

Wolves! 5-16-04

Matthew 7:15-23 (NIV)

¹⁵Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. ²¹Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

In our passage for this Sunday, we are covering Jesus' warning about false prophets. To understand this passage, we must understand the use of the word "prophet", and what it meant to Jesus. The most common use of the word is defined by Vines as "one who speaks forth or openly"; "a proclaimer of a divine message, denoted among the Greeks an interpreter of the oracles of the gods." (*—Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*). Today, We immediately think of someone who foretells future events. That was true in some cases but is not the main thrust of the word. It is someone who speaks for God.

There is a very important change in the use of the word at the time of Christ. It is a change in the way we relate to the prophets and their role among us. Because we do not realize the nature and importance of this change, we have many problems in the church today. It is of the utmost importance for your spiritual health that you understand this truth.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God came upon a man or woman, and they prophesied, meaning that they spoke forth God's word to the people. Those who heard these words were suppose to take them to heart. The hearers did not have the Holy Spirit residing in them to confirm or deny the message that was given. That is why there was a death penalty for prophets who turned people from the truth by uttering lies in the name of God. They were to be stoned by all the people if their words did not come to pass or if they turned the people from Jehovah to other gods. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5) I can't tell you how many false prophecies I've heard in my day. I've heard a number already this year, yet none of them have been stoned, nor should they be. What changed?

The Holy Spirit was poured out! The words of the people that speak for God are subject to the confirmation by the Word of God and the Spirit within you and me. (1 Corinthians 14:29) We are not expected to take their words as an addition to the Bible, but judge them by the Bible. (Acts 17:11) Those who speak for God do not hold the office of prophet in the way that the Old Testament prophets did. Jesus made that very clear. Listen to His words.

Commented [notes1]: ¹If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, ²and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," ³you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: ²⁹Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 1 Corinthians 14:29 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: ¹¹Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17:11 (NIV)

¹⁶*the law and the prophets are till John; since then the reign of God is proclaimed good news, and every one doth press into it;* Luke 16:16 (YLT)

The Law and Prophets were supposed to be the link with man and God until the reign of God was proclaimed. That happened when Christ declared He would be the living Lord within us. (John 14:17)

It seems that the church today is just like Israel of old. They keep looking for a king. (1 Samuel 8:6) We tried to put the crown on Billy Graham, but he just refuses to accept it. That is because He knows and loves the King. We have hundreds of little kings today. They always have a word from the Lord for us, as if the Spirit had not been poured out and you cannot hear God for yourself. The big red flag is the attitude that God is really working especially and uniquely through them, because they have such a special anointing. Humility is the mark of a genuine servant of God, not arrogance. (Psalms 25:9)

The author of Hebrews starts his letter indicating the change we are talking about: ¹*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.* Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)
God used to speak through the prophets. But in these last days, He has spoken in one glorious expression for all to hear, the life of Jesus Christ. It is really sad that people who are hungry for respect and honor of man want to go back to the days of the prophets. It is just as easy for you to hear from God as it is for me. (John 10:3-4) Anyone who is willing to submit to the Lordship of Christ and invite the Spirit of God to live in and through them has the same wonderful opportunity to hear the Kohl Yahweh – the voice of God. Isn't that exciting! What a privilege! But there lies the rub. Many Christians would rather put a man on a pedestal so that they don't have to surrender. People want a priest between them and God, but God has always been after a nation of priests. (1 Peter 2:9) (Exodus 19:6) The same thing happened with Moses. God was going to speak to the people but they didn't want to have to face God. They insisted that Moses go to meet God in their place. (Exodus 20:18-19)

I am not special. Jesus is special! If we are special it is because the special One is living in us. This church will go on with or without me. Some of you may be here because of me. Maybe you like my style of preaching or the substance, but if the church gets focused on me, God will remove me. We are here to focus on Jesus. (Hebrews 12:2) If I point to myself, like these false prophets that Jesus was referring to, God's loving mercy will remove me. Every part of the body is equally important. (1 Corinthians 12:22-27) It is the head that is special, and the head is Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:18) The modern system of church has too much emphasis on the preacher. That is why the early church was led by a group of elders. (Titus 1:5) If one man died or fell into sin, the others were right there to keep the church on track. It wasn't a big traumatic make or break event when an elder left, because all the other elders remained keeping the church on the same course. Jesus is the head; we are the body. Are you committed to Jesus and His body? We won't act like a real spiritual family until we are! Commitment to an

Commented [notes4]: ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.
John 14:17 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: ⁶But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD.
1 Samuel 8:6 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: ⁹He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.
Psalms 25:9 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: ³The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.
John 10:3-4 (NIV)

Commented [notes8]: ⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

Commented [notes10]: ¹⁸When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance
¹⁹and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."
Exodus 20:18-19 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: ²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes12]: ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ... [1]

Commented [notes13]: ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
Colossians 1:18 (NIV) ... [2]

Commented [notes14]: ⁵The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.
Titus 1:5 (NIV) ... [3]

organization or a particular pastor more than to Jesus and the body will keep us from God's full intentions for us.

The people who speak forth the Word, remember that is the meaning of prophet, are still among us. God still gives that gift and calling to believers for building up the church. (Ephesians 4:11-13) That is my calling, but others have that calling too. There may be one main speaker, but our danger is to have our relationship with God centered on one man. That makes that man a great big target for the enemy. You need a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus and His whole body, not just the mouth.

In our passage today, Jesus warns that some prophets that come and proclaim the Word are really out to destroy and steal. They are ravenous wolves.

¹⁵"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."

It is really hard to tell because of their sheep's clothing. How are you going to know? If they look like a fellow sheep, and they proclaim the Word, what is the clue that something is wrong?

¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

What is the result of their ministry? What are they producing? Are their hearers closer to Jesus, or committed to them as a person? Are they praising Jesus, or praising them? (1 Corinthians 1:25-29) I appreciate encouragement, but I immediately have to give credit to Jesus. If my message is ever about me, or glorifies me, the Lord will bring something to humble me. (Proverbs 16:18)

It is all about Jesus. You can't hang out with a wolf for long without discovering something wolf-like about him. He doesn't have the same appetite as sheep. He doesn't want to be in the flock. He may fool you for a while, but if you get close enough, long enough, you start to see the fangs. His focus is himself and what he desires. (Psalm 52:7)

The Apostle Peter says that in their greed they exploit you with stories they have made up. They will have the most amazing stories to tell you of how God worked through them. (2 Peter 2:3) The purpose is to collect a great big love offering or gift for their "ministry". Bad fruit! People that hear and receive them want to be like them, important! (2 Peter 2:2) It isn't about Jesus being all-important, but about them being a special so-called servant of God. They point to the individual instead of the head and body. Jesus knew this would be important enough in days to come that He gave us a great big "Watch out!" He will repeat this warning again during the last week. (Matthew 24:11)

This criteria is certainly a good tool to examine our own lives. What kind of fruit do we produce? If your source of sap and life is Jesus, you will be producing the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, and self-discipline. (Galatians 5:22-23) But if your source is the flesh, the old nature, then it will be selfish gain and pleasures. We reproduce what we are. The principle is found in the first chapter of Genesis. Everything reproduces after its kind. (Genesis 1:11-12) Since we are born in sin, we

Commented [notes15]: ¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV)

Commented [notes16]: ²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. ²⁶Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, ... [4]

Commented [notes17]: ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: ⁷"Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!" Psalms 52:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: ³In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. 2 Peter 2:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: ²Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. 2 Peter 2:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes21]: ¹¹and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Matthew 24:11 (NIV)

Commented [notes22]: ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV) ... [5]

Commented [notes23]: ¹¹Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with ... [6]

need a new heart, the very life of Christ, if we are to produce good fruit. (Romans 8:5-9) That is especially necessary for leaders in the church. (Acts 20:28) Leadership comes with many temptations. Leaders that God can truly use are those who are broken to the point of not relying on themselves. (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)

¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. God is a good gardener. (John 15:1) He won't waste the good nourishment of the ground on plants that only produce thorns. You can't live your life for destructive and selfish purposes and expect to escape judgment. (Luke 13:7-9) He will nurture what is productive and cleanse the earth of what is not. This is another way to recognize a wolf. Eventually his work will come to nothing. God will see to that. That was the sound advice of Gamaliel to the Sanhedrin when they wanted to persecute the fledgling church. (Acts 5:38) It is true today.

²¹"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Wolves can act like sheep. They can bleat like sheep. They know all the church lingo. They memorize Scripture. They can talk the talk; they just can't walk the walk. I've been fooled at least three times. They can say "Lord, Lord," but they won't follow the Lord's instruction.

There will be no wolves in heaven. (Revelation 21:27) Some wolves' hearts are so corrupted that they even deceive themselves. They prophesy, and drive out demons, and do miracles in the name of the Lord. Jesus wasn't suggesting there would one or two folks that would be this way, He said 'many'.

I often wondered if the false prophets that deceive people into cult like groups don't know what they are doing or if they carefully plan their deception. Actually, I believe there are both kinds. Here, Jesus seems to suggest that they don't know their own heart. Surely you wouldn't try to convince the Lord when you knew you were deceiving people and keeping them from the truth. They actually believe that they are doing those things at God's direction and in His power.

The miraculous is not always the sign of spirituality. Faith is a powerful thing. Some have faith in themselves. Some have faith in sayings and expressions. Faith can do the miraculous, but Jesus calls them evildoers. Some wolves are so enamored with greatness, so caught up in fame, they don't realize they have become famous on the coattails of Jesus, without a relationship with Jesus.

The applause of men was what the Pharisee lived for. (John 12:43) They taught in the name of God. They could quote more Scriptures than I can. They had more good deeds to point to than I can ever hope to perform. Converts, they have dozens, but one thing is missing. (Matthew 23:15) They don't know God.

Commented [notes24]: ⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Romans 8:5-9 (NIV)

... [7]

Commented [notes25]: ²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Acts 20:28 (NIV)

Commented [notes26]: ⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.

... [8]

Commented [notes27]: ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

John 15:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes28]: ⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'

⁸"Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it.'

... [9]

Commented [notes29]: ³⁸Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.

Acts 5:38 (NIV)

Commented [notes30]: ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 21:27 (NIV)

Commented [notes31]: ⁴³for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

John 12:43 (NIV)

Commented [notes32]: ¹⁵"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

Matthew 23:15 (NIV)

... [10]

The Jews used the word “know” as an idiom for a relationship between a husband and wife. (Genesis 4:1) It is no wonder then that the church is called the bride of Christ. (Revelation 19:7) We need to have a committed relationship with Jesus. We are to share the deepest secrets of our heart and hear His heart as well. We are to be faithful to Him. The wolves think they are in a relationship with God when really they have made themselves a god. They are in a love relationship with themselves. How heart rending will be those words in their ears, “Depart from me; I never knew you.” They thought they would enter God’s presence with welcome and be trumpeted like royalty. In their mind they convinced themselves that it was all for God, but their heart was addicted to the praise of men. (Matthew 23:5-7) The wake-up call will be devastating.

Commented [notes33]: ¹And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. Genesis 4:1 (KJV)

Commented [notes34]: ⁷Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Revelation 19:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes35]: ⁵“Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’ Matthew 23:5-7 (NIV)

This is a very real temptation for anyone who would follow Christ. When you get serious, you begin to memorize Scripture and share Jesus with others. Sheep are natural followers, so they look for someone who is closer to the Lord to follow. They will praise you for your good deeds. But remember this, unless those deeds continue to come out of a relationship of loving your Savior, they will be meaningless works. The temptation is to continue in them to gain respect from other Christians, to be looked up to. If your good deeds do not flow from Christ in you, you are in danger of treading the wolves’ path. You may think yourself saved, but stand at the door of heaven and hear the most dreaded words in eternity. “Depart from me, I never knew you.”

In this short portion of Jesus’ sermon, we have a warning to the lambs to watch out for wolves. There is the clue of how to discern the wolf from the lamb by observing their fruit. We also have a warning to the wolf to consider the consequences of going on with religion that is based on your own efforts rather than a relationship with Christ.

Where do you find yourself in this sermon Jesus preached? Have you been following man rather than relying on an intimate relationship of your own with Jesus? Are you going through the motions of religion but haven’t surrendered to Jesus’ loving lordship over your life? Please understand, this is not physical at all, but some of the language Jesus used is very much like the language of a groom with his prospective bride. (John 14:2-3) He asks you personally if you will be His, faithful to Him alone. Until you submit to a relationship with Him in which He is first, your religion will be your own works, rather than an expression of love for your betrothed. Are you His? He is the most wonderful suitor you could imagine. He has your best interests at heart, but you can only be His by saying “yes” to His proposal. He asks you, “Will you be mine and mine alone?” (Deuteronomy 6:5-6) It isn’t about following a pastor, or being in a certain church, or doing the right things. It is about knowing Jesus. Will you be His? Do you know Him?

Commented [notes36]: ²In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. John 14:2-3 (NIV)

Commented [notes37]: ⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Deuteronomy 6:5-6 (NIV)

(The following is from a sermon by Shadrach Lockridge entitled “My King Is...”)
 “The Bible says my king is a seven-way king. He’s the king of the Jews; that’s a racial king. He’s the king of Israel; that’s a national king. He’s the king of righteousness. He’s the king of the ages. He’s the king of heaven. He’s the king of glory. He’s the king of kings. Besides being a seven-way king. He’s the Lord of lords. That’s my king. Well, I wonder, do you know Him?”

David said, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.' My king is a sovereign king. No means of measure can define His limitless love. No far-seeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of His shoreless supply. No barrier can hinder Him from pouring out His blessings.

He's enduringly strong. He's entirely sincere. He's eternally steadfast. He's immortally graceful. He's infinitely powerful. He's impartially merciful. Do you know Him?

He's the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world. He's God's Son. He's the sinner's Savior. He's the centerpiece of civilization. He stands in the solitude of Himself. He's honest and He's unique. He's unparalleled. He's unprecedented.

He is the loftiest idea in literature. He's the highest personality in philosophy. He is the supreme problem in higher criticism. He's the fundamental doctrine of true theology. He's the core, the necessity for spiritual religion. He's the miracle of the ages. Yes, He is. He's the superlative of everything good that you choose to call Him. He's the only one qualified to be our all-sufficiency. I wonder if you know Him today.

He supplies strength for the weak. He's available for the tempted and tried. He sympathizes and He saves. He strengthens and sustains. He guards and He guides. He heals the sick. He cleanses the leper. He forgives the sinner. He discharges debtors. He delivers the captive. He defends the feeble. He blesses the young. He serves the unfortunate. He regards the aged. He rewards the diligent. And He beautifies the meek. I wonder if you know Him.

Well, this is my king. He's the key to knowledge. He's the wellspring of wisdom. He's the doorway of deliverance. He's the pathway of peace. He's the roadway of righteousness. He's the highway of holiness. He's the gateway of glory. Do you know Him?

Well, His office is manifold. His promise is sure. His life is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. I wish I could describe Him to you.

He's indescribable. He's incomprehensible. He's invincible. He's irresistible. Well, you can't get Him out of your mind. You can't get Him off of your hand. You can't outlive Him and you can't live without Him. The Pharisees couldn't stand Him, but they found they couldn't stop Him. Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him. Herod couldn't kill Him. Death couldn't handle Him, and the grave couldn't hold Him. That's my king!

And Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever and ever! How long is that? And ever and ever! And when you get through with all the forevers, then amen! Good God Almighty! Amen!"

Page 2: [1] Commented [notes12] notes

²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,
²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,
²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,
²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.
²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.
²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
1 Corinthians 12:22-27 (NIV)

Page 2: [2] Commented [notes13] notes

¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
Colossians 1:18 (NIV)

Page 2: [3] Commented [notes14] notes

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Titus 1:5 (NIV)

Page 3: [4] Commented [notes16] notes

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²⁶Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.
²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.
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²⁹so that no one may boast before him.
1 Corinthians 1:25-29 (NIV)

Page 3: [5] Commented [notes22] notes

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

Page 3: [6] Commented [notes23] notes

¹¹Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.
¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.
Genesis 1:11-12 (NIV)

Page 4: [7] Commented [notes24] notes

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

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Romans 8:5-9 (NIV)

Page 4: [8] Commented [notes26] notes

⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.

⁹Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (NIV)

Page 4: [9] Commented [notes28] notes

⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'

⁸"Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it.

⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

Luke 13:7-9 (NIV)

Page 4: [10] Commented [notes32] notes

¹⁵Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

Matthew 23:15 (NIV)