

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was giving His great teaching session to His disciples commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount.” He warned them not to judge hypocritically. They should not cast their pearls before swine. He told them they should ask and receive. Now, He continues His important discourse in Matthew 7.

III. How to Enter the Kingdom.

A. Verse 13. The narrow gate is the true gate of entrance. Narrowed to one: Jesus Christ. The broad or spacious way leads to destruction, Greek *apoleia*. First occurrence in the New Testament. We need to realize this even today. Just because God is gracious to men’s sins does not mean that their wicked deeds are not leading them down the road to destruction. This road is easy to find, and many find it today.

B. Verse 14. Difficult means constricted, *thlibo*. We are not told statistics on the “many” and the “few.” Yet we should not be overly optimistic about men’s chances. It is all too easy for anyone to walk the way to destruction. Christ is the only sure means of salvation. The narrow gate narrows right down to Jesus Christ, the only Savior.

IV. Know Them By Their Fruits!

A. Verse 15. A lot of people need to read this and really take it in. Far too many think that a false prophet would carry a placard saying so, would be obvious. But false prophets come looking like sheep. “False prophets” is the Greek *pseudoprophEtOn*. The Greek word “prophet” is of such a character that “false” must be added on the front to make this clear. Hebrew, however, is not so. These men are rapacious or thieving. These false prophets steal away men’s minds and hearts from the truth.

B. Verse 16. You will fully know and recognize them by their fruits. Men’s hearts are not a total mystery that only God can know. To a large extent men’s actions reveal what is in their hearts. Of course fruit is not gathered from thorns or thistles.

C. Verse 17. This is obvious in nature, but men seem to forget it in human beings!

D. Verse 18. These will bring forth after their kind. The opposite makes no sense, for how else would you define a good tree or a corrupt tree than by its quality of fruit? This is not to say, of course, that a good tree might not have a bad piece of fruit here or there. The point is the overall crop.

E. Verse 19. Those who bear corrupt fruit will likewise be cut down from their positions and burned up in the fire.

F. Verse 20. Therefore what some would say, “You don’t know my heart!” is found false. We can know someone’s heart by viewing his fruit. Someone with a Godly heart will not bring forth a constant stream of worldly and godless fruit! A person’s lifestyle reveals his character.

V. Those Who Say “Lord, Lord” Emptily.

A. Verse 21. “Will” is the Greek *thelo*, meaning the desire.

B. Verse 22. Today it is the popular conviction that anyone who can prophesy, cast out demons (*daimonia*), or do some great supernatural deed (*dunamis*) must be in the closest relationship with God. Yet Christ reveals that this is not so! Even the

supernatural is no indication of Divine activity or relationship. Deuteronomy 13:1-5, the fulfillment of predictions does not prove that God is in it.

- C. Verse 23. A most terrible sentence! Remember Peter's words in John 6:68. Where else is there to go? Notice this carefully: many who call Jesus Christ "Lord, Lord!" are actually practitioners of lawlessness whom He will reject and refuse in the end. Not believers who lost their salvation (impossible); He never knew them.

VI. Conclusion: The Lord taught many important things about entering the kingdom. The way is narrow, as one must enter through Christ. One knows men by their fruits. A good tree does not bring forth bad fruit, nor a bad tree good fruit. A true follower of Christ and a false one are the same way. Many who say "Lord, Lord," will in fact never enter God's kingdom. How do we recognize people like this? By their fruit! Let us strive, not just to recognize this fruit in others, but to produce this fruit ourselves.