

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Lesson 25, Chapter 7 Continued 2

Matthew chapter 7 concludes the Sermon on the Mount that began in chapter 5. I'm hoping that by this point a better understanding is being gained about the context and intent of Yeshua's long speech; a context that has been improperly stated for centuries. The context advocated by institutional Christianity as early as the 4th century is that the Sermon on the Mount was the event whereby Christ abolished the Law of Moses and replaced it with the Law of Jesus. However an intellectually honest and straightforward reading of those 3 chapters tells a different story. The true context is of an extended teaching on the biblical Torah that Yeshua made before a large crowd of mostly Holy Land Jews. His clear intent is not only to separate God's Word from manmade Traditions and incorrect (or perhaps incomplete) interpretations, but also to instruct His people on the reality that the Kingdom of Heaven has arrived and therefore God's biblical instructions must be taken in that light. For most of the Jews who heard it and took the teaching to heart (including the 12 Disciples), this meant to them that the End of Days was nearly upon them. The urgency of the 12 Disciples is apparent within the writings of Peter and John and later on Paul. Later, in another setting, Yeshua will teach a series of parables that attempts to flesh out what the Kingdom of Heaven is like and therefore how this impacts people from both a spiritual and an earthly, physical standpoint.

Christ anticipates that not only will several in the crowd doubt the veracity of some of what He is teaching, but also that there will be people who will come along afterwards to try and undo or slander the truths He has taught..... sort of the 1st century version of Fake News. Therefore in verse 15 Jesus speaks a warning about the false prophets.... the producers of the Fake News.... and describes them as wolves in sheep's clothing. That is, these wolves are not

Jewish religious leaders who are attempting to rightly teach the Hebrew Bible but have misunderstood some of it. Rather these are religious leaders and zealots..... at first Jews and then later within a few years, Gentiles.... who masquerade as one thing, but are actually another. Their tradecraft is deception. But what is more, these wolves will not be terribly easy to identify because the sheep's clothing they wear is that of pious Jews who attend synagogues, do the rituals, and at least outwardly obey the Law of Moses.

Open your Bibles to Matthew 7 and we'll start reading at verse 15.

RE-READ MATTHEW 7:15 - end

Last time we discussed exactly what a prophet was, and was not, in Yeshua's day. Rather than go over it again I'll briefly sum it up. First, we must not think in terms of the Old Testament prophets, nearly all whom operated in concert with one king of Israel or another. Second, in general we also must not think in terms of a prophet who brings a new and different oracle from God (that is, they come saying "thus says the Lord"). And Third, whereas God at times showed an Old Testament prophet a glimpse of the future, that was no longer the case by Yeshua's time except perhaps for John who penned Revelation. Jews believed that the canon of the Bible was closed. There were no new writings that should be seen on the level of inspiration as the Hebrew Bible that had had no additions in about 4 centuries. So a so-called New Testament prophet was essentially a Bible teacher. They taught on what already existed. They were Jewish religious teachers who advocated for and interpreted God's Word..... still in the realm of what we today would call a Pastor or a Rabbi. I think Paul would, after his encounter with the risen Christ, epitomize what people in his day would call a prophet. Some of the prophets more pushed the agendas and Traditions of their particular group or beliefs. So false prophets were those who misled people and did not teach the truth. The highly negative expression of a wolf in sheep's clothing was thoroughly understood in Jewish culture and likely throughout Roman culture as well since it was first created and written down in the 6th century B.C. as one of Aesop's Fables. So it is not that Yeshua created a new expression, but rather He made use of a common one. It is only that He applies it to false prophets who come to dash the faith and steal the souls of God's people.

This brings up one other thing: clearly to Yeshua (and to Matthew) false prophets were a problem in that day. This was not a theoretical or hypothetical issue.

Mark, Peter, and John spoke about the problem, and we find it discussed in the Didache. Because these false prophets disguise themselves as sheep (that is, as one of God's people who is honest, gentle, and of the faith), it can be quite difficult to know which prophets are worth listening to and which should be avoided..... they didn't wear name tags. Therefore in verse 16 Christ tells His followers how to distinguish who are true prophets (like Paul, Peter, and John), and who are false prophets from outward appearances. I want to stress that this is about **outward** appearances. We have no practical way to know what is in a person's mind; that is, we need some kind of a means to learn what lies under the sheep's skin. Christ's method is rather simple: "You will know them by their fruit".

Knowing them by their fruit means to identify them according to what they do. It does NOT mean to identify them by their success or lack of success (according to earthly standards). Let me put this in modern stark terms: it does not mean that if a pastor presides over a growing 10,000 person church then it is proof positive that he must be a true prophet. Therefore a pastor over a small 50 person church must be a false prophet. It also doesn't mean that if a Bible teacher is wealthy and sells tons of books that it is proof that he is a true prophet, but a Bible teacher who is poor and just scraping by is a false prophet. Nor in both of these examples is the opposite true. The term "fruit" means first and foremost spiritual fruit that manifests itself in deeds and works; whether these are of evil or good character.

Good spiritual fruit doesn't mean only the things that we can't see and are manifest only in Heaven. It means the kind of fruit that is in line with God's will and is based on His truth and His instructions to us. It means the righteous things that we do on earth that result from a Holy Spirit-driven motive and intent. So next Christ gives us some simple examples from nature about how this works. Notice how Christ constantly uses nature to help explain the complex and the ethereal. This is because the same Creator of the ethereal also created the physical. So while in one sense the ethereal and the physical are two different realms, in another sense they are both cut from the same cloth so the God-principles that govern both realms operate on the same basis. Thus the natural, physical realm that surrounds us (a realm we humans are built to perceive) serves as a good illustration and explanation of the ethereal realm, which we cannot see, touch, or hear with our human senses.

There is another good reason to use the natural world to explain the super-

natural: it remains true no matter how much time passes and no matter the culture. That is, time, place and language doesn't change the realities and the truth of it. Therefore neither do the realities and truth of how to spot a religious snake-in-the-grass posing as a harmless little bunny rabbit. And what Yeshua proposes is that we make our judgment about these prophets based mostly on what we see them do. However even this makes a big assumption that we first know God's Word well enough to know what is right and wrong, good and evil, false and true. This is why Christ first spent some hours instructing the crowd in the correct interpretation of God's Torah prior to telling them how to recognize a false prophet.

The first example of how a member of the congregation of God is to judge the fruit of a prophet is to state the obvious from nature; a thorn bush (a useless thing that can harm you) cannot produce edible and delicious grapes. And sticky thistles (another useless and bothersome thing) cannot produce edible and delicious figs. The grapes and figs are symbolic of righteous things. But perhaps the deeper principle is what we can call "like for like". Light produces illumination. Dark produces darkness. Evil produces wickedness, and good produces righteousness. It cannot be otherwise. In some ways I find it interesting that Christ continues with this line of thought because it is awfully simple and self-evident; His was hardly a complex or new thought. Yet he continues on. Why? Because as human beings we have a tendency to over-complicate matters, and to find ways around things that are clearly questionable or even obviously wrong but we'd rather not face it because we find some kind of benefit in it. Let me put it in terms that at some point most adult Christians have personally faced or at least heard about. A Pastor who is dearly loved by his congregation does wrong things, and teaches wrong things, but he is given a pass because he is someone who is so loved and revered that the congregation feels that he cannot be so bad as to not be believed and followed. We've all heard of a Pastor who has stolen from his church; or committed adultery or molested a child. And yet sometimes immediately the congregation will rush to his defense, declare him forgiven, and then blindly move on ready to continue to believe his every utterance about God's Word. There is no better example of ignoring Christ's like-for-like principle; that is, the inherent inability of a thistle to produce figs.

And lest Jesus's listeners get too caught up in the specifics and think Christ is saying that this principle only applies to certain situations, He expands it to the nearly universal by saying: "Likewise, a healthy tree produces good fruit and a poor tree produces bad fruit". In other words, His first examples used cases from

nature where wild bushes aren't fruit bearing under any circumstance; they are not like for like. Who would go searching through a thorn bush hoping to find grapes? Not even a child would think to do that. No one would because it is not like-for-like. Thus the lesson is this: don't overlook the obvious. We today say it a different way. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and talks like a duck..... it's probably a duck. And yet there are those who will look at the duck and see a swan. Let me give you an extreme, but real, example: Adolph Hitler. Hitler was early on in his political career an obvious tyrant and monster; and yet he professed Christianity. And because the Lutheran Church was so prominent in Germany, and because it was overtly anti-Semitic in its theology, Hitler claimed it his Godly duty to (among other things) rid the world of the Christ-Killers: the Jews. Therefore the Lutheran Church supported him as did, at first, the Catholic Church for similar reasons.

But now in verses 17 and 18, we're dealing with the less obvious. We're dealing with something that at first glance **is** a like-for-like situation. We have fruit trees doing what God designed them to do: bear fruit. And yet, everyone knows that not all fruit trees produce good fruit. Some of them fail at what they were designed to do. The fruit appears as expected, but never fully develops or it develops what appears to be normally, so it doesn't taste good. The problem is that the average person won't know whether the fruit is good or bad until they taste it. Therefore this is an even more dangerous situation than the first example of the thorn bushes and thistles. Thus the illustration that a poor tree (a poorly developed tree) can't produce tasty fruit, and a well developed tree can't produce inedible fruit (and vice versa). So the like-for-like principle applies, but it is more nuanced.

This is not a new thought as we first find it in the Book of Job.

^{CJB} Job 14:4 *Who can bring what is pure from something impure? No one!*

And later in the Bible in John.

^{CJB} 1 John 3:9 *No one who has God as his Father keeps on sinning, because the seed planted by God remains in him. That is, he cannot continue sinning, because he has God as his Father.*

Now let me challenge you a little bit while I preach a little bit. Should we take Christ's, and Job's, and John's statements to mean that a kind of rigid

predetermination has taken place in that the human realm is divided into 2 parts, and those that inhabit each part can never change their minds and cross over into the other? Did Yeshua mean that a poor tree can never become a good tree? Or that a good tree can never cease to be a good tree? This is no small matter, because essentially that is the basis of Calvinism, for instance. The early Church Father Chrysostom thought deeply about this troubling matter and concluded the following in his commentary on the Book of Matthew:

"Christ saith not this: that for the wicked there is no way to change, or that the good cannot fall away, but so long as he is living in wickedness, he will not be able to bear good fruit. For he may indeed change to virtue, being evil; but while continuing in wickedness he will not bear good fruit".

I fully agree with Chrysostom's statement. We must not take Yeshua's statements where He is using natural examples for spiritual principles as absolutes or as sole determining factors, but rather they are meant as generalizations. Wicked people can change, as can good people change. Maybe we should think of these statements in a similar way as we would a proverb. That is, we know it is a good rule of thumb to live our lives by; but there can be exceptions and so it is not necessarily true 100% of the time. And the same goes for the summation Christ offers in verse 20: "So you will know them by their fruits".

But before He offers that summation He says something that ought to always be at the forefront of our thoughts and actions. It is that fruit trees that don't produce good fruit get cut down and burned up. Being in Florida in citrus country, that fact is abundantly evident because some of the citrus trees planted in the large orchards just never give off the tasty fruit expected and so they are literally cut down and burned up. Yeshua is speaking of judgment.... or better the Final Judgment. To be clear: this is an End Times judging that is being spoken about; it doesn't mean that a false prophet, or someone who doesn't produce good fruit, will necessarily experience a divinely orchestrated calamity during their life as a consequence. But it does allude to the idea that all who follow Christ are expected to produce good fruit. And therefore those who don't are counterfeits. Remember: good fruit is evidence of righteousness and bad fruit or no fruit is the evidence of a counterfeit follower. Naturally everyone won't produce the same fruit or in the same quantity; rather it will be according to what our individual gifts and talents are, and also according to God's explicit will and purpose for our lives. So, Believers: are you producing fruit? Is it good fruit? Or are you perhaps

producing no fruit at all? A fruit tree that produces no fruit is just as subject to judgment as one that produces bad fruit.

We must also face that some false prophets are going to be so good at deceiving that they may never be found out; or, they won't be found out until it's too late. I think it could be that they eventually convince themselves that they are true prophets, thus falling into the trap built by their own deception. David Koresh, the leader of that strange religious cult in Waco, Texas whose teachings and actions eventually cost so many lives, might be a good example of this variety of false prophet. Going back a bit further to the late 1970's, another false prophet named Jim Jones led over 900 people, including himself, into a mass murder/suicide. While I don't want to take this too far, I think what we're all concerned with is fruit in the religious context. So in the religious context of our lives (and I use the term religious loosely), can we really always know from their deeds when a Pastor or a Rabbi is telling us God's truth and with a pure motivation as a true prophet? Let me give you an example of what I mean that is in the mainstream Christian sphere.

Over the centuries the Christian faith has been severely permeated with false teachings and erroneous doctrines. I would say that as profoundly scholarly as was Martin Luther, his deeply imbedded prejudice against Jews could not be contained as merely personal; it spilled over into especially his later writings about his faith. And so the large church denomination that evolved from his breaking away from the Catholic Church naturally adopted the teachings and beliefs of their namesake. At the core of those teachings is a not so subtle anti-Jewish sentiment that colors many long-standing Lutheran doctrines in ways their congregations often fail to recognize. Those doctrines remove Israel and Jews as God's precious treasure and transfers it to Gentile Christians. It divorces the Jews from their homeland, Israel. It makes Christ as not really Jewish but rather as some kind of a generic everyman. It makes Jehovah the Old Testament God of the Jews, and Christ the New Testament God of the Gentile Church..... and so much more. So was Luther a poor tree bearing poor fruit? Was he a good tree that bore good fruit..... but also some bad? How can we know?

In Luther's time and for a long time afterward, Bibles were hard to come by for the common man (most of whom in the gentile world of his day couldn't read anyway). So perhaps the common man who had little to go on for what the Bible actually said other than what their Pastors taught them, could get a pass. But how about today? How about for the past 100 or more years in the West when

Bibles have been readily available and at a price ranging from affordable to free? Does not the modern common man have the means at our fingertips to read the Bible and learn for ourselves what constitutes God's instructions versus what men, past or present, claim? The fact that so many blatantly false doctrines are still taught as biblical truth from pulpits, and accepted without hesitation as truth from congregations, ought to tell us that relatively few people are interested enough to seek out the truth in the Bible to test what they're being told. And so often even when they might discover the written truth in the Bible that contradicts what they are being told, they continue supporting and being part of the congregation and denomination that continues to spew falsehoods because it's embedded in their long held traditions. Are these among the False Prophets that Jesus speaks about?

You see, the onus is on us to go further than merely invoking generalizations like "you will know them by their fruit". How do I know what good fruit is, and what bad fruit is, if I'm not instructed in the matter? It's not as though I know it as an instinct that I'm born with; rather such knowledge must be acquired. And if I don't actively acquire the knowledge of God's Word, then I can't spot a false prophet by their outward appearance (in the form of their deeds), which in the end revolves around what they teach (which is what prophets do). And just as much, I can easily encounter a true prophet and reject him as false if all I know are manmade doctrines. I can hear the truth, but insist on measuring that against the falsehoods I've been taught, and if it doesn't match what I've always thought was truth I might reject it and label him as a false prophet. Yeshua, as the truest of prophets, would go on to suffer slander and accusations of being a false prophet; and that had much to do with why He was executed.

Now we come to one of the hardest few verses in the entire Book of Matthew. I want to read them again before we discuss them.

CJB Matthew 7:21-23 ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants. ²² On that Day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?' ²³ Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'

This is another of those biblical passages that is controversial and is spun in any number of ways, often so that it conforms to some predetermined doctrines.

From the 30,000 foot view, we see that Jesus says that there is a segment of Jewish society that He will reject and bar from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Clearly, Jesus is the gatekeeper to the Kingdom and makes the determination about who enters, and who is shut out. I think it is appropriate to expand that rejected segment to the gentile community as well, because the followers of Yeshua expanded their range and evolved from nearly all Jewish to nearly all gentile. The question about this segment of society is: what is their spiritual status? Are they non-Believers in Christ? Are they those who profess Christ but in reality are pretenders and counterfeits? Or are they actual Believers but they have failed to carry out their obligations as part of Yeshua's flock? How a denomination answers this question will have much to do with how others of their faith doctrines are constructed.

Perhaps the most pertinent part of the first few words of verse 21 is to understand what Yeshua means when He says that not everyone who calls Him "Lord, Lord" will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. There are a few possibilities but the way Luke has it phrased I think puts a finer point on it.

^{CJB} **Luke 6:46** *"Why do you call me, 'Lord! Lord!' but not do what I say?"*

In other words, if you don't follow what Christ teaches, how can you turn around and call yourself a follower? A follower, by definition, follows what their master teaches and the example of how he lives. Essentially we have a Hebrew oxymoron developed here. It fits in with the statement in chapter 6 verse 24 that no one can be a slave to two masters (itself an oxymoron). He is not saying "you are not a follower", He is asking a rhetorical question to the crowd; something to make them think. Some Bible commentators see Him as speaking about the false prophets; I don't. Certainly they might be included within this group that will be rejected from the Kingdom, but they don't form the whole group or even the bulk of it.

Using a bit of common sense, why would anyone call Yeshua "Lord" if they didn't claim membership to His group of followers? To use Christian terms: only those who are part of the Church would refer to Jesus as Lord. And while technically the term "Lord" (*kurios* in Greek, *adon* or *adonai* in Hebrew) is a rather generic term for showing respect (like saying "sir"), Yeshua was a common blue collar worker in His day and such a title would not have been used of Him except in how it was meant; in the religious context. That said, we should not think at this moment beyond what has happened thus far. Yeshua has not publicly claimed to

be the Messiah nor the Son of God. So those who determined to follow Yeshua would have seen Him as their chosen religious leader. John the Baptist also had his following, as did several venerated Rabbis such as Shammai and Hillel. "Lord" (in the sense of "master") would have been a common way of addressing them all. Still, even before His public announcement, He dropped hints of His uniqueness and of a relationship with The Father that went beyond being but one of many who worshipped Him and thus in Jewish colloquial expression called God "Our Father".

So, says Christ, don't call me your master if you don't follow the ways I have laid out for you. Logical. Rational. Rather a point of common sense. But there is another element to this response that in hindsight we can understand. The element is Yeshua's role as Savior. I'll say again: at the time of the Sermon on the Mount, being Savior was not yet put forward publicly. We of course can look back and see through some of the things that Jesus said and on into a deeper meaning because we have the advantage not only of retrospect, but also we have the recorded history of the revelations of His identity that Christ eventually made (some of which even after He made them many Jews still didn't understand). So knowing what we know from later pronouncements of Christ and from the writings of Peter and Paul and John who followed Yeshua, we could rightfully make verse 21 read:; "Not everyone who says to me "Savior, Savior" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven...." The point being that knowing His true identity and mission, and merely calling upon His name doesn't save nor does it indicate someone who is saved. Perhaps not in Jewish society so much, but throughout Roman society, calling on the names of various gods for various purposes was common and customary. So if someone wanted something from the God of the Jews they could decide that perhaps this Jesus fellow might be the right name to use to get God's attention and fulfill their petition.

At the same time, again in retrospect, clearly by now (if He hadn't earlier) Jesus knew what and who He was. He was to be judge at the End of Days to determine who would be ushered into the eternal Kingdom of Heaven, and who would not be allowed in. But let me also say that this is a two-stage process. The Kingdom of Heaven had arrived with the appearance of John the Baptist. So those who would trust Christ as Savior would be immediately made part of the fledgling Kingdom on earth..... such as it was. You, who today trust Messiah Yeshua, are right now part of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. And yet it is a Kingdom that is still developing towards its complete fulfillment that will not happen until Yeshua returns to us. So the Kingdom is for the earthbound now, and for the eternal

bound later.

So if calling on Yeshua's name is not how one enters the Kingdom, then what is? The first requirement, says Christ, is: "only those who **do** what my Father in Heaven wants". Notice the term "my Father". Right there Yeshua dropped a big hint that no doubt some in the crowd noticed, and especially so His 12 Disciples. The correct term that a Hebrew could sometimes use to refer to God was **avinu** "Our Father"..... but never "my" Father. The term **avinu** was also used sometimes to speak of Abraham. The point being that Christ went from acknowledging a national relationship with Yehoveh, to a direct familial relationship. God literally was Jesus's father.

So no matter how we translate those words, Jesus sets down a requirement that goes well beyond a public declaration of allegiance to Him. In fact, the real allegiance must be to Jesus's Father. And even more than allegiance, a follower must be a doer. Yes, Believers, this means that the nice warm fuzzy feeling we get about trusting Christ is not sufficient. We must be active. We must seek the will of The Father and carry it out. And that will goes far beyond the event of our salvation. Clearly the biological brother of Yeshua, **Ya'akov** (known better in our Bibles as James), got this message loud and clear and understood its great significance.

CJB James 2:14 ¹⁴ *What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such "faith" able to save him?*

Yeshua's response to the rhetorical question James asks is: "no". It is not that good works brings on salvation. It is that the evidence of salvation brings on good works. And by good works I mean righteous deeds that have been motivated by the will of The Father. Only a faith accompanied with righteous deeds is an authentic faith.

Verse 22 continues the thought with:

CJB Matthew 7:22 *On that Day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?'*

The term "that Day" is a Hebrew expression meaning the Day of Judgment, also called the Day of the Lord. It is that day that every human will have to present an

account of their life to God.... and bear the consequences or the rewards for it. And here we see Yeshua essentially claiming a status as God's agent to be that judge. No doubt the people sitting before Christ caught that and some would have accepted it and the majority would have scoffed and grumbled at such a thought. So the context and setting for the straw man that is pleading his case with Yeshua is that he is standing before the Great Judge at the End of Days. And his claim for acceptance into the Kingdom is that he prophesied, expelled demons, and performed miracles in Yeshua's name. Once again, acts and deeds are not the determining proof of our salvation.

There's always been considerable disagreement over what it means to do things in Christ's name. It could mean a number of things.

- 1) It might mean in Yeshua's authority and power.
- 2) It might mean that if one can do similar things to what Christ did, then perhaps that person is Christ returned.
- 3) Perhaps it is that false prophets and counterfeits use Christ's name merely to gain access to the Believing congregations.
- 4) Maybe, as do the pagans, Jesus's name gets used like a magic word or an incantation.

It is my view that it means all these things. It means using His name for whatever false or perverse purpose one might have. And clearly in verse 22, those who are teaching in Christ's name, expelling demons in His name, and performing miracles in His name do so for one of these perverse reasons. Because in truth, real followers of Christ are encouraged to teach, expel demons and do miracles in His name. So it is not that there is something wrong in these 3 deeds; it is the motive and intent of the doer that is wicked.

Christ's response to this is terrifying:

^{CJB} Matthew 7:23 *Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'*

At the Great Judgment the Great Judge will reject those who plead their case in such a way. Yeshua knows their hearts and minds. He refuses to grant them

entry into the fulfilled Kingdom of Heaven.

But when He speaks of "workers of lawlessness", much of the institutional Church nearly has a heart attack, or they just read by this and pay little attention. But this verse connects back to chapter 5 verse 17 - 19. Remember: the subject is entry into the Kingdom of Heaven and its prerequisites. The Greek word used here for lawlessness is **anomia**. The KJV prefers to use the term iniquity and the NAB says evil doers. Why choose those words that seem to deviate from literal translations? The Greek word for law is **nomia** (and **nomos**), and so the word for having no law it is **a-nomia**. But acknowledging this opens up a can worms because what law can Jesus be taking about except the Torah Law.... the Law of Moses? He obviously isn't talking about any kind of secular law whereby somebody breaks one of those laws. He doesn't mean Roman law. The only law that matters because it affects a Believer's eternal status is God's law as He made so very clear earlier in His sermon, back in chapter 5, and specifically as it connects to a person's place in the Kingdom of Heaven. And what did He say?

CJB Matthew 5:17-19 ¹⁷ ***"Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete.*** ¹⁸ ***Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah- not until everything that must happen has happened.*** ¹⁹ ***So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.***

Chapter 7 verse 22 closes the circle and settles the matter. Lawlessness for Jesus is Torah-lessness. It is trying to operate outside of God's written commandments. Entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven requires more than calling on Christ's name. It requires obedience to God's Torah. We'll explore that matter further next time.