



The One Year Bible Club



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Nick Boork Ministries

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Matthew 23:13-39

New King James Version (NKJV)

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.

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.

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.

¹⁶ "Woe to you, 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, '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.

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!

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.

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.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.³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.³³ Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?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.³⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

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!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!’”

Okay, here's my commentary

In Matthew chapter 23, Jesus pronounces 8 “Woe’s” upon the Scribes and Pharisees. The word woe means grief or denunciation. I think both meanings are relevant because the Scribes and Pharisees caused both grief because of their hypocrisy and therefore Jesus denounced or exposed them as false leaders that were on the pathway to the destruction of hell and they were influencing multitudes of people to follow them. What were these woes that Jesus pronounced upon the Scribes and Pharisees? Let's go through them and as we do we will discover through their bad example of what God does not want us to become today.

1st Woe – Shutting the kingdom of heaven not allowing men to enter

Jesus came preaching the truth to set men free from their sins and receive them into the kingdom of heaven but the Scribes and Pharisees rejected Jesus Christ and his message and sought to turn people away from Christ. It was bad enough that they didn't believe in Jesus as the Messiah but they also aggressively tried to stop others from believing and following Jesus Christ as the Savior.

2nd Woe – Devouring widows houses and praying long public prayers to impress people about how spiritual they were

In other words, they took advantage of widows and robbed them of their material possessions. They also prayed long-winded prayers in public just to get people to believe and trust in them because they appeared to be really connected to God. Jesus said because they did this they would receive greater condemnation.

James 3:1 alludes to this also; “NOT MANY [of you] should become teachers (self-constituted censors and reprovers of others), my brethren, for you know that we [teachers] will be judged by a higher standard and with greater severity [than other people; thus we assume the greater accountability and the more condemnation].” Amplified.

So if you're a spiritual leader, a teacher or preacher of the Word of God when it comes time for judgment the Lord will evaluate each one to see if they lived what they preached that others should live. This goes back to the original warning that Jesus gave to beware of the Scribes

and Pharisees in Matthew 23:3...do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

3rd Woe – Reproducing twofold children of hell

Jesus said that the Scribes and Pharisees were zealous to convert people to their traditions and way of life. The problem was because they were hypocrites they reproduced hypocrites. If a preacher is not born-again he won't get others born again. If he's not filled with the Holy Spirit he won't get others filled with the Holy Spirit. Preachers reproduce what they are on the inside not what they seem to be and proclaim on the outside.

4th Woe – A false value system of swearing oaths

The Scribes and Pharisees developed a corrupt system of swearing oaths using the gold of the Temple as the value that obligated people swearing legal oaths. If a person was put under oath to perform something they were obligated to follow through but the Scribes and Pharisees were causing people to declare their integrity swearing by either the gold of the Temple or the sacrifice on the altar. Jesus rebukes them for this because it was a corrupt system. This is why he said what's greater the gold or the Temple that sanctifies the gold. And when a person swore by the Temple he was really swearing by God that lived in the Temple not the brick-and-mortar but God. The living God that would hold a person accountable for what they had sworn His name. This is why Jesus taught in Matthew 5:37 But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

5th Woe – Majoring on the minors and neglecting more important teachings

According to Jesus, the Scribes and Pharisees were so legalistic in their approach to tithing that they emphasized to a great degree even bringing to the Temple 10% of the smallest herbs growing in their gardens. Now Jesus did not rebuke them because they tithed, as a matter fact He said you should tithe but as spiritual leaders the Scribes and Pharisees were neglecting to teach the more important things about God to the people like His Justice, Mercy and Judgment. Justice meaning what is right and wrong according to the Word of God and how to apply the Word of God to our daily lives. Mercy meaning teaching God's heart about forgiveness and reconciliation of relationships with God and man and how to live in the Mercy of God. Judgment meaning accurately teaching about what God blesses and what God condemns.

So today in our churches, we should preach what is really important and not major on the minors preaching our opinions about passing fads and fashions. What we should teach is the gospel of Jesus Christ, His salvation and the commandments of Jesus to love God and all people.

6th Woe – External righteousness without internal transformation

Jesus said the Scribes and the Pharisees looked great on the outside but inwardly they were sinners. Why? Because they didn't deal with their inward heart and evil motives. They never really repented before God for their sinful ways they just reformed themselves outwardly to look like they were righteous. This is why Jesus gave the example that they cleanse the outside of the cup but the inside was full of extortion and lawlessness. Jesus said they needed to concentrate on cleansing the inside first then the outside.

7th Woe – Religious hypocrisy

Jesus said the Scribes and Pharisees were like tombs that had a fresh coat of paint. However on the inside Jesus said they were full of dead men's bones and all kinds of unclean things. This is highly condemned by God because they put on a religious appearance looking righteous and holy in the eyes of men but on the inside they were full of sin and death.

8th Woe –They were the seed of murderers and they were murderers at heart

This is why Jesus exposed them because he knew what was in their hearts. Even though they said they would never have murdered the prophets as their fathers did yet their hearts were full of envy and hatred against Christ. Jesus called them serpents and snakes and asked them how they thought they would escape the condemnation of hell. This is a solemn warning given by Christ confronting the Scribes and Pharisees with the true condition of their lives before God. Did they listen to Christ and repent? No, they were the ones that turned Jesus over to Pilate to be crucified because they were full of hatred even as the Bible says they hated Christ without cause. Yet, Jesus prayed for them from the cross saying Father forgive them because they know not what they do.

What's the Bottom line?

- Live a sincere life not trying to impress men.
- Live to please God and don't live for the praise of men.

- Beware of hypocrisy because everything hidden will be revealed.
- Cleanse the inside of your life or your heart and mind first.
- If you're called to leadership don't shrink away from the responsibility but be the best leader you can be by living in the truth yourself and you will reproduce true children of God and the Lord will bless your ministry with fruit that remains to His glory!

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