Beware Of False Prophets

Matthew 7:15-23

Intro:

A. Jesus has taught His disciples about judging one’s brother. V.365
   1. The same measure we use to judge others will be used by them to judge us.
   2. We should not be critical of others unless we are certain we are free from the same fault.

B. Jesus, at this point in His sermon, tells His disciples to beware of false prophets.
   1. There is a startling truth spoken by Him.
   2. They are to be judged by their, "fruits".
   3. These, "fruits" are not what they do in Jesus’ name but what they say in His name.
   4. What is the “wolf” clothed in? v.22

I. The Warning Of Jesus.

A. "Beware of false prophets..." v.15
   1. beware = προσέχω = “to turn one’s mind to,” “to pay attention”, “to give heed”
   2. false prophet = ψευδοπροφήτης = “one falsely professing to come as a messenger, and a message from God.”

B. “which come to you in sheep’s clothing...”
   1. clothing = ενδυμα = “anything put on”, “a garment of any kind,” “the clothing worn by the ancient prophets.”
   2. “Be on the watch for false religious teachers, men who come to you disguised as sheep...”

C. “...but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”
   1. inwardly = εσωθεν = “from within.”
   2. ravening = αρπαξ = “ravenous”, “raging”
   3. “but beneath that disguise.”

II. The Nature Of The False Prophet.

A. “ye shall know them by their fruits...”
1. know = ἐπιγνῶσκω = “an exact knowledge,” “to know fully”, “to recognize.” V.16a
2. fruits = καρπος = “fruit,” “produce”, “result”.
3. Identification can be made by their product.

B. “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” v.16b
1. “can grapes be picked from thorn bushes...” - TCNT
2. “can you gather figs from thistle clumps”?

C. “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” V.17
1. good = ἀγαθος = “good of its kind”, “admirable”
2. fruit = καρπος = A, 2
3. corrupt = σαρκος = “rotten,” “decayed”, “used of things unsuitable,” “things unusable”, “unfit”, “bad”.
4. Trees bear fruit according their nature.
5. A tree cannot bear fruit contrary to its nature. V.18
6. The end of the rotten tree. V.19

D. “wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
1. fruits = καρπος (same) A, 2
2. know = επιγνωσκω (same) A, 1

III. The End Of The False Prophets.

A. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;” v.21
1. saith = λέγω = “to lay before”, “relate”
2. enter = εἰσέρχομαι = “to come or go into”
3. “It is not everyone who keeps saying to me, Master, Master, who shall enter the kingdom fo heaven.”

B. “...but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”
1. doeth = ποιεω = “to make”, “to form”, “to produce”
2. will = θελημα = “active volition”, “desire”
3. "...but the man who actually does my Heavenly Father's will" - Phi

C. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name"? v.22
   1. Lord, Lord = κύριος = "might one, mighty one," "ruler". "one who assumes and exercises power."
   2. The same words as verse 21!
   3. prophesied = προφητεύω = "to hold the office of a prophet; to do the office of a prophet, to speak forth, warn, exhort, in the name of God."
   4. "Didn't we preach in your name" - Phi

D. "and in thy name have cast out devils"?
   1. cast out = εξεβαλομεν = "we expelled"
   2. devils = δαιμονιαν = "Evil spirits which are to be seen as influencing the lives of people for evil"

E. "...and in thy name done many wonderful works."
   1. wonderful works = "mighty works" = δυναμεις
   2. works of power = "we did many wonder-works"

F. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you..." v.23
   1. profess = ὁμολογεω = "to speak or say the same with another", "to assent" "to agree with"
   2. Jesus does not deny that they did all these things that they have said.
   3. I never = ουδεποτε = "not ever," "not at any time."
   4. knew = γνωσκω = "to perceive", "to gain insight into", It denotes a true and personal relation between the person knowing and the object known."
   5. This man never had a personal relationship with Jesus. He assumed His office and made him right with God. He assumed the office and made-p his message!

G. "...depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
   1. depart = αποχωρεω = "to depart from", "go away"
   2. work = εργαζομαι = "to form by labor"
3. *iniquity* = ἁμαρτία = "violation of law"; non-observance or transgression of the law, whether unknown or will fully violated; lawlessness.

4. He spoke these works to those who prided themselves as keepers of the law!

IV. God’s Evaluation Of False Prophets.

A. **In the Old Testament.**
   1. Deuteronomy 13:1-11 "...shall be put to death" v.5
   2. Jeremiah 23:16-21
   3. Deuteronomy 18:15

B. **In the New Testament**
   1. 2 Peter 2:1-2
   2. 1 John 4:1-