

“Fascinating Facts About The Fruit” **Matthew 7:15-20**

Introduction: In these last days, there are many religions, cults, and denominations. With so many beliefs, how can we know what is right? This can be answered by turning to the Word of God for our direction. However, once we view the Scriptures in their context, we begin to see that not everyone that totes a “Bible” is of God. They are titled as “false prophets”. False prophets preach false doctrine that damn men’s souls to hell. The Bible has much to say about these apostates.

1. The Deception of False Prophets Matthew 24:11- *“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”*
2. The Display of False Prophets Matthew 24:24- *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*
3. The Delusion of False Prophets Mark 13:22- *“For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”*
4. The Decoration of False Prophets Luke 6:26- *“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”*
5. The Doctrine of False Prophets II Peter 2:1- *“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.”*
6. The Distribution of False Prophets I John 4:1- *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”*
7. The Disguise of False Prophets Matthew 7:15- *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”*

Body: Now that we understand that there are false prophets in the world, we need to know how to see through their disguise. Although these apostates may be fooling themselves, the child of God does not have to be. The Lord offers us a description of these deceitful workers. Notice:

- I. The Clothing of the False Prophet Matthew 7:15- *“sheep’s clothing”*
 - A. Their Presence- *“Beware”*
 - B. Their Prophecy- *“false prophets”*
 1. “A false prophet is a teacher of incorrect doctrine, or one falsely and unjustly laying claims to divine inspiration.” (Barnes Notes)
 2. “It probably had reference to the false teachers then among the Jews.” (Barnes Notes)
 - C. Their Pretending- *“come to you in sheep’s clothing”*

1. According to John Gill, this is the clothing referred to in Mark 12:38. It consisted of a garment made of the wool of a sheep that extended down to the feet.
 2. It is an outward display (pretending to be true prophets—Hebrews 11:37) but with inward problems as in Matthew 23:28.
- D. Their Personality- *“but inwardly they are ravening wolves”* Acts 20:29-31
1. Outwardly, they appear humble, but inwardly they are vicious.
 2. “Wolves are more dangerous than dogs and hogs.” (RWP) (II Peter 2:22)
- II. The Contradiction of the False Prophet Matthew 7:16- *“grapes of thorns, or figs of thistle”*
- A. The Guile of the Fruit- *“Ye shall know them by their fruits”*
1. “The Saviour gives the proper test of their character.” (Barnes Notes)
 2. “Fruits, in the Scripture and Jewish phraseology, are taken for works of any kind.” (Adam Clarke)
 3. “People do not judge of a tree by its leaves, or bark, or flowers, but by the fruit which it bears.” (Barnes Notes)
- B. The Gathering of the Fruit- *“Do men gather...”*
1. *“grapes of thorns”*
 2. *“figs of thistles”*
 - a. “Their doctrines are like "thorns", which prick and pierce, give pain and uneasiness; and, like "thistles", choke, and are unprofitable, afford no solid food and nourishment;” (John Gill)
 - b. “Everything in nature reproduces after its kind, and this is also true in the spiritual realm.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “As the thorn can only produce thorns, not grapes; and the thistle, not figs, but prickles; so an unregenerate heart will produce fruits of degeneracy.” (Adam Clarke)
 - d. “A man cannot be a saint and a sinner at the same time.” (Adam Clarke)
- III. The Creation of the False Prophet Matthew 7:17-18- *“good tree...corrupt tree”*
- A. The Righteous Tree- *“good tree”*
1. v. 17- *“bringeth forth good fruit”*
 2. v. 18- *“cannot bring forth evil fruit”*
 - a. “You cannot always distinguish them by their bark and leaves, nor by the spreading of their boughs, but *by their fruits ye shall know them.*” (Matthew Henry)
 - b. “As is the tree, so is its fruit;” (John Gill)
 - c. “It is not the fruit that makes the tree good, but makes it appear to be so; but it is the goodness of the tree that makes the fruit good.” (John Gill)

- d. “As a good man does, and will do good works, but his works do not make him a good man; he is so before he performs good works, or he would never be able to do them;” (John Gill)
 - B. The Rotten Tree- *“corrupt tree”* Job 14:4
 - 1. v. 17- *“bringeth forth evil fruit”*
 - 2. v. 18- *“neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit”*
- IV. The Condemnation of the False Prophet Matthew 7:19- *“cast into the fire”*
 - A. The Production of the Corrupt Tree- *“bringeth not forth good fruit”*
 - B. The Penalty of the Corrupt Tree- *“is hewn down”* Matthew 3:10
 - C. The Perishing of the Corrupt Tree- *“cast into the fire”*
- V. The Clarity of the False Prophet Matthew 7:20- *“by their fruits ye shall know them”*
 - A. The Fruit of the False Prophet- *“by their fruits”*
 - B. The Finding of the False Prophet- *“ye shall know them”*

Conclusion: Matthew seems to close this section the same way that he opened it. We can detect a false prophet by their fruits. We must be careful to be watchful for these deceivers because they are able to persuade men to follow their pernicious ways. Notice how they can influence others.

- 1. Deceitful are the Works II Corinthians 11:13- *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”*
- 2. Departure from the Word I Timothy 4:1- *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;”*