

## 4 *Did Jesus Warn of False Prophets Who Would Negate the Law?*

---

### *Introduction*

Jesus was concerned about the “signs and wonders” prophets misleading Christians. (Matt. 7:15-23, *viz.*, v. 22; 24:11, 24.) Jesus warns of the false prophets in Mark 13:22. They “shall show signs and wonders to \_\_\_\_\_, if possible, even the elect.”

In Deuteronomy, these signs-and-wonders prophets are false not because their prophecies are untrue. Rather, their signs and wonders are extraordinary. Indeed,

\_\_\_\_\_ . (Deut. 13:2, “the sign or the wonder \_\_\_\_\_, whereof he spake unto thee.”) Rather, the proof they are false is in

(*i.e.*, the Five Books of Moses). These prophets try to “draw thee aside out of the way which Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in.” (Deut. 13:5. *Cf.* Deut. 4:2.)

When Deuteronomy was written, all there was of Scripture was Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Thus, even a prophet with true prophecy must be rejected if he seduces you to “draw aside” from the command-

\_\_\_\_\_

3.5Tw[arophet

Tw[(In

De

by teaching certain violations of it were permissible. (Numbers 24:1 *et seq*; Rev. 2:14.) (See page 41 *et seq.* for further discussion.)

Jesus in Matthew 7:15-24 is clearly alluding to these same “signs and wonders” prophets. Jesus says they are lost. He will deny He ever knew them even though on Judgment Day they are able to say they did “marvelous works in Your name,” and many “prophecies in Your name.” (Matt. 7:22.) Jesus tells us He will reject them. It is not because they lacked true prophecy or marvelous wonders. Rather, the sole reason to reject them is they are workers of “*anomia*.” (Matt. 7:23.)

This Greek word *anomia* here means “negators of the Law (of Moses).” This is one of its two lexicon definitions. In choosing this definition over *lawless*, we do so primarily because Jesus’ warning was obviously paralleling Deuteronomy 13:1-5. See discussion in the next section.

If you agree on choosing this dictionary definition, then we can easily anticipate that Paul is not going to fare well. Paul’s doctrine that the Law of Moses was abolished by Jesus’ coming is well known. See chapter five.

---

### *Why Anomia Means Negator of Mosaic Law*

Jesus tells us we can identify the false prophets because they are workers of “*anomia*.” (Matt. 7:23.) What does this Greek word *anomia* mean?

In Greek, *anomia* is a feminine noun, related to the adjective *a-nomos*. *Nomos* is the Greek word to identify the Law or Torah, *i.e.*, the Five Books of Moses. (Strong’s #3551.) The prefix *a* is a negative particle in Greek. Putting the parts together, it should mean *negation of the Law (Torah)*.

Do the lexicons agree? What does *anomia* precisely mean in Matthew 7:23? The best lexicon of ancient Greek (which is free online) is Henry George Liddell's and Robert Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon*.<sup>1</sup> It defines *anomia*<sup>2</sup> as one of two meanings:

- “the negation of the law”
- “lawlessness, lawless conduct.”

The common rendering of Matthew 7:23 opts for the second meaning. (See ALT, KJV, and ASV translations.) These texts ignore entirely the first option. These translations do not reveal these workers practiced the “negation of the Law.” Yet, this is the meaning Jesus’ intended in this context.

Jesus is talking about workers of the *negation of the Law* because He is paraphrasing Deuteronomy 13:1-5. Let’s see how by comparing the concepts in Matthew 7:15-23 with Deuteronomy 13:1-5. When put side by side, we find *lawlessness* is an incongruent break from the paraphrase by Jesus of Deuteronomy. However, “negation of the Law” would be in line if Jesus’ intended a paraphrase of Deuteronomy.

- 
1. *Logos Software* describes LSJ (its acronym) as “the world’s of ancient Greek...” <http://www.logos.com/products/details/1772> (visited 2005). It explains the 1940 edition is the core of the 1996 edition. As to the 1940 edition, *Logos* explains LSJ is the “ for all scholars of ancient Greek authors and texts discovered up to 1940....” *Id.*
  2. The least expensive way to verify this is online. To do so, go to Tuft University’s online version of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0155&layout=&loc=Matthew+7.1> Then find Matthew 7:23, and the last word is *anomian*. Click *anomian* and then select the LSJ link for this lexicon. Or you can purchase this lexicon in book and computer form from *Logos* at [www.logos.com](http://www.logos.com).



If the test is whether these people are *workers of iniquity* or *lawlessness*, then since all of us sin, there would never be a true prophet you could trust as long as he is human. Thus, if you accept Paul's truism that "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God..." (Rom. 3:23), then Paul and all prophets are workers of iniquity merely by being human.

Thus, everyone is a worker of iniquity at some point. If we apply *iniquity* as the meaning of *anomia* in Matthew 7:15-23, as it commonly is translated, it ends up making Jesus give a meaningless warning. That is, the verse becomes pointless because we all work iniquity. There could never be true prophecy we trust if a true human prophet is rendered false merely because he is like us who sins from time-to-time. *Iniquity* never was the proper translation of *anomia*. Only *workers of negation of the Law (of Moses)* fits Jesus' intended meaning.

**Indeed the  
of the apostle**

**among you in all  
patience  
and  
in powers.**

**2 Cor.12:12  
(talking about  
what proved  
his validity).**

---

### *What If Anomia Did Mean Iniquity? Was Paul a Worker of Iniquity?*

However, if one insists the traditional translation of *anomia* as *iniquity* is correct, Paul is encompassed by the verse anyway.

Paul's letters reveal very egregious behavior. He even flaunts this in front of Christian congregations. Paul did not leave his sins for private evaluation. Paul shamelessly put them on public display.

For example, Luther admits that Paul's letter to the Galatians includes curses on others (Gal. 1:9).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Paul also tells us he "condemned" Apostle Peter in front of a

big crowd of people. (Gal. 2:11.) Paul also called the “brethren” of Galatia “foolish” ones. (Gal. 3:1.) Another time Paul listed off a series of accomplishments, confessing repeatedly he was “boasting.” (2 Cor. 11:16-18.)

Yet, Jesus and the Bible prohibit such curses, condemnations of others without private personal confrontation first, labelling brothers as fools, and boasting. (See the Table below for Bible references.)

Therefore, if one insists Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:23 require proof someone was a worker of *iniquity*, Paul is caught again. The list in the table below is not only long, but also appears in teaching letters to a spiritual community! As James 3:1 says, *teachers* will receive a “heavier judgment” for their errors.

Paul's Letters	Violation of God's Commands?
<b><i>Cursing Others.</i></b> Galatians 1:8, 9: “Anathema” (cursed) is anyone or angel if preaches “a different gospel” than Paul preaches. See also, 1 Cor. 16:22: “anathema” (cursed) is “anyone who does not love the Lord Jesus.”	James 3:10: “Out of the same mouth comes forth praise and cursing; my brothers [and sisters], these [things] ought not to be happening in this way” — emphatic “It’s wrong!” Prov. 10:7 “[Evil man’s] mouth is full of cursing...” Cf. Nu 23:8
<b><i>Calling Others Fools.</i></b> Gal. 3:1: “O foolish Galatians...” Paul calls them “brethren.” (Gal. 1:11; 3:15.)	Matthew 5:22 “whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.”

- 
3. Luther admits Paul’s cursing in Luther’s lecture on Galatians in 1531. In commenting on Galatians 1:9, Luther says: “Paul repeats the curse, directing it now upon other persons. Before, he cursed himself, his brethren, and an angel from heaven.”

**Paul's Letters**

**Violation of God's Commands?**

**Boasting.** 2 Cor. 11: “(16) let no man think me foolish; but if ye do, yet as foolish receive me, that *I also may boast a little*. (17) That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.(18) Seeing that many *boast* after the flesh, I will *boast* also.” (ALT). [Greek *kauchaomai* = boasting.]<sup>a</sup>

James 4:16: “But now you boast in your pretentious pride; all such boasting is evil.” (ALT) [Greek *kauchaomai* = boasting.]; 1 John James 2:16: “the boasting (*alazoneia*)<sup>b</sup> of life is not of the Father but of the world.”

Prov. 29:23 “pride/arrogance” (*gauth*) shall bring a man low.”

Prov.27:2 “Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger and not your own lips.”

**Condemning Others.** Galatians 2:11: “But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to [his] face, because he had been condemned [by me].” v. 12 (text of the outspoken condemnation of Peter in front of audience). (*kataginosko* = condemned).

Matthew 7:1 “Stop judging [*i.e.*, condemning], so that you shall not be judged....” (*krino* = condemn or judge)<sup>c</sup> Matthew 18:15: “if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone.”

- a. Paul goes on and makes boasts of his background and achievements: 1 Cor. 11: “(22) Are they Hebrews? *so am I*. Are they Israelites? *so am I*. Are they the seed of Abraham? *so am I*. (23) Are they ministers of Christ?... *I more*; in labors *more abundantly*; in prisons *more abundantly*, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft.”
- b. The Greek word *alazoneia* is often incorrectly translated as *pride*. (ASV, ALT, KJV, GSB.) However, the meaning of the Greek is *boasting* or a synonym, not *pride*. The definition *pride* is not even listed by Liddell Scott. The Liddell Scott Lexicon defines it solely as “boastfulness” “false pretension” or “imposture.”
- c. Jesus orders us to evaluate whether someone is a false prophet (Matthew 7:11-23). Jesus commends the Ephesians for finding someone to be a “liar” who said he was an apostle but was not. (Rev. 2:2.) Thus unless Paul was accusing Peter of being a false prophet/apostle, Paul is violating Jesus’ prohibition against condemning others publicly without first having a private confrontation. (Matt. 18:15.) Such findings (False Prophet/False Apostle) are not, in fact, ‘condemnations’ *per se*. They are necessary findings to fulfill our duty to “not harken unto the words of that [false] prophet” (Deut. 13:3). The findings are not intended to condemn such a person without a private confrontation, but rather to distinguish true Scripture from false.

---

*Paul Admits He Is*

There is a more significant reason why Jesus' words against wonder workers of *anomia* are not translated correctly in Matthew 7:23. It is because Paul admits he practiced *anomos* in 1 Cor. 9:20-21. Thus, if Jesus' word *anomia* were correctly translated in Matthew 7:23, it would lead to an instantaneous proof of Paul's invalidity *by Paul's own admission*.

What does *anomos* mean in 1 Cor. 9:20-21?

*Anomos* is the adjective form of the noun *anomia*.

(The word *anomia* is the word at issue in Matthew 7:23.)

*Nomos* is the word one would use to indicate the *Torah* of Moses. (Strong's #3551.) The particle *a* in Greek is the negation of whatever follows. *A-Nomos* should mean *negation of Torah/Law/law*. Without looking at a lexicon, one can anticipate *anomos* might have some meaning bearing on the *Torah*. Strong's Lexicon says *anomos* has two meanings: either a violator of the Law/law or "one destitute of the (Mosaic) Law." Liddell Scott likewise say *anomos* means either "lawless, impious" or "without the (Mosaic) Law." It specifically cites the latter meaning as what Paul means in 1 Cor. 9:21.

Indeed, when you read Paul's remarks, it is clear he means he practices to be "without the *Mosaic* Law." Paul says the following in 1 Cor. 9:20-21:

(20) And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are ***under the law*** [*i.e.*, *Nomos*], as under the law, ***not being myself under the law*** [*i.e.* *Nomos*], that I might gain them that are under the law; (21) to them that are without law, [I became] ***as without law*** [Greek ***anomos***], not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. (ASV)

In verse 20, Paul is clearly using *Nomos* to mean *Torah*, *i.e.*, the books of Moses. He equates becoming as a Jew as practicing being under *Nomos*. His usage of *Nomos* thus starts out clearly meaning *Torah*. He practiced being *Torah* submissive as an evangelical tool.

Then, still in verse 20, Paul says he behaves as if under the Mosaic law even though he is “not...myself under the [Mosaic] Law...” His expression in Greek is expressly “not being under the Law”—*me on autos hupo numon*. The word *me* in Greek means *not*. It serves an equivalent function as the prefix *a* in front of *Nomos*. Paul is plainly saying therefore he is *not under the Law* that applies to Jews. Paul accordingly is announcing he is *Not under Nomos*.

Paul then emphasizes this by saying in verse 21 that to those who are not under the *Nomos*—here he uses the word *anomos*, Paul “becomes”<sup>4</sup> as one “not under *Nomos*”—again using the word *anomos*. Paul thus not only says in verse 20 he is *not under Nomos*, but also says he to appear this way, *i.e.*, *Anomos*, as a tool of evangelism.

**Matthew 7:23**

workers of negating the Law

**1 Cor. 9:21**

[I, Paul] work to become without (Mosaic) Law

What about verse 21 where Paul does assert that he is under the *Law of Christ*? It is clear Paul does not mean he is under *the Law of Moses*. In verse 20 he just said he is not under *Nomos* (*i.e.*, the *Torah*). We will explore in the next chapter precisely what Paul means by the *Law of Christ*. Briefly, he means he is under a new moral system. It is not

---

4. The Greek is *ginomai*. It also means *make*. Paul *made himself as one not under the Law, i.e., anomos*. This entire expression parallels “workers of negation of the Law” in Matthew 7:23 which is *ergozomai anomia, i.e., work anomia*.

based on *Torah*. It is based on other principles that Paul explains are guided by conscience. See the discussion in the next chapter entitled: “The New Morality In Its Place” on page 80.

Yet, what Paul is admitting in 1 Cor. 9:20-21 is what Jesus is warning about in Matthew 7:23. Jesus is warning about those who will come in His name, and come with true signs and wonders. Yet they are workers of *A-nomia*. This is the noun form of the related word *A-Nomos*, an adjective, that appears in 1 Cor. 9:20-21. Jesus is warning of someone who will uproot the *Torah*. This someone will replace the *Torah* with what is in essence merely the commandments of men. See, Matt. 15:6 (“thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”)

---

*How Jesus’ View of Mosaic Law Aids  
Translation of Matthew 7:23*

Jesus by Paul’s own admission is on a different page than Paul. Jesus made it clear that His use of the term *anomia* in Matthew 7:23 is to identify those who will *negate the Law* (of Moses). In Matthew 5:18-29, Jesus expels any idea that He intends to introduce any new morality that would supplant the *Torah* (Law of Moses). In Matthew 5:18-19, Jesus explains that anyone who “shall teach” others not to follow the least command of the Law of Moses will be least in the kingdom of heaven:

(18) For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law [*i.e.*, *Nomos*], till all things be accomplished. (19) ***Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven:*** but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (ASV)

One would be hard pressed to find a more direct way of saying a Christian must teach and keep the Law of Moses. We should clearly see Jesus had every intention that the Law continued in the New Testament community. This passage is not isolated.

Jesus emphasized repeatedly keeping the letter of the Law, while not exaggerating it. Law-keeping was a constant theme of His teachings. Besides Matthew 5:18-19, Jesus taught that traditions of men should not be accepted which supplant the Law. (Matt. 15:3-6.) He emphasized keeping the Ten Commandments as part of His gospel of salvation. (Matt. 19:17.) In Revelation 2:14, Jesus is upset with those teaching contrary to Exodus that you are permitted to eat meat sacrificed to idols. If you read with care Jesus' correction of the Pharisees, it is always about their exaggerated or misguided interpretations of the Law. Jesus never faults their desire to obey the Law. They set aside the "weightier" matters of the Law to follow the less "weighty" matters of the Law. Jesus wanted them to follow *both* aspects of the Law. (Matt. 23:23.)

Those who glibly have tried to make Jesus out to attack keeping the Law have failed to weigh the consequences of their argument. While they shield Paul, they end up making Jesus a false messiah. For any prophet who would seduce Israel from keeping the Law would be, even if he had miracles and signs, a false prophet. (Deut. 4:2,13:5.)

These Law-keeping passages should impel a Christian to come to grips with the question of

in the early church.

Such a conclusion, if recognized, would have on modern Christian doctrine. When we think about the hue and cry if we should quote Jesus to answer the question, we must remember Jesus' pro-Law keeping view is a truth staring back at us from the pages of Scripture. We cannot lightly dismiss it. The revolu-

tionary implication is that Jesus' warning of the false prophet to come who would negate the Law means He was warning us about Paul.

Now one can see why the translators of Matthew 7:23 who assume Paul's validity elected to use a nonsensical translation of *anomia* as *lawlessness* or *iniquity*. If *lawless* or *lawlessness* were the test of a prophet who comes with signs and wonders to deceive Christians, everyone is suspect. Jesus' warning would then be so broad that it is rendered meaningless. This makes it nonthreatening to Paul's validity. However *anomia*'s other meaning, according to Liddell-Scott, is *negation of the law* (of Moses). That meaning parallels Deuteronomy 4:2 & 13:1-5. Those with true signs and wonders but whose purpose is to seduce us from following the *Torah* are false prophets. (Deut. 13:1-5.) Paul is instantly in the hot seat. He even admits in 1 Cor. 9:20-21 of practicing to be *anomos*, *i.e.*, one who *negates the Law (of Moses)* by dismissing it.

Given Jesus' repeated emphasis on keeping the Law, Jesus must have intended us to understand those who would undermine His emphasis on keeping the Law of Moses were going to be the mark of the false prophet to come. Jesus intended *anomia* in Matthew 7:23 to mean *negator of the Law of Moses*.

However, let's keep an open mind. Did Paul actually ever teach that the 'least commandment' in the Law of Moses was abrogated for a follower of Jesus? If so, then Jesus tells us Paul is a false prophet by Jesus' very blunt words in Matthew 7:15-23. To follow Paul would mean we are disobeying Christ. To follow Paul in such a circumstance would also mean we are violating God's command in Deuteronomy 4:2 against *diminishing* from God's word. To follow Paul would also mean we are violating Deuteronomy 13:1-5 wherein God tells you to not fear or listen to the prophet who tries to seduce you from following God's commands in the Law. God specifically commands us to not add such a prophet to *inspired* canon. Or is there even the slightest chance Paul did not negate the Law of Moses?

**A Passage to Meditate Upon: What Causes Empty Worship?**

**Jesus on Negation of The Law by Traditional Religious Doctrine. Says Leads to Vain Worship.**

(1) Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, (2) Why do thy disciples [i.e., *parabaino*, go contrary to] the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. (3) And he answered and said unto them,

? (4) For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. (5) But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God [i.e., the *korban* payment to the Temple created by the religious leaders as a substitution for directly supporting destitute parents]; (6) he shall not honor his father. [i.e., *akuroo*, invalidate, make of none effect]

. (7) Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, (8) This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. (9) But . (Matt 15:1-9, ASV)

Jesus in this passage says that the Pharisees were teaching “for doctrines [about God] the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:9, KJV.) The Greek version of Matthew is a paraphrase of Isaiah 29:13, which Jesus is in substance quoting. In Isaiah, what Jesus describes as *men's doctrines* is called in Hebrew *mitzvat anashim melumada*. According to Hebrew scholar Nehemiah Gordon, it means “a learned commandment of men.” (N. Gordon, *Hebrew Yeshua v. Greek Jesus* (2006) at 23-24.) Gordon further explains this means a commandment of men that is recognized as law by performing it over and over again. This is reflected in the RSV and JPS versions that translate Isaiah as saying, “commandment of men learned by rote.” What is Jesus' point?

This passage in Isaiah was commented upon by later Karaite Jews in the ninth century. Their application of Isaiah appears to be identical to Jesus' point.

First, who were the Karaites? Nehemiah Gordon is a modern Karaite Jew. This is a Jew who rejects man-made accretions to the Law of Moses. Karaites represent a movement founded in the ninth century within Judaism. When Nehemiah Gordon read Jesus' words in Matthew 15, he was both "impressed and surprised." For Gordon explains Isaiah 29:13 became the "battle cry of the Karaites against Rabbinic innovations and this phrase appears countless times in medieval Karaite writings." (N. Gordon, *Hebrew Yeshua v. Greek Jesus* (2006) at 24.) Thus, Jesus brought this message first!

Finally, Nehemiah Gordon quotes the ninth century Karaite commentary on Isaiah 29:13. It sounds familiar.

Abandon the learned commandments of men that are **not from the Torah**; do not accept anything from anyone except that which is written in the Torah of the Lord alone. (Daniel al-Kumisi, *Epistle to the Dispersion*.)

Jesus had the same explanation of Isaiah. Jesus took it one step further. He explained when you teach the *learned commandments of men* so as to *diminish* from the Law given to Moses, you have "empty worship." Thus, by violating Deuteronomy 4:2, which prohibits diminishing the Law, Jesus said you violate the Second Commandment — you are now taking the "Lord's name in vain." Your worship is now *in vain*. Thus, Jesus said that when the Pharisees taught God's personal command to *honor your mother and father* could be substituted with a special payment to the temple (Matt. 15:5 *supra*), they were *negating* the Fourth Commandment. They caused the worshipper who used God's name to now be worshipping in vain, thus violating the Second Commandment. The consequence? Jesus later explained in Matthew 23:23 that the Pharisees' teachings which diminished the "weightier matters of the Law" thereby made their pupils become "twice the sons of hell" as their teachers. (Matt. 23:15.)