

ESCAPING BONDAGE TO PRESENT-DAY PHARISAISM
"Part VIII: Escaping The Sway Of False Teachers To Heed The True"
(Matthew 7:13-23)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Today we face a lot of false spiritual teaching and teachers:

(1) Last Sunday after our worship service, I heard from a believer about his once belonging to a Gospel-preaching church that brought him under such feelings of **false** guilt and its **trauma** that he left it to move about 20 miles away. That way its leaders couldn't hound him anymore!

Yet, with more correct teaching he's received from other church teachers, he has been able to return and visit a service in another church of that denomination and come away emotionally **unscathed!**

(2) The April 5th, 1998 Republican-American reported that the Shroud of Turin, hailed by many as the burial cloth of Jesus, went on display in Turin, Italy over the Easter weekend. That way **three million** pilgrims could file by and look at it behind bullet-proof glass! Well, the **Christian Bible** reveals the Shroud could **not** be Jesus' gravecloth: (a) John reported in John 20:7 that what covered Jesus' head was discovered **separate from** what covered His **body**. (b) This arrangement was not created by grave robbers, for the way the clothes lay convinced John Jesus had risen **opposite** Mary Magdalene's report that someone had *moved* the body, John 20:2, 6-8. (c) Well, the Shroud of Turin, a **full body** cloth, folds at the **head** of the body it covered, so it could **not** have been **separate** from **another** body wrap, but would have **overlapped** it! Yet, *millions* in **Christendom** adore the Shroud of Turin -- **WHY, as it CONTRADICTS Scripture?!**

The article states that the Catholic Church is expected to permit further studies after the year 2,000 to see if the Shroud is Christ's true burial clothes! In light of John 20:7 in the **Christian Bible**, **WHY?!**

(3) Last month, a Christian called me about a friend of his who had accepted Christ. But, **before** she had believed, the minister had taken her from the pew to the front and touched her forehead, and she had fallen "slain in the Spirit"! The man wondered how the Spirit could "slay" one that way **before** salvation! (I wonder, too as one is indwelt by the Spirit only **after** salvation!) What bothered me was that I had a time trying to get him to **believe** what I was *telling* him!

Well, how can we discern such misleading and often harmful teaching and teachers and cleave to God's TRUTH?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Some spiritual teachers impress me at first only to leave me later feeling 'burned' where others seem to grow on me the more I hear them! Why, and how can I be more discerning to be edified?!"

I. SOME Church teachers TODAY harmfully mislead their hearers!

- A. In our lessons on Rev. 1-3, we found that our prophesied Evangelical era contains the test to avoid oppressive church leadership, Rev. 3:17.
- B. This struggle mimics Christ's conflict with the Pharisees in His earthly ministry over acceptable, gracious Messianic leadership, Rev. 3:21b.
- C. Now, the Pharisees had a correct **theology** (Mtt. 23:1-3), but an errant practical application of it that produced spiritual **bankruptcy**:
 1. Matthew 5-7 is the "Sermon on the Mount," Walvoord, Matt., p. 3.
 2. This address **contrasts** false Pharisaic spirituality with the true:
 - a. In this message, Jesus claimed that one needed to have a greater righteousness than the Pharisees to gain eternal life, Mtt. 5:20;
 - b. Then, by signaling His criticism of what the Pharisees had taught the nation in Mtt. 5:21, 27, 33, 28 and 43, Christ exposed the ways the Pharisees failed to attain unto God's righteousness (Edersheim, Life & Times of Jesus, The Mes., v. i, p. 527-528).
 - c. Jesus then warned about false professions (Mtt. 7:13-14, 21-23) and unsaved teachers (Mtt. 7:15-20) in Pharisaism.
- D. Thus today, as in Jesus' era, some teachers harmfully mislead hearers.

II. Thankfully, God LIMITS the EFFECTS of such harmful teachers!

- A. Christ will build His Church in spite of these teachers, Mtt. 16:18.
- B. The Holy Spirit equips even the weakest true believer **experientially** to sense uneasiness around such errant teachers, 1 Jn. 2:18-20, 27!

III. BETTER, we can use the "Sermon on the Mount" to DISCERN false from true realities with teachers to avoid harm and be edified:

- A. First, Christ's sermon discerns **false** from **true spirituality** in **general**:
 1. A false spirituality leads one to hate though inhibiting the act of murder (Mtt. 5:21-23) where the godly see their own poverty of lovelessness and seek God's supply of love to love others, Mtt. 5:3.
 2. A false spirituality can cause one to mislead to take advantage (Mtt. 5:33-37; B.K.C.,N.T., p. 31); the godly grieve over such deceit, 5:4

3. A false spirituality may try to exact retribution for losses suffered (Mtt. 5:38-42) where the meek merely look to God for their inheritance, not fretting over details of such losses, Mtt. 5:5.
4. A false spirituality leads to practicing showy religious rituals (Mtt. 6:1-18) where the godly thirst for the righteousness of God, 5:6.
5. A false spirituality makes one cliquish, loving his own but hating outsiders (Mtt. 5:43-48); the godly by contrast show mercy, 5:7.
6. A false spirituality causes one to avoid the act but not the thought of adultery (Mtt. 5:27-30); the godly are pure in heart, Mtt. 5:8.
7. A false spirituality makes one hypocritically criticize (Mtt. 7:1-6); the godly criticize only if they do what they say, Mtt. 7:5.
8. A false spirituality causes one to overlook keeping peace with others (Mtt. 5:23-26); the godly try to be peacemakers, Mtt. 5:9.
9. A false spirituality makes one look to money for life's securities (Mtt. 6:24); the godly look to God for security, Mtt. 6:31-34.
10. A false spirituality leads one willfully to disobey "some" Scriptures (Mtt. 5:17-20); the godly seek to obey all of the Word, Mtt. 23:23.
11. A false spirituality causes one to leave a distaste with others (Mtt. 23:4); the godly like "salt" cause others to thirst for what they have (Mtt. 5:13) and expose them as "lights" to His truth, Mtt. 5:14-16.

B. **Applying** this information, we discern *false* from *true* SPECIFICS:

1. Discerning False from True Gospels - If the **blessed** must thirst for righteousness to **be filled** with it (Mtt. 5:6), no one is saved by **himself**, but by God's **unmerited favor**, Jn. 1:11-13; Eph. 2:8-9.
2. Discerning False from True Professions of Faith - If one is not saved because he calls Christ "Lord" or does great ministries, but **rather** enters heaven for being **known by Christ** (Mtt. 7:21-22), only by **personal faith in Christ** can one be saved, 1 Jn. 5:11-13.
3. Discerning False from True Spiritual Teachers:
 - a. First, from 1 Jn. 4:1-3 we know that unsaved teachers cannot confess Jesus as God come in the flesh like saved teachers do. Some knowingly teach a false gospel as "apostates," 2 Pet. 2:1.
 - b. Second, saved **or unsaved** teachers with a false spirituality **produce** the godless qualities of III, A! Good teachers **produce** the opposite qualities, causing others to thirst as "salt" for what they have so as "light" they can illumine God's truth, 5:13, 14-16

Lesson Application: *In discovering from this sermon where we stand, (1) trust in Christ for salvation (Jn. 1:11-13) to receive the discerning Holy Spirit, 1 Jn. 2:18-27. (2) If as believers we have misled others, or WERE misled, (a) confess the waywardness as failure to heed the Spirit's 1 Jn. 2:18-27 subjective warnings (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) depend on the Spirit (Ga. 5:16-23); (c) He will EQUIP us to discern experientially as well as via Scripture, 2 Tim. 3:13-17. (3) Then, obeying God makes us "salt" and "light" to help other misled people!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Years ago, there was a Pastor of a Gospel preaching Church in Chico, California who was studying for his Sunday sermon. He pastored a Church that believed one could lose his salvation after he accepted Christ. He had been raised to deny "eternal security", had attended a School that denied the belief, and taught against it from his pulpit.

But while studying Hebrews 6:4-6 in his study, he realized that the text taught that **if** a person had truly accepted Christ, and **were** he **EVER** to "fall away" and become **unsaved**, he could **never** be saved **AGAIN**. That passage reads in the NIV: "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace."

Realizing that if one **could** lose his salvation, that this text taught he could **never** be saved again, this pastor **agonized** as he **also** knew that John 6:37b taught that all **lost** people who came to Jesus would **never** be cast out. This pastor knew that **all** Scripture was inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16), that it couldn't **contradict** itself. That meant that, for **both** Hebrews 6:4-6 **and** John 6:37b to be **true**, then a Christian could **NOT in any way LOSE** his salvation! He saw that his church's position and whole **denomination** were in **doctrinal error** on the crucial doctrine of salvation!

In seeking to be honest to the Lord, this pastor bravely wrote to the Baptist Church across town, requesting that it **re-ordain** him as a **Baptist**. He was re-ordained, resigned his pastorate in the errant Church he was leading and served for many years as a Baptist pastor!

As in the case of this man, God has put within every believer a honing "device" -- the Holy Spirit -- to tell him when he is getting misled by false teaching, 1 John 2:18-27. God's WORD then defines the truth from error so that every TEACHER or PASTOR and every OTHER believer is without excuse when it comes to falling for error! Let us then follow the truth of God's Word under the illuminating ministry of the Spirit of God!