

Study 9

The Obedience
JESUS
commanded

Keeping the commands of Christ without ever actually becoming born-again will not save anyone! That is, just because someone lives a “good” life doesn’t make them a Christian. Because, when someone becomes a Christian, God takes out their heart of stone and gives them a new heart (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26) where He writes His laws (Hebrews 8:10). One of the proofs that someone is a Christian is that they keep the Laws of God because they *want* to keep them.

1. Based on Hebrews 5:9, why is obedience to Christ necessary?
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2. What are the consequences of not obeying Christ according to Romans 2:8?
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When we share God's Word with others who have never turned to Christ, we are often confronted with resistance from people.

3. According to Matthew 7:13-14 did Jesus expect most people to turn to God?

4. If someone is prepared to accept Christ but not prepared to allow Christ to change their behaviour, should we water-down our Gospel to make it more "seeker-friendly"? Discuss.

4. Is Christianity easy? How do we reconcile Matthew 7:14 with Matthew 11:30?

FALSE PROPHETS

A prophet is someone who speaks on behalf of God. While James warns us not to presume to be teachers of God's Word, because there is greater accountability for teachers (James 3:1), the accountability for prophets is even greater.

5. Note Deuteronomy 13:5 (and 18:20). What does this tell us about how accountable people claiming to God's prophets should be held?

The ministry of the prophet is the only specifically stated as belong to both the Old and New Covenants. In the Old Covenant the prophet was also regarded as an “intercessor” (one who prayed for others and communed with God in prayer). In the New Covenant the prophet is described as someone who also *encourages* believers. Ephesians 2:20 says that Christ builds His Church upon the foundation of Prophets and Apostles. In one sense this refers to the foundation of Scripture given to us by the Old Testament Prophets and the New Testament Apostles, but there is also a sense of this being an ongoing building program where each generation is given its own apostles and prophets by Christ to the Church.

6. Why is it sometimes hard to quickly identify a false prophet according to Matthew 7:15?
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There is a difference between someone who thinks they have heard from God and are wrong, and someone who simply falsely declares something as being from God. One of the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in First Corinthians 12 is prophecy. This gift will be done away with once “*that which is perfect has come*” (the Physical Resurrection at the culmination of time). Until then, the Bible says *we prophecy in part*. This means that we can sense what God is saying at times only in part (not fully). We may at times get this wrong. But it doesn’t mean that we are *false*.

7. How did Jesus say we could identify a “false” prophet? (Matthew 7:16-20)
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DEPART FROM ME!

There is coming a day when we will stand before God and be judged. This first judgment is whether we will be with the Lord for eternity, or whether we will be separated away from Him eternally. It is this Judgment that Jesus now refers to. Christ links obedience to His commands with eternal consequences.

8. How does Jesus link obedience to Him with eternal judgment? (Matt. 7:21)

We can sometimes think that everyone who performs miracles in Jesus' name must be very holy. But this apparent gift has little to do with a person's holiness and everything to do with God's grace. Miracles and prophecies can come still flow out of someone's life who once walked with God but now no longer does.

9. How is this confirmed by Matthew 7:22?

It is possible to be doing things for Christ without ever knowing Him. But even worse still is to be doing things for Christ and not be known by Him! Just as in a healthy marriage, intimacy, or knowledge of a person, comes when feelings, hurts, fears, disappointments, triumphs, dreams, ideas and needs are shared with each other. When we share at that level with another person they get to *know* us.

10. How does this explain what Christ said in Matthew 7:23?

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11. Based on what Christ said in Matthew 7:24-27 how should we follow Christ?

Amen.