

Lesson 124 - Following True Undershepherds

1. Who placed true teachers, preachers, apostles, prophets and others in the church showing that we are not to avoid church? **1 Corinthians 12:28**

EGW: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily, prophets, thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, then gift of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." {PUR, December 29, 1904 par. 4}

The Lord desires His church to respect every gift that He has bestowed on the different members. Let us beware of allowing our minds to become fixed on ourselves, thinking that no one can be serving the Lord unless he is working on the same lines as those on which we are working. {PUR, December 29, 1904 par. 5}

2. What are we to do towards anyone that comes in the name of Christ or claims to be a representative of Christianity? **1 John 4:1**

EGW: The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1. And Isaiah declares, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20. 118 {CCh 92.2}

3. What do true pastors feed the flock with? **Jeremiah 3:15 [2 answers]**

EGW: Human judgment does not decide any case. The Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. He is working through divine agencies to draw souls toward purity of service, toward mercy and justice. Who will be drawn? "The Lord hath said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judea. Only acknowledge thy wrong, and proclaim these words to the North, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and if thou repent I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon thee; for I am merciful, saith the Lord; and say to all that repent, I will not keep Mine anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hath scattered thy ways to strangers, and ye have not obeyed My voice, saith the Lord. If thou repent, I will not keep My anger forever. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you. I will take one of a city, and two of a family, and I

will bring you to Zion, and I will give you pastors according to My heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." {Ms45-1909}

4. What is the purpose of prophets, preachers, teachers, and others? **Ephesians 4:11-12**

EGW: These solemn matters are set before me in clear lines. God has appointed apostles, pastors, evangelists, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith. God declares to His people, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." There must be a continual advancement. Step by step His followers must make straight paths for their feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. Those who would labor for God must work intelligently to replenish the deficiencies in themselves and glorify the Lord God of Israel by standing in the light, working in the light of the Sun of Righteousness. Thus they will carry the church forward and upward and heavenward, making its separation from the world more and more distinct. {1888 1645.2}

5. What does a good congregation do? **Ezekiel 37:24**

EGW: (no comment)

6. What shall false prophets, preachers, and teachers bring in? **2 Peter 2:1**

EGW: Peter also outlines two classes, one approved of God, because obedient to all his commandments; the other disloyal to him, sinning against him because transgressing his law; for "sin is the transgression of the law." "There were false prophets also among the people," he writes, "even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." But he says, "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." {ST, February 11, 1897 par. 11}

7. What is placed upon false pastors? **Jeremiah 23:1**

EGW: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! . . . Behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings." "Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock; for your days for slaughter and your dispersions are accomplished; ... and the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape." [Jeremiah 23:1, 2; 25:34, 35 (MARGIN).] {GC88 655.2}

Ministers and people see that they have not sustained the right relation to God. They see that they have rebelled against the Author of all just and righteous law. The setting aside of the divine precepts gave rise to thousands of springs of evil, discord, hatred, iniquity, until the earth became one vast field of strife, one sink of corruption. This is the view that now appears to those who rejected truth and chose to cherish error. No language can express the longing which the disobedient and disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever,—eternal life. Men whom the world has worshiped for their talents and eloquence now see these things in their true light. They realize what they have forfeited by transgression, and they fall at the feet of those whose fidelity they have despised and derided, and confess that God has loved them. {GC88 655.3}

8. What will false teachers swerve into teaching? **1 Timothy 1:6**

EGW: This recent apostasy has been a great trial to us, and has largely increased my burdens and writing. It has hurt my soul. But having done all, we must stand. Paul wrote to Timothy, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith; so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned; from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.... Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." {7MR 176.1}

If these men who have gone out from us, had, as faithful stewards, searched deep into the word of God, and heeded Paul's words of the sixth chapter of Ephesians, they would now have been standing more and still more firmly in the faith.... These men have yielded up the Bible truth which has made us what we are, Seventh-day Adventists. They have thought to wrap themselves up in a spurious sanctification, which will accord with any false theories that men may choose to accept. They have not added to their faith, but have detracted from it.... {7MR 176.2}

9. To make up for the false doctrines, what do false preachers rely upon? **Mark 13:22**

EGW: These ideas in relation to prophesying, I do not hesitate to say, might better never have been expressed. Such statements prepare the way for a state of things that Satan will surely take advantage of to bring in spurious exercises. There is danger, not only that unbalanced minds will be led into fanaticism, but that designing persons will take advantage of this excitement to further their own selfish purposes. Jesus has raised His voice in warning: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord." "If any man shall say to you, Lo here is Christ, or lo, He is there, believe him not; for false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed; behold, I have foretold you all things" [Mark 13:21-23].--Letter 6a, 1894, pp. 3, 4. (To "Dear Brethren and Sisters," March 16, 1894.) {2MR 188.1}

10. But what are we to do regarding these preachers with signs and wonders? **Acts 17:10-11**

EGW: Says the prophet, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." We must search as diligently in the word of God as did the noble Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so." We should dig as for hid treasure in the mines of truth. Christ has warned us that false prophets would arise and would deceive many. There are many who profess to have great faith. They make great claims to holiness, but do they speak according to the law and the testimony? If they do not, it is because there is no light in them. Men fold the garments of their self-righteousness around them, and claim perfection of character; but they have only measured themselves with a standard of their own creating, and with sacrilegious hands they have torn down the true standard of all righteousness. The law of Jehovah is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The sinner wants to get it out of the way because it condemns him. It is thought burdensome by the transgressor, but the obedient can say with David, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." {ST, May 27, 1889 par. 2}

11. What are false teachers, preachers, prophets compared to? **Matthew 7:15**

EGW: Teachers of falsehood will arise to draw you away from the narrow path and the strait gate. Beware of them; though concealed in sheep's clothing, inwardly they are ravening wolves. Jesus gives a test by which false teachers may be distinguished from the true. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," He says. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" {MB 145.1}

12. What can self-glorification, attention seeking, idol pastors do with the flock, especially during a crisis? **Zechariah 11:17**

EGW: God calls for a consecrated ministry. In Zechariah we read: "Lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young ones, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall utterly darkened" [Zechariah 11:16, 17]. {18MR 181.5}

Notice the spelling of the word idol. It is not idle, but idol. This refers to the minister who makes an idol of himself--to the minister who carries on his heart no burden for souls. Let the ministers consider this scripture. The Lord has no use for idol shepherds. {18MR 182.1}

13. What will false teachers not teach with soundness? **2 Timothy 4:3**

EGW: When God sends to men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, he requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message. The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image, [Revelation 14:9-11.] should lead all to a diligent study of the prophecies to learn what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it. But the masses of the people turn away their ears from hearing the truth, and are turned unto fables. The apostle Paul declared, looking down to the last days, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." [2 Timothy 4:3.] That time has fully come. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love. {GC88 594.2}

14. Through vanity by speaking to what the hearers want to hear, lying by telling the congregation they can disobey and still go to Heaven, and presenting false dreams, what is still done in vain? **Zechariah 10:2**

EGW: (no comment)

15. From that situation in Zechariah 10:2, who receives God's anger? **Zechariah 10:3**

EGW: (no comment)

16. Who still gets punished because of not desiring sound doctrine by choosing those that tickle the ear (itching ears)? **Zechariah 10:3**

EGW: (no comment)

17. When the pastors, teachers, and other church leaders "slumber", and do not preach what they ought to preach, what happens to the people spiritually? **Nahum 3:18**

EGW: The sheep that need to be fed, are scattered upon the mountains of Israel; they are starving to death on dry theories. My brethren, you do not feed the flock, you do not have faith, humility, and love. The most sacred responsibility rests upon those who have accepted the position of shepherds to the flock of God. But if the professed ministers of Christ are not endowed with the power from on high, they are not fit for the work of this time. The work calls for men who have spiritual energy, and far seeing discernment. God sends light to His people that they may live in His light according to their privileges. There are many who feel satisfied with their meager attainments, and they refuse the light that God sends them, saying by their attitude, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." In so doing they not only rob their own souls of spiritual knowledge, but they rob the souls of others. Those whom they endeavor to help, have to suffer loss because the teachers fail to employ their talents in the way that God would have them, and choose to place their own limited, narrow experience before the people, instead of the glorious gospel of Christ. They are like guide posts pointing in the wrong direction. They will forfeit the favor of God, and come under His displeasure, unless they change their course decidedly and humble their hearts before God. {1888 405.2}

18. What will the false teachings lead people to do? **Jeremiah 50:6**

EGW: (no comment)

19. What do false shepherds (teachers, pastors, etc.) tend to focus upon? **Ezekiel 34:2, Isaiah 56:11**

EGW: “His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.” God says to them, “Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” {Ms107-1901}

I tell you that those who have discovered themselves to strangers, who have led God’s people in false paths, will never see His face. They claim to believe God’s law, but they transgress this law, allowing Satan to work his will and way through them. They claim to follow the Lord, but He says: “I know them not. They are workers of iniquity, multiplying disobedience, and leading my people in strange paths. I cannot keep my covenant with them.” {Ms107-1901}

20. What will God hold the shepherds (teachers, pastors, etc.) responsible for? **Ezekiel 34:10, Jeremiah 23:2**

EGW: Of the ministers who take away the key of knowledge from the people, refusing to enter in and hindering those who would enter, God says, “Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.” {Ms33-1900}

What shepherds are here meant? It is certainly those who claim everything in the promises of God which they have no right to claim, for they are transgressing His law. When God sends His messengers to speak His words and warn the people that they are trampling under their unhallowed feet the law of God, these false shepherds refuse to accept the message. They will accept the falsehoods of those who have apostatized from God and taken sides with the first great rebel, but they utterly refuse to investigate the Scriptures fairly, to see if the things which God’s messengers say are true. {Ms33-1900}

21. What is the promise granted to the true sheep (congregation)? **Ezekiel 34:12, Jeremiah 23:3**

EGW: These souls whom you despise, said Jesus, are the property of God. By creation and by redemption they are His, and they are of value in His sight. As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Ezekiel 34:12. {COL 187.1}