

Bible Study Matthew 7:13-29

1. How do you find most people who aren't Christians are at talking about issues like heaven, hell, life after death, Jesus, eternity? Discuss.

*Cultures can vary on this, but it seems in Australia (the West in general?) these issues are **not** discussed. In fact, they are more usually avoided. Serious thought is not given, the topic changed, and you can be insulted for even raising such issues. We are, functionally speaking, materialists – all that matters is what you can see and touch now.*

2. **Read Matt 7:13-14.** What does this say about the nature of this life? (cf 2 Cor 5:4) What does it say about being a Christian? (cf Col 1:22-23, 2:6)

*This life is not all there is – it “leads to” something; either destruction or Life. 2 Cor implies that “this life” is not really “life” – it is merely ‘mortality’ – we await the true ‘life’ that will swallow up this mortality! Being a Christian is not just about being converted, it's about **continuing** in Christ – following him in repentance, faith and obedience every day – there is a gate **and** a road, not just a gate.*

3. In case this passage makes you think God is somehow mean-spirited, or that heaven will have only a few people in it; Notice that Jesus invites (actually, he commands) **ALL** to enter – everyone is invited (cf Acts 17:30). Read also Rev 7:9.

4. **Read Matt 7:15-23.** Jesus' words are the truth about God's Kingdom. But there will be counterfeits. What does Jesus say that shows how serious false teaching is? Read also Acts 20:29-31 & 2 Pet 2:1-3, 17-22.

Jesus calls them “ferocious wolves” – despite their appearances, they are capable of great damage. Their error will cost them eternal life too – v23. How often do we see this spiritual seriousness of people who preach an alternative version of Christianity?!!

5. How can you “watch out” for these false prophets?

Firstly: Know that they exist, and that they come looking for us “they come to you ...”. Then, be willing to discern fruit. John wrote, “do not believe every spirit (teaching), but test the spirits...” (1 John 4:1-3). we need to know the authentic Word of God. The better we know this, the more clearly we'll recognise the fruit of false teachers. So always be ready to ask, “Where is that in the Bible?”

6. **Read Matt 5:1-2, 7:24-29.** Why are these chapters well called “Sermon on the Mount” rather than, say, “Lecture on the Mount”?

A lecture presents information for people to do with as they please. Jesus is speaking with the intention of moving people to respond. In fact, he even says that to do nothing is a response – but one that leads to disaster!

7. Do you ever feel like you're in a minority for being a Christian? What encouragement do these verses offer you?

Popular opinion is no accurate measure of the truth – especially in spiritual matters. The road is narrow because it does not allow me to bring my own will with me – I must surrender all to Lord Jesus and follow his lead. But he leads me to Life, away from the destruction I was heading towards. “The fool has said in his heart, ‘there is no God’” (Ps 14:1) – the wise person hears Jesus' words and puts them into practice. Pray that you, and all who confess Christ, will continue to do this.