

# Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

Ryan Moody

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## Introduction

Why do many preachers discourage us from trying to understand the Bible ourselves? Why do they warn us that we'll fall into error unless we learn from them and their system of theology? Could it be that the opposite is the case? Could it be that they're knowingly teaching us error and don't want us to find the truth by studying on our own?

It was a long and difficult 30 years for me to finally realize the utter depth and expanse of deception being swayed over people by preachers in Protestant Trinitarian churches. Now, it's not that every one of them is cognizant of purposely deceiving people. Some are simply deceived themselves and unknowingly deceiving others. However, many of them have crossed a point of no return. They've been given over to the enemy and are being used by him to accomplish his will.

I kept asking myself, why won't these preachers agree with what Jesus Christ taught about God and about Himself? How can they disagree with Him yet still be walking with Him, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amo 3:3)? I had no choice but to conclude that they're not walking with Him. It's one thing to be ignorant of what Christ taught but quite another to know His teaching yet willingly teach something different.

## The two litmus tests

Jesus told us two main ways to identify false preachers and false Christians, "**He that is not with me** is against me; and **he that gathereth not with me** scattereth abroad" (Mat 12:30). Whoever is not in agreement with Jesus is against Him, and whoever is not working with Him is working against Him. Now, someone can be sincerely ignorant or confused about what Jesus Christ taught and not be overtly disagreeing with Him. God's mercy and forgiveness is there when we come to the knowledge of the truth and repent, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for **they know not what they do**" (Luk 23:34). However, those that know and understand what Jesus Christ taught yet willfully teach something different are against Him.

Jesus Christ's teaching about God and about Himself is very clear and straightforward. The Son called Himself "the Son of God" and the Father called Him "My Beloved Son" from heaven. The Son never called Himself "God" and the Father never called His Son "God." Furthermore, the Son *did* call His Father "God" and even called Him "My God." And neither of them called the holy breath "God." Furthermore, the Father and the Son aren't co-equal because the Son said that His Father "doeth the works" (Jhn 14:10), "is greater than I" (Jhn 14:28), "the only true God" (Jhn 17:3), and that His Father is "My God" (Mat 27:46; Jhn 20:17; Rev 3:12). We must be in agreement with what He taught to be with Him, otherwise we're against Him.

Jesus told us to keep His commandments and teach others to keep His commandments: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Mat 5:19); "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mat 28:20);

“If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jhn 14:15); “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (Jhn 14:21); “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (Jhn 15:14); “For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus” (1Th 4:2); “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments” (1Jo 2:3); “Blessed *are* they that do his commandments” (Rev 22:14). To be working with Him for the good of His Kingdom, we must first obey His commandments ourselves, then teach others to also keep His commandments.

There are two reliable litmus tests that expose whether someone is with Christ or against Him: (1) agreeing with His teaching about God and about Himself; (2) keeping His commandments and teaching others to keep His commandments. Preachers that have been shown the simple and straightforward teaching of Christ about God and about Himself yet stubbornly refuse to submit to Him aren’t with Him—they’re not ministers of God. And when they teach people a lower standard of morality than what Christ commanded, particularly in His Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew chapters 5-7, they bear the fruit of wolves.

## We’ll know them by their fruits

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.** (Matthew 7:15-20)

Jesus said that we will know wolves by their fruits. This is the *only* way we’ll know them! We might have known dearly, for many years and even decades, pastors, ministers, missionaries, and fellow laborers that seemed the model and example of loving, serving, and helping others. They poured their hearts out in tears and nurtured people as if their own children. They’re warm, kind-hearted, loving, and sacrificing. Yet they disagree with the clear teaching of Jesus Christ about God and about Himself, and they don’t teach others Christ’s commandments. They’re not with Him and they’re not working with Him. Wolves in sheep’s clothing are *extremely good* at what they do! Let’s not be naïve in supposing we can spot them ourselves. We can’t. Jesus said that they can only be known by their fruits.

Jesus told the religious leaders that the words they speak betray them, “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.**” (Mat 12:33-34). Those that are evil cannot speak in agreement with the good things Jesus spoke, and they cannot teach others His commandments. They won’t teach others to obey and submit to Him because they’re working against Him. Wolves don’t teach people His commandments because they’re leading them down road than the narrow way.

Jesus told us to not only hear but also do His commandments, “Therefore whosoever **heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them,** I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock ... And every one that **heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not,** shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand” (Mat 7:24,26). Wolves, however, keep the sheep hearing but not doing yet think they’re on the narrow road that leads to life. They want them hearing sermons, listening to podcasts, memorizing

Bible verses, sticking to a daily Bible reading plan, meeting in small group Bible studies, reading “Christian” books, and so on. They love to quote, “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17), because they want them hearing, and hearing, and hearing but not doing.

“And no marvel; for **Satan himself** is transformed into **an angel of light**. Therefore *it is* no great thing if **his ministers** also be transformed as the **ministers of righteousness**; whose end shall be according to their works” (2Co 11:14-15). They appear to be ministering righteousness, helping people to be right with God. But they’re truly ministers of the enemy. They’re extremely subtle, cunning, and deceitful. They can only be known by their fruits.

## Which side of the truth are we on?

“Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (Jhn 18:37), “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (Jhn 18:37 NIV). When the truth comes to our knowledge and understanding, we’re forced to take sides. Those on the side of the truth listen to Jesus while those on the other side don’t listen to Him.

When we’re on the side of the truth, we’ll have plenty of adversaries on the other side, “And in nothing terrified by **your adversaries**: which is **to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation**, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to **suffer for his sake**; Having **the same conflict which ye saw in me**, and now hear *to be* in me.” (Phl 1:29-30). The opposite sides of the truth are evidence of both perdition and salvation. Adversaries help assure us that we’re on the right side, the side of the truth, the side of salvation. while those on the other side, sadly, are headed for perdition or destruction.

Suffering for His sake, “Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, **for my sake**” (Mat 5:11), “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to **suffer for his sake**” (Phl 1:29), comes with the territory, for being on the side of the truth. To affirm and stand for the truth that Jesus Christ taught and to suffer the consequences for it, is to suffer for His sake and for His glory. It’s to stand for what He stood for and defend what He defended. When we stand for the truth Jesus taught, His adversaries become ours and God will bless us for it. It’s evidence that we’re on His side.

When Paul said, “Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me” (Phl 1:30), he certainly didn’t mean that we’ll necessarily be beaten, flogged, stoned, and shipwrecked like he was. He meant that we’ll also experience the same conflicts concerning the truth. We’ll have adversaries using the same kinds of tactics against us that they used against him. The particular conflict the Philippians saw in Paul and Silas was that they were falsely accused before the people and punished, “These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.” (Act 16:20-22). The people were told false accusations to stir up animosity, retaliation, and unjust punishment, “But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans” (Act 16:37).

This same conflict had happened to Paul earlier in other regions, “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and **made their minds evil affected against the brethren**” (Act 14:2), “And there came thither

*certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who **persuaded the people**, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead” (Act 14:19). This same conflict also happened later in other regions, “Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. **And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city**, when they heard these things.” (Act 17:7-8), “But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and **stirred up the people**” (Act 17:13).

When we’re on the side of the truth, we’ll experience these same conflicts. We’ll have adversaries in positions of authority that will stir up people against us. We won’t always know what people are being told or why they have suddenly turned against us. But people’s minds will be evil affected, persuaded, and stirred up against us.

When we’re reproached for Christ’s name and His sake, it’s evidence that God’s breath is in us but not in them, “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for **the spirit [breath] of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part** he is evil spoken of, **but on your part** he is glorified” (1Pe 4:14). These two “parts” or two sides of the truth reveal who belongs to God and who doesn’t.

## Conclusion

“For I am not **ashamed [epaischynomai 1870] of the gospel of Christ**” (Rom 1:16). Paul wasn’t ashamed of the gospel Christ preached. He wasn’t ashamed of Him and His words, “For whosoever shall be **ashamed [epaischynomai 1870] of me and of my words**, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father’s, and of the holy angels” (Luk 9:26). On the other hand, those that teach a different view of God than what Jesus Christ Himself taught should be suspect. If they’re sincerely ignorant by way of having been taught that view in seminary, God will be merciful to them when they come to the knowledge of the truth and repent. However, when they’ve been shown the truth yet refuse to change their teaching, they’re bearing the fruit of wolves. They’re exhibiting the evidence of being ashamed of Him and of His words.

Sanctification means “separated” or “set apart,” “For both **he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one**: for which cause **he is not ashamed [epaischynomai 1870] to call them brethren**” (Heb 2:11). Jesus separated His disciples from the rest of the world by the truth He taught them, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jhn 17:17). And He that separated them, along with them separated by Him, were “all of one,” were in unity and agreement about the truth. For that cause, for the cause of the truth, He was not ashamed to call them His brethren, “Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to **my brethren**, and say unto them, **I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God**” (Jhn 20:17). He’s not ashamed to call us His brethren when we’re not ashamed to call His Father our Father, and His God our God!