

# Luke 7:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

## Analysis

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The Pharisee's internal response: 'Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner' (Greek 'ei ē houtos prophētēs, eginōsken an tis kai potapē hē gunē hētis haptetai autou, hoti hamartōlos estin'). The Pharisee's reasoning: true prophets would recognize sinners and avoid defilement. His unspoken conclusion: Jesus is either ignorant or indifferent, disqualifying Him as prophet. The irony—Jesus knows precisely who she is and demonstrates divine authority to forgive sins. The Pharisee's categories (clean/unclean, righteous/sinner) prevented him from seeing redemption and transformation. Reformed theology recognizes that self-righteousness blinds more effectively than notorious sin. The Pharisee's confidence in his own purity prevented him from recognizing his need for the forgiveness the woman sought.

## Historical Context

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Pharisaic purity laws avoided contact with sinners to maintain ritual cleanliness. Touch from 'unclean' person defiled for remainder of day. The Pharisee expected Jesus to recoil from the woman's touch if He were truly a prophet. Prophets like Isaiah received divine knowledge; surely Jesus would know her reputation. The

Pharisee's unstated conclusion—Jesus lacks prophetic insight. Yet Jesus demonstrates superior knowledge—He knows the woman's sin, the Pharisee's thoughts, and has authority to forgive. Early church faced similar accusations—associating with sinners supposedly invalidated Christian claims. Yet gospel power appears precisely in transformation of sinners, not avoidance of them.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does self-righteousness blind us to our own need for grace while making us judgmental of others?
2. What false assumptions do we make about holiness requiring separation from rather than transformation of sinners?
3. Why is Jesus's knowledge of both the woman's sin and the Pharisee's thoughts significant for understanding His authority?

## Interlinear Text

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ἰδὼν δὲ ἡ Φαρισαῖος ἡ καλέσας αὐτοῦ εἶπεν  
saw Now which when the Pharisee which had bidden him it he spake  
G1492 G1161 G3588 G5330 G3588 G2564 G846 G2036

ἐν ἑαυτῷ λέγων, Οὗτος εἰ ἦν προφήτης  
within himself saying This man if he were a prophet  
G1722 G1438 G3004 G3778 G1487 G2258 G4396

ἐγίνωσκεν ἀν τίς καὶ ποταπὴ ἡ γυνὴ ἡτις  
would have known who and what manner which of woman this is that  
G1097 G302 G5101 G2532 G4217 G3588 G1135 G3748

ἄπτεται αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἀμαρτωλός ἐστιν  
toucheth him for a sinner she is  
G680 G846 G3754 G268 G2076

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 7:16** (Resurrection): And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

**Luke 15:2** (Resurrection): And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

**Isaiah 65:5** (Parallel theme): Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

**Mark 7:21** (Parallel theme): For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,