

# Matthew 23

Jesus

**Matthew 22:45 [3 Tests] from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.**

## I. Woe to Scribes and Pharisees

1 Then Jesus **spoke to the multitudes** and to His disciples,

- **Jesus addressed Religious Jews:** Traps/Tricks
  1. **Answered their questions:** Many times, w/ another question
  2. **Asked them questions:** Painting into corner/ hanging horns of dilemma

Obvious Ch 22 Jesus had the Upper Hand because He had the Truth **as do we**

**Matthew 7:28** ... when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for **He taught them as one having authority**, and not as the scribes.

**Luke 4:32** ...they were astonished at His teaching, for His **word was with authority...**

**John 7:46** The officers answered, "**No man ever spoke like this Man!**"

**Jesus spoke with authority...as can we, if we know the Word of God**

- **After addressing Religious leaders Jesus does 180...**
  1. **Turns from the disgruntled**, discontent, displeased, resentful
  2. **Turns to Multitudes/** Wanted Word. Desired to change.

**His attention/time focused on those who want to Grow**

- **Beginns:** Publicly rebuking Hypocrites/Prideful...

2 ... "The **scribes and the Pharisees** sit in **Moses' seat**. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they **say, and do not do.**

- **Moses Seat?**
  1. Stone seat in front of Synagogues.
  2. Scribes/Pharisees instruct people by Law Moses

**Do what they say... Don't do what they do  
These guys don't Practice what they Preach**

- **Tell you what to do but don't do it themselves...**

4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

- **Hypocrisy...**
  1. Give you hard/impossible instructions

2. Send you on your way/Don't do the same

**Acts 15:10** [Why are you putting...] a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we **were able to bear?**

**Do better. Be better. Do more. Not enough...**

**Matthew 11:28** Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.** 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

5 But all their works they do to **be seen by men.** They make their **phylacteries** broad and **enlarge** the borders of their garments.

- **Motives?** Seen by others/looked up to/complimented
  1. **Big Phylacteries:** Boxes w/Scripture on head/hand; i.e. thoughts/actions
  2. **Big hems**/ornaments on costumes
- **Super-spiritual/Super Duper Saints/BGG's**

6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

- **What they love?**
  1. Best places in public; marketplace
  2. Best seats in private; Homes/Church
  3. Best titles: Rabi/Teacher/Father

8 But you, **do not be called 'Rabbi';** for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

- Desire **to be known** as "Teacher"

**James 4:3** My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a **stricter judgment.**

- **Don't seek a title/recognition...**

**Romans 12:3** [Paul encourages every one of us...] not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to **think soberly,** as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

**1 Corinthians 15:10** But by the grace of God **I am what I am**

- **Don't seek recognition:** Instead Seek God's glory
  1. **We are all brothers:** All sinners in need of a Savior
  2. **True Wisdom belongs to God alone.** It is His on loan to us through Word

**Colossians 3:16** Let the **word of Christ** dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another

- **Religious Leaders coveted recognition...**

1. ...to be called **Rabbi**
2. ... to be called **Teacher**
3. ... to be called **Father**

- Not wrong in itself but...
- **What was Forbidden?** Seeking after a title for **the sake of power over people**

11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

### **Desire to be called Servant of God**

- **God's economy/Spiritual Realm/Right-side-up world...**
  1. Servants are exalted
  2. Self-exalted are put down...

**Proverbs 16:18** Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

- Everybody's a big shot until their not. e.g. David Lee

Jesus again addresses the Religious Jews now in front of Multitude and Disciples  
I.e. Those who once looked up to them

13 "But **woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

### **8 Woes against Scribes/Pharisees**

- **Your teachings have Eternal Consequences**
  1. You are not going to heaven but hell
  2. You are taking others to hell w/you
- **Religious Hypocrisy:** Actors in baboonish costumes performing in genre of Tragedy

**Religion is not a joke. It is a direct attack against Christ. Woe to you!**

**John 14:6** ... "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

**Acts 4:12** Nor is there salvation in **any other**, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**John 10:8** All who ever came before Me [and after in context] are thieves and robbers

- Hinduism            1500    BC
- Zoroastrianism    1000    BC
- Confucianism      600     BC
- Buddhism           600     BC

- Taoism                    600    BC
- Shintoism                300    BC
- Islam                     622    AD
- LDS                        1830   AD
- SDA                        1863   AD
- JW                         1879   AD
- New Age                 1980   AD

**Similarities with Scribes/Pharisees?** All religions truly are the same...

- Trying to achieve Salvation by works
- Denying Person/Work/Blood of Jesus Christ

**Revelation 5:9** [Praise for Salvation] For You [Jesus] were slain, And have redeemed us to God **by Your blood** Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...

- **False teaching has Eternal Consequences**

Woe to you. You are not going to heaven. You are going to hell  
You are responsible for taking others to hell w/you

- **Jesus exposes their hypocrisy...** Filthy wedding clothes begin to fall off

**14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

- **Hypocrites;** i.e. actors!

**Fake-prayed long prayers with helpless widows**

Oh Lord you know temple needs money. How I wish this poor widow would cut you a check

- **Greater Condemnation/Judgment/Eternal Suffering** that *just* stealing
  1. Both Stole and Lied
  2. Took advantage of vulnerable.
  3. All under the presence of religion

"These words prove that there are degrees of punishment, as there are gradations in glory. All the ungodly will be judged and condemned by the Righteous Judge, but 'the greater condemnation' will be reserved for the hypocrites." [Spurgeon]

**James 1:27** Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. [By-product of a relationship with Jesus]

- Woe to you. Your condemnation will be great...

**15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you travel land and sea **to win one proselyte,** and **when he is won,** you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

- **Win a convert to what?**

1. To Jesus or your Organization?
2. To Salvation or man-made set of rules?
3. To Heaven or to Hell?

**Romans 10:2** [Paul of Jews...] they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 ... being ignorant of God's righteousness [they seek] to establish their own righteousness

Their business was not to turn men from sin unto God, but merely to convert them to an opinion [Poole]

**If you follow them and their teachings you will follow them to hell**

**Galatians 1:6** I marvel that you are turning away so soon **from Him** who called you in the grace of Christ, to a **different gospel**, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 11:4** For if he who comes preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

- **Only one Jesus can save...**

1. The Jesus that is God
2. The Jesus that offers Salvation only as a gift **paid for with His blood**

**Don't dare offer God anything for Salvation  
Apart from the Blood of Jesus He provided. Bind him hand and foot**

**16 "Woe to you, blind guides**

- **Blind:** Without Holy Spirit

**How many church leaders are unsaved/Without Holy Spirit?**

- Blind guides making up stories/Hallmark quotes. Calling selves "pastors"

16b... [Blind guides] who say, 'Whoever **swears by the temple, it is nothing**; but whoever swears by the **gold of the temple**, he is obliged to perform it.' 17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the **gold or the temple** that sanctifies the gold? 18 And [you say...] 'Whoever **swears by the altar, it is nothing**; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' 19 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the **gift or the altar** that sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21 He who swears by the temple, swears by it **and by Him who dwells in it**. 22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

- **Deceitful Oaths...**

1. We swear by the gold in the Temple not the Temple itself
2. We swear by the gift on the Altar not the Altar itself

**Jesus would say if you swear at all it is before God**

No matter how you word it/try to weasel out of it/you are responsible for it

**Matthew 12:36...** I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

Jesus reminded them that every oath is binding and God holds the oath-maker to account, even if they excuse themselves. [Guzik]

- **Hypocrites:** Actors/Game Players. But this is not a game
- **Fools/Blind:** Yet accountable now that Jesus has come...

**Luke 8:18 ... take heed how you hear.** For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

- Listening without receiving callouses the heart. These hearts are forming a crust

23 **"Woe to you,** scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you **pay tithe** of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: **justice and mercy and faith.** These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 **Blind guides,** who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

- **Consumed by lesser/easier things**
  1. Pay tithes to most minute details
  2. Neglect Mercy to others/Faith in God...true sacrificial obedience

Continue paying tithes but that doesn't get you off the hook w/regard to loving God/others  
Like picking a gnat out of a drink of water/swallowing a camel

25 **"Woe to you,** scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you **cleanse the outside of the cup and dish,** but inside they are **full of extortion and self-indulgence.** 26 **Blind Pharisee, first cleanse** the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

- Paint a pig Gold and add Pink Ribbon but still a pig

**One Pharisee listening got it... Inward change is most important**

**John 3:1** There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **born again,** he cannot see the kingdom of God." ...

- **Most Religious Leaders missed it**
- **Look good/Smell good but...**
  1. Full of Extortion of Others

## 2. Full of Indulgence of Self

27 **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.** 28 Even so you also **outwardly appear righteous to men,** but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

- **What else is inside these Fancy Religious Leaders?**

1. Hypocrisy
2. **Lawlessness?** Later

- **Whitewashed Tombs?**

It was the custom of the Jews of that time to whitewash the tombs in the city of Jerusalem before Passover so that no one would touch one accidentally, thus making themselves ceremonially unclean. Jesus said these religious leaders were like these whitewashed tombs ... **pretty on the outside, but dead on the inside.** [Guzik]

- **Jesus explains how they are lawless ...**

**Exodus 20:13** You shall not murder.

29 **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ 31 “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.**

- You admit that forefathers guilty of murdering prophets/righteous
- You compensate for their sin building tombs/monument to those they killed

Yet you do the same/will continue to do the same  
**And go so far as to murder the Son of God**

**Revelation 17:6** [Religion murderous hatred toward God] I saw the woman [false-religion], drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

Jesus spoke so strongly about these religious leaders for two reasons. First, He did not want others to be deceived by them. Second, He loved these men. These men were the farthest from God and they needed to be warned of coming judgment. What Jesus really wanted was their repentance, not their judgment. [Guzik]

- **I will put your righteousness to the test...**

34 Therefore, indeed, **I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes:**

some of them you will **kill and crucify**, and some of them **you will scourge** in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that **on you** may come all the **righteous blood shed** on the earth, from the **blood of righteous Abel** to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom **you murdered between the temple and the altar.**

- **Who will send? I Jesus will send...**
  1. Prophets
  2. Wise Men
  3. Scribes whom **you will kill, crucify and scourge**

The blood that flies from the lashes of the whip and sticks to you will be a reminder of the first martyr Abel killed by his jealous brother... to Zechariah whom you murdered.

**John 8:44** You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning

- Insides filled with Hypocrisy and Lawlessness...**even murder**

36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will **come upon this generation.**

- **All these things:** Sin and Judgment

**SUMMARY Woe to Scribes and Pharisees**

## **II. Jesus Laments over Jerusalem**

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but you were not willing!**

- **Harsh Condemnation...**

... And yet behind it all is His heart, and the 'woes' merge into a wail of agony, the cry of a mother over her lost child." [Morgan]

- **God's compassion...**
  1. Gather Israel to Himself
  2. Gather under His Wings of Protection

### **But you were not willing**

God wanted to save them. Called them. Pleaded with them. They were not willing

38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"

- You will be destroyed but one day...your descendants will call me Savior

**Revelation 1:7** Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And **all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.** Even so,

Amen.

**SUMMARY Jesus Laments over Jerusalem**