

By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you **in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.** Do men gather **grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?** Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**” (Mat 7:15-20). Jesus said that wolves are exposed by their fruits.

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for **the tree is known by his fruit.** O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, **speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.** A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” (Mat 12:33-35). The “fruit” by which wolves are identified is the words that come out of their mouths from their hearts. The reason it’s “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” is because what we say to ourselves in our hearts regularly, one day will come out of our mouths publicly!

Nobody but God knows what’s in our hearts but others will know once they hear it come from our mouths. God will put us in situations that pressure us to speak out loud the abundance of good or evil we’ve been speaking to ourselves in our hearts. The heart is to the mouth what a tree is to fruit.

This is also what Jesus meant by “Therefore **take no thought, saying,** What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” (Mat 6:31). If we’re serving God, we can’t be questioning to ourselves about His provision for our lives, or planning for our provision tomorrow, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow” (Mat 6:34). Jesus taught a parable about a rich man who spoke in his heart to himself, “And he thought within himself, saying” (Luk 12:17). He concluded His parable by teaching, “Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought for your life,** what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on” (Luk 12:22).

James taught extensively about the tongues, “But **the tongue** can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, **full of deadly poison.** Therewith **bless we God,** even the Father; and

therewith **curse we men,** which are made after the similitude of God. **Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.** My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? **Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?”** (Jas 3:8-12). His questioning “Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?” parallels what Christ Himself had asked “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” The heart is known by the tongue as a tree is known by its fruit.

James went on to say, “But if ye have **bitter envying and strife in your hearts,** glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not **from above,** but *is* earthly, sensual, **devilish.**” (Jas 3:14-15). Envy and strife in the heart is from the devil. The phrase “from above” harkens back to earlier in his letter, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is **from above,** and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas 1:17). What’s “from above” is Christ Himself, “He that cometh **from above** is above all” (Jhn 3:31), “Ye are from beneath; I am **from above**” (Jhn 8:23). Therefore, the wisdom “from above” is the teaching of Christ who came from above, “**But the wisdom that is from above is first pure,** then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. **And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.**” (Jas 3:17-18). The “fruit” of being right with God is a pure heart that makes peace with others.

Trinitarian Pastors fighting against the true view of God taught by His Son reveal what’s in their hearts. They betray themselves as wolves by what they say, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” And I found the same proved true with some fellow “Christians” whom I knew for many years. We were in each other’s homes, enjoyed meals together, met for worship and group prayer, and joined in many Bible studies and group discussions. Yet these same gentle and loving people would sometimes speak harsh words—talking spitefully about others, falsely accusing, arguing, causing divisions, and ultimately rejecting what Jesus Christ taught about God.

We don’t know what’s in anyone else’s heart. But when someone is bearing “evil fruit” by speaking evil, we can know their heart for certain, that they’re an “evil tree.” Hypocrites are very skilled at acting favorably in public—wearing sheep’s clothing. But when pressure is applied or when they think nobody is listening, we’ll hear from their mouths what’s truly in their hearts. By their fruits we know them.