

Series: Order in the Church

Title: Christian Con Artists Unmasked

Title: Titus 1:10-16

Illus: Scams and Scam Artists

Very few things anger me to the point of violence

Irish Sweepstakes

Perpetual Going Ou of Business Sales

Counterfeit Goods

Rental Property Add

Con Artist - Intentionally misleads for financial Gain.

Telel-marketing Scams

Internet Scams

Frank Abagnale - Bad Checks, posed as a Pan Am Pilot,

Doctor, Lawyer, Jailed, worked with FBI, now a

Millionaire Anti Fraud Consultant and Author.

Movie - "Catch Me if you can"

"If you believe that, I have a bridge I can sell you"

George Parker - Sold the Brooklyn Bridge

Bad Credit? No Credit? No Problem - You're PreApproved!

Religious Scam Artists.

Charles Taze Russell - JW & Watchtower Bible & Tract

Indicted for Fraud. "Miracle Wheat" scandal

Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford has perpetuated it.

Joseph Smith - LDS - Brigham Young

Mary Baker Eddy - Christian Science

Paul warns Titus about the real dangers of Spiritual Con Artists, intent on Scamming the churches by teaching a mixture of truth and error.

Every lawn in a mixture of grass and weeds.

Shepherds must sow seeds of truth & out weeds of error.

(1 Tim 4:1) *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*

Satan is scary smart, patiently skillful, the ultimate Con Artist. His favorite scam is to drape lies in beautiful robes of truth.

Paul was instructing Titus, these men have to have spiritual discernment, courage, and insight.

(Titus 1:9b) *that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

Spotting Spiritual Counterfeits:

So how were they to spot a Con Artist?

(Vs 1:9b) ***Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, ...***

By knowing the scriptures and Comparing everything to them: (Is 8:20) Scripture is the standard of Truth.

(1 Cor 2:12-16) Compare unknown with known truth.

False Teachers: (Vs 1:10a) *For there are many unruly*

Just like the rebellious children in Vs 6

(2 Cor 11:12-15)

Vs 12 Occasion - Opportunity to be a leader, to deceive them

Vs 13 explains what they are

Vs 14 Who's example they follow (Vs 15) the are convincing!

They always Claim Spiritual Authority: (1:10a) *For there are many unruly talkers.*

Above question - “God speaks through me” (1 Chron 16:22)
Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

They make claims of divine revelation:

Empty Promises: (Vs 1:10b) *and vain talkers and deceivers,*
Vain = Empty
Eloquent speakers, but shallow doctrine.

Captivating messages that challenge you to ponder, but doesn't motivate you to change, or tell what the change is.

Illus: *Andy Stanley: Power Message.*

They wrap up their messages by asking people to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, but Savior from ***What?***

No mention of sin.

False Teachers emphasis on:

How to get heaven here and now.

How to get the gold pavement down here.

How to get Healthier.

How to get a positive self image.

How to nurture the seeds of greatness within.

Illus: *Couple in their sixties on their anniversary.*

What if God's will is suffering here?

What if God's will is sacrifice here?

What if God's will is loss here?

A Con artist gives you what you think you want, but in the end all you have is empty promises.

There will always be Spiritual Con Artists, because our sinful hearts wants our desires fulfilled, here and now.

Deceptive Motives: (Vs 1:10c) *specially they of the circumcision:*

There were Jewish converts in the churches that were not willing to fully embrace the new covenant.

They wanted to turn Christianity into another Jewish sect.
Teaching that the Gospel was not sufficient w/o works.
Teaching Grace wasn't the standard for life.
Teaching Jesus isn't enough w/o the National Identity.

They wanted the NT Christians to be brought under their control.

(Gal 2:4) *And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:*

(Gal 5:1)

Paul uses strong words to direct Titus...

Scandalous Consequences: (Vs 1:11a) *Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses,*

Whole Families being turned from the truth: House church

Multiple generations of children will be born into these families, mislead from the beginning into false teaching.

Unmasking their Motives: Money & Fame (1:11b) *teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.*

Illus: Have you ever noticed how criminals cover their faces and hide their identity?

False Teachers were raking in the dough: Prosperity Gospel

It is amazing how false teachers can use the bible to con people into spiritual false hood.

This is possible if the pew stays ignorant.

False Teaching was real problem on Crete.

False religion, False teaching, Deceived flocks, Twisted Scripture, Additions and deletions from Scripture.

All done by seemingly religious men, whose motives were self serving.

Paul quotes a cretian poet who pulled off their masks.
(1:12-13a) *One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.*

Even the Cretian writer, Epimenides, in whose poems stand the words here cited, acknowledged the character of his island as being deceitful, cruel, and lazy.

They were ungodly people as much of the world is even today Evidently this character weakness was in the church on Crete

13 This witness is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

This is not a popular practice.

I have had people get upset because I called out a warning about a false teacher.

This is the job of the Pastor:

Unmasking their Teaching: Myths & Fables (Vs 1:14) *Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*

They were putting forth man made concepts.
Anything not found in scripture is Man Made.

It boggles my mind.

Many will use the Bible for reference, but not as their primary source.

Illus: Did you know there are a lot of ancient writings that happened at the same time as the bible writers?

Satan's original argument:

I have new truth, long forgotten by religious men who have abused their power...

The Book of Jubilees was a best seller, but not scripture.

The History of Susanna,

The writings of Tobit and Judith - Pure Fiction

filled with historical errors and questionable morality.

The Gospel of Thomas, written in the 3rd century.

The Apocrypha, the Talmud, the Cabbala, with some kind of moral lesson at best, and a redefined gospel at Worst.

Just because they are quoted as a church Father, doesn't mean anything:

(Vs 1:15) Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

The pure of heart tend to think in terms of purity while the impure and unbelievers tend to see everything through the prism of their own perversity.

Everything becomes perverse to an unregenerate mind allowed to run its course.

The particular context here likely is of doctrinal impurity.

The very mind and conscience of these apostate Jews were defiled by their spiritual blindness.

Their entire perspective was warped, especially regarding the truth of the gospel.

Illus:

When ever I try and discuss a bible principle with a lost person, I get push back from people labeling me a hater, or accusing me of judging them.

The Problem is found in Vs 16

Unmasking their Future: Misery & Fruitlessness (Vs 1:16)

They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

So many know about God, but they don't know Him.

The distance from heaven is 8" - Head to Heart.

Shielding the Flock & Sparing False Teachers: (Vs 1:11)

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

Saving the Church Family From Harm: (Vs 1:11-16)

Saving the False Teachers from Hell: (Vs 1:13) *This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;*

We have to care enough about their soul to share the Truth.

(Vs 1:16) They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Paul wants Titus to find shepherds who will live under the firm conviction...

Life is Short,
Death is Sure,
Sin is the Culprit,
Christ is the Cure.

Titus was to find men who really believed this..

Who would not compromise it.

Who will defend it.

Who will unmask those that deceitfully twist it.

Titus was to find men who would Guard and protect the flock.

Men who would give their lives for the flock.

Men who would stand up to the pressure of the world to compromise, or short cut the truth.

James, Kati, Penelope (4tyrs), and Sabine (7mos)

The flock of God is on the road to home, but heaven is not here on earth,

False Teachers sign the road offering us counterfeit maps, promising short cuts.

“why are you struggling, God wants you to be health, wealthy, and wise.”

“Why are you reading that old book, I have new information that will fill your heart with Love and Laughter.”

“Our way is easier ... here is how to avoid struggles.”

Repeating our Saviour's name, cleverly disguising their scam.

They offer shallow, empty, temporary promises, and road maps that don't exactly line up with God's Word.