# WOLVES - In The Wilderness

*STUDY GUIDE | Discernment, Humility, and Biblical Shepherding*

Finding the Ancient Path | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LE8xcxC8xuU

## Teaching Purpose

In WOLVES - In The Wilderness, the speaker examines the warning about wolves from Ezekiel and Zephaniah through Yeshua and Paul. The Teaching describes how exploitation, coercion, doctrinal distortion, and self-promoting leadership can arise within the covenant community. Drawing on Deuteronomy 13 and 8, it also presents false teaching as a test of fidelity in the wilderness. A central concern is the sincere but self-deceived teacher, who may gradually replace correction by Scripture with arguments defending established opinions. The closing discussion calls for Berean testing, humility, appropriate correction, and care rather than judgmentalism.

## Quick Answer

Biblical wolves are people whose teaching or leadership harms the flock and draws others away from faithfulness to Yehovah. The Teaching stresses that distortion can be gradual and even sincere: believers must test all teaching by Scripture, distinguish the text from personal interpretation, and practice humility, accountability, and loving correction.

## Core Distinction

Editorial distinction: The passage in Deuteronomy 13 speaks specifically about a prophet drawing Israel after other gods; applying every disagreement or sincere mistake to that warning is the speaker's broader inference. Likewise, the claim that all such teachers are wolves is a pastoral application, not an automatic biblical verdict. The historic tithe/leadership examples are personal testimony, not independently verified allegations.

## Teaching Outline and Key Takeaways

### Wolves Within the Flock

The warnings in Ezekiel 22 and Zephaniah 3 concern corrupt leaders inside the covenant community, not only outside enemies.

### Exploitation and Spiritual Control

The fellowship discusses excessive monetary demands, coercion, control over relationships, and the speaker's own participation in unhealthy leadership patterns.

### The Test of Deuteronomy 13

A persuasive sign or trusted speaker cannot override loyalty to Yehovah; the congregation must test teachings against His commandments.

### The Wilderness as a Place of Testing

Deuteronomy 8 frames wilderness hardship as a test of faithfulness and an occasion to examine one's response.

### The Wolf Who Does Not Know

From 2 Timothy 3:13 the speaker explores how someone can deceive others while also being deceived, gradually embracing an error sincerely.

### Confirmation Bias and Uncorrectable Beliefs

Proverbs 14:12 illustrates how a teaching that appears right may still mislead; accumulated teaching authority can harden mistaken convictions.

### Testing the Teachers

The discussion emphasizes the responsibility to search Scripture, question even respected teachers, and refuse personality-based allegiance.

### The Distorted Ruler

Acts 20:28-30 is illustrated with a slightly bent ruler: a subtle interpretive distortion affects every later judgment measured against it.

### When Scripture Is Quoted Out of Context

Matthew 4 illustrates that a true quotation can be used for an unfaithful purpose; fidelity requires context, not only accurate words.

### Do Not Go Beyond What Is Written

1 Corinthians 4:6 is used to warn against elevating a teacher's conclusions to the authority of Scripture itself.

### Self-Examination and Humility

Teachers and students alike must remain corrigible, distinguish revelation from inference, and allow Scripture to challenge past conclusions.

### Closing Fellowship Discussion

The extended discussion develops practical discernment, mutual accountability, patient correction, and the difference between loving discipleship and judgmentalism.

## Key Scriptures — Contextual Notes

- **Ezekiel 22:25-28** — Israel's prophets, priests, and princes are condemned for exploiting people, profaning holy things, and pursuing dishonest gain.
- **Zephaniah 3:3-4** — Judges are compared to evening wolves; the image exposes internal corruption among those entrusted with justice.

- **Jeremiah 23:1-4** — Yehovah rebukes shepherds who scatter and destroy His sheep and promises to gather and care for the flock.
- **Jeremiah 23:16-22** — False prophets may speak visions from their own minds instead of standing in Yehovah's counsel.
- **Matthew 7:15-20** — Yeshua warns of false prophets dressed as sheep and teaches that their fruits reveal their character.
- **Matthew 10:16** — Yeshua sends disciples as sheep among wolves, instructing them to exercise wisdom and innocence.
- **Acts 20:28-30** — Paul warns elders to watch themselves and the flock because wolves and self-promoting teachers can arise from within.
- **Deuteronomy 13:1-4** — Even an apparently fulfilled sign must not override fidelity to Yehovah when a prophet calls people to other gods.
- **Deuteronomy 8:2-3** — Yehovah led Israel in the wilderness to humble and test the people, teaching dependence on His word.
- **Deuteronomy 1:2-3** — The text gives an eleven-day route reference and separately dates Moses' address in the fortieth year; the Teaching applies the contrast to prolonged testing.
- **Hebrews 12:5-11** — Discipline can be painful yet directed toward growth; the discussion connects this to responding faithfully under hardship.
- **2 Timothy 3:13-17** — The warning about deceiving and being deceived is followed by a call to continue in the Scriptures, which equip believers for every good work.
- **Proverbs 14:12** — A way may appear right to a person while still leading to death, illustrating the dangers of misplaced confidence.
- **John 16:1-3** — Yeshua forewarns that persecutors may mistakenly believe they are serving God.
- **Matthew 7:21-23** — Religious claims and impressive works do not substitute for doing the Father's will; the passage warns against lawlessness.
- **Revelation 2:1-7** — Ephesus is commended for testing false apostles and warned against abandoning its first love.
- **2 Timothy 4:3-4** — Paul warns that people may choose teachers who suit their desires and turn away from truth.
- **Acts 17:10-12** — The Bereans examine the Scriptures daily to evaluate what they hear, modeling discernment rather than blind trust.
- **Matthew 4:5-7** — The tempter quotes Scripture, but Yeshua answers with its proper moral context and refuses to test God.
- **Psalm 91:11-12** — God's promised care is the passage quoted in Matthew 4; it must not be turned into permission to act recklessly.
- **1 Corinthians 4:6-7** — Paul warns against pride and partisan loyalty to teachers, calling readers not to go beyond what is written.
- **1 Corinthians 1:10-13** — Divisions over named teachers demonstrate how personality allegiance can displace devotion to Messiah.
- **1 Corinthians 3:4-7** — Paul and Apollos are servants; God gives the growth, limiting the authority ascribed to individual teachers.
- **James 3:1-2** — Teachers face stricter judgment, and all people stumble, calling for humility and care in instruction.

- **Galatians 6:1-2** — Restoration of someone caught in wrongdoing calls for gentleness, self-watchfulness, and bearing one another's burdens.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:20-22** — Believers should not despise prophecy but must test everything, holding fast to what is good.
- **1 John 4:1** — Believers must test the spirits rather than believe every spiritual claim.
- **Proverbs 27:5-6** — Open rebuke and faithful correction can reflect genuine love rather than hostility.

## Reflection and Discussion Questions

1. What are wolves in sheep's clothing according to Scripture?
2. Why do biblical prophets compare corrupt leaders to wolves?
3. Can a false teacher sincerely believe their own teaching?
4. How can good intentions still harm a congregation?
5. What does Deuteronomy 13 require when a prophet performs a sign?
6. How can believers test a trusted teacher without becoming disrespectful?
7. What does wilderness testing reveal about the heart?
8. How does 2 Timothy 3:13 describe deception?
9. What is the danger of confirmation bias in Bible study?
10. Why is Proverbs 14:12 a warning for teachers?
11. What is a wolf's desire to draw disciples after himself?
12. Why does Paul first tell elders to watch themselves?

## Practical Study Exercise

Read Ezekiel 22:25-28, Deuteronomy 13:1-4, Acts 20:28-30, and 1 Corinthians 4:6. Identify each speaker, audience, actual warning, and a possible modern application. Label each application separately from the verse itself.

## Closing Prayer and Application

Ask Yehovah for discernment, integrity in teaching, gentleness toward others, and the courage to amend convictions when Scripture corrects them.