

# Dealing with False Teaching

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by Rosemary Bardsley

This is an excellent Bible study listed on and taken from **Rosemary Bardsley's** website called **God's Word for You**.

<http://www.godswordforyou.com/how-to/deal-with-false-teaching>

It is a series of studies thoroughly examining what the Bible says about false teachers and false teaching. I highly recommend everyone read this material since we are living in a day and age where there are many false teachers and teachings. This will alert you to the serious dangers and impact of false teaching. This is especially useful for those young adult seekers out there who may be struggling with discerning the Truth while facing or being courted by false teachers and false prophets today. **This material is presented to you with the permission of Rosemary Bardsley.** The outline topics and links are listed for your convenience. I highly recommend you visit Rosemary's website: God's Word for You for rest of the information on this series. Check out the other topical studies from her website too.

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## Deal with false teaching

*How to Deal with False Teaching* is a series of studies that presents an analysis of what the Bible says about false teachers and false teaching. It is in some ways a very hard-hitting series of studies with the potential to offend. Its purpose, however, is to alert Christians to the serious dangers of false teaching, to the nature of false teaching, to the horrific impacts of false teaching that are described in the Bible, and to the many, many warnings against false teaching given in the Bible. It also identifies the kinds of false teaching that can be observed in contemporary Christianity.

### Article Title

- 1 [Summary of Studies](#)
- 2 [Introduction](#)
- 3 [Know the Bible's Perspective on human ideologies](#)
- 4 [Know the fundamental difference](#)
- 5 [Know what the Old Testament says](#)

- 6 [Recognize the true nature of false teaching](#)
  - 7 [Understand the impact of false teaching](#)
  - 8 [Obey the biblical commands](#)
  - 9 [Understand the importance of our minds](#)
  - 10 [Know the key points of doctrinal error](#)
  - 11 [Recognize false teaching today](#)
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## SUMMARY OF STUDIES



## HOW TO DEAL WITH FALSE TEACHING SUMMARY OF STUDIES

### Introduction

#### **Study 1: Know the Bible's perspective on human ideologies**

The Bible defines substitute religions and human ideologies as false

The Bible affirms that Christ alone is the one true truth

#### **Study 2: Know the fundamental difference between the true truth and false teaching**

The true truth is complete and absolute

False teaching replaces, adds to, or alters the meaning of 'the truth'

#### **Study 3: Know what the Old Testament says about false teaching**

The Genesis 3 deception – analysis of the Devil's deception

Idolatry and false gods – what the Old Testament says about them

Occult powers and practices

False prophets and false messages – what the Old Testament says:

- About the nature of false prophets
- About the source of their messages
- About the nature of their messages
- About the impact of their messages
- Warnings to false prophets and their audiences

Superficial and syncretistic worship

#### **Study 4: Recognize the nature of false teachers and false teaching**

New Testament data about the nature of false teachers and false teaching is collated under the following headings:

In the Gospels and Acts

- They are hypocritical
- They are destructive
- They do not belong to Christ
- They are impactive
- They are subtle and deceptive

In the letters and Revelation

- About their minds
- About their morals
- About their methods
- About their motives
- About their message
- About their allegiance

#### **Study 5: Understand the present and future impact of false teaching**

New Testament data about the impact of false teaching is identified under the following headings:

- Its impact on individuals and the church
- The personal impact and implications of believing false teaching

- The final impact on the false teachers themselves:

### **Study 6: Obey the biblical commands about false teaching**

New Testament commands regarding our response to false teaching are listed under the following headings:

- Expect false teaching
- Be on guard against false teaching
- Don't let them deceive you
- Don't believe them
- Don't give in to them
- Keep away from them
- Oppose and expose them
- Be mature
- Be contented with Jesus Christ

### **Study 7: Understand the importance of our minds**

The Old Testament teaches the importance of our minds

- Wisdom and understanding are the basis of true faith and godliness
- Lack of understanding and discernment leads to godlessness, rebellion, idolatry and the consequent judgment
- One key purpose/result of God's judgment on Israel was that they would *know* that he was the Lord
- The new covenant in Christ is anticipated as a time when people will know the Lord

The New Testament teaches the importance of our minds

- The New Testament words
- The significance given to understanding by Jesus Christ
- What the apostles said about knowledge and understanding

Human versus God-given wisdom

### **Study 8: Know the key points of doctrine affected by false teaching**

The New Testament identifies the following key areas of doctrine affected by false teaching in the first century:

- Errors concerning the nature of revelation
- Errors concerning the person of Christ
- Errors concerning salvation
- Errors concerning the role of the miraculous
- Errors concerning the last things

### **Study 9: Recognize false teaching today**

Contemporary false teaching is listed under the following headings:

- Errors concerning the nature of revelation
- Errors concerning the person of Christ
- Errors concerning salvation
- Errors concerning the role of the miraculous
- Errors concerning the last things

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **HOW TO DEAL WITH FALSE TEACHING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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The title of this study series, 'How to deal with false teaching', assumes a number of facts:

1. That there is such a thing as 'false teaching'
2. That there is such a thing as teaching that is not 'false'
3. That, in a fundamental and eternal sense, it actually *matters* what we believe
4. That it is possible to discern what is 'false teaching' and what is God's truth
5. That it is right to identify, reject, expose and oppose 'false teaching'.

Each of these assumptions stands in stark contrast to the post-modern and post-Christian mindsets that characterize contemporary culture and that have insidiously invaded and impacted the mind of Christians both individually, and corporately as the church.

In the post-modern and post-Christian mindset:

- There is no such thing as absolute truth that is true for all people, in all places, at all times.
- There is no such thing as one 'God', who alone is 'God', and to whom everyone is answerable.
- All religions are just human fabrications arising in different cultures at different times; it does not matter, therefore, which religion one chooses to follow.
- 'Truth' is relative and subjective.
- The distinctions 'false' and 'true', 'evil' and 'good', 'wrong' and 'right' are relative human constructions and have no real meaning or significance.
- 'Tolerance' – the affirmation of all belief systems as equally valid – is the ultimate and, to some extent, the only universal virtue.
- To claim that the Bible is the one true truth is both absurd and objectionable.

In our contemporary society the whole concept of '*false teaching*' is also absurd, an idea hanging over from a previous but now redundant worldview in which the concepts of 'truth' and 'absolute' had real meaning. To identify a belief system as 'false' is meaningless. It is also considered ethically wrong.

However, from beginning to end the Bible presents God's truth, which is upheld as right and the only system of truth to be believed and obeyed, in contrast with error, which is seen as false and wrong, and to be rejected and opposed:

[1] In Genesis 3 God's truth is twisted and corrupted by the deceptive suggestions of Satan.

[2] From Exodus to Malachi the one true God stands in deliberate, confrontational opposition with all 'other gods'.

[3] In Deuteronomy 18 belief in and use of occult powers is outlawed; this prohibition is repeated at various points through the Bible right up to the last chapter of Revelation.

[4] False prophets with false messages were opposed by the Old Testament prophets of God who spoke God's message.

[5] The four Gospel records reveal that Jesus spent much of his public ministry exposing and opposing the erroneous beliefs and practices of his hearers.

[6] The presence of false teaching in the churches was either the primary reason, or a secondary reason, for which all of the New Testament letters except Philemon were written. Already, so soon after its initial reception, the pure gospel was being so corrupted that it was in danger of being lost. The New Testament letters and Revelation give clear instructions to Christians about how to deal with the ever-present false teaching, and stern warnings about the nature, content and impact of false teaching and false teachers:

**Romans** was written primarily to combat a divisive legalism within the church in Rome, in which Jewish Christians thought themselves superior to Gentile Christians because the latter did not have the law.

**1 Corinthians** corrects false teaching concerning Christian leaders, marriage, rules about foods, spiritual gifts, the nature of revelation, and the resurrection.

**2 Corinthians** exposes false apostles and their deceitfulness

**Galatians** is a head-on confrontation with Judaistic legalism.

**Ephesians** corrects legalistic divisions between Jewish and Gentile believers, seeking to correct their understanding of salvation and the nature of the church.

**Philippians** exposes the circumcision party as false teachers.

**Colossians** addresses a double-barrelled powerful heresy in which, on the one hand, Christ was being reduced to just one among many steps to knowing God, and on the other, a devastating type of legalism was crippling the believers.

In **1 Thessalonians** errors regarding the last things are corrected.

In **2 Thessalonians** believers are reminded of the deceptiveness of 'the lawless one' and Satan.

**1 & 2 Timothy** and **Titus** directly warn against false doctrines.

**Hebrews** is a massive affirmation of the supremacy of Christ and his salvation written to warn its readers who were standing on the brink of reverting to Judaism.

**James** opposes an antinomian interpretation of the Gospel.

**1 Peter** tells us that because Satan is prowling around looking for someone to devour we should resist him, 'standing firm in the faith'.

**2 Peter** and **Jude** oppose a pernicious heresy which resulted in a godless lifestyle.

**1 & 2 John** confront a heresy in which the incarnation was denied; **1 John** also confronts an antinomian lifestyle. In **3 John** the apostle mentions twice how overjoyed he is when he hears that people are holding fast to the truth.

**Revelation** exposes the deceitful lies and counterfeit miracles of Satan and the grim

fate waiting both him and those he deceives.

The Bible is not embarrassed by its references to false teaching or by the condemnation it heaps upon false teaching and false teachers. In fact, its exposure of false teaching or false belief, in contrast to the true truth, is a central and definitive theme. Its message is essentially this: that God alone is God, that all other 'god' concepts are to be rejected as false and that those who believe in false gods are already under condemnation. The only way to escape this condemnation is to acknowledge the one true God when he confronts us in his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.

'Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.' [John 3:18]

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