

For Christ or Against Christ?

Fred R. Coulter—August 17, 1985

Who is for God or against God? Sometimes it makes you wonder. When you read some of these Scriptures and just take them for face value, they appear to be extremely contradictory. It's hard to figure out exactly what God is doing, and exactly what He means. Today, we're going to cover some Scriptures and some examples, which I hope will clarify some of these difficult Scriptures.

First of all let's go to Mark 9:38: "Then John answered Him, saying, 'Master, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name...[This was right after the disciples could not cast out a demon in the boy. Jesus had to come and do it, and this is why the question came up.] ...and we forbid him because he does not follow us.'"

We know there is one church; one body—right? We've been in churches where they said the corporate organization was *the only one on earth*, and anyone who was not a part of that was not a part of God. It's kind of the same mentality that is here. Here is someone, to their surprise, casting out demons in the name of Jesus Christ, but he was not a follower of Jesus with the disciples.

Verse 39: "But Jesus said, 'Do not forbid him; for no one who does a work of power in My name can easily speak evil of Me. And **the one who is not against you is for you**'" (vs 39-40).

Let's look at another Scripture, which seems to be in total contradiction to that. What is going to happen? Let's go to Matthew, the seventh chapter. This is a true Scripture.

Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord'... [This is a basic Scripture that we've heard and gone over many, many times—right?] ...shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father Who *is* in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?'" (vs 21-22). I put *did we not* because that's understood in the Greek as you go along for each sentence; it's understood, but in the English it doesn't follow through.

They did all these things, but is it the same one that would be back here that Jesus said not to 'forbid him'? Could it be exactly the same one? What if someone was *for* Jesus and only knew just a very limited amount? Suppose they did cast out some demons or healed someone and then they died? Then at the resurrection God says, 'I never knew

you.' That would seem to be a little harsh—wouldn't it? *Yes, it would!*

Verse 23: "And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.'" It really seems like a terrible contradiction—doesn't it? But is it really so? Maybe there's something else involved here that we need to look at a lot more closely to see exactly what God means and intends. They are both true. As we will see, one does not necessarily contradict the other, but one is a judgment in a certain set of circumstances, and another is a judgment in another set of circumstances. They are both true!

Numbers 11:28 is another one of those Scriptures where it says not to *forbid them*. Here again we have almost the same thing. Of course, you know the whole difficulty that they had with the ones trying to usurp the priesthood and everything like that. It was very clear that there were only certain ones that should do the things with Moses and the elders.

Numbers 11:27: "And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, 'Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.'.... [They weren't supposed to do that unless they were up around Moses and being anointed of God.] ...And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, *one* of his young men, answered and said, 'My lord Moses, make them cease'" (vs 27-28). In other words, they shouldn't be doing that. What happened to those who wanted the priesthood? *Remember the earth opened up and swallowed them!* This was a legitimate thing. 'Moses, don't let them do it; we don't want anything else to happen to the people. They're not one of the priesthood; they're not one of us, so forbid them!'

Verse 29: "And Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would *to* God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!'" Moses had the right answer there. In other words, it would be the same thing we would say today: 'Would that God we were all perfect and we didn't have any problems at all.' That would be nice. So, here they weren't forbidden from doing it.

Let's look at the account—we've alluded to it several times—of Elijah and what he did. Just a little background: This is after God demonstrated Who was God by burning up the sacrifice in the contest between God and Baal. God won and Elijah the prophet won. They killed 450 of the prophets of Baal and then Elijah got scared of Jezebel and ran

off down to Mt. Sinai. He came there and was in a cave.

1-Kings 19:9: “And he came there to a cave and stayed there. And behold, the Word of the Lord *came* to him, and He said to him, ‘What *are* you *doing* here, Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of Hosts... [He was a little self-righteous—wasn’t he? He was stating fact, but he was a little self-righteous.] ...for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down Your altars, and have slain Your prophets with the sword. And I, I alone, am left. And they seek to take my life away.’ And He said, ‘Go forth and stand upon the mountain before the LORD.’ And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains, and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind. And after the wind was an earthquake, *but* the LORD was not in the earthquake” (vs 9-11).

That would be quite a thing going out on the mountain and observe all this kind of thing. It would put a little bit of fear into you. You see the wind come along and knock all the big boulders down, they fall in big pieces and God wasn’t there. Then a tremendous thunder comes along and God wasn’t in that. If you’re in an earthquake and the thing is just shaking and rolling and rocking.

I remember the bad one we had several years ago, that just shook the whole house. I didn’t think it was going to stop shaking. The house was going round and round and up and down. I was holding onto the rail right at the top of the steps. That’s all I could do. I almost fell down. Poor Rachelle was in the bathroom and it knocked her off down into the potty and the house was moving around—an earthquake going on. That would scare you to death. Imagine what it would be and God was doing the earthquake right there, just shaking the ground. Puts a little fear into you—‘Oh, God, save me.’ That’s the first thing you’d think.

Verse 12: “And after the earthquake was a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire. And after the fire *was* a still, small voice. Then it came to pass when Elijah heard, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out, and stood at the cave entrance. And behold, a voice *came* to him and said, ‘What *are* you *doing* here, Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Hosts because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, have thrown down Your altars, and have slain Your prophets with the sword. And I, I alone, am left. And they seek to take my life away.’ And the LORD said to him, ‘Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you come, anoint Hazael *to be* king over Syria. And you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi

to be king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint *to be* prophet in your place. And it will be whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill. And whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet, I have left seven thousand in Israel *for Me*, all who have not bowed the knees to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him” (vs 12-18).

What does this tell us? *This tells us that God knows things beyond what may be apparent to us!* God knows who is *for Him*. If they are for God they cannot speak evil *lightly* of God. Here are 7,000 that Elijah knew nothing about. There would be, taken from this, in the world a category of people we don’t even know, beyond what we could say are all the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God. We could make it real broad and say all the Seventh Day Adventists are God’s people.

- How about some of those way beyond?
- How about some of those outside the fringes of that.
- Could there be some people that God has reserved to Himself?

I’ll tell you one thing. When it comes down to calling the 144,000 in captivity, God has selected them and no one knows who they are—right? There’s an example. What does the answer appear to be in this particular case?

Let’s go to the New Testament and see what the Apostle Paul said about things like this. This will help us to understand it. I’m sure that there are people who are deficient in knowledge. Knowledge is not the only thing. What is the most important thing? ***That you have the Spirit of God!*** Who does God give His Spirit to? *Obviously to those who obey Him!* We would have to say that what Jesus was talking about—*those who are for Him*—would have to be in a category where that they were not denying God; where they were obeying God to the best of their knowledge.

Here’s another part of the answer as far as churches are concerned, 1-Corinthians 12:4: “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit.”

Let’s go back to v 3 and we will see a somewhat same attitude here: “Therefore, I am letting you know that no one speaking by *the* Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed... [We have almost the same kind of statement that Jesus made—don’t we? *No one can speak evil of Me lightly*. Exactly the same type of statement.] ...and no one can say *that* Jesus *is* Lord, except by *the* Holy Spirit.”

That means not just acknowledging that Jesus *is* Jesus, because there are many people who do that; even the demons do and *they tremble!* Even

the demons knew that Jesus was Jesus before He was revealed to people. They said, ‘Have you come to torment us before the time, Son of God?’ It’s not just professing it with their lips alone, but this means that Jesus, as the Lord, has to do with a statement of conversion.

Verse 4: “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.... [There are different things going on that we don’t know anything about. We have to operate according to the best that we know how, according to the knowledge of God’s Word as He’s revealed it to us.] ...And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all” (vs 4-6).

Let’s go back to this case of the one casting out demons in Jesus’ name. Who was actually doing the casting out? *God was!* God was the One Who was casting them out. That shows a diversity of operation. Then it goes through showing all the things of the Spirit of God.

Now let’s see a contrasting example, Acts 19:13—here’s where using the name of the Lord and of Paul to cast out demons did not work! It wasn’t in *sincerity and in truth*. I think that’s where you would have to draw the line—wouldn’t it be? Can a person be sincere, following God’s Word and yet not know certain things? *Yes, they can!* Would God reject them under those circumstances? *No! God would not reject them under those circumstances!* But what if someone *knows* and then uses it for an evil purpose? Now then, we have a difference in attitude—don’t we? We have moving out of one category into another.

Acts 19:13: “Then certain vagabond Jews, exorcists...” They were involved in witchcraft, exorcising demons. We’ll see that Jesus made a statement that ‘if I, by the finger of Beelzebul cast out demons, then by whom do your sons cast them out? If I cast them out by the finger of Beelzebul then is Satan divided and his house shall not stand. But if I cast them out by the Spirit of God then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.’ So, we have a situation here whereby it is apparent that there are false miracles that are done. It is apparent that demons can go from one person to another person at the command of another demon-possessed person or Satan-possessed person. But that is not necessarily casting out demons.

Here it clearly shows the difference. Exorcists were those who exorcised demons out of people and things. They “...took it upon themselves to pronounce over those who had wicked spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul proclaims’” (v 13). In this case,

there was no casting out of demons. It did not work!

Verse 14: “Now there were certain *men*, seven sons of a Jew *named* Sceva, a high priest, who were doing this.... [You would think that the chief priest would have some authority to do something—right? You would think that the sons of the Jews would have some authority to do something.] ...But the wicked spirit answered *and* said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I have knowledge of; but you, who are you?’” (vs 14-15).

Notice, it didn’t work that time. The demons spoke back. Was the name of Jesus used? *Yes!* Are the demons to obey being cast out in the name of Jesus Christ? *Yes!* But it depends on who is doing it. If a person is obviously doing it in sincerity and truth, fine. It’ll probably happen. If a person is not doing it in sincerity and truth, but trying to use it to build up their own selves, as apparently these seven were, then it won’t work. So, they got a lesson real fast.

Verse 16: “And the man in whom was the wicked spirit attacked them, overpowered them... [This is against seven! Seeing one of these movies with the oriental karate people going around knocking people, kicking. This is what it was like—seven of them.] ...and prevailed against them, so that they escaped out of that house naked and wounded.” That would be quite an awesome sight. At that point, ‘Let’s get out of here leaving my coat; forget it, get out of here while you still have your life.’

Verse 17: “Now this became known to everyone inhabiting Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” See the difference? Not everybody can just go out and do it.

Are there miracles in the casting out of demons, which are false miracles whereby they can even use the name of Jesus Christ? How do you tell? Then we get into the category of people who are not *for* Jesus, but use the name of Jesus. Let’s look at that particular circumstance. I’ll re-cover what it said there about the casting out of demons and the Pharisees accusing Jesus and so forth.

Matthew 12:30: “The one who is not with Me is against Me...” There is a category that are *with* Jesus, who are not against Jesus. Jesus said, ‘Don’t forbid them. Let them continue with what they’re doing. They even use the name of Jesus. Then we see on the other hand those who are against Jesus, that attempt to use the name of Jesus. It didn’t work with those seven sons of the Jewish priest. What happens if you get someone who uses the name of Jesus—let’s take the pope. He uses the name of Jesus. Suppose he does some miracles? What’s

going to happen in that case and how are we to tell the difference?

“The one who is not with Me is against Me, and the one who does not gather with Me scatters” (v 30). This is a broad statement and I’m sure that in each of these cases God will have to make the judgment Himself. I would have to say in most cases we might not be able to tell. That’s why we have to put it in God’s hands. Just like Elijah. He did not know there were 7,000 left. He could not tell. God had to make that decision.

Let’s look at some other examples: Acts 8; let’s see a direct example where someone, in this case Simon Magus, wanted to use the name of Jesus Christ. You know the account of Simon Magus.

Acts 8:9: “But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery... [that’s dealing in witchcraft, demonism, and so forth] ...in the city and astounding... [bewitched (KJV)—*deceive*] ...the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one.... [Notice the attitude. It wasn’t humbly doing the Lord’s work. It was magnificently doing *his* work.] ...To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’ Now, they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed...” (vs 9-13). He said he believed, but:

- How did he believe?
- What was he looking to believe in?
- Was he looking for salvation, or was he believing the name of Jesus Christ could be used for his own ends and purposes?

We will see the latter is the case—for his own ends and purposes!

“...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip; and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them” (vs 13-14). They sent two apostles down there right away, because passing back and forth through Samaria they knew who was there. They knew what religion they had. They knew what was going on. Jesus said, ‘Go not in the way of the Samaritans. Here Philip goes on down there.

Verse 15: “Who, after coming down to *Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any

of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, **he offered them money**” (vs 15-18).

(go to the next track)

Verse 19: “Saying, ‘Give this authority to me also... [he wanted it for himself] ...so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit.’” There’s a vast difference. You can pretend you’re for Jesus so that you can have something for yourself. This is what he wanted. God is the One Who has to make that decision. Simon Magus *wanted it for himself!* Obviously then, which history shows, he used with his ‘religion’ and so forth. He took the name of Christ. He baptized.

Verse 20: “But Peter said to him, ‘May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money.’” That’s one of the main things the Catholic Church did for years and years. They sold every cardinalship and every bishopship that they could—you could buy it for money. It didn’t matter who you were, what you were, what your heart was, as long as you had enough money. Come and bring the treasure loot up to the St. Peter’s Basilica, you could become a bishop or a cardinal. Same philosophy!

Verse 21: “‘You have neither **part nor lot** in this matter... [tie that in with Acts 1:24-26 about the part and lot of the apostleship that was given to Mathias who was the replacement for Judas. That’s what it’s talking about here.] ...**for your heart is not right before God.**” That’s a very important thing! Your heart is not right with God! That’s what it gets down to with everything that is involved—is your heart right with God? Simon Magus’ heart was not right with God!

We might focus in on this as a pivotal point, or a fulcrum point by saying that God is going to make the judgment on a person’s heart: *Whether they are for Him or whether they are against Him!* God is the One Who is going to have to make that decision. Is that a decision that we should necessarily make? The Apostle Peter made this decision here because God was inspired to make it for Him verbally to Simon’s face. We can’t tell in every instance. We can tell to a certain degree, but still the judgment has to be with God; let God make the judgment.

- If you sow to the flesh you’re going to reap corruption.
- If you sow to the Spirit you’re going to reap eternal life.

God is the One Who is going to have to make that

decision.

Verse 22: “Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness” (vs 22-23). It has to do with how a person’s heart is.

God has not left us totally alone, but let’s go to 2-Corinthians, the eleventh chapter, and see that this carried on and went a little further than they had anticipated. Let’s see where then we have to make a decision based upon their fruits. In that particular case, even though a miracle may be performed—we’ll see that there are certain miracles that can be performed with Satan’s power—we have to make a decision based upon the commandments of God. That’s where God is going to draw the line.

2-Corinthians 11:13: “For such *are* false apostles... [like Simon Magus] ...—deceitful workers... [wanting to take those things for themselves] ...who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.” If you’re going to transform yourself into the apostle of Christ you’re going to use the name of Christ—right? Surely you would.

Verse 14: “And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.” This is why we have to understand what is light, what is darkness, what is walking in the light and all those things that come rushing in, and apply, and focus in on this verse. How can you tell which is the light of God and which is the light of Satan?

Verse 15: “Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants... [Satan has ‘ministers’ serving him. Notice: false apostles serving Satan] ...also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works.”

- How are you going to tell if someone does an undeniable miracle—maybe a paraplegic gets up walking—done in the name of Jesus Christ?
- How are you going to tell that that was a minister of God or not?
- How are you going to tell if it was God that did it? *Maybe from the faith of the individual*; did it in spite of the person involved!
- Or that Satan was the one who caused it to be done so that he could mislead people?

That’s really a quandary—*isn’t it?* I hope that puts it right where it is.

It is something that you need to be able to answer, especially in the world, if you’re talking to someone. ‘Old preacher So-and-So, he healed this

and he did that and he did the other thing.’ If you stand up and say that this person is not of God, **how are you going to know?** We will see that Satan has power to do miracles. They look and appear exactly the same.

Exodus 7:8: “And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ‘When Pharaoh shall speak to you saying, “Give a miracle for yourselves,” you shall say to Aaron, “Take your rod, and throw *it* in front of Pharaoh. It shall become a snake.”’... [Of course, the serpent was the god of the Egyptians—the cobra. Didn’t he have a cobra thing right up on his throne? You’ve seen the pyramids.] ...And Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh. And they did so as the LORD had commanded. And Aaron threw down his rod in front of Pharaoh and in front of his servants, and it became a snake. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers... [Same kind of person as Simon Magus—right? He used sorcery—didn’t he?] ...And they, the priests of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts, for each man threw down his rod, and they became snakes... [there was one slight difference] ...but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods” (vs 8-12). What if you were standing there and you saw this literally happen? Which god is the greatest?

Verse 20: “And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded. And he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters in the river were turned to blood.” That would raise the hackles on the back of your neck—wouldn’t it? I think the movie *The Ten Commandments* did a pretty good job showing how that took place. BAM! All of a sudden it was blood red.

Verse 21: “And the fish in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river. And there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the priests of Egypt did so with their secret arts...” (vs 21-22). They did the same thing! Is that not a miracle? *Yes, it is!* Is that not a sign? *Yes, it is!*

Exodus 8:5—this is the plague of frogs: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, ‘Say to Aaron, “Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.”’” If it weren’t so devastating that would be just absolutely hilarious, seeing all these frogs. They were not the little ones. Have you ever seen those Egyptian frogs? *They have huge frogs! They stretch out almost two feet!* Next time there’s something about the Nile River, you watch it and they’ll show these giant frogs. This is what would come jumping out—giant

frogs everywhere! Burping and jumping! You'd want to be up in God's position looking at it. To be down there and have it happen, it's like you're in your house and here comes a frog, then 20, 30, 50 and they're jumping all over. You go get in bed at night and there are ten of them in your bed. That would scare the liver out of you.

This reminds me: There's one fellow who makes money by protecting houses. Do you know how he protects them when you're gone on vacation? *He releases rattlesnakes into your house!* You pay so much for the rattlesnakes. Then he puts a sign, House Guarded by Rattlesnakes! He has never had anyone break in and steal anything. But he has an agreement with his clients that before they come home he takes them out the day before, and if he cannot find one of the snakes, he will pay their motel room until he does.

There's one case that he could not find one snake and he looked all over, high and low. He put them up in a motel and they were two days. He couldn't find this snake. Finally he did. Know where it was? *In the bed between the sheets, which would have been the first place they would have gone when they came home!* That would scare the liver out of you! After hearing that and then reading about these frogs. It would be something, going to bed and frogs jumping all over the place.

Verse 7: "And the priests did so with their secret arts, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt." There are false miracles that can actually be done by the power of Satan. Why do you think the Pharisees came along and said, 'You're casting out demons by Beelzebub'? *Because it can be done!* There are exorcists who do it by the power of Satan. Doesn't change anything though; just taking out of one pocket into another, out of one hand into the other.

Now then, we come to the next plague, v 16: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'"" You talk about a horrible plague; you talk about something that will absolutely get your down—LICE! I have never ever had any acquaintance with lice. I've heard of kids—even when I went to school—that come home with their heads full of lice. They have to use this pine tar or coal tar stuff and almost burn the hair off their head to get it out of their scalps. Lice are just so incredible!

Verse 17: "And they did so, for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth and it became lice in man and in beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt." I tell you, in

Egypt there's a lot of dust. It all became lice, crawling all over, biting, sucking, jumping, itching, scratching. Imagine all the animals out there bellowing and howling and hooting and yawning and all the things that they would do. Imagine the camels out there chasing each other and the donkeys and jackasses running around kicking, the horses neighing—all that would go on! And all the people there just scratching themselves and trying to kill them. Just scratch your head and it still itches and you scratch it and it bleeds and the blood is running down on you—you're scratching all over!

Verse 18: "And the priests did so with their secret arts to bring forth lice, **but they could not...**" [There's a certain limit that Satan has to imitating God's way or God's power. It's the same thing when there's a 'religion' that uses the name of Jesus Christ, that it's not of God. They only go so far and then there's a dividing line which cuts them off. We can't discern all of the things that go on, but we can discern one thing (Rev. 13—the false prophet that does miracles; 2-Thess. 2) miracles with all deceivableness and the full power of Satan the devil). Those are miracles that are done.

Let's go to Titus, the first chapter, and let's see how we can begin distinguishing between one and the other. There's a distinction that is made.

- There are those who do miracles that are for Jesus that God is not against, that He will not turn back.
- There are those who do miracles, maybe even in the name of Jesus who are not of God who are going to go into the Lake of Fire.

Titus 1:9—this is one of the qualifications of an elder: "Holding steadfastly to the faithful Word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*, so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine... [stable; right according to God's Word] ...and to convict those who are gainsayers. For there are many rebellious and vain talkers and deceivers, especially those from *the circumcision party*, whose mouths must be stopped; who are subverting whole households, teaching things which *they* ought not, for the sake of selfish gain" (vs 9-11). We saw an example of that here Acts 19—that's what they're doing it for. They were doing it for money. You pay exorcists so much to come and do their 'good' (dirty) work.

Verse 12: "One from among them, *even one* of their own prophets, said, 'Cretans *are* always liars, *and* evil, wild beasts, *and* lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true.... [Paul was not too nice to them—was he? The Apostle Paul slandered someone—huh? Did he? *If you want to take the critic's point of view!*

NO! He just stated something that was true.] ...For this reason you *must* rebuke them severely, that they may be sound in the faith; not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men, which turn away from the Truth” (vs 12-14).

We have a good example of that with Jim Jones, the People’s Temple. Doing things to help, help the poor, help the needy, feed the hungry, clothe the naked—that’s what they were doing. Everyone was following, saying, ‘What a great guy’ and gradually it was turned, turned from the Truth and it ended in suicide in Guyana.

Verse 15: “To the pure, all things *are* pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing *is* pure; rather, both their minds and consciences are defiled.... [It gets back to the heart. Remember what was said of Simon Magus? *I perceive that your heart is not right with God!* Same kind of heart. Their mind and conscience is defiled] ...They personally profess to know God, but in *their* work” (vs 15-16). You have to be able to make this distinction.

Let’s just review some of the things whereby we know that they are of God or not.

- If they speak not according to this Word—*they have to speak according to the Truth!*
- Whether they keep the commandments of God or not—*very important!*
- Whether they are doing these things from an honest and sincere heart!

Let’s look at this category again, and we will see how it ties in very carefully, very closely to what we said here. This follows right along, Matthew 7:15: “But beware of false prophets...” We are dealing with *false* prophets right off. We’re not dealing with those who are sincere but misinformed.

I guess the only good that came from ‘Vacation Bible School’ I remember I was on the farm and I took the team of horses and it had this big rake and you rake the hay into rows after it’s cut. I went down there and raking the hay and horses were real nervous and they ran away from me. You’ve seen these rakes, it’s a great long pole and this big wheel on the end and these huge tongs that come down scrape along—they have a little spring on them so that you can reach a certain point and the lever comes up and comes down and leaves a windrow. You get out there with the pitchfork and you get them into shocks. That’s the way they used to do hay. Now they just go along and they cut it down and with equipment bale it up.

Here I was on there and the horse started to run away. The more I said ‘Whoa’ and try to make him stop, the faster they ran. Lo and behold, one of

the dogs where I was working started barking, so the horses got even more scared and just bolted right for the road and they were going as fast as they could. I didn’t know what to do. I could have been killed! I think that’s the first time I ever prayed. I’m sure that God answered that prayer; I’m absolutely sure!

I remember I had in my pocket one of these little things that they give you at Vacation Bible School, so I prayed, ‘Oh, God, save me!’ I was holding onto the back of thing and all of a sudden the thought came to me, right in the middle of running down the road and the horses going full blast. When horses run away, they’re really going. All of a sudden the thought came to me to just do my tumbling roll. That’s what I did, I just let go and just did a tumbling roll and rolled down into the tumbling position, did two rolls and stood up on my feet and wasn’t hurt at all.

I didn’t know anything about keeping the commandments. I didn’t know anything about God other than ‘God, save my hide!’ Here the horses come barreling up and go past the house. My mom looks out the window and thinks Freddie’s on there. I was only about 11-years-old and she got scared to death. Of course, she would. Here come the horses—ZOOM!—your son is supposed to be driving and he’s not there. She runs out and here’s a log laying, part of the equipment is laying out there. She thought I was all torn up and was so relieved to find I was alive. She went running, chasing the horses and the horses ran altogether about two miles, ran out across the highway and were finally stopped when they ran with a light pole in-between—one horse on one side and the other on the other pole; that stopped them!

She runs down there and looks around, ‘where’s Freddy.’ Couldn’t find me. I come running up the road and I still remember to this day that when I found that I was alive, there was nothing broken, I took this little booklet out of my pocket and kissed it. I knew a little something of God. Not very much, but I’m sure that He heard my prayer. I would say just like the 7,000 that never bowed their knee to Baal. Was I sincere in it? *You bet! I was sincere as could be!* Was I set on doing evil after that? *NO! NO! Not at all!*

Here we have false prophets “...who come to you in sheep’s clothing, for within *they* are ravaging wolves.... [from the point of view of God’s perspective] ...You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit” (vs 15-17). Go back and go over some of those things we covered concerning evil and good, evil appearing good. How then do you discern what it is?

Verse 18: A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits.... [That is able to distinguish.] ...Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven... [Why? What is the key? What is the demarcation point between this category and the category that God allows? He doesn't forbid them! He allows them!] ...but the one who is doing the will of My Father Who *is* in heaven" (vs 18-21). He's talking again about their fruits. What is a person practicing in their lives? That's not to say they're free from sin, as we know. But what are they practicing in their lives? *The will of the Father in heaven!*

Verse 22: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you.... [That's a little bit different than the 7,000 that never bowed their knee to Baal. He knew them—didn't He? He said, 'I have 7,000 that haven't done it.')] ...**Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.**" (vs 22-23). If you look in your Greek Interlinear, it is 'anomos'—*lawlessness; against law!* In this particular case, it is not necessarily against the commandments, but it is against the sayings of Jesus.

If you transgress the words of Jesus, what did Jesus say? *He who keeps not my sayings loves Me not!* It's not just law alone, because He said, 'He who's practicing the will of My Father Who is in heaven.' Is there more to God's will than just law? *Yes, there is—much more to God's will than just law!* The law is part of it.

He summarizes and brings this aspect to it, v 24: "Therefore, everyone who hears **these words** of Mine and practices them..." From the Greek word 'logos'—the plural 'logous'—in this case 'tous logous'—*these words*. It's more than just commandments. Were the Pharisees commandment-keepers? *To a certain extent, yes!* But they also kept the commandments of men—right?

So, it's "...these words of Mine and practices them... [living by them] ...I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain

came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (vs 24-27).

Every year we see this: People build down in river bottoms and there's a flood that comes somewhere and washes them away. It's an awful sight to see, these houses floating down the rivers. It's really true. This is how then we're able to distinguish between those who are *for* Jesus—and even cast out demons in Jesus' name, who may be sincere in it, who are not speaking evil of Jesus—those God may recognize. Then you have the others who would be the false prophets, the misleading ones, those against law, against the teachings of Jesus when they would do a miracle it would not be by the power of God.

This then is how God is going to go ahead and make the judgment concerning that. That's why I've said before, God isn't out there rejecting everyone. We can selfishly say that 'we are the only people of God and anyone who is not with us is not going to make it into the Kingdom of God.' I've heard that before and I know that isn't true! *I know that is not true!* God can make the decision as to what He's going to do even someone He may be calling or working with, but they don't know all the things they're supposed to know. I mean, do we know everything we need to know? Really? *Of course not!* We're still learning! God isn't rejecting us; God isn't going to reject them either.

If they are led of the Spirit, if they will follow God's Word, God will lead them into the Truth and bring them into the knowledge of the things they need to know. If, at a point, they rebel against God and turn against Him... I've heard of a case where people heard of those who were healing in the name of Jesus. When they came to a certain point of the knowledge of Truth—shown to them right in the Bible—then they could not heal after that point. God is the One Who has to make the decision in each case.

I think that we need not take the attitude of raising our hand to condemn someone so quickly. We need to sit back and watch the fruits and let's listen to the message, and let's see what is really true according to God's Word. Then we can know the difference between those who are serving God and those that are not.

Here's another way you can tell whether a person is serving God or not; let's go to Deuteronomy 13:1 which gives us another discernment as to the ways that you can tell: "If a prophet rises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder which he foretold to you comes to pass... [actually happens; you see it take place; it did occur]

...saying ‘Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them’... [We can take this statement and show that other statements show that ‘let’s worship God in a little different manner than what God says, ‘because I do this miracle I’ll tell you what to do.’ or ‘God is not really the One Who is visible, we can put an idol over here and we’ll worship this likeness of the idol.’

Last week I was watching something on New Guinea and it was about the hunting of the dugongs; they’re much like elephant seals. The New Guineas are so filled with superstition and witchcraft, yet they say they believe in God. When they go hunting they have their little dugong idol that they have. They pet it and they talk to it and say ‘secret words’ to encourage them on the hunt to cause the dugongs to come to them—really weird! That’s today, living today, people today. I was sitting their thinking there’s no way you’re going to change those people—*no way!* Christ has to change them. Here’s the same thing—‘we can worship God, but we have our little dugong idol here and you pet that and good things happen.’ It showed them there doing their enchantings and so forth.

“...saying, ‘Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them,’ you shall not hearken to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God **is testing you** to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death...” (vs 2-5). That’s when they had the *administration of death* within the civil government of Israel. So, there’s another way that it happens.

Verse 6: “If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who *is* like your own soul, lures you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’—which you have not known, you nor your fathers, that is, of the gods of the people who *are* around you, near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth— ... [That’s all inclusive—isn’t it? That covers everything!] ...you shall not consent to him nor hearken to him. Nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare, nor shall you conceal him. But you shall surely kill him. Your hand shall be first on him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And you shall stone him with stones so that he dies because he has sought to drive you away from the LORD your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more

any such wickedness as this among you” (vs 6-11).

I’m sure that’s what’s going to happen when Christ is here on the earth; it’s going to be taken care of right away. There isn’t going to be any of this nonsense going on. That helps clarify a little bit more ***who is really following God and who is not!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 9:38-40
- 2) Matthew 7:21-23
- 3) Numbers 11:27-29
- 4) 1 Kings 19:9-18
- 5) 1 Corinthians 12:4, 3-6
- 6) Acts 19:13-17
- 7) Matthew 12:30
- 8) Acts 8:9-23
- 9) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
- 10) Exodus 7:8-12, 20-22
- 11) Exodus 8:5, 7, 16-18
- 12) Titus 1:9-16
- 13) Matthew 7:15-24
- 14) Deuteronomy 13:1-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 1:24-26
- Revelation 13
- 2 Thessalonians 2

Also referenced: Book:

Interlinear Greek-English New Testament by
George Ricker Berry

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