

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH
IVn. Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (cont.)
Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 14 First Evening c. 5:00 P.M.)
Wed, 12th Nisán (Apr. 1), A.D. 33: Inconsistency in Stewardship (5)
Mt. 23:23,24

Introduction: We have been considering the lessons which The Lord Jesus Christ taught along the way to and in The Temple on Wednesday two days before His Crucifixion

A. Lessons Taught on the Way to The Temple (c. 5:50 to 7:15 A.M.).

The Lord Jesus and His disciples spent the night on the south west end of The Mount of Olives. On their way to The Temple, Jesus taught them three Lessons on Faith, Prayer, and Forgiveness.

B. His Ministry in The Temple (c. 7:30 A.M. to c. 6:00 P.M.).

When Jesus entered The Temple early in the morning the religious leaders (chief priests, scribes, and elders) inquired of Him about His authority. Jesus challenged them by answering with a question of His own about John the Baptizer. After refusing to answer His question, Jesus told parables and began teaching lessons in eight categories.

1. The Lesson on Faithful Service (c. 9:00 A.M.).

This parable indicated two kinds disobedience: Blatant Resistant Disobedience and Reserved Disobedience which is implied consent to do what the father ordered but failed to comply. All sinners who repent and persistently obey The Father God's will and commands shall pass on and enter into The Kingdom of The God before religious hypocrites, who do not enter but shall be punished eternally in The Lake of Fire.

2. The Lesson on Fatal Wrath (c. 10:00 A.M.) - Two Parables:

a. The Parable of the Housemaster and the Fruit of his Vineyard.

This parable teaches that we all shall be called into account for complete obedience to all four of The Lord Jesus Christ's Commands and thereby render to Him the fruits of their work of discipleship. But failure to render the fruits of the vineyard to The Housemaster results in **Fatal Wrath of Eternal Destruction**.

b. The Parable of the Wedding Feast (c. 11:00 A.M.).

This parable teaches that failure to respond to the invitation to The Wedding Feast and wear the provided Wedding clothing results in **Fatal Wrath** by being cast into outer darkness, suffering in anguish forever with weeping and gnashing of teeth in The Lake of Fire.

3. The Lesson on Financial Responsibility (c. 1:00 P.M.)

Jesus responded to the question by the delegation of spies composed of Pharisees, chief priests, and scribes with a question followed by an example and another question which He turned into a visual aid to teach The Truth that it is equally important in the eyes of The God to render to each authority over us that which rightfully belongs to each.

4. The Lesson on Future Living (c. 1:45 P.M.)

This lesson teaches that The God expects every human to live in the light of life after death and the resurrection which follows. Every human must face The Judgment Throne of The God whether or not that one believes it and permanently commits trust to The Lord Jesus Christ. There is on the one hand The Resurrection of Absolute Life in union with The Lord Jesus Christ and on the other hand the resurrection for judging to Eternal Damnation. We must live so as to avoid that tremendous eternal cost and to face life after death.

5. The Lesson on False Religion (c. 2:30 P.M.).

This Lesson on False Religion covers four segments: Futile Resolve,

Faulty Reflection on Scripture, Fallible Recognition, and Fatal Rebuke.

a. The Reproof of Futile Resolve (c. 2:30 P.M.).

A lawyer-scribe took up the resolve and challenged Him with the question, Which sort of commandment in The Law ^{is} great and ⁰first of all? The answer: We must sovereignly prefer The Godhead **FIRST** in all things and put all that concerns Him **FIRST** before all earthly desires and ambition!

b. The Reproof of Faulty Rendering of Scripture (c. 3:15 P.M.).

There were four areas of Faulty Rendering of Truth which needed to be reproofed and corrected; concerning: the resurrection, the impact and priority of The Law and the priority of love; Theology, especially Christology; and which Commandment of The Law was great.

In dealing with the matter if Christology, He explained the two meanings of 'Lord' and the two aspects of His Sonship. The Lord Jesus Christ is David's Lord and Supreme Master and at the same time He also is Jehovah 'LORD,' David's Redeemer, The Second Person of The Godhead. In this way His Lordship is twofold. Firstly, He is The Son of The God. Secondly, He is The Son of Man (lit.: The Human), born of woman.

6. **The Lesson on Reproof of Fallible Recognition** (c. 3:45 P.M.).

Then in mid First evening (c. 3:45 P.M.), The Lord Jesus warned the crowds and His disciples against three serious categories in which the Pharisees used to obtain special recognition and avid attention: Lives Inconsistent with their Teachings, Insolent Appearance, and Intentness that their Status Be Honored. Although all these things may not be present at the same time, many of them are present in the lives of constituents and proponents of various religions of today, even in those who claim to be Christian.

7. **The Lesson of Reproof by Fatal Rebuke** c. 4:00 P.M. (Mt. 23:13-36).

On Wednesday afternoon (c. 4:00 P.M.) The Lord Jesus pronounced eight woes upon hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees for being engaged in eight areas of damnable deeds. It was noted that the Greek word translated 'woe' is **Ὀὤαί** (ouwah-ée), an interjection which means "Alas! A woe! or a calamity!" which is "a lasting state of deep distress and affliction." In the context in which The Lord Jesus used the term eight times, it refers to the judgment to The **Géh-ehnnah**, the place of fiery torment for Sin. Thus the severity of these eight woes multiplies seven times plus two more times (Lk. 11:42-46) the intensity of Woe that The Lord Jesus Christ pronounced upon these religious Pharisees and all religious people who are guilty of the same sins. All shall receive this same condemnation to The **Géh-ehnnah** according to the severity of their works, thus degrees of punishment as deserved in The Lake of Fire.

a. The First Woe! Prohibitive Oppression c. 4:00 P.M. (Mt. 23:13).

This first Woe that The Lord pronounced upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees before the face of His disciples was because of their prohibitive oppression upon the people to keep them from committing trust unto Him by shutting off the way to The Kingdom of The Heavens by constantly proclaiming the substitution of 'works,' instead of emphasizing 'repentance and faith,' which The God Requires.

So it is today, the same condemnation awaits all who refuse to enter themselves and/or seek to bar or hold back those who attempt to enter The Kingdom by whatever Satanic means, especially false teaching particularly concerning Salvation.

b. The Second Woe! Pretentious Praying c. 4:15 P.M. (Mt. 23:14).

There are two reasons for which this woe was pronounced:

(1) For Devouring that which Belonged to Widows (Mt. 23:14; Mk.12:40; Lk. 20:47).

A clarity of the meaning of The Greek word translated 'dwellings' in this verse, *οικίας* (oikéeahs) was given. The word for 'houses' is *οἶκοι* (oikoi). The accusative plural of *οικία* (oikéeah) means 'dwellings' with the metonymical meaning of 'household, goods, property, and means.' It was not just the houses of the widows that the scribes and Pharisees were devouring but also their means of livelihood.

There were two ways that the scribes and Pharisees could be accused to be the so-called devourers of the widows: to be Appointed as Executors of a recently deceased husband's estate and to be Honored at Sumptuous Feasts. They also persisted in using their religion to increase their own coffers while decreasing those of the widows, thus profiting from their religion and their religious teaching.

(2) For Pretentious Praying (Mt. 23:14; Mk.12:40; Lk. 20:47).

This is the second reason for condemnation in the second woe that The Lord Jesus pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees. The Greek noun translated pretense means primarily 'a pretended reason' or secondarily 'fair show or pretext' i.e. 'assuming an appearance in order to cloak the real intention'. Thus they assumed the appearance of desiring to intercede with pretentious prayers for grieving widows in order to extract or extort worthy presents from them.

It was also noted that what the scribes and Pharisees were praying are not prayers but as The Lord Jesus said (Lk.18:11) were nothing more than long sessions of prattle to themselves in public and in a sanctimonious tone. They prayed for the purpose to be heard and revered.

This lesson teaches that the false preachers, false teachers, and false pastors that are in their profession for the money under false pretenses have their lot cast with the historic scribes, Pharisees, and false prophets under the curse and woe pronounced by The Lord Jesus Himself. We must be ever so careful **not** to be taken in with their false doctrine. Thus we are obligated to persistently engage in study to learn more Truth to enable us to quickly recognize false doctrine and warn others to avoid such teachers and propagators of false doctrine!

c. The Third Woe! Persevering Proselytizing - c. 4:30 P.M. (Mt. 23:25).

The third **woe** that The Lord Jesus pronounced (c. 4:30 P.M.) upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees before the face of His disciples was their persistent persevering proselytizing to make Pharisee Jews that follow their doctrine and practices. We considered five pertinent facts about 'proselytes,' how they originated in the days of the Maccabees and various New Testament Scriptures that enlighten us to the reason for Jesus to express condemnation of the Pharisees. It also helps us to understand the difference between a truly regenerated disciple-saint of The Lord Jesus Christ and not just a proselyte-disciple and behooves us to examine our true relationship to The Lord Jesus Christ and behooves us to discern, but **not ever** to judge where others, we love and with whom we share friendship, stand in relationship to Jesus Christ. Are they truly disciple-saints of His or rather merely proselytes, who need our help in discipleship from merely believing to regeneration and growth to maturity in union with The Lord Jesus?

d-g. The Fourth to Seventh **Woes** come under The Category of Perverted Interpretation by Inconsistency in four areas: d. Inconsistency in: Conformity to The Scriptures in Relation to Swearing with an Oath; e. Stewardship in Relation to Tithing; f. Ceremonial Cleansing; and g. Inconsistency in Seemingly Righteous Living (Mt. 23:16-28).

d. The Fourth Woe! (c. 4:45 P.M.) Inconsistency in Conformity to The Scriptures in Relation to Swearing with an Oath (Mt. 23:16-22).

The Lord Jesus continued to upbraid the hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees, titling them blind guides and morons (the Greek neuter plural adjective used as a noun is *μῶροί* (mōroí) literally meaning 'foolish- or stupid-thinkers'! This is a degrading name to say the least! Then He stated that their erroneous interpretation, which reflected their foolish thinking, made an invalid, stupid assertion of distinction as the basis for an oath in order for them to evade the consequences and at the same time invalidate the oath (Mt. 23:16-22).

This fourth woe upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees was pronounced upon them for moronic thinking in seeking to evade consequences in swearing. There would be no need at all for anyone to evade the consequences if one does not swear at all, but always tells the truth. That is exactly what The Lord Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount more than two years before. But the Pharisees, being unrighteous pretenders find it necessary to cover up their prevaricating.

The Lord Jesus made very clear what the Scriptures say and mean about swearing with an oath, but the religious hypocrites had different opinions about getting around what Scriptures teach and ignoring or else defying Scripture by insisting on doing it their way, rather than doing what Scripture teaches. And at the same time as so many today, thinking their opinion is just as valid as Scripture. Consequently they do as they please and ignore Scripture in order to do what their proselyte religion teaches and bring upon themselves greater condemnation. "Opinion is a belief stronger than impression and less strong than positive knowledge" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1973). Are you depending more upon your opinion than Scripture Truth that you have heard taught properly, thinking you know a better way. Stop at once! lest you enter into greater condemnation!

But The Lord Jesus wasn't finished yet. He proceeded to deal with erroneous teaching in relation to consecrated gifts. The hypocrite-Pharisees negated the fifth commandment of The Law [Ex. 20:12 and 21:17) by instituting their oral precept regarding proper legal responsibility by declaring what ever their parents may be benefited by them, A consecrated gift! In this way they evade any longer being responsible to care for their aged parents.

Then in continuing His severe reproach of the hypocrite-Pharisees, The Lord Jesus referred back to His previous teaching on this same subject in His Sermon on the Mount in regard to The God's rejection of a consecrated gift if the offerer has caused offense to a brother. A consecrated gift from one out of union with his brother was not accepted and that one could not enter into The Kingdom (Mt. 5:20). And if this is so, then one claiming to be a disciple and follower of The Lord Jesus Christ and yet will not take the necessary steps for reconciliation specified by Jesus Himself (Mt. 5:23; 18:15-17) is consequently out of union with The God, with The Lord Jesus Christ, and with His Church. Such an one is **not** accepted by The God, and will **not** enter into The Kingdom of The God. There must be reconciliation first with The God, The Lord Jesus Christ, and then with one another and The Church, which results in unity (Eph. 4:1-7 cf. Jn. 17:20-23).

In addition all who refuse to segregate fellowship from such reprobrates are unclean as well and **not** regenerated in The God's eyes because regeneration results in a willingness to be persistently obedient to The God's Word and **all** Scripture Truth. Therefore those who

refuse to segregate shall join the reprobates in judgment. All religious proselyte hypocrites shall be considered being in the same category with the same eternal condemnation. Be warned! Do **not** be among their number!

All this makes clear the mind of The Lord Jesus Christ concerning His rigid stand on separation, which He demands every regenerated disciple in union with Him to take on Earth until He comes again.

e. The Fifth Woe! (c. 5:00 P.M.) Inconsistency in Stewardship in Relation to Tithing (Mt. 23:23,24).

The Lord Jesus pronounced this woe upon the hypocritical Pharisees because of their inconsistency in stewardship, especially with regard to tithing. In some areas they went beyond The Law meticulously tithing minute matters and abandoned due consideration of heavier matters more meaningful and bringing greater judgment.

“²³Woe to you[&], O hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees! because you[&] tithe the mint and the dill and the cummin^[an aromatic condiment] and you[&] abandoned the heavier [|]matters[|] of The Law: the judging and the mercy and the faith^[committed trust]. It is absolutely necessary to do these[~] things and not to abandon those[~] things. ²⁴O blind guides⁺, the⁺ ones straining out by filtering the gnat but ⁰ones swallowing⁺ the[^] camel!” (Mt. 23:23,24 APT).

This is the same as the first of six woes that He pronounced upon the Pharisees after He ate breakfast with one of them, who invited Him five months before this, back in mid-Heshvan (early Nov.), A.D. 32, (Lk. 11:42) previously mentioned. Altogether in both occasions The Lord Jesus Christ pronounced ten woes upon the scribes and Pharisees -- hypocrites. However, there He indicated that they tithed “the mint, the rue, and every kind of garden herb” and He stressed that they “violate the judging and the love for The God.”

Here (Mt. 23:23) The Lord Jesus called attention to the Pharisees’ tithing of the produce of three small herbs used as condiments, actually considered as small and insignificant matters of The Law. These are mint, dill, and cummin. Mint and cummin are aromatic herbs. Dill is an herb of the carrot family grown in Egypt and Palestine. Anise also is of the carrot family but is of southern European origin. Therefore ‘dill’ is the proper translation. All of these garden herbs are minute in size and weight, but have been magnified in interpretation by the Pharisees as important and necessary to be tithed and had been given greater attention than the weightier and more important matters of The Law which have been ‘abandoned’ by them.

Some commentaries have indicated that The Lord Jesus was refuting the Pharisees for tithing these herbs when in reality He actually said that it is absolutely necessary to do these things (v. 23). Therefore He was really indicating the necessity for those under The Law to observe the minutest matters stipulated in The Law. Since He cited three areas of tithing, He also cited three areas of greater value.

What The Lord Jesus was really emphasizing was that these minute matters were being meticulously observed by the Pharisees while they were abandoning three of most important matters of The Law: the judging, the mercy, and the faith, as well as, and not instead of, tithing the other things.

Please note the definite article before each of these nouns! Its presence indicates one particular aspect of each. The Lord Jesus did not mean just any aspect of judgment, mercy, and faith, but on the contrary, a specific judgment, a specific mercy, and a specific faith. With-

out the article, however these Truths could be conjured in the minds of people as to what each understood individually. But on the contrary, The Lord Jesus wanted the people to give thought to the particular Truth that He intended to convey concerning each Truth

‘The judging’ to which The Lord Jesus referred is found in the context of His teaching throughout the day. Three times in this last hour The Lord Jesus referred to the judging (judgment) to The **Géh-ehnnah**. He previously warned of this final judging in which all unregenerate humans (Jews and Gentiles) will be judged according to their works before being cast into The Lake of Fire. As was noted in the lesson to the Sadducees on Future Living (IVf part 6) early in the afternoon between 2:00-2:45 P.M., He warned of two resurrections, one unto Absolute Eternal Life and the other to Judging (Jn. 5:28,29; 3:17,18). He taught that every human is responsible to live his or her life in The Light of resurrection after death and to avail oneself of the provision The Lord Jesus Christ made for avoiding the resurrection unto judging and to be sure to be resurrected unto Absolute Eternal Life by repentance and persistent committed trust unto The Lord Jesus Christ.

‘The mercy’ to which The Lord Jesus referred is the mercy that The God showed to His People Israel expressed in His covenant and demonstrated through the centuries and was presently being offered through The Lord Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and resurrected-ascended (Ex. 20:6; Num. 14:18,19; Deut. 5:10; 7:8, 9,12,13; 1 Chr. 16:34; Ps. 86:5,13,15). These Pharisees were familiar with these Old Testament Scriptures. This same mercy is to be shown to the poor, the fatherless, and the widows as was shown to disobedient and sinning Israel. This is in contrast to the Pharisees practice of devouring widows’ dwellings (Mt. 23:14).

‘The faith’ which The Lord Jesus referred to is The Faith of which Paul wrote in The Epistle to Hebrews, without which Faith it is impossible to please The God well (Heb. 11:6).

‘Now apart from faith^[committed trust] it is impossible to please Him well! For it is absolutely necessary for the one approaching The God to commit trust that: He is continually being, and to the ones diligently persistently seeking Him, He becomes Rewarder of Retribution’’ (Heb. 11:6 APT).

It is The Faith of The Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Gal. 2:16,20; Lk. 18:8 APT; Rom. 10:8; Eph. 2:8 APT; Phil. 3:9 APT; Col. 1:23 APT), which Faith He was about to demonstrate beginning in two days. It is not just your faith nor my faith, but our faith in The Faith of The Lord Jesus Christ Who died in His Faith and resurrected in His Faith and The Faith that His Death and His Resurrection-ascension would save those who placed their faith in His faith, which Faith embraces all the great doctrines of Salvation and **All** Scripture.

It is the undivided attention and total commitment to these three heavier matters of The Law which pre-shadowed The Christ and all He came to provide summed up in these three aspects: the judging, the mercy, and The Faith, which are absolutely necessary to fulfill. The introduction of these at this time was in preparation for the transition that was about to take place from The God’s dealing with His people under The Old Covenant operating under Law to His dealing with all people who will embrace The New Covenant operating under grace.

Then The Lord Jesus concluded His pronouncement of the fifth woe by indicating the foolishness of the Pharisees’ thinking by using two

creatures to illustrate the magnitude of the heavier matters in contrast to the minutest matters. “O blind guides⁺, the⁺ ones straining out by filtering the gnat but ⁰ones swallowing⁺ the[^] camel!” Note the contrast between the articular and the anarthrous nouns. The article indicates particularity, individual identity, and definitude while the anarthrous construction indicates the quality, character, and nature of the noun. The ones He addressed were straining out the tiny gnat but the quality and nature of the Pharisees was to swallow an enlarged unclean animal.

The wine that was turning sour drew gnats, tiny little insects, which floated around in it. The people used linen as a strain through which the wine was poured to filter out the gnats. The noun ‘camel’ has a masculine and a feminine gender, which is indicated by the article of the gender intended. In this case The Lord Jesus used the feminine gender to indicate the increased size of the gestating camel with a large hump back as a contrast to illustrate the enormous disparity in what the Pharisees were swallowing in their thinking. Jesus labeled these religious law teachers, ‘blind guides’ as all false religious teachers are. They magnify the minute and minimize the weightier or more consequential matters

(Now note The Progression of Truth that The Lord Jesus Christ taught in The Temple on that Wednesday.

Firstly, He taught complete persistent obedience to The God’s Word and the failure to enter The Kingdom of The God by those who claim to be obedient to The God’s Word and put on a front that they are obedient ones, but actually are religious hypocrites, all of which shall not enter the Kingdom of The God.

Secondly, then The Lord Jesus taught that The God expects His vineyard to bear fruit and render the fruits thereof in due season and be rendered to Him. He holds both the leaders and workers accountable and will call every one individually to give account of the results in severe judgment for failure or great rewards for obedience.

Thirdly, The Lord Jesus taught that all people of all nations are invited to the marriage feast which The Father provided for His Son. Those who respond to the invitation of The Gospel, and willingly wear the wedding garment, which The Father provides, will spend Eternity with His Son. But those who refuse to wear the provided wedding garment shall face Fatal Wrath, suffering in anguish forever with weeping and gnashing of teeth in The Lake of Fire.

Fourthly, The Lord Jesus taught that in addition to those under The Old Covenant, all are financially responsible to render, to every government over them, the taxes assessed by each governing body and at the same time all are equally legally obligated to be financially responsible to The God to see that He receives the proper proportion (10%) of all gross income plus additional tithes.

Fifthly, The Lord Jesus taught that The God expects every human to live in the light of life after death and the resurrection which follows and every one must face believing it or not. There is either The Resurrection of Absolute Life in union with The Lord Jesus Christ or the resurrection for judging to Eternal Damnation.

Sixthly, The Lord Jesus taught that it is absolutely necessary to sovereignly prefer The Godhead **FIRST** in all things and put all that concerns Him **FIRST** before all earthly desires and ambition!

Seventhly, He taught that all are to be aware of Faulty Rendering of Scripture in areas of Theology, especially Christology: He Himself is The Lord of All, David’s Lord and Son, and at the same time He

is The **LORD, Jehovah**, Who is The Messiah, both **LORD** and Lord.

Eighthly, He taught the need to perceive fallible recognition in hypocrites in three ways: by means of lives inconsistent with their teachings and proclamations; by seeking attention by means of distinctive dress and outward appearance; and by use of irreverent titles for themselves and others of their religious system.

Ninthly, He reinforced and reemphasized His pronouncement of **woe** “a lasting state of deep distress and affliction” upon those who teach false and misleading ways and substitute ‘works instead of ‘repentance and faith’ to appease the anger and impending fearful Judgment of The God and then refuse to enter themselves.

Tenthly, He further extended His pronouncement of **woe**, upon them for their praying long prayers in public places, not from their hearts, but rather as a pretense of being religious and to gain wealth.

Eleventhly, He pronounced an even greater **woe** by upbraiding them for their persevering proselytizing to make Pharisee Jews that follow their sectarian doctrine and practices. Since they travel far and near to make just one proselyte-disciple and spend many hours training him in false doctrine, how much more should we put forth effort to properly disciple others with true doctrine of The Lord Jesus Christ?

Twelfthly, He condemned them for moronic thinking and replacing God’s commandments with oral precepts of their own. We must beware of relying on our own opinions and of those to whom we listen to teach us instead of what Scripture teaches and searching Scripture more deeply lest we be condemned with those Pharisees who relied on their own opinions and those of their Rabbies before them instead of relying upon The Holy Spirit’s guidance and teaching.

And **Thirteenthly**, He condemned them for their inconsistency in stewardship in relation to tithing: for emphasizing minute matters and omitting and abandoning the weightier and more important matters of The Law: The Judgment, The Mercy, and The Faith which matters bring greater judgment.

Conclusion: Today we continued our study of the third day of The Last Week in The Life of The Lord Jesus Christ on Earth. In first evening (c. 5:25 P.M.) Wednesday, 12 Nisán, He rebuked them for their inconsistency in tithing. To them it was more important to tithe the minutest matters and abandon due consideration of three weightier and more important matters of The Law: The Judgment, The Mercy, and The Faith, more meaningful and bringing greater judgment. Therefore must absolutely be fulfilled. But the lesser matters must not be left undone. This was given in preparation for the transition that was about to take place from The God dealing with His people under The Old Covenant operating under Law to His dealing with all people who will embrace The New Covenant operating under grace. Do you understand the meaning of these three Truths that are so important? If not take time to go over The Scriptures pertaining to each and consult your concordance for other Scriptures pertaining to these three subjects. Are you including the explanation of these three topics in your discipling of others?

Application: What will you do beginning **today** to apply these three Truths in your priorities for daily living and apply them in your discipling of others?

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: Read and meditate upon: Jesus’ Final Day of Public Teaching (early first evening c. 5:15 P.M.): **The Sixth Woe: Perverted Interpretation:** f. Inconsistency in Ceremonial Cleansing (Mt. 23:25,26).