

Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees *Part 2*

Matthew 23:16-22

The Wickedness of the Pharisees

- During the three years of Jesus' teachings, He consistently highlighted the unfaithfulness of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - *In **Matt 5:20**, Jesus said, "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."*

The Wickedness of the Pharisees

- During the three years of Jesus' teachings, He consistently highlighted the unfaithfulness of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - In ***Matt 6:1-5; 16-18***, Jesus referred to “hypocrites” which is a term He would use for the scribes and Pharisees.

The Wickedness of the Pharisees

- During the three years of Jesus' teachings, He consistently highlighted the unfaithfulness of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - In **Matt 12:22-45**, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their accusation against Him, emphasizing their absolute rejection of Him.

The Wickedness of the Pharisees

- During the three years of Jesus' teachings, He consistently highlighted the unfaithfulness of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - In **Matt 15:1-14**, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for making the command of God of "*no effect by your tradition.*" (vs 6)

The Wickedness of the Pharisees

- During the three years of Jesus' teachings, He consistently highlighted the unfaithfulness of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - In **Matt 16:1-4, 5-12**, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for not recognizing "*the signs of the times.*"
 - *Jesus then went on to warn His disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees.*

The Wickedness of the Pharisees

- During the three years of Jesus' teachings, He consistently highlighted the unfaithfulness of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - Jesus used three parables to highlight the wickedness of the Pharisees.
 - *Parable of the Two Sons. **Matt 21:28-32***
 - *The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers. **Matt 21:33-46***
 - *Parable of the Wedding Feast. **Matt 22:1-14***

The Wickedness of the Pharisees

- The more Jesus preached against them and their wickedness, the more the scribes and Pharisees determined to stop Him.
- As we enter this section of Matthew 23, we see Jesus not holding back in His condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees.

The Woes

- What is a “woe”?
 - A “woe” was a **public** denouncement of someone or something, a public condemning or censuring.
 - During the Old Testament, God’s prophets would deliver “woes” or **public** denouncements of ungodly behavior.
 - *Isaiah’s denouncement of Judah. **Isaiah 5:8-23***
 - *Habakkuk’s denouncement of Babylon. **Hab 2:6-20***
 - Jesus publicly denounced Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. **Matt 11:20-24**

The Woes

- What is a “hypocrite”?
 - Jesus often referred to the scribes and Pharisees as “hypocrites.” *e.g., **Matt 6:2, 5, 16; 15:7; 16:3; 22:18; 23:13***
 - *The Greek word, ὑποκριτής (hypokritēs) refers to a play actor who wore a mask to play a part.*
 - *Jesus’ use of the word appears to emphasize the scribes and Pharisees “performing” righteousness rather than “living” it.*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They had “*shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.*” ***vs 13***
 - *These leaders rejected Jesus’ message of repentance. Matt 3:1-12*
 - *Through their teachings, they would have discouraged people from hearing Jesus’ message.*
 - *Through their hypocrisy, they may have turned people away from desiring to follow God.*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They had devoured widow's houses while pretending to be godly through long prayers.
vs 14
 - *The “lawyers” may have stolen from widows as being executors of their husband's estate.*
 - *They were violating the law of Moses. **Exo 22:22-24***
 - *This woe is not found in certain older manuscripts. However, it is found in **Mark 12:40** and **Luke 20:47**.*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They would go to great effort to proselyte a person. Yet, they would “*make him twice as much a son of hell*” as themselves. ***vs 15***
 - *They would teach him the law and their many, many extrabiblical traditions.*
 - *They would set examples of self-righteousness.*
 - *“...make him twice as much a son of hell” may refer to the “convert” going farther than the teacher.*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They would make a distinction in oaths were there was no difference. ***vs 16-22***
 - *Jesus uses the words “fools and blind!” in reference to the scribes and Pharisees.*
 - *He calls them “blind” five times in this public address. Cf. Matt 15:14*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They would make a distinction in oaths were there was no difference. ***vs 16-22***
 - *This distinction gave them a way out.*
 - *“Swear by the temple and it is nothing.”*
 - *“Swear by the gold in the temple, **then** you are obliged.”*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They would make a distinction in oaths were there was no difference. ***vs 16-22***
 - *This distinction gave them a way out.*
 - *“Swear by the altar and it is nothing.”*
 - *“Swear by the gift on the altar, then you are obliged.”*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They would make a distinction in oaths were there was no difference. ***vs 16-22***
 - *Jesus' showed them their foolishness.*
 - *To swear by the altar is to swear by all things on the altar.*
 - *To swear by the temple is to swear by the temple and He who dwells in the temple.*
 - *To swear by heaven is to swear by the throne of God.*

The Woes

- Jesus publicly denounced the scribes and Pharisees. ***Matt 23:13-36***
 - Woe: They would make a distinction in oaths were there was no difference. ***vs 16-22***
 - *Their tradition made a way of taking an oath without any intentions of honoring the pledge.*
 - *Jesus addressed this mindset in ***Matt 5:33-37***.*

Conclusion

The takeaway...

- Never let our lives hinder someone from entering the kingdom of heaven.
 - Our light is to shine before men. ***Matt 5:16***
 - But, if we are walking in darkness, then we are failing to lead others to Christ. ***Cf. 1 John 1:6***

Conclusion

The takeaway...

- Never defraud or steal from others, especially those who are vulnerable and without help and support.
 - *“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.” James 1:27*

Conclusion

The takeaway...

- Bring others to Christ is part of the good works for which we have been created. ***Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14***
- We are to go and make disciples of all nations. ***Matt 28:19***
- However, we must teach the new convert accurately and continue to nurture them as babe in Christ. ***Cf. Heb 5:12-14***

Conclusion

The takeaway...

- Be honest. Be truthful. Let your “Yes” or “No” be bound by honor.
 - *“But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No,’ lest you fall into judgment.” James 5:12*
- Do not seek excuses or clever words to avoid the plain truth.

Conclusion

The takeaway...

- In this series of Woes, Jesus is publicly denouncing the sins of the scribes and Pharisees.
- If there is sin in our lives, then repent and turn away from sins before someone has to publicly denounce your sins.

Cf. Matt 18:15-17