

6/10/18

Matthew 23

Jesus has thwarted every attempt by the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians to entrap Him.

He has fulfilled His office of King, priest and prophet to the nation that constantly rejected Him.

So now with a broken heart Jesus pronounces judgment of the leaders and soon after the city of Jerusalem.

23:1-12 The words of Jesus to the multitudes and disciples.

* Parallel passages. Mk. 12:37b-40; Lk. 20:45-47

23:1-2 The affirmation of the authority of the seat of Moses.

- 1) Jesus turned to speak now to a different audience, "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples". vs. 1
 - a) It is till Tuesday of Passion Week. Matt. 21:23-22:46
 - b) Jesus now turns from the religious rulers to the crowd and the disciples.
- 2) Jesus affirmed the position of these rulers, "saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." vs. 2

- a) The scribes, the lawyers and interpreters of the Law and the Pharisee the ritualist and hypocrites.
- b) The reference to the seat of Moses "kathedra" was the official chair representing the law. Jer. 23; Ezk. 34:1-10; Tit. 1:5-11

23:3 The biblical principle of obedience to the Law.

Observe what is Scriptural not what they do.

- 1) The people were to obey the Law in its teaching, "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do." vs. 3a-b
- 2) The people were not to follow the example of the scribes and Pharisees, "but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do." vs. 3c-d

23:4 The religious rulers burdened the people.

- 1) They weigh people down with their traditions, "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders without helping them." vs. 4a-c
- 2) They do not require the same of themselves, "but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers." vs. 4d
 - * Pastors and leaders are to be examples. 1Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17

23:5 The religious rulers love the admiration of people.

- 1) Their motives are self-centered, “But all their works they do to be seen by men.” vs. 5a
- 2) They display their self-righteous appearance, “They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.” vs.

5b

- a) Phylacteries “phulakterion” was a little a small box with four compartment containing parchments of the scriptures and were worn on their forehead, they would make them broad. Ex. 3:1-10, 11-16; Deut. 6:6-9; 11:13-21

* Also on their arm written in four columns of seven lines

- b) The borders “kraspedon” refers to tassels of blue hanging down from the cloak to remember heaven, they would enlarge them. Num. 15:38; Deut. 22:12

23:6 The religious rulers loved prestige.

- 1) They loved to sit where they would be recognized, “They love the best places at feasts.” vs. 6a
* The best places “protoklisia”, were the first couches to recline at meal.
- 2) They loved to sit to be seen by all in the synagogues, “the best seats in the synagogues.” vs. 6b

* The best seats “protokathedria”, refers to the chief seats on platform facing the congregation.

23:7 The religious rulers loved titles.

- 1) They loved to be recognized in public, “greetings in the marketplaces.” vs. 7a
- 2) They loved to be honored in public with titles, “and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’” vs. 7b-d

23:8-12 The disciples of Christ were to be different than the religious rulers.

- 1) There was to be a sharp contrast, “But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.” vs. 8
 - a) The disciples were to not seek or demand titles, lie “Rabbi”.
 - b) The reason is there is only one true teacher Christ, they were not to flaunt their authority or power as lords.
 - c) The second reason, all believers are brothers in Christ, in the same family saved by grace.
- 2) They were not to give honor to any man to the things of God, “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.” vs. 9
* Don’t attribute to origin of spiritual truth to any man!

- 3) They were not to be proud seeking the title of teacher, “And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.” vs. 10
* Don’t let anyone be your spiritual guide, but Christ.
- 4) True greatness is in serving, “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.” vs. 11
* The servant is the greatest.
- 5) Pride and humility are opposed to each other, “And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” vs. 12
 - a) Pride leads to being abased and humility leads to exaltation. 1Pet. 5:5
 - b) Jesus, served and washed feet. Jn. 13;
Phil. 2:5-11

23:13-36 The woes of Jesus to the Scribes and Pharisees.

23:13-15 The hindering of people to enter the Kingdom of God.

23:13 The first woe.

- 1) The stern rebuke is now turned to the scribes and Pharisees, “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” vs. 13
 - a) The word but “de” marks the sharp contrast.
 - b) The word woe “auai” is interjection of grief and denunciation.

- c) The word always has the idea of the “burden of the Lord”, it is a proclamation of coming judgment.
- d) The word hypocrites “hupokrites”, means an actor or pretender, a false person and Jesus will call them this seven times.
- 2) The charge is stated, “For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.” vs. 13b
 - a) They shut up “kleio”, withheld and obstructed the knowledge of God, to point them to God, so they could call on God.
 - b) The kingdom of heaven, the period of grace from the First to the Second Coming. Lk. 11:52
- 3) The evil character of these men is declared, “for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” vs. 13c-d

23:14 The second woe.

- 1) The stern rebuke again is for their greed and covetousness, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” vs. 14a-c
 - a) The second woe is omitted in the R.S.V. and should be troubling to every believer.
 - b) This entire formula is repeated seven times exactly, with the exception of verse 16.

- c) The repeated identity of the scribes and Pharisees is hypocrites, actors, pretenders.
- 2) The charge is again stated, “For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers.” vs. 14d-e
 - b) The word devour “katesthio”, indicates to take advantage of widows of their material substance.
 - c) They robbed them through spiritual pretense.
 - * Standing in prayer in the synagogue and corners of the streets. Matt. 5:5
- 3) Their judgment would be more severe, “Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.” vs. 14f

23:15 The third woe.

- 1) The next stern rebuke, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” vs. 15a-c
 - a) They were consistent to their evil bent.
 - b) They had learned to use the system with a mask of deception.
- 2) The charges, “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.” vs. 15d-f
 - a) The word proselyte “proselytos”, means a Gentile converting to Judaism.
 - 1)) There were the God fears, proselytes of the gate that were not circumcised,

but followed all the ritual and ceremony. Acts 13:50; 16:14

- 2)) There were proselyte of righteousness who were circumcised.
- b) The third woe regards making a proselyte not just after their kind, but much worse, “twice as much a son of hell” as themselves.
 - * The word for hell is “gehenna”, the ultimate place for all those who rejected Jesus as Savior and Lord.

23:16-24 The placing of distorted value on vows and giving.

23:16-22 The fourth woe.

23:16 The misunderstanding of vows and sacred things.

- 1) The stern rebuke is different for the first and only time, “Woe to you, blind guides.” vs. 16a
 - a) They were spiritually blind, having no spiritual understanding and misinterpreting the word of God.
 - b) They were “blind guides” that would only be able to mislead and deceive people.
- 2) The charges, “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.’” vs. 16b-f

- a) The vows were being measured by the object, rather than the heart integrity before God.
- b) Jesus said let it be yes or no. Matt. 5:33-37

23:17 The false logic is condemned by Jesus.

- 1) Jesus castigated them severely, “Fools and blind!” vs. 17a
 - a) The word fools “moros”, means dull and stupid, involving spiritual things.
 - b) The word “blind” confirms their lack of spiritual perception, not physically.
- 2) The rational conclusion, “For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?” vs. 17a-b
 - a) This is a rhetorical question having only one answer and it is the correct one.
 - b) It is the temple that sanctified the gold.

23:18-22 The other examples of their spital blindness regarding vows.

- 1) Jesus pointed out the inconsistency of their logic as He quoted their words, “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.*’” vs. 18
 - a) The altar was part of the temple furnishings and belonged to God, yet they dismissed it as nothing.

- b) They prioritized the oath taken by the gift that was being given to God, a misplaced value.
- 2) Jesus rebuked and gave the proper value priority, “Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?” vs. 19
 - a) The word fools “moros”, again means dull and stupid, involving spiritual things.
 - b) The word “blind” confirms their lack of spiritual perception, not physically.
 - c) This is the second time. vs. 17
- 3) Jesus corrects their bad theology and practice regarding oaths. vs. 20-22
 - a) The altar is what sanctifies the gift, “Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.” vs. 20
 - b) The temple sanctifies the oath taken, “He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.” vs. 21
 - c) The oath taken by heaven is one ascribed to God, “And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.” vs. 22

23:23-24 The fifth woe.

- 1) The stern rebuke is state again by the repeated formula, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” vs. 23a-c

- 2) The charges, “For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith.” vs. 23d-f
- a) The fifth woe regards sacrifice over obedience. vs. 23; 1Sam. 15:22
 - b) The Law instructed these to be tithed. Lev. 27:30-33; Deut. 14:22-29; Mic. 6:8
 - c) They were neglecting and ingoring the more important matters of the law and the spirit of the law: “justice, mercy and faith”. vs. 23
 - 1)) Justice “krisis”, means righteous judgments regarding the law.
 - 2)) Mercy “eleos”, means kindness and pity towards man.
 - 3)) Faith “pistis”, means acting with conviction and trust in God’s word.
 - 4)) Michah says, “He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?” Mic. 6:8
- 3) The proper instruction, “These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.” vs. 23
- * a) The whole word of God is to be obeyed.
 - b) We can not be selective to our own choosing.
 - c) It is the little foxes spoil the vine. Song Sol. 2:15

- 4) The vivid evidence of their spiritual blindness, “Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!” vs. 24
- a) They were spiritually blind.
 - b) They would strained their drink with cloth to prevent them from swallow an unclean gnat, but in their disobedient of the important matter, they were figuratively swallowing a camel, the larges unclean animals. vs. 24
 - c) They were giving the appearance of diligent obedience being self-righteous actors.

23:25-28 The confusion over outward and inward holiness.

23:25-26 The sixth woe.

- 1) The stern rebuke continues, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” vs. 25a-c
 - a) They were good actors!
 - b) They needed to be born again.
- 2) The charges, “For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.” vs. 25
 - a) Their outward actions, deeds and rituals presented a very righteous state, while in reality their inward state was seeped in sin.
 - b) Their sinful hearts were full of extortion “horpage”, the act of plundering and

robbing and self-indulgence “akrasia” means excess, not restraining oneself from nothing. Jer 17:9; Matt. 15:18-20

- 3) The rebuke and proper instruction, “Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.” vs. 26
 - a) Jesus rebuked them ordering them to deal with their dirty hearts first.
 - b) Then the outside will be in line with the ways of God.

23:27-28 The seventh woe.

- 1) The stern rebuke, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” vs. 27a-c
- 2) The charges, “For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all uncleanness.” vs. 27d-e
 - a) The tombs would be marked out in feast days to safeguard pilgrims coming, lest they accidentally step on a grave and be defiled. Num. 19:16
 - b) The scribes and Pharisees were the same, they contaminated people.
- 3) Their self-deception and hypocrisy is declared., “Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” vs. 28
 - * People would be affected by their sinfulness!

23:29-30 The eighth woe.

- 1) The stern rebuke, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” vs. 29a-c
- 2) The charges, “Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous.” vs. 29d
- 3) The quotation of their own words, “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.’” vs. 30
 - a) Their hearts were insincere and self-delute by sin.
 - b) Their self-righteousness was intolerable.
 - c) But they were better than their forefathers.

23:31-36 The concluding verdict judgment.

- 1) The evidence of their deceptive lives condemned them, “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.” vs. 31
- 2) They were delivered over to their depraved character, “Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ *guilt*.” vs. 32
- 3) Their self-deception of being right with God, “Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?” vs. 33
 - * John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus used such words, “But when he saw many of

the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of **vipers!** Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” Matt. 3:7

- 4) The future would only varify their evil and guilt like their fathers, “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.” vs. 34

* They would persecute the apostle, prophets and beleivers of the church, which are recorded in the book of Acts, such as James and Stephen. Acts 12:2; 7:59-8:2

- 5) They would be judged being libe for the blood of those sent, “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.” vs. 35
- a) The blood of Abel was the first. Gen. 3
- b) The blood of Zechariah, son of Berechish the last recorded in 2 Chronicles that was the last book in the Hebrew writtings. 2Chron. 24:20-21
- c) The confusion is in the term “son of Berechiah” Chronicles say “son of Jehoiada the priest”.

d) Either ??

- 6) Their judgment is sure, “Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.” vs. 36

23:37-39 The weeping of Jesus over Jerusalem as He pronounced her judgment.

* The parallel passage. Lk 13:34-35

23:37 The broken heart of Jesus.

- 1) The lamentable words of Jesus for her treaury to God by murdering His messengers, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!” vs. 37a-c
- a) Jerusalem was the God’s city, chosen by Him. 2Chron. 6:6; Dan. 9:19; Zech. 3:2
- b) Their guilt was undeniable.
- 2) The deligent persistance of God to turn and protect her, “How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings.” vs. 37d-e
- a) The picture is of God incredible patience and love for her people and city. Amos 4:6-12
- b) The picture is of loving provision and protection.
- 3) The content and willful rebellion and rejection of God, “but you were not willing!” vs. 37f

23:38-39 The rejection of Israel by Jesus

pronouncing Jerusalem. Hos. 13:9

- 1) The declaration of her judgment to come,
 “See! Your house is left to you desolate.” vs. 38
 - a) “Your house” verses “My house”. Matt. 21:13
 - b) Desolate “eremos”, solitary, uninhabited, deserted like a wilderness.
 - c) In 70 A.D. Titus destroyed the city and the temple, not leaving one stone upon another as Jesus predicted. Matt. 24:1-2
- 2) The declaration of future comfort to Israel,
 “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!’” vs. 39
 - a) This will take place at the end of the Great-Tribulation.
 - b) The woman, Israel, will flee to the wilderness and be protected by god for the last three and a half years, the remnant. Rev. 12:6; Is. 16:1
 - c) The LORD will pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication and they will look on Him whom they pierced, God will destroy the armies of the world and establish His Kingdom on the earth. Zech. 12:10-14; 14:3-9