

47: *Jesus Judges Hypocrisy* - Part 2 (Mt 23:27-39)

Last week we saw Jesus strongly judge hypocrisy & disobedience. Today we see Jesus complete His harsh judgment of His enemies, in their last interaction before Jesus is arrested to be judged by them.

beourguest

Thanks so much for joining us today! Please register with our **CONNECT CARD**.

- Use our **WI-FI: *Worship Center Guest***



GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



CONNECT CARD



CHURCH APP

getourapp

Download our **CHURCH APP** for sermons & notes, ways to connect, upcoming events, online giving, & more.

teachingnotes

Hypocrites bend what the Bible teaches to fit their beliefs & behavior instead of bending their beliefs & behavior to fit what the Bible teaches. Jesus is tired of the the hypocrisy of the religious leaders, obeying fog-filled man-made traditions over the clarity of the Scriptures. For example, the religious leaders were more concerned with tithing their small herbs - not specifically mentioned in Scripture, while neglecting what was CLEAR - treating others with **justice, mercy, & faithfulness**.

Catch the Context

Matthew 23:25-26 (NIV) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! **First clean the inside** of the cup and dish, and **then the outside also will be clean**.

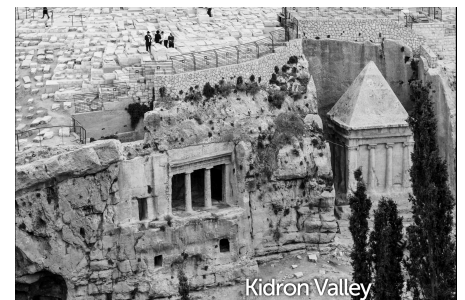
Whitewashed Tombs

Matthew 23:27-28 (NIV)

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like **whitewashed tombs**, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are **full of the bones of the dead** and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are **full of hypocrisy and wickedness**.

Just before Passover (springtime), Jerusalem was prepared for the many pilgrims who would be making their way for the Passover celebration (e.g. roads fixed & general cleaning). Included in that city-wide cleaning were tombstones, cut into the rock formations near the roads just outside the city. Over 800 rock-cut tombs from the time of Jesus have been discovered - owned by the very wealthy.¹

Jewish tombs are a good distance outside the walls of Jerusalem, across the Kidron and Hinnom valleys - facing the city. Some *tombs in the Kidron Valley* monuments are very large and ornate cut into the rock, dating to 100-200 BC. The largest number of *individual tombs* are up above the Kidron Valley, on the Mount of Olives facing Jerusalem.



Kidron Valley

Tombs would be whitewashed, making them look clean & further beautifying the sparkling city. This also made the tombs stand out to visitors, warning them to avoid touching them. Those touching tombs were considered unclean and would not be allowed to participate in the seven days of the Passover festivities.²

Regardless of the clean white appearance, the reality is that **INSIDE**, they contained the smelly, decaying bodies of the dead. This is what Jesus compares **the teachers of the law and Pharisees** to - **whitewashed tombs**. People should avoid them like they avoid whitewashed tombs.

Honoring Dishonored Prophets & Killing the One The Prophets Foretold

Matthew 23:29-30 (NIV) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

Here's the irony: the religious leaders honor the prophets and other righteous people whom their ancestors persecuted. *And while the scribes & Pharisees claim they would honor those who spoke on behalf of God*, the same men are now persecuting Jesus - *the One who speaks not only on behalf of God the Father, but IS God (the son) in skin*.

¹ Paul H. Wright, "Indicting Hypocrisy with Imagery from the Temple Mount," in Lexham Geographic Commentary on the Gospels, ed. Barry J. Beitzel and Kristopher A. Lyle, Lexham Geographic Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 424-425.

² Douglas Sean O'Donnell, Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 689.

FUTURE PERSECUTION TO JESUS & HIS FOLLOWERS

Matthew 23:31-34 (NIV) So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started! "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore **I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers.** Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

Although these men claim to condemn their ancestors' treatment of Godly messengers, they are following in the footsteps of their forerunners. And now Jesus tells them that it's time for them to **complete what their ancestors started.**

🔍 Formal equivalent translations (NET, ESV) say, "**fill up, then the measure of your ancestors.**"

The cup full of sins has been filling up and they are going to cause it to overflow as they unleash their hatred on Jesus & His followers. Jesus call these deadly enemies **snakes & vipers.** And in just a few days, Jesus will be the One who is killed by crucifixion. Others would follow, including many of His 1st century disciples. For example,

- The apostles get flogged under the authority of some of the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:17-42).
- James the apostle is beheaded by Herod, and Peter is arrested, while many of the unbelieving Jews applauded (Acts 12:1-3).
- Steven is stoned to death (Acts 7:51-8:1). Saul of Tarsus affirms it, later repents, follows Jesus, and becomes better known as Paul - the writer of 13 letters - just over 2/3rds of the New testament (69%).³
- Paul is persecuted by unbelieving Jews - being run out of town (cf Acts 9:23-25), thrown in prison on multiple occasions, flogged 5 times, & stoned so badly he was left for dead (2 Cor 11:23-27, Acts 14:19).

✗ **PERSECUTION is coming** through these leaders to Jesus & His followers.

✓ **PAYMENT is coming** to these leaders & their followers through God Almighty!

JUDGMENT COMING TO 'THIS GENERATION'

Matthew 23:35-36 (NIV) And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I tell you, **all this will come on this generation.**

Abel was the 1st person to be murdered in the Hebrew Scriptures. If the order of the Hebrew writings was the same in Jesus' day as in the present Hebrew Scriptures, then **Abel** (Genesis) **to Zechariah** (Chronicles) would represent the entire OT collection.

- **Abel's murder** is recorded in the 1st book of Scripture - **Genesis**. (cf. Gen 4:8-11)
- **Zechariah** was a high priest who confronted his sinful people in 2 Chr 24:20-22, saying:

2 Chronicles 24:20b-21 (LSB)

"Thus says God, 'Why do you trespass against the commandments of Yahweh and do not succeed?

Because you have forsaken Yahweh, He has also forsaken you.'" So they conspired against him and at the command of the king **they stoned him to death in the court of the house of Yahweh.**

2 Intriguing Similarities

1. **Abel** was murdered by his own brother. Since then many Jewish 'brothers' murdered their own people including **Zechariah**.
2. **Abel & Zechariah** were killed because they were RIGHTeous before God, while their enemies were NOT.
Abel's LIFE & Zechariah's LIPS confronted their enemies with truth.

🕒 Here comes **Jesus**, a Jew among Jews, the greatest example of righteousness to ever walk the planet. Jesus has been confronting them with His LIFE & LIPS. Every righteous prophet from Abel to Zechariah pointed to God's TRUTH - Who is now STANDING in from of them - Jesus, the Messiah. Yet these men who had condemned their ancestors persecution of righteous prophets are about *to complete what their ancestors had begun* - killing the RIGHTEOUS ONE. Since these men REJECTED and KILLED the One the Scriptures pointed to, JUDGEMENT would **come on this generation, the very generation that Jesus had spoken to and performed miracles among.**

³ Samuel Macauley Jackson, ed., The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: Embracing Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology and Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Biography from the Earliest Times to the Present Day (New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1908-1914), 160. * Of the 183 pages given to the Epistles in Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament, St. Paul fills 127.

JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM

Matthew 23:37-39 (NIV) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, **how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.** Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Jesus wants to *protect* the people of Jerusalem, **as a hen does her chicks under her wings.** But the majority of the religious leaders & their followers **were not willing** to receive Jesus as their Messiah. Because of this, the ultimate culmination of killing the prophets sent by God is to disgrace the Son rather than honor Him. And **your house is left to you desolate** (more on that next week). And what's this about: **"You will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"**? That already happened earlier in the same writing (Matthew 21:9). Find out next week!

☀ Merrill Tenney

The genius of the Gospels lies not in their rhetorical or philosophical qualities, but lies rather in their presentation of Christ who is unparalleled in all other literature. His supernatural origin, His sinless life, His penetrative teaching,

His triumphant death and resurrection might seem to belong to fiction; and if the Gospels were fiction, they would rank among the world's greatest stories.

They are, however, sober history, and are consequently all the greater.

The Gospels did not make Jesus; He made them. Because of Him they are distinctive, and through their individual emphases and peculiarities He bids the successive generations of men to come to Him.

❓ Now JESUS bids US to come to HIM. Will we?

- Will YOU - like the 1st century disciples of Jesus - sell out & follow Him? OR...
- Will you wait too late, and face the wrath & justice of His judgment?

heretoseveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156), **Rob & Rebecca Leatherberry** (229-232-1087), or **Mark & Dot Mancil** (850-253-5405).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. Before we dig deeper, what stood out to you from today's teaching - challenging, encouraging, or leaving you with questions?
2. **Read Matthew 23:27-28.** How did the background about whitewashed tombs help you to understand what Jesus intended? Why did Jesus compare the Pharisees to whitewashed tombs in the sermon?
3. In what ways can we avoid the danger of *being like whitewashed tombs*, as warned by Jesus? What steps can we take to prioritize inner spiritual growth over outward appearances?
4. **Read Matthew 23:29-36.** What did Jesus know was coming that caused Him to be so swift & focused on judging these men? Take a moment to look back in the Scriptures to see what faced the followers of Jesus years later - apostles flogged (Acts 4:17-42), Steven stoned (Acts 7:51-8:1), James the apostle beheaded (Acts 12:1-3), & Paul faces multiple persecutions (Acts 9:23-25, Acts 14:19, 2 Cor 11:23-27).
5. To whom was **"this generation"** (v36) referring to & why was Jesus holding them accountable for all the righteous who were murdered by their ancestors? Why are they held more accountable for what they are going to do to Jesus & His disciples compared to what their ancestors had done to other prophets?
6. **Read Matthew 23:37-39.** How do you know that the ultimate desire of Jesus wasn't to judge Jerusalem *guilty*? Ultimately, why ARE they going to be judged *guilty*?
7. What does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
8. How can we pray for/care for one another this week? (Pray for one another.)