



# 200,000,000 False Teachers!

Revelation 9:1-21 Matthew 7:15-20

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Some of the most graphic and fantastic images in the book of Revelation have to do with **FALSE TEACHINGS** that lead people *away* from the Lord Jesus.

These graphic and fantastic images begin with Satan dramatically *falling as a star out of heaven*. In Revelation, Satan is the *King of Hell*, and his name is Destroyer. He is given the key to the *Gate of Hell*, and when he opens it, smoke like a gigantic furnace darkens the sky and smothers the earth.

Out of the *fires and smoke of Hell* come gruesome creatures that destroy people. Some of these creatures are described as **locusts that look like war-horses and have tails like scorpions**. Others are described as **horses and riders that are dressed for battle**. In these graphic and fantastic images, three things stand out:

1. All these dangerous creatures come from **Satan** himself.
2. The danger is in their **mouths**. It is what they say that makes them dangerous.
3. Their number is vast: **200,000,000**

These dangers from Satan are **FALSE TEACHERS AND FALSE DOCTRINES inside the Holy Christian Church**<sup>1</sup>, as well as all the **FALSE IDEAS, THEORIES, AND PHILOSOPHIES in the secular world** that lead people away from Christ and His Word.

These dangers are *everywhere*: the number **200,000,000** teaches us that there are **countless** false teachings that you must always be aware; there are **vast numbers** of heresies that cloud, distort and deny the truth of God's holy Word.

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<sup>1</sup> This is where the **Antichrist** (the Roman Catholic papacy) and the **Apostate Protestant Church** fit into the End Times. They are pictured together in the book of Revelation as the “Beast from the Land” (Rev 13:11ff). This Beast from Satan is dangerous because it “looks like Lamb (Christ); but speaks like Dragon (Satan).” The danger is in their mouths; it is what they say that makes them dangerous. This beast represents all false teachings that lead people away from Christ, especially highlighting those “inside” the Holy Christian Church. This beast morphs throughout Revelation, and is later described as the “False Prophet” who leads the world astray; and the corrupt and vile “Harlot/Prostitute” who stands opposite the pure and holy “Bride of Christ”, the true Holy Christian Church.

The danger of false teachings cannot be overstated: the danger is real.

† **Jesus** refers to false teachings as **yeast** – meaning that they grow and spread  
Matthew 16:11-12

† **St. Paul** refers to heresy as **gangrene**, -- indicating that not only do they grow and spread, but they kill and destroy 2 Tim 2:16-17

† **St. John** tells us that false doctrines are **Satanic** 2 John 9-11

† **St. Peter** warns us that false teachings will lead to you to **condemnation** and **eternal death**. 2 Peter 2:1-3

False teachings are terrible things. They are lies and deceptions that people believe and follow wholeheartedly. False teachings are signs of the end of the world, and they are very real and powerful dangers.

In the Book of Revelation, there is a **gigantic contrast** at work in these images. Just as there are **200,000,000 false teachers** so too, there are **only 2** true teachers of God's Holy Word Revelation 11:3ff. **Remember: the numbers are not literal; they are figurative.** It's a **gigantic contrast** meant to teach us that even though there are a vast number of false teachers teaching false doctrines; the truth of God's Holy Word is still available, the pure Gospel is still being preached in these terrible Last Days and ever increasing End Times.

The fearsome appearance of these horses and riders [in Revelation 9] ought to alert all of God's saints to the terrifying and destructive nature of false doctrines, which many in our day simply view as relatively harmless differences of opinion among religious people.

That Gospel good news about Jesus is the light that shines in this dark world. The good news of Jesus' death and resurrection is the **only hope** for this corrupt and sinful world. In Jesus, God the Father reconciled the world to Himself. God counted your sins against Jesus, and He died. Your sins are not counted against you, neither is your guilt. It was all counted against Jesus. You are forgiven because He died and rose from the dead on the third day. **This is the Gospel.** This Gospel good news about Jesus is the **ONLY hope** for this corrupt and sinful world; it is **the Light** that shines in this dark world.

This Good News about Jesus' death and resurrection is ridiculed by the world; and even more tragic, it is either **denied, ignored, or not understood** by most pastors and churches.

**Revelation warns us that there are precious few faithful witnesses to His Word in the End Times.**

**2 faithful witnesses,  
in contrast to 200,000,000 false teachers!**

As you think about this grave warning in Revelation and the serious danger of false teachings in the world and especially in the church, a couple of things stand out.

**First**, be thankful that the Lord has brought you to a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation. The LCMS is a conservative church body that holds to the teachings of God's holy Word. Our emphasis is on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection that leads us to repentance and the forgiveness of sins. We are part of the “2” faithful witnesses; we are not part of the “200,000,000” false teachers. ***If you are like me, then you frequently thank the Lord that you are a conservative Lutheran Christian.*** For me, it is clearly in my personal “top tier of blessings” from the Lord’s good hand.

**Second**, this clear and present danger of false teachings is meant to drive you into studying and learning the Word of God as you live your life in these End Times. The only way to combat heresy and false teachings is with the **truth** of God’s Holy Word. You have to understand the Gospel! You have to know what God’s Word teaches; you have to understand what you believe, teach and confess based on God’s Holy Word alone! **If you do not know or understand God's Holy Word, then you are easy prey to the 200,000,00 false teachers.**

Spend time studying God’s Holy Word; ***make it your personal lifelong goal to be ever more Biblically literate and doctrinally sound.*** At the beginning of September, all of our Bible studies will be back on. **Plan now to attend one**; make it a priority to be in a serious Bible study studying God's Holy Word. The more time you spend becoming knowledgeable and aware of the **truth** of God’s Word, the easier it will be for you to spot a lie, to expose a false teaching, and to avoid heresies. By learning God's Word, you will grow in faith and knowledge, and you will not be deceived by false teachers. Only the Word of God can protect you from the 200 million false teachers!

**Finally**, this strong warning in the book of Revelation calls you to **examine your life** and check **who and what** is influencing you. Our sinful nature is only too willing to listen to lies and to stray away from the truth of God's Holy Word.

### ***So think about your life . . .***

- ✓ Have you let false teachers influence your thinking?
- ✓ Are your attitudes shaped by the world and its ways rather than God's holy Word?
- ✓ Are there signs that you are "falling away" from the faith?
- ✓ Have you become "cool," apathetic, or careless in your Christian faith and life?
- ✓ How do you pray? How vibrant is your prayer life?
- ✓ How often do you share Christ with others?
- ✓ Are you fully engaged in worship, or is worship rote, routine, and even boring to you?
- ✓ How about your zeal? Do you have a "burning desire" to glorify God in every area of your life?
- ✓ Are you striving to be evermore biblically literate, doctrinally sound, and passionately engaged in the Kingdom of God?

These are the kinds of questions that will start you thinking about your Christian faith and life, and they will expose areas where false ideas contrary to God's holy Word are creeping into your life.

If you find something amiss in your life --- then repent.

Repentance means that you turn away from your sin, confess it to God, and believe that you are forgiven through Christ the Lord. The Holy Spirit works through the truth of the Gospel to renew you and to create a zeal for Christ, His Word, and His Kingdom. The Holy Spirit within you leads you to seek the truth of God's holy Word and to shun any idea, theory or teaching that is contrary to God's Holy Word.

We live in the End Times ... there is a clear and present danger for you as a Christian: the danger of false teachers. Two hundred million false teachers are compared to two faithful witnesses.

1. **BE THANKFUL** that the Lord brought you to a conservative Lutheran Church body
2. **Make a commitment TO STUDY** God's Holy Word
3. **Be very careful WHO AND WHAT** you let influence you.

Amen!