

By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them

Matthew 7:15-23

Last week we looked at verses 13 and 14 of Matthew Chapter 7.

""Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: **14** Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.""

Jesus is commanding us to enter in at the strait gate and to take the narrow path that leads to life. You do that by believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You put all your faith in him to save you from eternal destruction in hell...

And remember, there are few that will choose to do that.

There is a reason why the way is broad that leads to the wide gate, because "many go in thereat." Sadly, the majority of this world will end up in hell, simply because they choose to reject the payment that Jesus made for their sins.

Ultimately every man and woman has a free will to make the decision to believe in Jesus, or reject Him.

But remember, the devil also plays a part in enticing people and leading them to destruction.

""1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ""

So the devil wants to devour all humans and bring them to destruction with him, but he especially wants to destroy God's people, those who already have believed in Jesus.

""Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: ""

This wasn't just a warning for Simon Peter, this is a warning to all Christians, that satan desires to have all of us and sift us as wheat. Understand what that means...

When farmers harvest wheat, they have to separate the edible grains, from the inedible chaff. The way that they do that is by threshing the wheat. This involved beating the husk or treading it under the feet of oxen to remove the grains. Then tossing it into the air to allow the wind to blow away the inedible chaff. And finally, the grain can be sifted to separate any residual chaff.

Now that you have that process in your mind, think about how Jesus is using this to describe how satan wants to sift Peter and all believers as wheat.

He wants to tread on us, stomp us down, toss us into the air and separate us so we blow away in the wind. The devil loves to cause division and destroy local Bible believing churches.

He uses many different tactics, devices, as well as people to do his dirty work for him.

That's why Jesus warns about false prophets immediately after he talks about entering in at the strait gate.

""Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.""

In order to understand what a false prophet is, we first must know what a true prophet is.

""Deuteronomy 18:18-22 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. **19** And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him. ""

So a prophet is someone who receives the words of God, and then speaks or declares God's words to the people.

A true prophet declares truth because they are not speaking their own words. They are speaking God's Words.

The Word of God is truth. **John 17:17** Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**

Because God's Word is truth. It will always come to pass. For example, when the prophets foretold of Jesus coming into the world and dying for the sins of all people. That prophecy was fulfilled.

We know that all prophecies in God's Word about the future will come true as well because God cannot lie.

""20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. **21** And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? **22** When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, *that is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.""

A false prophet is the opposite of a true prophet. A false prophet speaks lies because they are speaking their own words.

They may say that they are speaking God's word but they are not.

""Jeremiah 14:14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.""

So a false prophet is someone that says they are speaking for God, but they speak lies in His name.

They were not sent by God. Neither did God command them to speak the things which they are saying. They are speaking lies.

""Deuteronomy 13:1-3 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, **2** And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; **3** Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams..."

So if a person comes up to you and says, "God told me that you are going to get a blessing tomorrow."

And then the next day you find a 20 dollar bill in the street. And that same person also says that in order to go to heaven you must be baptized in the holy ghost and speak in tongues to be saved, that person is a false prophet.

Because even though what they said about you came true, they are still speaking lies when it comes to salvation and how to be saved.

They are still a false prophet. Because they are not speaking God's Words.

""Deuteronomy 13:5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.""

So understand that a true prophet speaks the Words of God. They speak truth.

A false prophet speaks their own words. They speak lies.

""Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you **in sheep's clothing**, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.""

The devil is using false prophets in this world to devour, to cause division, to bring people to destruction and hell. And Jesus is warning us that these false prophets will not appear to us as an enemy...

They will appear to us as a friend. Someone we can trust. They will come in sheep's clothing.

Sheep are harmless. But inwardly, these false prophets are ravening wolves.

""2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. **14** And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. **15** Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.""

So Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. The things in this world that hurt you don't appear evil on the outside.

Like beer commercials show people having a good time, partying, living life to the fullest... But what they don't show you is the aftermath, the drunkenness, that leads to death and destruction.

That's how the devil operates. And you need to know how he operates so you can be on the lookout like Jesus is commanding us to do.

Just like Satan transforms himself to appear good as an angel of light, his ministers—the false prophets, are transformed into ministers of righteousness.

Outwardly they appear to be decent people. They say things that make you feel good. But their motives are to fill their own bellies.

""Romans 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by **good words** and **fair speeches deceive** the hearts of the simple.""

""Jeremiah 23:16-17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, *and* not out of the mouth of the LORD. **17** They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.""

So when the people despised the Lord, the false prophets said Don't worry, "you will have peace"

When the people were living in sin and walking after their own imagination, the false prophets said,
"No evil will come upon you"

There are many churches today that do the same thing. Pastors that only preach acceptance, and that God loves you for who you are no matter what your lifestyle is.

We know that Romans 5:8 says "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Christ didn't die for us and make salvation a free gift so we can continue living in sin.

He cleansed us from all unrighteousness so we can be raised with Jesus Christ and walk in newness of life.

Being told what you're doing is wrong is not pleasant, but when you listen, it leads you to living a life under God's protection and blessings.

So these false prophets will lie to you and tell you what you want to hear in order to get many followers and fill their own bellies. They love to have power over the people.

Take for example the prosperity preacher, Joel Osteen of Lakewood church in Houston Texas. They have a weekly attendance of over 45,000 people.

The reason they have that many people is because he tells people what they want to hear, just like in Jeremiah 23 and Romans 16. He uses good words and fair speeches. Here are some quotes from Joel Osteen.

"You're not defective. You're not a mistake. You're not faulty. You have been fearfully and wonderfully made. You are already good enough."

""Romans 3:12 – *“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”*""

"God wants us to prosper financially, to have plenty of money, to fulfill the destiny He has laid out for us."

""Philippians 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;""

"If you believe in yourself, you can overcome anything."

""Jeremiah 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.""

1 John 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

So Joel Osteen teaches the opposite of God's Word. He tells lies in order to gain a following and fill his own belly with riches.

""2 Peter 2:1-3 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord

that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. **2** And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. **3** And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.""

These false prophets are greedy and covetous and want to make merchandise of you. How do they do that? Through feigned words. That means they give a false appearance, and they say things that they themselves don't actually believe.

I want you to also notice in this passage that these false teachers, or false prophets will be "among you".

Jesus said in Matthew 7:15 that they will "come to you" in sheep's clothing.

""**Acts 20:28-31** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. **29** For I know this, that after my departing shall **grievous wolves enter in among you**, not sparing the flock. **30** Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. **31** Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.""

Paul is warning the church leaders and the brethren, to watch for these grievous wolves that will "enter in among you".

Paul is not just casually saying "this might happen so keep an eye open"

He is saying grievous wolves **shall** enter in. It's a guarantee. Therefore **watch!**

For three years he did not stop warning them night and day with tears. This is a big deal.

Jesus warned us, and Paul is reminding us of that same warning.

I want you to think about this church here. This is a new church. We started in October of last year so it's not even a year old yet. It is guaranteed that grievous wolves will enter in here to try to cause division and it's our job as church leaders to watch for them.

And all of us need to be studying the Word of God so we can be on the lookout and recognize false prophets when they appear.

The question then is, if these false prophets are coming in sheep's clothing. They are going to enter in appearing as ministers of righteousness. They will appear to be good...

How will we recognize them and be able to spot them when the time comes?

TRUE WORDS

Baptist Church

Revelation 21:5 

Sunday School

13 July 2025

""**Matthew 7:15-20** Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. **16 Ye shall know them by their fruits**. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? **17** Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. **18** A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. **19** Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. **20** Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.""

So Jesus compares men or teachers to trees. Trees always bear fruit after their kind.

""**Genesis 1:11-12** And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. **12** And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.""

Just as a tree always bears fruit after its kind, we are able to determine whether someone is a false prophet or not based on the fruit that they produce.

A good tree produces good fruit, and a corrupt tree produces evil fruit.

An apple tree always produces, what kind of fruit? Apples.

An orange tree always produces, what kind of fruit? Oranges.

A Christian should always produce...more Christians. The bible compares souls to fruit.

""**Proverbs 11:30** The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.""

This is where we get the term "Soul Winning". The fruit of the righteous, those who have the righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith, our fruit is winning the souls of other people to Jesus.

We are winning souls, or Soul winning, and producing good fruit. You are reproducing after your kind.

So if a Christian produces other Christians who are saved and believe in Jesus, then a false prophet will produce people that are not saved and spread lies that lead people to hell.

""**2 Peter 2:1-2** But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in **damnable heresies**, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction... ""

A damnable heresy is a teaching that will lead people to hell.

For example, teaching people that they must be baptized to be saved is a damnable heresy. Or telling people that they can walk away from God and lose their salvation is a damnable heresy because you are teaching them to trust in their own works.

So the easiest way to spot a false prophet or teacher is to ask them what it takes to get to heaven.

If they say anything other than, "It's only believing in Jesus Christ. Nothing else"

If they say, "you have to endure to the end to get to heaven..."

"You have to live a holy life to get to heaven..."

If they say, "faith without works is dead, you must have works and faith to be saved."...

That person is preaching another gospel. That is a false teacher or false prophet, and the Bible says to let them be accursed.

Galatians 1:6-9 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: **7** Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. **8** But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. **9** As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

So someone who is preaching a false gospel will not produce good fruit. Only evil fruit.

This is how you can test pastors and other churches to see if they are good churches.

For example, We talk to a lot of people out here in the streets and door to door. Many people say they attend different churches in the area. St Stevens is a really popular one that many people go to.

We ask those people what it takes to get to heaven. 99% of the time people say you have to be a good person, follow the commandments, love other people.

If 99% of the people from that church do not know how get to heaven. That means the pastor is not teaching them the true gospel. The fruit of that pastor, which is the congregation, reveals that they are a false prophet.

Matthew 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. "

The fruit is the people they produce, and the message they proclaim.

And if they are actually teaching them contrary to the word of God and adding works to salvation. They are teaching lies in the name of Jesus. God says let them be accursed. That is evil and wicked, and they are leading people straight to hell.

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

There are close to 400,000 churches in the United States. Sometimes it feels like there is a church on every corner. And that's true in certain areas, especially here in west Louisville.

All of these churches proclaim the name of Jesus, but the majority of them will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

""**Matthew 7:22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?""

There are many pastors that proclaim to prophesy in the name of Jesus, and cast out devils in the name of Jesus, and do many wonderful works in the name of Jesus.

But it's all a façade, it's smoke and mirrors, it's deception and lies. The false prophets are using the name of Jesus to fill their own bellies. They are turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and preaching for greed and filthy lucre. Their fruit is evil.

""**Matthew 7:23** And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.""

Jesus never knew those people because they never believed and put their faith and trust in Him.

Closing Thoughts

As you sit here today ask yourself, "Would I be able to recognize a false prophet?"

Jesus warns us that they are coming in Sheep's clothing. We can't rely on knowing them by their appearance, but we can recognize them by their fruit.

Their fruit is a false gospel that produces people that are on the road to destruction and hell.

A true prophet preaches God's Words. A false prophet preaches their own words.

If someone says they have a "word from the Lord for you", or they say "God told me to tell you..."

They better be able to show you straight from the Word of God.

God will never say anything that contradicts the scriptures.

""**2 Peter 1:19-21** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: **20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. ""

TRUE WORDS

Baptist Church

Revelation 21:5 

Sunday School

13 July 2025

That more sure word of prophecy is the Word of God. There is no private interpretation. God does not come to people and give them a new Word that is not found in the scriptures.

Let the Bible be the final test for a prophet.

Are their words matching up with God's Words, or are they speaking a vision of their own heart?

""**Isaiah 8:20** To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.""

Please read God's Word every day so you can recognize when someone is speaking their own words and not God's.

Don't stay in the dark. Seek understanding and wisdom in the scriptures, and you will start spotting false prophets from a mile away.

You will know them by their fruit.