a love for expository teaching. Expository teaching prevents proof texting.
6. Finally, obey and commit to the truth. The more we do so, the more God reveals to us.

QUOTATIONS

"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right." – Charles Spurgeon

We need to keep our eyes and our Bibles wide open (paraphrase) – David Jeremiah