

The myths of religion: Religion is a private matter

Matthew 7:15-20

☐ Watch out for people who want to lead you astray (15)

• False teachers are deceptive and dangerous

- False teachers avoid preaching on such things as the holiness, righteousness, justice, and wrath of God. The main emphasis of his preaching is God's love, which he fails to keep in balance with God's justice or wrath.
- False teachers avoid preaching on the doctrine of the final judgment. They reject the biblical doctrine of Hell and favor a less stringent and less offensive approach.
- False teachers fail to emphasize the fallenness and depravity of mankind. They avoid teaching that man is sinful and cannot save himself.
- False teachers deemphasize the substitutionary death and atonement of Christ.¹

• To stay on the right path, disciples must exercise discernment

- Test of Truth: Is their message true? (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)
- Test of Theology: Do they encourage people to follow God? (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)
- Test of Ethics: Do they practice what they preach? (Jeremiah 23:9-15)

☐ What one does reveals who one is (16-20)

• Actions speak louder than words (16, 20)

• Our actions are consistent with our character (16b-18)

• Judgment awaits those who are false and/or hypocritical (19)

¹ Adapted from *The Sermon on the Mount: The message of the kingdom*, by R. Kent Hughes. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, p.250-251.