

The Other Half of the Verse

An open letter to Holy Word Explained on Matthew 7:23 — "I Never Knew You"

Jørn André Halseth



Dear Holy Word Explained

This letter answers the video [MATTHEW 7:23 — WHAT "I NEVER KNEW YOU" REALLY MEANS IN GREEK](#) by Holy Word Explained. Every quotation of the speaker below is word-for-word.

Dear friends at Holy Word Explained,

You read the verse rightly — and you read it further than most pulpits ever do. You held the line between oida οἶδα^{G1492} and ginōskō γινώσκω^{G1097} where it actually runs. You caught that *oudepote* means the relation never existed for a single moment — that this is not a verse about losing faith but about a knowing that was never there. You traced *ginōskō* through the Septuagint back to yāda עָדָה^{H3045}, and you proved it from the right places: Adam knowing Eve (Genesis 4:1), «You only have I known of all the families of the earth» (Amos 3:2), «Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you» (Jeremiah 1:5). You heard Psalm 6:8 underneath «depart from me». And you saw the direction of the sentence — that Jesus does not say *you never knew me* but *I never knew you*, the same direction Paul guards in Galatians 4:9 when he corrects his own sentence mid-flight: «or rather are known by God».

Activity in Jesus's name, disconnected from actually knowing Jesus, is not righteousness. It is lawlessness wearing the costume of righteousness.

— *Holy Word Explained*, **MATTHEW 7:23** — **WHAT "I NEVER KNEW
YOU" REALLY MEANS IN GREEK**

That sentence deserves to be carved somewhere. So does your last image — «a tree can be hung with fruit that was tied on rather than grown». I am not writing to correct any of it. I am writing because the verse has a second half you walked past, and because you handed your viewers the most searching question in the Gospels and left them standing in front of it without the door. Both belong to the same chapter you were expounding.

The half of the verse still waiting

The sentence that contains «Lord, Lord» does not end at the comma.

Matthew 7:21, WEB · Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

But he who does. Jesus names the ones who enter, and He names them by a verb of action. You said — rightly — that the *ginōskō* «cannot be replaced by activity». But notice what Jesus does with activity in this verse: He does not discard it, He relocates it. The workers of *anomia* are not condemned for working; they are condemned for working outside the relation — *a-nomos*, unbound, self-commissioned. And the man who enters is not the man who stopped working; he is the man whose work is the Father's will. Your own words about the two builders carry this: «the difference between the two builders is whether they did the words of Jesus or only heard them». That is verse 24, and the verb is Jesus' own:

Matthew 7:24, WEB · "Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on a rock.

Jesus made the same point in one sentence in Luke, and it reads like His own commentary on Matthew 7:

Luke 6:46, WEB · "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things which I say?

So the yada and the doing are not rivals, and the sermon never plays them against each other. Doing is what being-known looks like when it walks. The cure for fruit that

was tied on is not a bare branch — it is fruit that grew, from a root the Father planted. A hearer who leaves your video resolved to *do less* has misread the verse exactly as badly as the one who resolved to *prophesy more*. The question is never the volume of the work. It is whose will the work obeys, and whether the Workman is known.

The question you left on the table

You closed with the right question: «Not what have I done in His name, but does He know me?» But you closed there — and a soul who takes that question seriously cannot be left holding it. If the ginōskō was never there, can it begin? Jesus answered that question sixteen verses before the warning, in the same chapter, in the same sermon:

Matthew 7:7-8, WEB · "Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.

The sermon that ends with «I never knew you» carries inside it «ask, and it will be given you». The two passages are eleven verses apart, and the second exists for everyone the first has just terrified. Being known is not a lottery drawn before you were born and already lost. It is the covenant God swore to hand out person by person:

Jeremiah 31:33-34, WEB · But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Yahweh: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.

They shall all know me — the verb is yada, the same word you traced. The new covenant is that knowing, distributed to every person who enters it, with no intermediary. And Jesus defined eternal life as exactly this and nothing else:

John 17:3, WEB · This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.

So the man your video unsettled — the churchgoer who suddenly cannot answer «does He know me?» — must be told what Jesus told him: come and ask. Not one person who ever came was turned away:

John 6:37, WEB · All those who the Father gives me will come to me. Him who comes to me I will in no way throw out.

And the one who has come does not need to live under the verse in terror, because the knowing is sealed from His side, not maintained from ours:

Second Timothy 2:19, WEB · However God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."

Notice even the seal has two faces — *known by Him* on one side, *depart from unrighteousness* on the other. Yada and doing, stamped into the same foundation stone. The seal agrees with the sermon.

Come further in

I walked this same trail before I ever saw your video — ginōskō back through the Septuagint to yada, Genesis 4:1, Amos 3:2, Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 4:9, the sons of Eli who handled the holy things and «knew not Yahweh» — and then kept walking, through the door your video stops in front of: how a person is born again, how the knowing begins, and how a man may be sure of it. It is all in the book [Born Again](#), in the chapter «Yada — To Be Known by Him» and the chapters that follow it into the water. You did the diagnosis with a precision I salute. The treatment is written down. Come and see.

Your video ends by asking whether He knows us. The Bible ends with the answer God intends for everyone who asks: «they shall see his face» (Revelation 22:4). No veil left. Yada, face to face, forever.

With respect and in the same hope,

Jørn André Halseth

How this was made

This is the author's own work. It was composed with [junifye](#) and an AI assistant, drawing its Scripture and original-language work (Greek, Hebrew, cross-references) from [Darash](#) (Hebrew *darash*, “to seek, inquire, study”), a tool and reference work for the Bible in its original languages.

Both are **MCP** tools you can use from Claude Desktop or any AI assistant. Study the Word in its original tongues with Darash, read the Scriptures in [Bibleread](#), and browse the [public library](#).

Free for personal and congregational use — not for sale. © the author; commercial rights reserved to Publifye AS.

A gift of support — [Stripe](#)



Scan to read this book online