

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 9 – January 9<sup>th</sup> – Matthew 7:15-29**

**Works frequently referenced in these notes on Matthew**

- Hagner, Donald A      *Word Biblical Commentary Vols.33a & 33b: Matthew 1-13 & Matthew 14-28*, Word Books, Dallas, 1993 & 1995
- Morris, Leon          *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992

**Verse 15**

Προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν ψευδοπροφητῶν, οἵτινες ἔρχονται πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἐνδύμασι προβάτων ἔσωθεν δὲ εἰσὶν λύκοι ἄρπαγες.

προσεχω pay close attention to, be on guard, watch, watch out  
ψευδοπροφητης, ου m false prophet

It is difficult to determine the nature of the false prophets mentioned here. Gundry thinks that they were Jewish Christians over zealous for the law while others argue that they were antinomian ultra-Paulinists. Hagner comments, "The designation 'false prophets' need not be taken in a narrow, technical sense as referring to a particular group. It is impossible to know what specific group, if any, the evangelist had in mind... The term can be applied generally to all who fulfil the description in 7:15-20, who bring forth 'bad fruit,' whether Pharisees (thus Hill), charismatic enthusiasts, libertines, or even hypocrites in the Church (Minear). Possibly the warning is general and has no specific group in mind."

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅτι who, which

ἐνδύμα, τος n clothing, garment  
προβατον, ου n sheep

I.e they appear or masquerade as members of the flock.

ἔσωθεν adv. within, inside, inwardly  
λυκος, ου m wolf

Cf. Acts 20:29.

ἄρπαξ, ατος grasping, greedy

**Verse 16**

ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς. μήτι συλλέγουσιν ἀπὸ ἀκανθῶν σταφυλὰς ἢ ἀπὸ τριβόλων σῦκα;

Cf. Lk 6:43-44.

καρπος, ου m fruit, outcome  
ἐπιγνώσεσθε Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 pl  
ἐπιγνώσκω perceive, understand, recognise

A timeless or gnomic future.

μητι Negative particle, used in questions to indicate the expectation of a negative answer

συλλεγω gather

ἀκανθα, ης f thorn-plant

σταφυλη, ης f (bunch of) grapes

τριβολος, ου m briar, thistle

συκον, ου n fig

**Verse 17**

οὕτως πᾶν δένδρον ἀγαθὸν καρποὺς καλοὺς ποιεῖ, τὸ δὲ σαπρὸν δένδρον καρποὺς πονηροὺς ποιεῖ.

οὕτως thus, in this way

δενδρον, ου n tree

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

καλος, η, ον good, fine, beautiful

σαπρος, α, ον bad, rotten, worthless

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad

"δένδρον ἀγαθον, 'good tree,' in the context of the sermon and the Gospel, represents the disciples of Jesus, the people of the kingdom, and the καρπους καλους, 'good fruit,' the righteousness expounded in the teaching of Jesus. σαπρον δενδρον καρπους πονηρους, 'decayed tree, bad fruit,' refers, on the other hand, to those (false prophets) who only give the appearance of belonging to the truth and whose true character is revealed in their unrighteous deeds." Hagner.

**Verse 18**

οὐ δύναται δένδρον ἀγαθὸν καρποὺς πονηροὺς ποιεῖν, οὐδὲ δένδρον σαπρὸν καρποὺς καλοὺς ποιεῖν.

δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of

**Verse 19**

πᾶν δένδρον μὴ ποιῶν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.

ποιῶν Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s ποιεω

"Jesus does not speak of what the tree does, but of what it does not do; in the last resort it is not the tree that actually bears bad fruit that is condemned, but one that fails to produce good fruit." Morris.

ἐκκοπῶ cut off, cut down, remove

πυρ, ος n fire

βαλλῶ throw, throw down

Cf the words of John the Baptist in 3:10 and Jesus' words in John 15.

### Verse 20

ἄρα γε ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς.

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

ἐπιγνώσεσθε see v.16

### Verses 21-23

These verses provide a "striking illustration of the lesson given in vv 15-20." Hagner.

### Verse 21

Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι· Κύριε κύριε εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

"Matthew's community can hardly have failed to think here of the primary Christian confession, that Jesus is Lord (cf. Rom 10:9; Phil 2:11; 1 Cor 12:3), and of the futility of empty profession (cf. the emphasis on 'doing' what is righteous in Rom 2:13; Jas 1:22, 25; 2:14; 1 John 2:17)." Hagner.

εἰσελεύσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"When the kingdom of heaven comes in all its fulness, it will not be people's professions that count, but their profession as shown in the way they live." Morris. Cf. Lk. 6:46.

### Verse 22

πολλοὶ ἐροῦσίν μοι ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ· Κύριε κύριε, οὐ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι ἐπροφητεύσαμεν, καὶ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι δαιμόνια ἐξεβάλομεν, καὶ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι δυνάμεις πολλὰς ἐποιήσαμεν;

ἐροῦσίν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl λεγω

ἐκεινος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, he, she, it

For the phrase ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ cf. Amos 8:9; 9:11; Isa 2:20; Zeph 1:10,14; Zech 14:4, 6, 8, 13, 20, 21; 2 Thess 1:10; 2 Tim 4:8.

σος, ση, σου possessive adj. your, yours

ὄνομα, τος n name, title, authority

δαιμονιον, ου n demon, evil spirit

ἐξεβάλομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl

ἐκβαλλῶ throw out, cast out

"God who is holy can do holy things with instruments that are not. The ability to drive out demons says nothing about the inner holiness of the broom which God may make use of. Obedience is more than miracles." Gutzwiller.

"To be active in religious affairs is no substitute for obeying God." Morris.

"Hill is correct, then, in characterising the activities of these persons as 'a continuation of that of Jesus himself ... in fulfilment of the apostolic commissioning' and as 'in no way abnormal in the life of the early church'...

These persons are thus not criticised for their charismatic activities but for their dependence upon them as a substitute for the righteousness taught by Jesus. We may conclude that charismatic activities, done apart from this righteousness, have no self-contained importance and are in themselves insufficient for entry into the kingdom of heaven." Hagner.

### Verse 23

καὶ τότε ὁμολογήσω αὐτοῖς ὅτι Οὐδέποτε ἔγνων ὑμᾶς· ἀποχωρεῖτε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν.

τοτε then, at that time

ὁμολογεω confess, declare

οὐδέποτε never

ἔγνων Verb, aor act indic, 1 s γινωσκω

Cf. Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2.

ἀποχωρεω go away, leave

ἐργαζομαι work, do, perform

ἀνομια, ας f wickedness, lawlessness

The use of this particular word underlines their failure to submit and to obey. "Religion can never take the place of actual obedience to the teaching of Jesus. Matthew will return to this uncompromising view in chap 25, again in connection with the coming day of judgment." Hagner.

### Verse 24

Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ἀκούει μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτούς, ὁμοιωθήσεται ἀνδρὶ φρονίμῳ, ὅστις ᾠκοδόμησεν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τῇ πέτρᾳ.

ὅστις, ἦτις, ὁ τι who, which, whoever

"'Doing' words is a somewhat curious expression, but clearly it means that the person in view is not content with admiring outstanding teaching; he makes it his guide and models his life on it." Morris.

"The standard of orthopraxy, of righteousness, is the words of Jesus, not those of the Torah." Hagner.

ὁμοιωω make like; pass resemble, be like

A number of MSS read ὁμοιωσω αὐτον perhaps influenced by Lk 6:47.

ἄνηρ, ἄνδρος m man, husband  
φρονιμος, ον wise, sensible  
οικοδομεω build, build up  
οικια, ας f house, home  
πετρα, ας f rock, solid rock

### Verse 25

καὶ κατέβη ἡ βροχὴ καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ποταμοὶ καὶ ἔπνευσαν οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ προσέπεσαν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ οὐκ ἔπεσεν, θεμελιώτο γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν.

καταβαινω come or go down, descend  
βροχη, ης f rain  
ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἔρχομαι  
ποταμος, ου m river, stream  
πνεω blow (of wind)  
ἄνεμος, ου m wind  
προσέπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl  
προσπιτω fall down, beat against

Cf. Ezek 13:10-15; Isa 28:17.

ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πιτω fall, fall down  
θεμελιώτο Verb, pluperf pass indic, 3 s  
θεμελιωω found; establish firmly

### Verse 26

καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀκούων μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ μὴ ποιῶν αὐτοὺς ὁμοιωθήσεται ἀνδρὶ μωρῷ, ὅστις ὠκοδόμησεν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον.

μωρος, α, ον foolish; το μ. foolishness  
ἄμμος, ου f sand, seashore

"We should not understand a deliberate choice of sand, but a failure to take seriously the necessity for a solid foundation." Morris.

### Verse 27

καὶ κατέβη ἡ βροχὴ καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ποταμοὶ καὶ ἔπνευσαν οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ προσέκοψαν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ ἔπεσεν, καὶ ἦν ἡ πτώσις αὐτῆς μεγάλη.

προσκοπτω beat against; strike against  
πτώσις, εως f fall  
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

"The expression points to complete ruin. For a house built on sand there is in the end no other fate than complete destruction. So it is with anyone who hears Jesus' teaching without heeding it. It is teaching with a strong undertone of warning as well as with much to comfort and inspire. We neglect the warning at our peril." Morris.

### Verses 24-27 Postscript

It is easy to make this discourse, with its uncompromising concluding admonitions, into a new nomism, i.e., the pursuit of righteousness through the obeying of commandments (those of Jesus replacing those of Moses). But this conclusion, as plausible as it seems at first glance, makes the mistake of ignoring the larger context, not only of the sermon itself, with the opening, kerygmatic beatitudes, but also and more importantly of the whole Gospel within which this this discourse takes its place. There the announcement of the good news of the dawning kingdom has priority. This means above all a new era with a new experience of the grace of God. Any nomism, or law-centredness, must take account of this new era. Nevertheless, the teaching of Jesus is to be taken seriously, as even Paul would have insisted. And the Sermon on the Mount stands within the canon of the Church as a proper antidote to a Paulinism that (unlike Paul himself) champions a gospel of cheap grace. The gospel of the NT has room for the stern ethic of Jesus, without ceasing to be gospel. The Sermon on the Mount represents an emphasis not simply for Jewish Christians, who may have some lingering interests in satisfying the strictures of Moses, but also for all Christians, who cannot claim that name without interest in the righteousness of the kingdom." Hagner.

### Verse 28

Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους, ἐξεπλήσσοντο οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ·

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι  
ὅτε conj when, at which time  
τελεω complete, finish  
ἐκπλησσομαι be amazed

The imperfect suggests an ongoing effect.

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

"The plural, *multitudes*, indicates that this was not the impression of a tiny minority but of a large number of people. As we saw in 5:1, the sermon was addressed primarily to disciples, but there were others than disciples present. It is the reaction of these others that Matthew now relates. He does not give the impression that Jesus was simply another in a multitude of teachers, some slightly more acceptable than others. Jesus astonished people. There was no one like him." Morris.

διδαχη, ης f teaching, what is taught

Cf. Mk 1:22.

**Verse 29**

ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν.

διδασκω teach

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

γραμματευσ, εως m scribe, expert in  
Jewish law, scholar; town clerk

Hagner comments, "The periphrastic construction ἦν διδάσκων, 'he was teaching,' draws attention to the repeated teaching that so astonished the listeners. The consistent element in this teaching that caused the astonishment was the ἐξουσια, 'authority,' it presupposed. Unlike οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν, 'their scribes,' who taught not with a sense of their own authority but in heavy dependence upon the traditions of earlier teachers and somewhat diffidently, Jesus set forth his teaching with unique conviction and authority (cf. 'But I say to you': 5:22, 28, 32, 39, 44; 'these *my* words': 7:24, 26). Nor does his teaching consist mainly of the exegesis of the text of the Torah; it is pre-eminently *his* own words that are authoritative. This unique ἐξουσια is, as the reader of Matthew knows, the result of the true identity of Jesus." Hagner adds that the verse, "has an unmistakable polemical tone reflecting the growing hostility between the synagogue and the church."