

False Prophets in the Last Days

By Lehman Strauss

Al Sanders:

[Background Music Begins]

Through the years, Biola's Hallmark has been typified through the words of a familiar hymn, we have a story to tell to the nations since nineteen hundred eight, the education of dedicated young men and women for Christian service around the world. This has been our fervent commitment and desire. I'm Al Sanders with a very special welcome to you who are members of our Biola Hour Fellowship. You are the central core of our ministry. You are the ones who, humanly speaking, under the leading of the Lord, make possible this growing outreach which ultimately encircles the globe. In a moment, a very special message from God's word. But first, here's Dr. Lehman Strauss, who's heard regularly on our broadcasts with his distinctive Bible study time on the Biola Hour brother Strauss.

Lehman Strauss:

Thank you, Al Sanders. And greetings, friends. Today, we're going to share a very important subject from the word of God. False prophets in the last days. But before we get to that study, I would like to say a word concerning the Biola Hour fellowship. I could sit down and write you a little note. Put it in longhand. And I would enjoy that. I've written hundreds and hundreds of notes through the years. But this is more personal, I think. I'm speaking to you. You have my

voice coming through to you. And I want to use my voice right now to tell you how much we appreciate your prayer participation and your regularly giving for the ministry of Biola. Now, we believe that God has given to us. One of the greatest opportunities of all time, training young men and young women for their future. Now, some of these young men and women will be missionaries. Some will be involved in Christian education. Some will be involved in teaching in other institutions. Some will become housewives and mothers. Others will become lawyers, doctors or whatever. But we're here to train them, to get them ready for a life of usefulness for God. We want them to be their human best, guided by the Holy Spirit. And so we're training young people and you're having a share in that. In this particular tape comes to you, a member of the Biola Hour fellowship.

Now, each month, these fellowship tapes will give to you a particular message, something of importance. And they're provided for those of you who have indicated that you want to continue praying and giving to support the outreach of Biola this month, it'll be my privilege to discuss the subject. False prophets in the last days. And I think you will enjoy the subject. Why not take your Bible and let's get to it right now. Not long ago, I sat at the breakfast table in a motel dining room in North Carolina with a brother in Christ. He was not a pre millennial's. He was an Amillennialist. That is, he did not believe in a literal thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. And of course, we were at opposite poles in our prophetic viewpoints. And our conversation leaped to a discussion of Revelation Chapter 20. We couldn't come to a mutual agreement on that passage of scripture. But the one reason that we held to two different principles of interpretation I literalize the chapter and my friend vaporized it. Now the question revolves around the

literalists of the scriptures. We talked at some length about those first three verses which tell us that Satan will be bound and incarcerated in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

And my friend labored long and hard to convince me that those verses have no reference to the future, but that Satan is bound now, and that God has the whole world in his hands. Now, I believe strongly in the biblical doctrine of the sovereignty of God. But somehow I just could not follow my friend's reasoning. It did not have a sound biblical basis. Oh, yes, he quoted scripture. There's no question about that. In fact, he quoted Luke 10:18. He not merely quoted it. He got his New Testament out and he said, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. And then he showed me, John, 16 eleven. The prince of this world is judged. But these words from our Lord are not telling us that Satan is bound now in God's plan. Satan is a defeated foe. Finally and ultimately. But the final overthrow of Satan is still future. Our Lord's death on the cross was one of the first steps in the defeat of Satan. I think Colossians 2 verses 14 and 15 will clarify this, but there are yet future steps to be taken when Satan is cast out of heaven into the earth. According to Rev. 12:10. And after that, when he's cast into the bottomless pit, according to Revelation Chapter 20, verse 3. And finally, when he's cast into the Lake of Fire Forever Revelation Chapter Twenty and verse ten. Now Satan's present position in the world is one that is unmistakably clear in first John five nineteen we read and we know that we are of God and the whole world. That is the whole world system lie in wickedness.

Now the word wickedness here in the Greek should read the wicked one. It's the same term used in First John, Chapter 2 verses 13 and 14. First John 3:12 and first John 5:18. The idea that this present world system is in Satan's control is no mere guess. It's no mere conjecture, but an

absolute certainty. Just as certainly as the Christian knows he belongs to God. He knows that the present state of affairs in this world system is under Satan's dominion. The devil has the whole world system in his hands. Three times the Lord Jesus referred to Satan as the Prince of this world. John 12:31, John 14:30 and in John 16 Eleven. Now, if Satan is not the ruler over this reprobate world system, Jesus never would have said that he is Satan, not God is the prime instrumental cause of all wickedness. God is sovereign and in perfect control of his universe, and his plan will ultimately prevail. But the final overthrow of the devil and his wicked system will not be realized before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, why do many people miss this truth? It's expected of the unsaved that they might resent hearing this. And there's a reason for such a negative reaction. Paul said the god of this world had blinded the minds of them, which believed not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine on to them. Second Corinthians 4:4. You see, there is a veil of unbelief over the minds of the unsaved. This is not the fault of the gospel, nor the fault of the preacher of the gospel. Paul said that the god of this world has blinded their minds. One of Satan's goals is to hold men in unbelief. He is the god of this age. He is not the God of creation. He is not the God of the created universe. But he is the unholy ruler of the ethics and the morals and the culture of this age. It is he who controls the minds of men and imbues them with the idea that wrong is right and right is wrong. God is not blinding their minds. God is not putting the veil over the eyes of people. This world or age is the age extending to Christ's coming. Jesus and Paul and John are showing us the tremendous force of evil at work in the world, attempting to defeat the gospel. Those wicked powers are not in God's hands. They are in Satan's hands. What was apparent to the writers of scripture is that Satan exercises power and dominion. In this present

world system, most people are blind to this fact. Therefore, they are blind to their pride, to their ignorance, to their anger, to the covetousness, their jealousy, their greed. And I'm not surprised at the blind spots in people's moral and spiritual perception.

What does surprise me, dear friends, is the fact that many professing Christians and even some Christians have blind spots. They are unable. To discern truth from error, they go along whistling in the dark. That God has the whole world in his hands. They sing their little song. He's got the whole world in his hands. Therefore, things can't be too bad. But conditions are bad. They are far worse than most of us know. And moreover, the Bible makes it clear that there is no hope for improvement before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And anyone who can't see that just can't see the Lord Jesus Christ gave us some amazing prophetic truth as he was bringing to a close his famous Sermon on the Mount. He gave an amazing prophecy in Matthew seven verses twenty one to twenty three. He said, Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven. But he did do with the will of my father, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name, have cast out devils or demons and in thy name, have done many wonderful works? Jesus said then, while I profess unto them, I never knew you depart from me. That work iniquity. Now, here are some of the most solemn and sobering words ever spoken by Christ. And yet they are neglected or ignored by many. Why? Because they disturb us.

They tell us of a day in the future when men shall face Jesus Christ and be judged. Here our Lord is quite blunt about that future judgment. And it is a terrifying thought that many will be in the company. He's talking about the future. Judgment will be a time of terrifying surprises for many,

not merely a few odd persons. He said many will say to me in that day, and those of whom our Lord is speaking are not atheists. They are not irreligious. They are not insincere. They recognize who Jesus is. They are correct in their doctrine about him. They're confessing that he is Lord. They're saying, Lord, Lord Now, this shows that they are orthodox in what they believe about Jesus Christ. But the terrible and terrifying fact remains that they will not enter the kingdom of heaven. We know they will not because Jesus said as much. Now, in order to be saved, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord Acts 16 31. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Romans 10:9. If thou shalt confess with my mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thine heart that God had raised him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. Every true Christian will confess Jesus as Lord. Those who go into the kingdom will be those who believed it and who said so. But the frightening thing, which our Lord says, is that not everyone who believes who Jesus is and who says so shall enter the kingdom of heaven. James, in his epistle, reminded us that the demons also believe James chapter two and verse 19.

Now I'm sure we have a surprised and shocked multitude as they listen to the words of Jesus. Who then are the many that believe who Jesus is, and confessing with their mouths, but who will not enter the kingdom of heaven. We are certain they never had been saved. Now there are some who hold to the idea that a saved person can lose his salvation. And that here Christ is speaking of backsliders. But notice that Jesus said I never knew you. The point our Lord is making is the fact that he never at any time had anything to do with them. He never recognized them. The many who will call Jesus Lord in that day were victims of deception. This is clear as we examine his teaching in the power where previous to the one we're considering here in Matthew Seven, he exhorted the people to make certain that they walked the narrow way and entered in at the

straight gate. Matthew 7 verses 13 and 14. And then he followed that exhortation immediately with a warning of the serious danger of false prophets. Those deceivers persuade the people to walk the Broadway and enter the wide gate. The many in verse 22 were deceived by the false prophets in verses 13, 14 and 15. Now that is so clear in Matthew Chapter 7 that you just can not miss it.

Now, the false prophet is a deceiver who at first appears to be all that one would expect as being correct. He disguises himself as a sheep when actually Jesus said he is a wolf. He impresses you as a nice, innocent person whose aim is to help you. Jesus said in Matthew, 7:15, they come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are wolves. They're teaching on the surface. Seems quite correct. But in actuality, it follows the Broadway, which leads to destruction. Now the word wolves was a common term for false leaders and false prophets among the Jews. In Ezekiel twenty to twenty seven. We read her princess in the midst thereof are like wolves, ravening the prey to shed blood and to destroy souls to get dishonest gain conditions in Zephaniah's time were bad, Zephaniah wrote her princess. Within her are roaring lions. Her judges are evening wolves. They gnaw, not the bones till the morrow. Her profits are light and treacherous. Persons. Zephaniah. Chapter three verses three and four. The Lord Jesus said to his disciples, Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Matthew 10:16. He said that he was the good shepherd who came to protect his flock from the wolves. And before Paul departed from Ephesus, he also warned the elders of coming danger, saying. For I know this that after my departing, shall grievous, wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock? Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Axe twenty versus twenty nine and thirty.

Now be on your guard for those persons who wear the cloth but have no right to wear it. God said they speak lies in the name of the Lord. They wear of rough garment to deceive Zacharias 13 verses three and four. Now the rough garment in Zacharias 30 was a garment of wool a sheepskin worn with the fleece inside next to the body for warm. And it was the conventional dress of Old Testament prophets. It was called a mantle. The Prophet Elijah wore such a mantle in first Kings 19:13, and later he passed it on to Elisha. In 1 kings 19:90. Elijah and Elisha were true prophets of God. But there were also false prophets who went about using the office of the Prophet, gaining prestige and imposing on the generosity of God's people. Now, this is the satanic art of deception, deceiving people is their stock in trade. They are subtle. Paul describes them in Second Corinthians. 11:13 as false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. Peter said in second, Peter 2 one, there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies. And concerning their kind, Jude said, they crept in unawares. Jude, verse four. You see, because of their outward appearance as sheep, they are not suspected as the wolves that they are now. Peter gives us a clue as to their modus operandi when he writes. There were false prophets also among the people. And I take it he meant by the people of Old Testament times more. Moses warned the children of Israel of the coming of false prophets Deuteronomy 13, verse 1. And it seems that the false prophet would appear wherever God would raise up his true prophet. The disguise of the false prophet would make it difficult for the people to detect his error. Or now the false prophet in Jeremiah's time is an illustration.

He went among the people saying Peace, peace when there is no peace. Jeremiah 6:14. You see, he's a very comforting preacher, always leaving the impression that there is not very much wrong. He never disturbs you. He never makes you feel uncomfortable. He never preaches against sin. He never preaches on the holiness and the righteousness of God. The falseness is not in what he does say, but rather in what he does not say. He may keep reminding you that God loves you, and so do I. But he will never preach against sin in that. Never preach about the holiest. And the righteousness of God. Now, because a man does not preach things that are obviously wrong and untrue, does not exclude him from being a false prophet, a preacher does not have to preach heresy to make him a wolf in sheep's clothing. He's a false prophet. If he conceals the truth now, there's some good in most religions. But then friends, there's a lot of good food thrown into the garbage pails every day. But I don't know anybody who goes to the garbage pail to get it and eat. I'm simply saying beware of false prophets.

The present state of the professing Christian church is one of deterioration. She has lost her strength and effectiveness. And this sad state of affairs is not confined to the liberal and the modernistic churches. In some evangelical conservative churches, there is not the fourth right preaching of the whole Council of God. Too frequently the programs are light, breezy and entertaining. Lacking strong expository preaching of God's work, the preachers preach vaguely and generally with their strongest emphasis on the love of God. Beloved Christian. Beware of appearances. The wolf in sheep's clothing prophet may speak correctly and appear to live the good life. And yet he can deceive many, even if a person is deceived for only a little time. The damaging results could be permanent. What appears to be righteousness in our eyes could be filthy rags in God's sight through the prophet Isaiah. God said all our righteousness is as

filthy rags. One of the major weaknesses in too many Christians is the lack of discernment, the inability to judge correctly. Both the preacher and his preaching.

When the disciples ask our Lord for the sign of his coming at the end of the age, he said, take heed that no man deceive you for many shall come in mining saying I am Christ and shall deceive many, many false prophet shall rise and deceive many for their shall rise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders in so much that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Read the Olivet discourse in Matthew Chapter 24 and note verses four, five, eleven and 24. In those verses, our Lord made it clear that as the age runs its course and his coming to the earth draws nigh, deception will be a characteristic feature. Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gave these words in first Timothy for one. Now the Spirit speak it expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Today we can see this growing deception on every hand. The wolves in sheep's clothing are increasing in number.

I look again at our lords. Words in Matthew seven twenty two. Those who were deceived will say to the Lord, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons, and in thy name done many wonderful works. You see, they were so badly deceived it never once dawned upon them that they were not saved. As a matter of fact, they were very sure of their salvation. And no doubt greatly surprised to discover that they were lost after all, everything they had done, they did. In Jesus name, they cast out demons. They performed miracles in the name of Jesus. But they were deceived. The wolves in sheep's clothing had tricked them. Now it's possible for any person to say Lord, Lord. And yet never know the Lord

experientially. Jesus said in Luke 646, Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say. The five foolish virgins stood without the closed door cry. Lord Lord opened to us, but he said unto them, verily, I say unto you, I know you not Matthew. Twenty five verses eleven and twelve.

My friend Satan is the master deceiver. And from these passages, it is clear that he has deluded many in Jesus name. The wonderful works these poor, deluded souls will lay claim to will include miracles. Our Lord, for foretold how that false Christ and false prophets shall show great signs and wonders. Matthew 24:24. Or the word sign there means miracle. And as we approach the end of the age, they will be increased activity in the performing of miracles. I think we can see much of this today in the movements that major on speaking in tongues and in the healing services. These demonstrations will increase to such proportions that when the antichrist appears, who's coming his after the working of Satan with all powers and signs and miracles, the world will gladly accept him in Second Thessalonians, Chapter 2.

We have the story of the appearing of the Antichrist after the church is raptured or removed from earth to heaven. And it's interesting to note that when he comes, he will come posing as a great power from God, or even declaring himself to be God to be a Messiah. He will occupy the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and he will take over and perform miracles, and the world will be ready for it. The stage is being set today. There are religious television programs today that people watch for hours that simply give stories and illustrations of miracles, of speaking in tongues, of healings. It's all experiential. It's not based on truth. We start out with experience and people watching these programs. They want to be like the people they're watching and listening to and

they want the same experiences. Don't be deceived, my friend. You never get saved. Listening to someone else's experience and Christian, you will never grow in grace. Listening to someone else's experience. An important lesson we must learn is that the devil is always an imitator. Never an innovator. His great subtlety is in his skillful ability to imitate and it even times to duplicate the works of God. And he always does it in Jesus name. Today, there are many people whose main interest is in phenomena associated with the Christian life. They are kept busy going to meetings, getting their kicks from watching demonstrations that appear to be supernatural and miraculous, and their chief interest is in the apparent miracle rather than a personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, or how easily any of us can succumb to this subtle tactic of the devil. The devil's big attraction is the experience meeting. The music is entertaining the sermon. It has entered enough of the Christian vocabulary to hold the interest.

The emphasis is upon the idea that God loves you. But the main pitch is toward an experience that has in it a touch of the miraculous and the supernatural. You are encouraged to expect the miracle after listening to people testify about the miracle they experience, and then your urge to phone in or send in your dollars to support this great work. And it's always in Jesus name. I think all people enjoy watching a spectacle. They'll hurry to see a pageant or a parade or a fight. Anything that's grand and showy, but the greatest spectacle of all the drama of the ages is the struggle between good and evil. The leading actors are God on the one side and the devil on the other. What the spectators and participants on earth do not see is the disguise and the deceitfulness of sin. The devil's religion glitters like a crown of gold on its head, but it has the sting of death in its tail. There's a new brand of Christianity so-call. It moved in upon us in the 1950s, having the glamour and excitement of a mighty spectacular. It came in Jesus name.

Quoting the Bible, attributing its miracles of speaking in tongues, casting out demons and the power to heal. There are people from all walks of life involved in it.

Protestants and Roman Catholics alike. Its greatest achievement has been to divide families, split churches and create unprecedented confusion. My friend God is not the author of confusion. He is the author of Peace. As in All Churches of the Saints, First Corinthians 14 33. Tens of thousands have been led astray. They have followed those who claim to prophesy in Jesus name, who cast out demons in Jesus name and in Jesus name, have done many wonderful works. God only knows where they will spend eternity. Jesus said. Then will I profess unto them? Many, not all, not all. But also notice. Not a few, but many. I will profess unto them too many. I never knew you depart from me. Ye that work iniquity, my friend. Beware of false prophets. If you would possess the kingdom of all kingdoms, you must be born again. Jesus said, except a man be born again. He cannot see the kingdom of God. This, dear friends, is the mandate of the King of Kings. Let me ask you, have you experienced the new birth? Do you know what it means to be saved, to be born again? Have you had the genuine experience of salvation? That is the experience of all experiences. If you're not sure that you're saved, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust him implicitly for your salvation from sin and your only hope for heaven. Now we're going to continue our study by dealing with what I'm going to call the big lie, the big deception of the last days. And we'll just stop at this point, turn our tape over and then we'll proceed with our study.