

**Message #7 of Scripture Beneath The Surface**  
***“Can You Trust All the Teachers?”***

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today we're going to take a look at the question, "Can you trust all the teachers?" The teachers we're talking about are those who teach the scriptures; the theologians, the bishops, the pastors, the evangelists, etc. All those men and women who come to you and teach. Of course, the list includes me. I fall under that category, too. Now, what we want to do today is answer that question, "Can you trust all the teachers. Can you trust all of us who teach the word of God to give you the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Well, let's make this really short, plain, and simple. The answer is, "No! You absolutely can not trust all the teachers. End of story!"

So, what am I doing on this program? If you can't trust that everything I say is the truth, then why would you listen to me? Who can you trust? Well, the answer to that question comes in two parts. First, you can trust those who give you two or three witnesses that what they say is the truth, and second, you can trust those witnesses which are qualified witnesses.

Now, this may sound confusing, but the reason I say that you need two or three witnesses in order to believe someone, is that the Bible teaches us that two or three witnesses are necessary whenever deciding what is truthful, especially when the truth is a matter of life and death. Here, let's look at the book of Numbers, chapter 35, verse 30. It says, "Whoever kills any person, the

murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.” Notice it says, one witness is not sufficient testimony to condemn a person. In Deuteronomy 17:6, it says, “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.” And here’s another scripture. Deuteronomy 19:15 says, “One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”

Now, you see that in this last scripture, God has established the rule of two or three witnesses even for situations that are not a life and death matter. Two or three witnesses are necessary in order to keep people from being condemned by false accusations. Of course it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to realize that if a man could be condemned just by the testimony of one man, this world would be a scary place to live. All it would take to send someone to prison would be someone telling a lie about you because they didn’t like you. So, having at least two or three witnesses is better, and will help to ensure that the testimony is well founded before a person is finally judged to be guilty. The truth is most important, especially in life or death situations. What we want is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so having good qualified witnesses will help us to accomplish that.

Now, this concept of two or three witnesses is further carried out by Jesus in the New Testament. In John 5:31, Jesus says that if he bears witness of himself, his witness is not true. What? Jesus’ witness not true? How can that be? We know that everything Jesus spoke was true. However, as we continue to read in these verses we see that the point Jesus was making was that his witness alone was not sufficient to prove his words as being true. Not that his words were false, but only that his words could not be considered to be true if the only witness to those words were his own. Jesus was saying that his own words, even though he was the Son of God, were not sufficient proof that he was actually speaking truth. Now, he also referred to John the Baptist who gave witness to him of being the Messiah. But then he continued and explained that the witnesses which would confirm his words to be true were not human witnesses, because human witnesses were not qualified to confirm his own words. What he needed was two or three witnesses. His own words were one witness, but the second and third witnesses were the Father in heaven and the Holy Spirit.

You see, humans are not qualified to prove God as being true. John the Baptist, although sent by God to give testimony of Jesus, was not a qualified witness to prove that the words of Jesus were true. In the verses of John, chapter 5, Jesus continued to explain that in addition to his own testimony, the Father in heaven testified of him, and also, the very works that he did, those miracles he performed, gave witness of him, because only by the power of the Holy Spirit could anyone work miracles to the glory of God. The power of God comes through the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 12:28, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the avenue by which he was able to cast out evil spirits. By referring to the concept of three witnesses, Jesus was emphasizing the importance that all three persons of the Godhead were necessary in order to reveal God to his people. It would prove that the Father’s word is true, that the Holy Spirit is definitely the avenue of God’s power,

and that Jesus Christ is definitely the Son of God, and that all three persons make up God himself, the one true God.

God the Father gives the first witness which is found all through scripture, both openly and hidden by symbolism. The word of God found in scripture testifies of Jesus, and in addition, God also spoke audibly of Jesus when Jesus was baptized by saying, "This is my beloved Son in who I am well pleased. Hear ye him."

Now, God the Son gives the second witness, by being God in the flesh. We are told in John, chapter 1, verse 1, that in the beginning the Word was God. In verse 14 it says that this word became flesh and dwelt among us. This helps humans, who are flesh and blood, to more easily recognize and understand God's word because we can see God's word manifested through the life of Jesus Christ.

Now, the third witness that the words of Jesus are true, is the witness of the Holy Spirit. This witness was by the signs and wonders that Jesus did. The works of God are accomplished by the power of God through his Holy Spirit, and no man can do the miracles in God's name unless the Holy Spirit himself brings them to pass. When you see a miracle, when you see a healing, when you see an evil spirit cast out, you are seeing the evidence of God, by his Holy Spirit, in action. When you see these things take place in Jesus' name, you know they cannot take place unless it is the will of God. God does not allow his power to be used for purposes which are not for the accomplishment of his will. Therefore, when the miracles took place at the hand of Jesus, the people around him could recognize that the Holy Spirit was giving witness, was testifying to the authenticity of the words Jesus spoke.

The point I'm making is this. Jesus taught that in order for his words and actions to be proven as truly from God, he needed more than his own witness as proof. He needed two other witnesses to confirm that he was truly the Son of God. And those two other witnesses were not men of the earth, but were actually the Father and the Holy Spirit. In essence we have the testimony of the Mind of God, from which truth comes, the testimony of the Body of God, which reveals God to flesh and blood humans, and the testimony of the Spirit of God, who performs the miraculous signs and wonders which enforces the word of God. All three witnesses testify of the truth to mankind, and all three witnesses make up the one supreme God who is not three Gods, but is one God. It is the same thing with us humans, essentially, because we ourselves are made up of our mind, which brings forth the words from our inner man. It is our bodies which manifest what is hidden in our hearts, and it is our spirit which causes us to bear the fruit of what is hidden in our hearts.

When Christians are dealing with Scripture, they are dealing with spiritual things, and they are matters of life and death. They require more than just a single testimony, more than just one witness, and most importantly, they must be qualified witnesses. Only God can prove that God is who he says he is. Man can testify of God, but other men cannot know God by just the testimony of men. Humans come to know God when he draws them to himself, and then reveals himself to

them by his own witness, and by the two other witnesses, which are Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In Zechariah, chapter four, these three parts of God are represented by a lampstand which has seven lamps, and by two olive trees which supply the oil to the lamps. I would encourage you to take time and look up these verses. It is a symbolic representation of the three parts of God which make up God as a whole. In Zechariah 4, the lampstand represents God's word, and the two olive trees represent Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, who by their additional testimony to God's word, supply the needed oil to light the lamps. You see, the word of God does not shed light unto the world without the additional testimonies of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The oil of the two olive trees is necessary for the lamps to burn. Unless oil is supplied to the lamps, the lampstand cannot help us. The word of God is not complete until the second and third testimonies are added.

Now, notice that Revelation, Chapter 11, describes almost the same picture, but with one specific difference. In Revelation, Chapter 11, there are not one, but two lampstands. Because the one lampstand and the two olive trees in Zechariah were the word of the Lord, we know that the two lampstands and two olive trees of Revelation 11 are also the word of the Lord. To break it down further, the two lampstands are God's word in two testaments; the Old Testament, and the New Testament. Zechariah, chapter 4, only indicates one lampstand because the New Testament had not yet come to pass.

Now, the word of God is powerful, but it's value increases with revelation. Without revelation, God's word is like a lamp without oil. The two olive trees represent that which reveals the hidden understanding of the word of God, that which sheds light and dispels the darkness. They represent that which adds witness to God's word, revealing the true God, and thereby proving his word is true. As represented by the two olive trees, Jesus and the Holy Spirit reveal God, testifying of him to the people of Earth. The oil coming from the two olive trees represents the additional illumination that comes to God's word when we combine the written word of God with the life and witness of Jesus Christ and also the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

Notice that to know God requires not only the written word, but also the revelation knowledge of God brought to light by the two witnesses which can reveal a spiritual God to human flesh. Without the additional two witnesses, which are able to take that which is a completely spiritual concept and translate it into knowledge that humans can comprehend, God would only be testifying of himself. However, mankind must come to an understanding of God, must come to a revelation of God, in order to know God. And man must come to know God in order to love God. And finally, if man can come to love God, then man can come to be one with God, for God is love.

And for you who would ask concerning the death of the two witnesses in Revelation 11, just think for a moment what happens when there is no longer the living testimony of Jesus or the Holy Spirit in the world. What happens when these two types of witness are destroyed by the people of Earth? God would no longer have two or three witnesses, but only the witness of Himself. And then Satan could convince people that God's witness is no more true than Jesus' witness would

be when testifying only of himself. A great portion of the Christian church of today, because they have no 'ears to hear', have already disavowed the Holy Spirit's work in the church; and many, in what is loosely called Christianity, have already denied Jesus Christ as the true Son of God who died and rose again, and are claiming that there are alternative ways to God other than through his Son. Certainly, when God told us in scripture that two or three witnesses were required in order to establish truth, he wasn't just kidding around. In fact, the understanding of the concept of two or three witnesses is probably one of the most important concepts in scripture, especially for understanding end time prophecy.

So, in referring to our original question, "can you trust all the teachers?" we find that the answer lies in first recognizing that what a preacher preaches is supposed to be the word of God. And if it is the word of God, then it is a spiritual concept, not an earthly one. And if it is a spiritual concept, then it is a matter of life and death. Therefore, when you hear the preacher, you're not really looking to him for your understanding. What you want is truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And because you want the truth, you will also want two or three qualified witnesses so that the truth can be firmly established in your heart. You won't be looking for just something that sounds good, but something that gives you the promise of eternal life. Remember, eternity is a life and death situation. Yes, I know that what the preacher is trying to preach is the word of God, but we must KNOW it is the word of God before we can take it as our own, before we can believe it, before we can risk applying it to our lives. For if we apply that which is NOT truly the word of God to our lives, it may very well cause our eternal destruction.

Now, I'm sure that you have no intention of taking man's word at face value. But many times we Christians find ourselves accepting what is told to us without receiving the testimony of one or two more witnesses. And even if we do require one or two more witnesses, how often do we make the mistake of looking to other human beings for that witness when it is God's word that is being decided upon. If we hear a preacher teach a doctrine, and then listen to other preachers teach on the same subject, and they agree, does this mean that what they say is true? No, it doesn't! Because we are dealing with spiritual concepts, because we are dealing with the word of God, which to us is a matter of life and death, our purpose is to discern whether what the preacher spoke is actually the word of God or just the preacher's word. Therefore the witnesses which are required are those witnesses who are qualified to PROVE what is or is not true concerning the God of Heaven.

When you hear or read of God, compare it with the life of Jesus. When you hear or read of God, let the Holy Spirit guide you, for as it says in John 16:13, it will guide you into all truth. Let the Holy Spirit move you. Let it create an emotion within you. Let it create feeling in you. As you become more and more familiar with God's written and spoken word, and become more and more familiar with Jesus Christ, who is God's revealed Word, you will begin to recognize that the spirit within you is truly testifying of God. It is at this time that you accept the spoken or written word as truth, and not just because the preacher teaches it.

Man's testimony is only the testimony of man. Truth does not come just from man. Man can speak anything. That's one reason why good preachers encourage people to read their Bibles. But truth is only revealed to us from the written or spoken Word of God when it is accompanied by God's two other witnesses. If you believe something just because most preachers preach it, then you are really trusting in the percentages of chance. But, going to heaven is not based on chance, but on knowing God. We know from scripture that many times the majority believed the false prophets, and only a small minority believed the true word of God. But heaven is not reached by those who follow the majority. Remember the admonition in Matthew 7:13-14, which tells us that many will try to follow the broad way to get to heaven, but it is only a FEW who follow the narrow way, and actually get there.

Yes, we must have preachers, and we must have teachers, for it says in Romans 10:14, "How can they hear without a preacher?" But it also says in Matthew 23:8-10, not to call any man father, meaning to give someone other than God the complete authority over your spiritual life, and not to call any man master, or teacher, meaning that we are not to take man's word as the final authority. These verses tell us that only God is your father, and only God is your guide. Be VERY careful when you find a preacher who wants to be your authority, or who will even let you treat him as if he is your complete authority. Keep in mind the familiar term, 'wolves in sheep's clothing'. Once again, refer to 1 Corinthians 11:3, and realize that the head of man is Christ. Your pastor is not your head.

Because Christians have such a great tendency to trust preachers instead of looking to God, we have many forms of doctrine in the church today. And many of these doctrines are nothing more and nothing less than products of man's reasoning rather than the revelation of God's word. In most instances the shepherds mean well, but have made the same mistake as the sheep. They have been led, not to the revealed word, and not by the Holy Spirit, but have accepted man's word at face value rather than applying themselves to the study of the word and to prayer.

You know, Christians love to play follow the leader with their bishop, their pastor, or their elders, but they are not the authority over spiritual things. They have authority for administering the church, but not over what you believe or don't believe. It is the three witnesses of God which is your authority in spiritual matters. No, I'm not suggesting that you stop listening to the preachers, but I am suggesting that you sincerely and prayerfully question everything they say, including everything I say. I know it's easy to listen to a man or woman who apparently is Mr. or Mrs. Nice Person, and to accept everything they say as gospel. I have even heard Christians say, "I know he is telling me the truth, because I know he would never lie to me." This is either from ignorance or stupidity, for although he may never have any intention of lying to you, this in no way guarantees that he will always be 100% perfectly right. We're all human. We're all fallible. We all err. No teacher has all knowledge and all understanding. The only qualified witnesses to the word of God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. With these three witnesses you can be assured of knowing the truth. You can be certain of knowing God.