

Question:

How can false prophets, who have no genuine relationship with the true God, still cast out demons using the name of JESUS? Are they using God's power—or Satan's?

Answer: Understanding the Mystery of False Prophets

To answer this, we must approach the issue with a biblical and theological lens. There are two main categories of false prophets found both in Scripture and in today's context:

1. Those Who Use Demonic Power (Fully Deceived)

These individuals operate entirely under satanic influence. They do not preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, nor do they truly invoke His name. Instead, they use occult practices under the disguise of Christianity—what Paul calls “a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:5).

Though they may dress in religious clothing and quote Scripture, they are, in essence, wolves in sheep's clothing.

Matthew 7:15

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”

2. Those Who Still Use the Name of JESUS but Have No Relationship with Him

This group is more dangerous because they appear to be genuine. They may have once walked with God but have since drifted, or they use ministry as a means for personal gain (see Philippians 3:18–19). Some may have received a genuine spiritual gift or anointing from God in the past, but now live in disobedience.

And yet—miracles can still happen in their ministry. Why?

Biblical Example: Moses and the Rock (Numbers 20:7–12)

God instructed Moses to speak to the rock, but he struck it instead. Despite his disobedience, water still came out of the rock.

Numbers 20:11

“Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.”

This shows us that God, in His mercy, may still act for the sake of His people—even if the leader is disobedient. But that leader still faces consequences.

Spiritual Gifts Are Not the Same as God’s Approval

Spiritual gifts (like prophecy, healing, or miracles) are not always a sign of spiritual maturity or right standing with God. Paul explains this in:

Romans 11:29

“For God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable.”

This means someone may still operate in a gift even after they have strayed from the faith. But Jesus makes it clear: miracles are not proof of salvation.

Matthew 7:22-23

*“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’
Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

How Then Do We Identify True Prophets and Ministers?

Not by their power, but by their fruit—their life and the result of their ministry.

Matthew 7:16, 20

“By their fruit you will recognize them... Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

Why Do False Prophets Cast Out Demons in the Name of JESUS?

Two Kinds of Fruit to Examine:

1. The Fruit of Their Life (Character):

Do they live according to the Word of God? Do they show evidence of the Holy Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

A person living in sin or greed, despite working miracles, is not a faithful servant of Christ.

2. The Fruit of Their Ministry (Impact):

Are the people under their teaching growing in godliness and holiness?

If the people they serve remain worldly, disobedient, or unchanged, that's a sign the ministry is not bearing the fruit of God.

2 Peter 2:1-2

"There will be false teachers among you... Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute."

Another Example: The Lying Old Prophet (1 Kings 13:11-32)

In this story, an old prophet lies to a younger one and causes his downfall. Surprisingly, he still receives a true prophecy afterward. This shows that a person can operate in prophetic gifts even after falling into deception—again proving that gifts are not the measure of a person's standing with God.

1 John 4:1

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

John 10:41

"Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true."

To identify a true prophet, pastor, apostle, or teacher, don't be

impressed by their power—examine their fruit.

Look at their lifestyle. Look at the effect of their ministry. Do they point people to holiness, truth, and Christ-likeness?

Miracles can deceive, but fruits don't lie.

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

May the Lord give us discernment, humility, and wisdom in these last days. Amen.

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