

General Comments on Matthew 7

This chapter continues Jesus' stinging rebuke of Phariseeism, and also serves as a prediction of the general public reaction to Jesus. The subject is largely an expansion on the proverb "Physician, heal thyself" (cf. Luke 4:23). The people in general, and the Pharisees in specific, will reject Jesus' teachings and do everything they can to find fault in him. They are picking at motes in Jesus' eye while a beam obscures their own vision. They reject Law the Prophets, and so they will reject Jesus.

The text of this chapter can be arranged as an inverted parallelism, as follows:

- A - (v. 1-5) Parable of two eyes, mote and beam
- B - (v. 6) Wicked priests, dogs, swine
- C - (v. 7-11) Good and evil gifts
- D - (v. 12) The Law and the Prophets
- D - (v. 13-14) The strait gate and narrow way
- C - (v. 15-20) Good and evil fruit
- B - (v. 21-23) Those who violate the Priesthood
- A - (v. 24-27) Parable of two foundations, rock and sand

The parallelism warns the listener to judge righteously and follow the Law (v. 7-20), unlike the present religious leaders (v. 1-6, 21-27).

There are significant changes made to the text in the Inspired Version. Particularly note in the IV that Jesus' addressing the priests and Levites is made explicit rather than implicit.

KJV

- 1 Judge not,
that ye be not judged.
- 2 For with what judgment ye judge,
ye shall be judged:
and with what measure ye mete,
it shall be measured to you again.
- 3 And why beholdest thou the mote
that is in thy brother's eye,
but considerest not the beam
that is in thine own eye?
- 4 Or how wilt thou say
to thy brother,

IV

- 1 Now these are the words
which Jesus taught his disciples
that they should say unto the people.
- 2 Judge not unrighteously,
that ye be not judged;
but judge righteous judgment.
- 3 For with what judgment ye shall judge,
ye shall be judged;
and with what measure ye mete,
it shall be measured to you again.
- 4 And again,
ye shall say unto them,
Why is it that thou beholdest the mote
that is in thy brother's eye,
but considerest not the beam
that is in thine own eye?
- 5 Or how wilt thou say
to thy brother,

Let me pull out the mote
out of thine eye;
and, behold,
a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite,
first cast out the beam
out of thine own eye;
and then shalt thou see clearly
to cast out the mote
out of thy brother's eye.

6 Give not
that which is holy unto the dogs,
neither cast ye your pearls
before swine,
lest they trample them
under their feet,

and turn again and rend you.

7 Ask,
and it shall be given you;
seek,
and ye shall find;
knock,
and it shall be opened unto you:
8 For every one that asketh
receiveth;
and he that seeketh findeth;
and to him that knocketh
it shall be opened.

Let me pull out the mote
out of thine eye;
and canst not behold
a beam in thine own eye?
6 And Jesus said unto his disciples,
Beholdest thou the scribes,
and the Pharisees,
and the priests,
and the Levites?
They teach in their synagogues,
but do not observe the law,
nor the commandments;
and all have gone out of the way,
and are under sin.

7 Go thou and say unto them,
Why teach ye men the law
and the commandments,
when ye yourselves
are the children of corruption?

8 Say unto them,
Ye hypocrites,
first cast out the beam
out of thine own eye;
and then shalt thou see clearly
to cast out the mote
out of thy brother's eye.

9 Go ye into the world,
saying unto all, Repent,
for the kingdom of heaven
has come nigh unto you.

10 And the mysteries of the kingdom
ye shall keep within yourselves;
for it is not meet to give
that which is holy unto the dogs;
neither cast ye your pearls
unto swine,
lest they trample them
under their feet.

11 For the world cannot receive
that which ye, yourselves,
are not able to bear;
wherefore ye shall not give
your pearls unto them,
lest they turn again and rend you.

12 Say unto them,
Ask of God;
ask,
and it shall be given you;
seek,
and ye shall find;
knock,
and it shall be opened unto you.
13 For every one that asketh,
receiveth;
and he that seeketh, findeth;
and unto him that knocketh,
it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you,
 whom if his son ask bread,
 will he give him a stone?
 10 Or if he ask a fish,
 will he give him a serpent?
 11 If ye then,
 being evil,
 know how to give good gifts
 unto your children,
 how much more shall your Father
 which is in heaven
 give good things
 to them that ask him?
 12 Therefore
 all things whatsoever ye would
 that men should do to you,
 do ye even so to them:
 for this is the law and
 the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate:
 for wide is the gate,
 and broad is the way,
 that leadeth to destruction,
 and many there be
 which go in thereat:
 14 Because strait is the gate,
 and narrow is the way,
 which leadeth unto life,
 and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets,
 14 And then said
 his disciples unto him,
 They will say unto us,
 We ourselves are righteous,
 and need not that any man
 should teach us.
 God, we know, heard Moses and
 some of the prophets;
 but us he will not hear.
 15 And they will say,
 We have the law for our salvation,
 and that is sufficient for us.
 16 Then Jesus answered,
 and said unto his disciples,
 Thus shall ye say unto them,
 17 What man among you,
 having a son,
 and he shall be standing out,
 and shall say,
 Father, open thy house
 that I may come in and sup with thee,
 will not say,
 Come in, my son;
 for mine is thine,
 and thine is mine?
 18 Or what man is there among you,
 who, if his son ask bread,
 will give him a stone?
 19 Or if he ask a fish,
 will he give him a serpent?
 20 If ye then,
 being evil,
 know how to give good gifts
 unto your children,
 how much more shall your Father
 who is in heaven
 give good things
 to them that ask him?
 21 Therefore,
 all things whatsoever ye would
 that men should do to you,
 do ye even so to them;
 for this is the law and
 the prophets.
 22 Repent, therefore, and
 enter ye in at the strait gate;
 for wide is the gate,
 and broad is the way
 that leadeth to destruction,
 and many there be
 who go in thereat.
 23 Because strait is the gate,
 and narrow is the way
 that leadeth unto life,
 and few there be that find it.
 24 And, again,
 beware of false prophets,

which come to you
in sheep's clothing,
but inwardly
they are ravening wolves.
16 Ye shall know them
by their fruits.
Do men gather grapes of thorns,
or figs of thistles?
17 Even so every good tree
bringeth forth good fruit;
but a corrupt tree
bringeth forth evil fruit.
18 A good tree
cannot bring forth evil fruit,
neither can a corrupt tree
bring forth good fruit.
19 Every tree
that bringeth not forth good fruit
is hewn down,
and cast into the fire.
20 Wherefore by their fruits
ye shall know them.

21 Not every one
that saith unto me,
Lord, Lord,
shall enter into
the kingdom of heaven;
but he that doeth the will
of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me
in that day,
Lord, Lord,
have we not prophesied in thy name?
and in thy name
have cast out devils?
and in thy name
done many wonderful works?
23 And then
will I profess unto them,
I never knew you:
depart from me,
ye that work iniquity.
24 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:
25 And the rain descended,
and the floods came,
and the winds blew,
and beat upon that house;

who come to you
in sheep's clothing;
but inwardly
they are ravening wolves.
25 Ye shall know them
by their fruits;
for do men gather grapes of thorns,
or figs of thistles?
26 Even so every good tree
bringeth forth good fruit;
but a corrupt tree
bringeth forth evil fruit.
27 A good tree
cannot bring forth evil fruit;
neither can a corrupt tree
bring forth good fruit.
28 Every tree
that bringeth not forth good fruit,
is hewn down,
and cast into the fire.
29 Wherefore by their fruits
ye shall know them.
30 Verily I say unto you,
It is not every one
that saith unto me,
Lord, Lord,
that shall enter into
the kingdom of heaven;
but he that doeth the will
of my Father who is in heaven.
31 For the day soon cometh,
that men shall come before me
to judgment,
to be judged
according to their works.
32 And many will say unto me
in that day,
Lord, Lord,
have we not prophesied in thy name;
and in thy name
cast out devils;
and in thy name
done many wonderful works?
33 And then
will I say,
Ye never knew me;
depart from me
ye that work iniquity.
34 Therefore, whosoever heareth
these sayings of mine
and doeth them,
I will liken him unto a wise man,
who built his house upon a rock,
and the rains descended,
and the floods came,
and the winds blew,
and beat upon that house,

and it fell not:
for it was founded upon a rock.
26 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:
27 And the rain descended,
and the floods came,
and the winds blew,
and beat upon that house;
and it fell:
and great was the fall of it.
28 And it came to pass,
when Jesus had ended these sayings,
the people were astonished
at his doctrine:
29 For he taught them
as one having authority,
and not as
the scribes.

and it fell not;
for it was founded upon a rock.
35 And every one that heareth
these sayings of mine,
and doeth them not,
shall be likened
unto a foolish man,
who built his house
upon the sand;
and the rains descended,
and the floods came,
and the winds blew,
and beat upon that house,
and it fell;
and great was the fall of it.
36 And it came to pass
when Jesus had ended these sayings
with his disciples,
the people were astonished
at his doctrine;
37 For he taught them
as one having authority from God,
and not as having authority from
the scribes.

Comments on Matthew 7

1 JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam [is] in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

v1-5 Do not be judgmental (v. 1), because you will be measured by the standard you judge others (v. 2). Do not look for fault in others, as you should be more concerned about the faults within yourself (v. 3). As long as you are interested in finding fault in others, then you blind both to other's problems and your own (v. 4-5).

A scathing rebuke of fault finding. Verses 1-4 address the people in general, where v. 5 specifically addresses religious leaders. Without the IV the change in who is being addressed in v. 5 is obscure.

v1 The IV inserts a verse before v. 1 making it clear the content of the chapter is what Jesus taught his disciples to say during their missionary work.

The IV on this verse changes the reading to conform to that

of John 7:24. The matter of judging and not judging is one that frequently turns contentious in the course of discussion. With respect to judging one another, as in being critical and finding fault with one another, we are not to do this. With respect to making value decisions regarding to the morality and ethics of specific behaviors, we are to do this, cf. Moroni 7:16-19. When it comes to matters of interpersonal relationships, we have to strike a balance between mercy and justice, which is dependant upon the offending individual's repentance or lack thereof, cf. Mosiah 26:36, D&C 58:43. Also IV/JST Mark 9:40 reads:

Therefore, if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; or if thy brother offend thee and confess not and forsake not, he shall be cut off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell.

v2 The intent here is the same as that in Matt. 5:22.

v3 "mote...beam", the Greek term here translated to mote is "karphe", and means a dry stalk, twig, or chaff. The Greek term for beam is "dokos", meaning a beam, as in a construction beam. The intended meaning of the metaphor of picking at other's flaws when your own are far greater is plain enough, but it is still obscure when reading about motes and beams. Obviously, a beam cannot fit in one's eye. What then is the intent? The "karphe...dokos" may have been used by the author because the terms are alliterative.

It is possible to take meaning from the parable in v. 24-27 and say Jesus' intent is to equate the faultfinding Pharisees with those whose houses collapse, and are therefore crushed in the rubble. The faultfinder is crushed underneath the beams used to support the roof over his head because he has built upon a sandy foundation.

Approaching it from a point of perspectives, the mote and beam could be the same object viewed from two vantage points. When one is looking at something small under a magnifying glass or microscope it looks huge and blocks out everything else from view, even though the object can in fact be tiny. In the eye of one man a piece of straw or twig is small because he is seeing it far off. But, in the eye of the faultfinder who looks at things very close up so as to find flaws, the twig becomes a huge beam that obscures his vision. This explanation assumes a single object with different perspectives while the parable suggests two objects.

v4 The IV inserts two verses after this one attacking the religious leaders, accusing them of gross hypocrisy.

v5 The IV makes it clear those being addressed here are the religious leaders of the people, the scribes and Pharisees. In the KJV this is obscure, but can be deduced from the charge of "hypocrite" which is only used explicitly in reference to the scribes and Pharisees in the preceding chapter, and in the accusation that the beam is already present as opposed to v. 3-5 which only warns of beholding the mote in other's eyes. With the scribes and Pharisees he is saying the beam is already there because they are setting themselves up as above the common people and looking down upon them.

"then shalt thou see clearly", casting the beam out of your own eye does not subsequently entitle you to pick at motes in other people's eyes. Jesus' accusation implies that as long as a person is picking at motes in someone else's eyes, then they have a beam in their own. Only when fault-finding is abandoned can a person see clearly. If the religious leaders would abandon their hypocrisy, then they would be able to be effective spiritual leaders who help people with their problems.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

v6 The IV inserts a verse preceding this one putting this verse into context better. The disciple missionaries are to herald the kingdom of God on earth, but are not to publish abroad the mysteries of the kingdom. And then the IV adds another verse after v. 6 which says that the world cannot understand what the disciples themselves can hardly understand, so don't use it in your proselyting.

Taken alone, the verse is a blistering attack on the Jewish religious leaders. It castigates them for being unclean themselves, but also of giving that which is sacred to those whom they should not. Jesus warns the disciples to not be like the Phraisees.

The various symbols are based upon OT prophetic rhetoric. For "dogs", cf. Isa. 56:10-11; for "swine", cf. Isa. 65:4 and Isa. 66:17; and for "rend you", cf. Ezek. 34:1-10. Dogs and swine are also both unclean animals, cf. Exod. 22:31, Lev. 11:7.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

v7-11 God is always willing to bless those who are genuinely seeking Him (v. 7-8). Even as people know how to give good gifts, God knows all the better how to give the best gifts that people really need (v. 9-11).

The matter at hand is the Lord is willing to grant personal revelation, and so the disciples are to encourage people to seek after such things. The Pharisees will say that God makes no such thing known to the them, to which Jesus counters with a parable about good gifts. God is always willing to give good gifts, they just aren't willing to ask for them.

The IV on these verses expands the text considerably and shows that Jesus' comments are in fact part of a discussion where he makes a statement (v. 7-8, IV v. 12-13), the disciples ask him a question (IV v. 14-15), and he answers with a parable (v. 9-11, IV v. 16-20).

v11 "ye...being evil", the IV indicates this is making reference to the Jewish religious leaders.

"good gifts", people know how to give good physical gifts, but the Father knows how to give good spiritual gifts.

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

v12-14 The Law and the Prophets are the straight and narrow way. All a person has to do is love their neighbor as themselves, yet few choose to do so and many fall into destruction.

Another stern rebuke aimed at the Jewish religious leaders. He is telling them to love others as themselves (v. 12), and to stay in the straight and narrow way (v. 13-14).

The implicit accusation is the scribes and Pharisees are not living the Law and Prophet referenced in v. 12 and are in fact in the broad way aimed at the wide gate of destruction (v. 13).

Jesus appears to be equating the Law with the "strait gate" and the Prophets with the "narrow...way".

v12 Luke has the "Golden Rule" in his account, but it appears earlier, following the admonitions on how to deal with exploitation, cf. Luke 6:31.

While the physical rituals of the Law are no longer in force, the spiritual ideal of the Law and the Prophets are still in force today, and ever have been, cp. Matt. 5:17-19.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

v15-20 Jesus then admonishes his disciples to beware of false prophets who would pervert the gospel to promote themselves (v. 15). He tells them false prophets may be discerned by their actions (v. 16-18), and those who are evil will be cut down (v. 19). Thus may the disciples discern a false prophet, by his fruits and his ultimate demise (v. 20).

These false prophets are in parallel those who cast their pearls before swine (v. 6). A false prophet does not care for sacred things, so they will administer them to anyone so as to promote themselves.

v16 "thorns...thistles", plants such as this are representative of evil and adversity in the OT, cp. Gen. 3:18, Num. 33:55, Isa. 9:18.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

v21-23 Jesus then goes on to warn his disciples they cannot worship him in word only, but must worship him by doing the Father's will (v. 21). Even those who do miraculous works in the name of the Lord are not exempt this requirement (v. 22), if they do not know Jesus' ways and choose to do iniquity (v. 23).

Implicit in this warning is the disciples themselves must not end up as false prophets, who do great works but then fall into iniquity.

v21 Words alone are not sufficient to get a person into the kingdom of God. For similar statements, cp. Luke 11:27, Luke 13:23-30, Luke 18:18, John 13:17, 1 John 2:1-6.

v22-23 These verses are referring to people who exercise the Priesthood or any gift of God they have unrighteously, cf. D&C 3:4, D&C 121:33-46.

v23 "I never knew you", the IV changes this to "Ye never knew me". The IV reflects the standpoint of the disciple as it is their responsibility to reconcile themselves to the will of the Lord.

"depart from me, ye that work iniquity", a quotation of Ps. 6:8, Ps. 119:115.

24 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: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 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: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

v24-27 Jesus closes the sermon with a parable derived from Isa. 28:14-18, also cp. 2 Ne. 28:28, Jacob 5:5-17, and Hela. 5:12 for similar derivations. Jesus characterizes the two different reactions people will have to his teachings. Either they will hear and do his teachings, and build upon the Rock (cf. Deut. 32:4, 1 Ki. 5:17), or they will ignore him and fall.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as [one] having authority, and not as the scribes.

v28-29 The people, being used to the rubbish taught by the scribes (cf. Isa. 28:7-8), are amazed at Jesus' power in teaching.

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