

Beware of False Prophets

 Matthew 7:15-20

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After last week's lesson you could tell that I am concerned that pastors are capitulating to the surrounding culture by sacrificing primary interpretation for application. This is due to a lack of confidence in the word of God being effectual and relevant to a postmodern, self-centered society. It's my contention that the word of God is the power of God and always relevant to whatever culture it is projected into. Therefore discovering what the passage means is entirely relevant to whether I can find any direct application to the audience. This contention is the traditional and historical approach to studying the Bible. Past generations of pastors were scholars and always sought to discover the original intent of the author and then afterwards make application for the audience. So seeing that this has largely fallen by the wayside in order to capitulate to the felt needs of postmodern audiences is a sad day for me. I think man continues to know who God is and to know what God has done and that this is the chief purpose of God's revealing Himself to man in the Bible.

We're studying the Discourse on the Mount and we are in the final section; Matthew 7:13-29. This is Jesus' conclusion and challenge to His audience based on the main body of teaching that He gave in 5:17-7:12. The main body of teaching consisted of a series of contrasts between His interpretation of the Mosaic Law and that of the scribes and Pharisees. Following only His interpretation would render that generation of Israel righteous enough to enter the kingdom. The final section is therefore His challenge to Israel to make the right choice about who to follow. Were they going to continue to follow the interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees as they were taught in synagogue? Or were they going to recognize their teachings as hypocrisy, repent and follow the interpretation of Jesus? Their decision as a generation would have serious consequences for the entire nation.

The need to make a decision is laid out by three illustrations of two's; there are two gates, choose the right one, there are two trees, choose to follow the right ones and there are two foundations, choose to build on the right one. The fact that each illustration has two choices shows that a decision must be made. Last time we looked at the first illustration. This illustration is found in Matt 7:13-14. In this illustration there are two gates that lead to two paths that lead to two destinies. Usually the

interpretation is that Jesus is talking about salvation. The narrow gate is faith and the narrow path is good works and the destiny is heaven. MacArthur is representative when he says, "The narrow gate is by faith, only through Christ, constricted and precise. It represents true salvation in God's way that leads to life eternal...The wide gate...leads to hell, not heaven. Salvation is by grace alone, but it is not easy. It calls for knowledge of the truth, repentance, submission to Christ as Lord and a willingness to obey His will and Word."¹ The problem is that this interpretation does not take into account the immediate context. The context is not the individual condition of salvation but the generational condition of kingdom entrance. The offer of the kingdom was uniquely 'at hand.' That generation of Israel needed to repent of the teachings and practices of the scribes and Pharisees and follow Jesus' teachings and practices in order for the kingdom to come. Because MacArthur reads the passage as the individual condition for salvation he necessarily adds works to faith and corrupts the gospel message. Salvation, in his view, "is not easy." The resulting problem is that his gospel is "another gospel" (Gal 1:6-11). Salvation is by grace alone, a free gift, and it is therefore easy. The difficulty of understanding the passage is alleviated when it is realized that the OT predicted that one generation of Israel will return to the Lord and live in obedience and therefore enter into the kingdom and enjoy ultimate blessing (e.g. Lev 26:40ff; Deut 4:30-31; 30:1-5). That generation had the opportunity to enter, the kingdom had drawn near. This opportunity is stated later in the NT to have been a missed opportunity (cf Matt 21:43; Rom 10:19). Another recent interpretation of Matt 7:13-14 is that Jesus is talking about Christian discipleship. In this view both gates are offered to genuine Christians who must daily decide which gate they will enter and which temporal life they will experience. The narrow gate is the daily decision put before a Christian to follow the path of discipleship and enjoy a rich and enjoyable life now. The wide gate is the daily decision put before a Christian to follow the way of the world and face a spiritually impoverished and purposeless life. Dillow is representative when he says, "Both gates and ways ultimately will lead him to the millennial kingdom at the Second Advent, but the one who chooses the broad gate and way will find that his life is spiritually ruined in the interim and he will suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ (Mark 4:35)...The narrow way is costly as well, but in a different sense. It will cost the follower radical discipleship, but this loss has a positive outcome, a rich life now."² This interpretation is also problematic because it does not take into account the immediate context. The context is not the Christian's condition of discipleship and subsequent evaluation at the judgment seat of Christ but the generational condition of kingdom entrance for the nation Israel. The offer of the kingdom was 'at hand.' This was a unique time. Until one reads the discourse in light of the OT conditions put upon Israel for ultimate enjoyment of the land in the kingdom one cannot interpret this discourse correctly! The OT teaches that one generation of Israel must repent and return to obedience to the Lord under the terms of the Mosaic Law if God is going to remember His Abrahamic Covenant and usher the nation into the rich blessings of the kingdom. The proper interpretation, then, is what I call the covenant view. This view sees the wide gate as the entry point to following the teachings and practices of the scribes and

Pharisees. The narrow gate is the entry point of following the teachings and practices of Jesus. Jesus commands them to enter the narrow gate that leads to the narrow path of persecution that will surely arise for following Jesus' teachings and practices but will just as surely lead to a rich destiny of life in the kingdom. Few were following finding this path though they needed only seek to find. The wide gate is the entry point for following the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. This was the broad way that is easy and comfortable but will ultimately lead to destructive judgment prior to the kingdom. Many were following this widely-accepted path. They needed to have a change of mind, repent, and enter the narrow gate.

Today we come to Matthew 7:15-23. This is the second illustration of two's. The illustration is the well-known two trees that bear two kinds of fruit. Almost without exception commentators begin to discuss how to identify a truly saved person, by evaluating their works. These fruit-inspectors become the guardians of the gate to heaven, writing off many as mere professing believers and others as needing to continue persevering in producing good fruit in order to ensure their final salvation. Fruit then becomes the validating mark of a truly saved individual. However, that this interpretation is wildly incorrect should be obvious. Before Jesus introduces the illustration of the two trees He issues a highly figurative warning that is often overlooked. This figurative warning is the key to the illustration of the two trees. The warning concerns not true and false believers but true and false prophets. These prophets look like sheep externally but inwardly they are wolves. This observation alone precludes any idea that the passage shows how to identify a truly saved person. Instead it teaches how to identify a false prophet. Jesus is merely repeating the two OT tests for identifying a false prophet.

In verse 15 Jesus says, **Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.** Who are the **false prophets**? In the context it is apparent that the **false prophets** are those who are leading many Israelites into the wide gate. Specifically then the **false prophets** are the scribes and the Pharisees. They were the leadership of Israel and they were leading the people astray. Pentecost agrees saying, "Christ classified the Pharisees as false prophets (Matt. 7:15). They claimed to be God's representatives with His message to instruct the nation in His way."³

It is important to define a prophet. What was a prophet? A prophet was the mouthpiece of God, the instrument used by God to speak into history. His words may be historical analysis or prophetic discourse but always God would authenticate His prophets by giving them the ability to do signs, miracles and wonders. Both prophesying and doing signs are present in this passage. Note verse 23, **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?'** The claim then is that because they prophesied and did signs they were true prophets. Verse 23 is clear in its denunciation that they were truly His prophets. So how was one to identify whether someone was a true or false prophet?

Turn to Deut 13. There are two tests for a prophet in the OT; Deut 13 and Deut 18. Let's observe the first test in Deut 13:1. "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder," note right off that he may be a prophet or he may just be a dreamer. The option is put out right away that both may do a sign or wonder. Then note verse 2, "and the sign or the wonder [does] come true." So a genuine, bona fide miracle takes place. Now note, "concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them.' What do you do? Verse 3, "you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." So what is the test? Is the test whether the guy did a miracle or not? No, the test is whether he has orthodox theology or not. Is the man orthodox in His teaching? Is he in line with prior revelation? So verses 1 and 2 show that miracles do not prove a person is a true prophet. It doesn't matter if he can do signs and wonders. False prophets often do signs and wonders; the Book of Revelation is full of them. It says the anti-Christ and the false prophet will do tremendous miracles, they will delude the whole world, people will flock to these guys because they can do great miracles. But miracles alone do not authenticate someone as a true prophet. That may shock some of you who have not seen this section of Scripture. It's very interesting. Which is weightier according to Scripture? The content of teaching or ability to do miracles? The content of teaching. Orthodox teaching always takes precedence over miracles in Scripture. Why? Because Satan can do miracles. What can't Satan do? Spout forth orthodox teaching. And following orthodox teaching is where you measure your loyalty to God. God was testing them to see if they would put His word above miracles. The miracles, in and of themselves, don't prove anything. Miracles are attention grabbers but they can be smoke and mirrors and if one gives precedence to the smoke and mirrors and not on Scripture then do they really love the Lord their God? No. So a miracle is not a sign *unless* it is accompanied by orthodox teaching. So that's the first test of a prophet and what is it? If someone does a great sign, in and of itself that does not authenticate, it must be accompanied by orthodoxy. And if he's not orthodox the sign is from Satan. That man is not a prophet, don't listen to him.

Turn to Deut 18. The second test is in Deut 18:22, Deut. 18:18 sets the context as prophets. "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth," a good definition of a prophet. The prophet did not speak on his own initiative. He spoke on God's initiative and with God's word. He was God's mouthpiece. Verse 20, "But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die." That's pretty serious crime; a capital crime to say God said when God didn't say. But how do you know? In a court of law when a guy is on trial for this crime what tests do you apply to know? That's what they're asking in verse 21, "You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'" Verse 22 gives the rules of evidence "22When a

prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him." Notice the fear, when a prophet spoke it was fearful because it was the proclaimed word of God. That's something we're obligated to follow. So we better find out if it's really His word or not. So what's the test? If the thing does not come about or come true then he's not a prophet. Did it say if it does come to pass he's the real deal? No. It's not a positive test; it's a negative test. In fact, we already learned in Deut 13 that if a thing he says comes to pass big deal, is he orthodox. Saying something's going to come to pass doesn't prove a thing. The question is, does he get something wrong. Why is that the test? Because God never gets anything wrong. And therefore a true prophet will always get everything he says right.

So let's put the two tests together. A guy comes along and he does a miracle. Does that authenticate anything? No. Not by itself. What else does he have to have? Orthodox teaching. Then let's say a guy comes along and says something is going to happen and it doesn't happen, does that authenticate anything? Yes it does. That guy is a false prophet. It only works negatively, not positively. And I bet if you go into Christian churches and ask 100 people that if someone does a miracle are they a prophet, 99 of them will affirm that they are. Wrong. The issue is, are they orthodox in their teaching. Does everything they say come to pass? These are very stringent tests because the claim that one has a word from God is a very serious claim.

Now that's the background for understanding Matthew 7:15-23 and it makes it easy. Note that in this pericope there is just one command just like there was one command in the prior pericope. There it was "enter the narrow gate;" here it is "beware of the false prophets." Both of these commands are emphatic, Jesus placing them at the beginning of each illustration. They therefore establish the basic teaching that is to be learned. What we are to learn at base in this pericope is that there are false prophets and they are violently destructive and we are to know them by what? Their fruit. Which must be what? Their teaching! Are they orthodox? That is what this is all about. What is the one command? **Beware.** The word is from *προσεχω* and means "to be in a state of alert, *be concerned about.*" They should be in a constant state of alert looking out for false prophets. The admonition presupposes they are not easy to detect. Paul says later in 2 Corinthians that "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14). Is it any wonder then, that his workers masquerade as true prophets of God? Therefore they should "be on their guard." Glasscock says of this word, "In this context, used with the analogy of "ravenous wolves," there can be little doubt that Christ was implying that His disciples should be alert with a sense of fear because of the vicious destructiveness of false teachers."⁴ Now note that Glasscock interpreted these false prophets as false teachers. Is a teacher a prophet? No. Unfortunately many are identifying them these days. They are not. What are some differences? A prophet could predict the future. A teacher can only explain what's already written. What's another difference? A prophet speaks

with infallibility. A teacher speaks fallibly. His interpretations can be wrong. What else? The prophet could do signs to authenticate. A teacher can't do signs. This passage is clearly not about false teachers but false prophets because in verse 23 they do signs, something teachers could not do. However, there is one similarity. What's the similarity? They both speak relative to God's word, they both claim to teach truth, they just do so with different authority. But they are both in very important positions. What does the NT later say in James 3:1 about teachers? Let not many of you should become teachers? Why does it say that? Because a teacher is going to face stricter judgment. Doesn't that signal the importance of the teacher? And in Acts 20:29 what does Paul liken false teachers too? The same thing Jesus likens them to in this passage, savage wolves. So I'm going to make application to false teachers over in the Church age even though this passage is about false prophets in the age of Israel. They share this caricature in common.

Now apparently these Jews had become lax about detecting false prophets. Why do I say that? Because Jesus says **Beware**. They weren't on ready alert. And do you think people in the church are alert to false teachers today? No way. Today we're so tolerant that we've got to get every opinion on the table, that's only fair and now it's gone so far that we let Muslims come in and take the pulpits. I wonder what Jesus would think about that? Well, we don't have to wonder, we know. How does Jesus see **false prophets**? As wolves. But are these wolves easy to detect. No. Why are they difficult to detect? Because they **come to you in sheep's clothing**. That is to say, they look like a harmless sheep. Are sheep that impressive? They don't do much. They have very little kick. They wander around and graze in a field. They basically go unnoticed. **But inwardly**, Christ says these masquerading as sheep **are ravenous wolves**. What are wolves like? Wolves are quite impressive. They have a powerful bite. They hunt by stealth until they have identified a weak victim. When they attack a sheep they attack violently, often grabbing the hinds and then re-positioning to grab the neck, jerking powerfully to snap the neck, ripping the jugular vein causing massive blood loss and then ripping the little lamb to pieces.⁵ It's a very gory mess but it's a mess I'm going to show you because the 21st century Church simply cannot get it through their thick skull how Jesus looks at false teachers. And I think you'll understand after you see what this wolf did to this man's flock that we are to not listen to these people or else you'll be dealing with a gory mess, spiritually speaking, this is what heresy will do to you spiritually.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzIFFAaY7wE>

Now I bet you never think of false teachers the same again and I sure hope not because what that wolf did to those lambs is the exact parallel of what heresy will do to you spiritually. And we do not tolerate it. It's our job as elders to protect you from the dangers of false teaching. And there are many wolves out there trying to destroy you, they're doing it through books, they're doing it through media, they're doing it through education, they're doing it through academia, they're doing it through the church and

they're all just looking for a weak Christian. That's what the Humanist does, that's what the Jehovah's Witness does, that's what the Mormon does, that's what the Muslim does, that's what the Evolutionist does, they all look for and prey on weak, untrained believers. And those sheep that you saw all wounded and bloody and lying around dead is what a believer looks like spiritually after they've been violently attacked by these false teachers. So you evaluate these people, what are you evaluating? Their doctrine, their teaching. And I want you to remember that wolf when you detect it because that's who they are underneath.

Now who are the wolves in 7:15? The scribes and the Pharisees. They don't look like wolves, they look like nice religious people. Nonsense. They're cold-blooded killers. Now read verse 16, **You will know them by their fruits.** What's the fruit? Their teaching. What comes out of their mouths! That's the one thing Satan can't produce, good teaching. He's a liar and the father of lies and he's been a liar since the beginning. So you will know them by their false teaching, what they say, not what they do. That was the criteria in Deut 13, orthodox teaching. Turn to Matthew 12:33 to see that the fruit is what they say and not what they do. Heck, these guys can do exorcisms and all kinds of miracles, that's not the issue. Who is Jesus addressing in Chapter 12? Verse 1, the Pharisees, verse 38, the scribes and the Pharisees. Same group. Verse 33, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit." Same analogy. Verse 34, "You brood of vipers," you see Jesus and John the Baptist were on the same page in their analysis, "how can you, being evil, speak what is good? What's the fruit? The fruit is what they speak. What's the tree? The tree is evil. How can those who are evil speak what is good. Then Jesus gives the principle. "For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart." Why did they have evil hearts? Because Satan was filling their hearts. He was controlling them. Verse 35, "The good man brings out of *his* good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure what is evil." The entire point is that you can detect a false prophet by his teaching. Note verse 36, "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." What's the issue? What they do or what they say? What they say. The fruit is the words that come out of their mouth, the teaching and that teaching is either good or bad. If it's good then they are true prophets. If it's bad they are false prophets. Satan cannot proclaim what is good. He cannot proclaim orthodoxy. That is why orthodoxy is the ultimate test. That is why it is so important to know the truth. How else can you evaluate?

Back to Matthew 7:16, **You will know them by their fruits.** Their what? Their words. Analogy. **Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?** Of course not. Why not? Because a thorn bush doesn't have it in it to produce grapes and a thistle doesn't have it in it to produce figs. So a false prophet does not have it in him to speak truth! Verse 17, **So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.** They can do no other. Either you are a true prophet or a false

prophet. And the final issue is always what they produce, what they speak, their teaching. Verse 18, **A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.** True prophets could not speak lies. They always spoke the truth. False prophets could not speak truth. They always spoke lies. This was the test of a prophet! Verse 19, **every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** Now who is the **tree**? We've been talking about the fruit and we said the fruit is what is spoken, what is taught, but we haven't said what the **tree** is. What's the **tree** in verse 19? The false prophet. The false prophet **does not** speak the truth. What's his destiny? What was his destiny in the OT? What were they supposed to do to a false prophet after he went through the court trial and he failed the test? Execution. Capital punishment. What's the destiny here? **Thrown into the fire.** What does this mean? It doesn't mean hell. They may end up in hell but that's not the issue here. The issue is judgment. **Fire** is a common metaphor for judgment. What will happen to the Jew prior to the kingdom? Judgment. The false prophet is not going to enter the kingdom and that false prophet in context is the scribe and Pharisee.

Turn back briefly to Matthew 3. Is there anything new? Here's John with his preparatory message in verse 2, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In verse 5 loads of people are going out to be baptized on the condition that they were confessing their sins, the sins of following the scribes and the Pharisees. Verse 7, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" What wrath? The coming judgment prior to the establishment of the kingdom! And what are they told to do if they are truly repentant? Verse 8, "bear fruit in keeping with repentance." You know if you've had a change of mind about the system of theology your teaching, change your teaching! What was their teaching in verse 9? "We have Abraham for our father." It was an automatic entrance into the kingdom in their teaching. Automatic entrance! Oh no says John, verse 10, "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Is he saying anything different than Jesus was saying? No. Same message. What's John saying? Judgment is at hand. The axe is already laid at the root of the trees. If you want to avoid judgment bring forth the right teaching. If not, they're going to be excised from Israel by judgment and not enter the kingdom. Verse 12 proves this is the interpretation. "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor. That's the judgment and they're going to be like chaff. "and He will gather His wheat into the barn," the wheat is what is valuable. It's going to be brought into the barn. What's the barn? The Kingdom! But what of the chaff? "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." That's the judgment prior to the Kingdom. The kingdom was "at hand" and that is the key to Matt 1-11. If the kingdom was 'at hand' then the judgment preceding the kingdom was also 'at hand.' It can be no other. This is the message of every OT prophet and it is the message of John the last OT prophet and of Jesus the last King.

Finally Matt 7:20, **So then**, grand conclusion to His audience, they have a choice to make, who are they going to follow, **you will know them by their fruits**. Go back, evaluate OT theology, go back to the Law, what did the Law teach? Is that what the scribes and Pharisees are teaching? They may do wonderful things. They may look like nice religious people. But do they teach the Bible correctly? Or is that what I am doing? And then, based on that make your decision who to follow. Does that work?

In conclusion, what is Matt 7:15-20 about? It's about how a Jew would identify a false prophet. Verse 15 begins with a warning. **Beware of the false prophets**. They weren't paying attention. They needed to start paying attention. False prophets were all around them but could they detect them? On the outside they look like nice religious sheep **but inwardly** they were **ravenous wolves**. And do you know what **wolves** do to sheep? Hopefully you've got a nice graphic of that. How do we identify false prophets if they look like sheep? Verse 16, the same way you identified them in the OT. **You will know them by their fruits**. What are the **fruits**? Their teaching! What comes out of their mouth? Remember, what comes out of the mouth is that which fills the heart. What filled their hearts? Satan! Grapes aren't gathered from thorn bushes, are they? Figs aren't gathered from thistles, are they? No. It's impossible for Satan to speak true doctrine. Satan can do miracles but he can't speak truth. So how will you know them? Not by what they do but by what they teach! Verse 17, **every good tree bears good fruit**. Every true prophet speaks the truth because God is truth. **But the bad tree bears bad fruit**. Every false prophet speaks lies because Satan is a liar. Verse 18, **A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit**. That analogy is so obviously true in the material realm but we have to transport it to the spiritual realm of the prophet! Verse 19, what is **every tree that does not bear good fruit** destined for? Being excised from Israel and judged prior to the kingdom. They are speaking forth the doctrines of Satan and they are not going to the kingdom. Nor is anyone who follows them. So they need to be able to identify them. Verse 20 closes the way verse 16 opened. **So then, you will know them by their fruits**. Once more, what are the fruits? What they speak. This passage has absolutely nothing to do with identifying who true believers are by becoming fruit inspectors. It has to do entirely with how to identify a false prophet.

How can we apply this passage? We can apply it to identifying false teachers because Paul does in Acts 20:29. He warns that false teachers are savage wolves who arise from within and from without the Church. So first, beware. The Jews needed to beware of the false prophets among the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. We should constantly be on the alert for false teachers. False teachers who arise from the world outside the church such as false philosophies like individualism, scientism, pragmatism, materialism, agnosticism, et. al. False philosophies are a dime a dozen. They can also arise from false religions like Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, British Israelism, et. al.; false religions are a dime a dozen. But false teachers can arise from inside the Church through Lordship Salvation, Prosperity Gospel, Emergent Postmodernism, Mysticism, et. al. So point one, we should beware, be constantly on alert. The enemy,

Satan, is prowling around seeking to devour you and he has a multitude of deceptions to do so. Second, false teaching is extremely destructive spiritually. The picture of a wolf slaughtering a sheep is an accurate caricature of what false teaching does to you spiritually. Granted, no fallible human teacher can get everything perfectly correct, infallibility is limited to the prophets, but the picture remains of the danger of false teaching. Here we would play up the importance of fundamental Bible doctrine like the Trinity, the Eternal Sonship of Christ, the Gospel, the Deity of Christ, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom to come, the ministries of the Holy Spirit. These are fundamental things that should be taught with precision. So the second thing is to understand the extreme danger of false teaching. Third, to be armed against false teaching we need to be armed with the text of Scripture. Jesus taught His precision interpretation against the nuanced interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees. He did this so the people could really see the difference and be able to make a wise choice. We therefore need to know the text. This is not easy. Most people are not interested in the text but in theology or worse, what the text means to them. In that world false interpretations will abound and they will be slaughtered spiritually; led into legalism or licentiousness, drawn into perfectionist straightjackets or into experientialism or into money giving schemes that promise great prosperity. A pastor should be well trained in order to show the nuances of difference so the people can know the truth and detect the lies and make a wise choice. This is why not many should become teachers! The teacher and elders have the responsibility of protecting Christ's sheep from the wolves.

¹ John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, p 1404.

² Joseph Dillow, *Final Destiny*, p 285, 288.

³ Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 187.

⁴ Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, ip 171.

⁵ <http://www.wolfcountry.net/information/WolfHunting.html>