

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

59- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 39  
Jesus Warns about False Teachers- Part 2

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Church July 2, 2023

## **Matthew 7:15-23**

**15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.**

**16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?**

**17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.**

**18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.**

**19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**

**20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.**

**21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.**

**22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'**

**23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'**

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now by the Time that Jesus got to **Matthew 7:14**- He is finished with the main thrust of this amazing Sermon that has come to be called, the "*Sermon on the Mount*". Verses 15-23 speak about the great Danger of following somebody who doesn't teach the Truth that Jesus has taught in this Sermon- while verses 24-27 speak about the Results of hearing; believing; loving; and obeying the Truth that Jesus taught in this Sermon.

But we need to remember what Matthew is trying to tell his

fellow-Jews about WHY Jesus is preaching this Sermon. The Apostle *desperately* wants his fellow-kinsmen to believe in Jesus. And he wants them to not fear *abandoning* the Old Covenant and *embracing* the New. So, to help them do that- in this perfect Sermon- Jesus is:

- Acting as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Moses by teaching the people the Word of God
- Acting as the Messiah by fulfilling the Law
- Acting as God by illustrating what God originally meant in the 10 Commandments
- Exposing the Hypocrisy of the Jewish religious Leaders
- Showing the Superiority of the New Covenant that He is bringing in
- Articulating the Characteristics and Attributes of the new people of God; who will inherit the new Kingdom of Heaven

... because back in **Matthew 5:20**- Jesus said,

**For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

... and this entire Sermon is illustrating what that “**surpassing Righteousness**” looks like in the normal daily Life of genuine Believers.

Now last time we began to look at what Jesus taught in these 9 inspired; inerrant; and infallible Verses about false Teachers; false Prophets; and the Heresy that they push onto the people. And I don’t think we can ever say this too much:

**Since we are saved by what we believe in; what we trust in; and what we confess; and NOT by what we “DO”- then what we believe in; what we put our Trust in; and what we confess- matters!**

So, we believe in Absolute Truth. We believe that there is Truth that is absolute; fixed; permanent; unchangeable; and that is applicable to all Mankind- for all Time. And it is Truth to which all peoples from all Nations; throughout all Time- will be held Accountable.

We also believe that God is the greatest and most important Reality in the Universe. And so, all other Truth flows out from Who God is. And because God is the greatest and most important Reality in the Universe- then ALL of this Life- is to be lived to the Glory of God!

We also believe that this Absolute Truth is both “knowable” and “teachable”- and that means we may “know” and “understand” and “comprehend” Absolute Truth- which, by default means that this Truth is taught with words and

examples and phrases that makes sense to the hearer. And it also means that we can *pass* that Absolute Truth down to our Children and from one Generation to the next.

We believe that we do NOT find this Absolute Truth in a Laboratory; nor in the Halls of Congress; nor in the White House; nor in the corporate Board Rooms; nor in the History books; nor in our own Minds. Absolute Truth is revealed to Man by God. In other words, Truth is “shown” and “displayed”.

So, it is true that, to a lesser degree, Absolute Truth is revealed throughout God’s Creation. The Apostle Paul said this in **Romans 1:20**:

**For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.**

So, at least two Attributes of the one, true and living God:

1. His eternal Power
2. His divine Nature

... are revealed to the worthy seeker, “**through what has been made**”. And God revealed these two Attributes through what has been made:

... “**so that they are without excuse.**”

So, to a *lesser* degree- those two Characteristics of the greatest and most important Reality in the Universe are revealed or shown or displayed through what God created- so that no human can ever say, “*I didn’t love You or obey You because I didn’t know*”.

But, to a much *greater* degree- God has revealed Absolute Truth through the pages of sacred Scripture. So, even as God chose very ordinary and common men to receive His revealed Word; and write it down; (as God the Holy Spirit “moved” on them); and publish it- so too- God took very ordinary and common tools of Language- like nouns; and pronouns; verbs; and adverbs; and adjectives and prepositional phrases- and God revealed Absolute Truth to the world through these things.

And that means that there is a Body of Words that make up Absolute Truth. And *part* of that larger Body of revealed Absolute Truth- has to do with the Subject of how lost Sinners are saved- and why. So, while SOME Absolute Truth has to do with Salvation- not all of Absolute Truth has to do with Salvation.

But the part of Truth that has to do with the Salvation of guilty rebels by what God alone does for them- is NOT found in the created Universe. It is ONLY found in Scripture. And the fact that the Truth about Salvation is found ONLY in Scripture is why in **Mark 16:15**- Jesus told us to,

**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.**

... because unless they hear Absolute Truth about Salvation heralded to them- NOBODY would believe and be saved.

But this is also why in **Matthew 28:20b**- Jesus said we are to ongoingly teach,

**... them to observe all that I commanded you ...**

So, yes, we *herald* the part of Absolute Truth called, the “Gospel”- so that lost Sinners can receive new, spiritual Life (born again). And we *continue* to herald that Gospel so that those born again souls can repent of Sin and trust in Jesus and in His finished Work and be “Justified”. And then we continue to herald the Gospel- so those justified souls can be adopted into the Family of God.

But then we also *teach* (and the individual begins to read and study) the other parts of Absolute Truth that has been revealed in Scripture- so those souls, who have *already* experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; and who have *already* been Justified; and who have *already* been Adopted can now be Sanctified and learn how to live their daily Lives in joyful Obedience to Jesus Christ.

But because we are Human- we do not always fully understand what we are looking at- when we observe the created Universe. And so, we periodically assign *incorrect* or *incomplete* Attributes to God. Or we *mis-understand* what we read in the Bible; and we periodically come to an incorrect or incomplete Conclusion from our Study of Scripture.

You see, we don't come to the Bible as a neutral individual. We come to the perfect words of the Bible with our own personal experiences; and ideas; as well as our own individual biases and prejudices and carnal thoughts. And we weave those things in with the inspired Words of the Holy Bible and so, sometimes, we come to wrong Conclusions; and we draw out Ideas and Understandings that are at odds with what God actually said. And every single person does this. Nobody is exempt from this Problem. The very best of Christians do this- all the time. And that is what keeps us Humble; and on our Face before God.

But because this is a Problem with ALL of Humanity- the very Best we can hope for- is to *reduce* the Times we do this- because we CAN'T *eliminate* it. And God has allowed this to be true for all of us- to humble us and to make sure that

whatever we get from reading and studying the Bible- will make us MORE godly; MORE Humble; and MORE Christ-like and NOT puffed up- because we have become “smart” about the Bible.

We need to remember that when the Thief on the Cross came to the Entrance of Heaven- he had not been baptized. He had also not developed his Theology about Justification by Faith alone. He didn't know anything about the five “*Solas*” of the Protestant Reformation; and He had not memorized the Heidelberg Catechism. As far as to *why* he was allowed to enter into the Glories of Heaven- in spite of the Fact that he was a wicked Sinner- that man had only one thing going for him:

*“The Man on the middle Cross told me He would meet me here before this day was over!”*

Now that is great- and is a wonderful example of the Grace of God- but we MUST agree that we are NOT that man! We are NOT dying next to Jesus- without having an Opportunity to know the Truth; and love the Truth; and obey the Truth. And so, our Situation is different from his. Jesus said this in **Luke 12:48b**:

**... From everyone who has been given much, much will be required...**

... and we have been given 66 Books of inspired, Absolute Truth. And so, we are required to *know* that Truth; and *believe* that Truth; and *love* that Truth; and *hope* in that Truth. And then we are required by the God who spoke it- to strive honestly to *obey* that Truth- joyfully!

So, we are the people who MUST believe that Truth matters. And one of the Reasons why false Teaching is so hated by God- is because that which is false; that which is a Lie; that which is NOT true- CANNOT forgive a single Sin; and CANNOT save a single soul. So, false Teaching is destructive to us.

But another Reason why God hates false Teaching so much- is because false Teaching changes what we think about Who God is. So, it tells a Lie about Who God is. False Teaching portrays God as being something other than Who He really is. And that is Blasphemy. And by us being led astray about Who God really is- we are also deceived about What God will or will not do- and why. And that is why Jesus said,

**Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.**

Now in order to get the full impact of what Jesus said here- we must understand the Context of the Time in which Jesus spoke these words. Jesus preached this Sermon right at the beginning of His earthly Ministry. And at that Time He literally spoke these words- there were NO New Testament Books written.

And by the Time that the Apostle Matthew wrote these words down- the entire Old Testament had been finished and published and had spread around the “known world” for over 200 years. But there may have been just a few New Testament Books already written, like:

- James (48AD)
- Mark (50-55 AD)

... but there weren't very many.

And so, the Church didn't have what we have now. They didn't have a “*completed Cannon*” of 66 Books. They didn't have the hindsight of 2,000 years of Church History and 6,000 years of human History to learn from. They didn't have the “Ministry Gift” of Teachers- to help explain what the Bible meant by what it said; and what Obedience to it looked like. And so, God only required of the people according to the Degree or to the Level that He had graced them with Truth. But we can't say that.

And so, we ARE Required of by the Lord to a greater degree than they were. And we are required to learn what God has said and to exercise what the Bible calls, “Spiritual Discernment”- which is the Discipline that allows Believers to divide between the “Holy” and the “Profane”. To make a Distinction between what is “True” and what is “False”. And to divide between What God has spoken and What He has NOT spoken.

And that is NOT a mystical Experience. It is a Miracle- but knowing Truth is NOT purely a mystical Experience. So, we don't come to know Absolute Truth by “binding the devil” nor by “pleading the Blood of Jesus” nor by “rebuking satan”. We come to know Divine Truth by spending Time in the Bible.

Now Jesus mentions “false Prophets” here. And so, we need to understand that before the “Age of Inspiration” was over (when the last Book of the Bible was received and written down)- God used men in the capacity of what were called, “Prophets”. And Prophets basically did three things:

1. They were authorized by God to speak about future Events
2. They heralded Divine Truth
3. They issued “Divine Indictments”

... and the Miracles and Signs and Wonders that the Prophets performed were carried out in order to give them “Divine Credibility” about what they were speaking.

And God also used these men to render God’s Judgment to those who had sinned- which included the Kings and Priests of Israel as well as the Kings and spiritual Leaders of other the Man-made religions of other pagan Gentile Nations of the world.

So, a Prophet represented God to the people. And as a result of that being true- the Prophets was required of- to a higher degree or level of other people. And the Commodity that Prophets used- was God’s Word. And so, a Prophet would begin by saying,

*“Thus says the Lord!”*

... and then follow that Statement with an Announcement or a Promise of either God’s Blessing or Cursing on a person; or a group; or a city; or an entire Nation- even an entire Civilization!

Or that Prophet would follow that Statement with a Proclamation or a Promise from God- of an Event that would happen; or a Person who would come and do certain things- at some point in the Future.

But in any event- that Prophet would speak for God. And by beginning the Proclamation with the phrase, *“Thus says the Lord”*- the Prophet would speak to the people on behalf of God. And the “Currency” that the Prophet dealt with- that would PROVE that he was, in fact, speaking for God- would be that what he spoke would happen- EXACTLY as he spoke it!

And this is true because God is NOT a Liar and God ONLY speaks Truth! So, the Issue- as it pertained to a Prophet- was ONLY one thing: and that one thing was ALWAYS the SAME thing!

## **What did God say?**

... and WHAT God said has ALWAYS been the Issue; and it ALWAYS will be the Issue.

Now today, we no longer have Prophets- precisely because we have the final, finished, and completed Revelation of God to Mankind contained in the 27 Books of the New Testament. So, ALL that God wanted to reveal to Man- He has revealed in the 66 Books of inspired Text. So, today, if you wish to know *“What did God say?”*- you go to the Bible and read it. And if you desire to hear *“What God said” audibly*- you read the Bible out loud. So, the Holy Bible- the Scriptures

are the “*Vox Dei*”- the Voice of God; and the “*Verbum Dei*”- the Word of God in the earth today.

And that means that today- the Battle over WHAT GOD SAID- is fought between godly Teachers versus the false Teachers. But the War over WHAT DID GOD SAY- began back in the Garden with Eve and the Serpent- so, please turn with me to **Genesis 3:1-6**

**1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"**

**2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;**

**3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"**

**4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!**

**5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

**6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

These six verses tell us about an Event called, the “*Fall*”. This is where Adam and Eve sinned and “*fell*” from their “*first Estate*” and became “*Sinners*”; and “*Lost*”; and in NEED of two things:

1. Forgiveness
2. Righteousness

These six verses explain why there is Cancer and Wars; and why we have to have the Police and a standing Army; and why people steal and tell Lies; and why there is Injustice and Crime; and why people Hate and Lust; and why people get sick; and why millions of old people and children and weak and sick people suffer; and why people die.

This Passage tells us why things don’t work right; and why babies are born blind; and why there are cripple people; and why we get frustrated on our jobs; and why Problems exist; and why Galaxies filled with billions of stars- die. And these six verses also reveal why there is Unbelief and Atheists; and why God created Hell.

Now if I were to ask you what the greatest example of Evil is- I suppose many of you would say things like, “*Mass Murderers*” or “*Pedophiles*” or “*People who*



*sell drugs to children*” or *“People who blow up Children”*. And those things *are* Evil. But one of the *greatest* examples of pure Evil that has ever been- and one that has caused the most damage to the most people- is when Eve and Adam ate the forbidden fruit. Because that one Act of Rebellion- damned every Man, Woman, and Child who will ever exist. And it all began with the SAME THING:

### **What did God say?**

... look again at verse 1:

**Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"**

The FIRST thing satan said was to ask Eve what God had said. And even though here in the English- you don't really get the full impact of this- in the original Hebrew- you see that satan was actually questioning whether Eve had understood what God had said- *correctly* or *fully*. So, he asks,

**... Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?**

In other words, satan was asking Eve- *“Are you sure that's what God said? Maybe He didn't exactly mean that. Maybe you heard Him wrong. Are you sure about that?”*

... and then Eve began to tell satan what she understood that God had said,

**2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;**

**3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"**

Now what is interesting about this- is that God NEVER told Eve any of this. God told Adam these things. And so, what we can deduce from this; what is implied from this- is that part of a Husband's Responsibility to his Wife- is to teach her what God said. The Husband is required by God to teach his Wife and Children what God has said.

And in this Case- there were NO Books to read and study and learn from. All Adam had was the direct Communication from God to himself. And so, that is what Adam was required to teach his Wife. So, what Eve is telling the devil- is her

understanding of what Adam had taught her. And even though it isn't verbatim- it is good enough to illustrate the "Divine Warning" that God had given Adam from **Genesis 2:16&17:**

**16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;  
17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."**

God told Adam that- BEFORE He made Eve. So, Adam correctly and faithfully taught his Wife about that "Divine Warning". And what Eve told the devil in **Genesis 3:2**- is Eve's best Understanding of what Adam had taught her that God had told Adam earlier.

Now the Reason I am going over this in this Way- is to illustrate to you how ALL false Teaching occurs. Jesus told us to Beware of false Prophets and false Teachers and false Teaching. And ALL false Teaching has to do with the one, single Issue of WHAT did God say? That is ALWAYS the Issue!

Now look at satan's response to Eve's Statement in verse 4:

**The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!"**

Now back in verse 1- satan was *questioning* what God had said. And the Questioning of the Word of God by the devil- was NOT designed to help Eve get it right or understand it better. It was designed to simply put doubt in her mind about what God had said- so she would be confused.

But now here in verse 4- satan is NOT questioning God's Word- he is directly CONTRADICTING what God said! In verse 3- Eve said, "*We can't touch the forbidden fruit or eat it or we will die!*" That's what Eve understood about what Adam had taught her. But now in verses 4&5 satan says,

*"Naaah- you won't die! God is mean! And if you eat that fruit- you will be like God Himself! And God knows that! And He doesn't want you to become important and powerful like Him!- So, go ahead, Eve- take it- eat it! It will make you wise!"*

... now look again at verse 6:

**When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

Now five minutes ago, Eve couldn't even touch that fruit. But now- since satan has deceived her and made Sin look attractive- what God said is completely irrelevant and even wrong! And the Result is that what God forbade- looks great!

This is EXACTLY how ALL false Teachers; and false Prophets; and false Teaching operate. The *first* thing they do- is to take something that God said- that you are familiar with- and that you already KNOW to be true- and they begin to ask Questions that are designed to make you doubt everything you have ever been taught.

And the MORE they ask Questions about that Issue that God spoke- the MORE you doubt.

You see, God made the human mind in such a way that we learn things through a series of Questions and Answers. That's why School tests have Questions. You read and study an Issue and you become familiar with it. And then you take a Test- that is designed to find out if you really understand that Issue or not. That's how we learn. And that's why the Catechism is nothing other than a series of Questions and Answers. God wants you to understand Divine Absolute Truth.

Now the Bible clearly teaches that the entire human Race was cursed by God because of Adam- NOT Eve! Yet Eve ate FIRST! So, what is that all about? Look carefully again at the last part of verse 6:

**... she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

... those two words, "with her" means that Adam was right there next to Eve- the entire time that satan was deceiving her.

So, even though Adam had been faithful to teach Eve what God had said- he failed miserably here to protect his Wife from the Deception by the devil. He should have spoken up; stepped up- jumped up- SOMETHING! To stop what the devil was doing. Because in addition to teaching the Wife and Children what God has said- the Husband and Father is required by God to PROTECT HIS WIFE! And to prove this is true- look what God told Adam when He called him into Account from **Genesis 3:17**:

**Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'"; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.**

Part of the Reason God cursed Adam was because HE DID NOT LEAD! God wants Men to lead! And so, the Apostle Paul later took that Truth and said this in **1Corinthians 15:22b**

**... as in Adam all die ...**

... NOT Eve.

You see, NOTHING works right when Men don't lead. And this is one Area where "what God has said" is being almost systematically ignored. Because God made them uniquely Male- so that Men WOULD lead. Female dominated Homes and Female led Churches are weak and sinful Homes and Churches that have been deceived by satan into disobeying "what God has said".

And the very Fact that Women are leading and dominating in those Areas- is the direct Result of Rebellion and Disobedience by weak and emasculated Men! And there is ONLY one Fix: Men must repent and begin to obey what God has said- and lead!

Now we need to know that God does NOT want nor does He ever ask for "*Blind Obedience*". God wants you to know WHAT you believe and WHY you believe it. And God wants you to so understand what He has said and why- that you genuinely agree with it; that you see the Benefit of believing in it; and that you see Truth as the Path to your own Joy and Happiness!

But that means that Ignorance of the Truth of what God said- is ALWAYS the area that satan will attack. So, God gave us 66 Books that have nothing except inspired, inerrant, and infallible Truth. So, God has gone to great lengths to help us KNOW. The Owner and Creator of the Universe wants us to KNOW! The Apostle John said this in **1John 5:13**:

**These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.**

**1John 5:20a**

**And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ...**

**John 20:30&31**

**30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;**

**31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**

God does NOT want us to be ignorant of Divine Absolute Truth. And so, God has given us both the Ability and the Way that we can remove ALL Doubt and KNOW- so we can BELIEVE! The ONLY people who ask for and even demand “*Blind Obedience*” is satan; and the Cults; and the false Teachers- who will get angry even if you ask a Question.

Now we all know that there are *some* Questions that are insincere. And those kinds of Questions are NOT asked so that the person can understand better- but to simply argue. But even though that’s true- MOST Questions are NOT like that. And so, anytime any spiritual Leader gets angry because a genuine Question is asked- or they interpret a sincere and honest Question as an attack against their Authority- know that that person is false and run from him!

A genuine Man of God welcomes Questions- because he wants you to understand Divine Truth- so that satan can’t cause you to have Doubts.

And this is WHY I emphasize Bible Study and welcome your Questions. If you are in the Bible- you are reading and studying what God said. And the MORE you read and study what God said- the MORE you will understand it; and the LESS satan is able to confuse you about it. And you can ALWAYS ask Questions- in fact- you should!

Please understand that satan always operates in the shadows and in your weakest area. So, the BEST way to know what God said- is to spend more time with what God said.

Remember, WHAT GOD SAID is always the Issue. And satan- and all those who follow him- will either try to put doubts in your mind about what God said or he will contradict what God said. And so, the BEST Way to NOT be deceived by satan- is to KNOW WHAT GOD SAID! So, ALL false Teaching is either a twist of what God said or it contradicts it outright! Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

