



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Deuteronomy 13:6

If Your own brother, son, or daughter, the wife you love, or your best friend may secretly tempt you, saying,

"Let's go worship other gods."

- 13:8 Don't be influenced by any of these people or listen to them. Have no pity on them. Don't feel sorry for them or protect them.

- **Deuteronomy 13:9**

You must put them to death.

- **You must start the execution.**

Then all the other people will join you in putting them to death.

- **13:10 Stone them to death**

because they were trying

to lead you away from

the LORD your God,...

- **Matthew 23:1–33**

Jesus relentlessly condemned

the false spiritual leaders
of Israel,

in particular the

scribes and **Pharisees**,

- Men who held the

dominant power and influence

in Judaism.

- Jesus warned about them in His first sermon, the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5:20; 7:15**),
- And His last sermon consists almost entirely of warnings about them and to them. (**Matthew 23**)

- Many Christians today are greatly concerned about the rising influences of communism, humanism, secularism.
 - Yet those evils, great as they are, do not together pose the threat to Christianity that false teachers do.

- Throughout the history of redemption, the greatest threat to God's truth and God's work has been false prophets and teachers, because they propose to speak in His name.

- That is why the Lord's most scathing denunciations were reserved for the false teachers of Israel, who claimed to speak and act for God but were liars.

- Today, more than at any time in modern history man made religion and cults are seriously entrenching on many in our generation.

- Even within the church, many ideas, teachings, and philosophies have become popular and influential.

- Colossians 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

- As in ancient Israel,
the further God's people
moved away from His Word,
the more false religion
flourished.

- At no time
have Christians had
greater need
to be discerning.

- The scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus addressed stood guilty of perverting God's law and for leading Israel into heresy,
 - Just as the false prophets among their forefathers had done
(**Matthew 23:30–32**).

- What Jesus said about them and to them is of much more than historical significance.
- It is essential instruction for dealing with the false leaders who abound in our own day.

- In this final public message, the Lord wanted to draw the people away from those false leaders and turn them to the true teaching of God's word.

- **Matthew 23:1-12**

Jesus declared that the scribes and Pharisees were

- **Without authority,**
- **Without integrity,**
- **Without sympathy,**
- **Without spirituality,**
- **Without humility,**
- **And therefore without God's approval or blessing.**

- Now speaking to them directly,
He asserts they are under
God's harshest condemnation.

- **In verses 13–33**

Jesus pronounces

seven curses,

or **woes,**

on those wicked leaders.

- The scene in the Temple that day **had become volatile in the extreme,**
- More volatile than when Jesus had cast out **the merchants** and **money-changers** the day before.

- At that time Jesus' anger was vented against what the religious leaders were doing outwardly,
 - And that attack had outraged them (**Matthew 21:16, 23**).
 - Now He attacked what they were inwardly,
- And that infuriated them even more.

- In our day

of tolerance

the kind of confrontation

Jesus had with the

scribes and Pharisees

seems unloving.

- Any person who speaks harshly against a false religion or unbiblical teaching is considered unkind and judgmental.

- Jesus' indictments in Matthew 23 are so inconsistent with the idea of Christian love held by some liberal theologians that they conclude He could not have spoken them.

- Here are no less than **eight solemn woes** denounced upon the very men who trusted in themselves **that they were righteous.**
- And what made the woes **most terrible is that** they were pronounced by One that was meekness Himself.

- And what is,
if possible,
yet more awful,
the same Almighty Judge,
calls them by
several names
which mark their
ungodly character.

- You serpents,
you generation of vipers,
- How can you escape
the damnation of hell?
- That is, ye cannot escape it.
 - There is a similar method of speech by the Apostle.
 - How shall we escape,
if we neglect so great salvation.
(Hebrews 2:8).

- It is one of the plainest doctrines in the Bible, that the *seed of the woman* and *the seed of the serpent,* are in a life and death struggle. (**Genesis 3:15**)

- Therefore,
when the Lord Jesus said:

**Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers;
how can ye escape
the damnation of hell?**

- He was recalling
that struggle.

- And the
scribes and Pharisees
were aiding the enemy.

- Our Lord considered the battle so important that he consumed the greater part of a long chapter upon it.
- Therefore it demands our serious consideration.

- How did this generation of Pharisees manifest their serpentine hatred to Christ, and bring upon themselves those awful denunciations?

- Not for their immoralities,
for they
prided themselves
in being highly moral.

- Not for their neglect of public or private worship.
For they did both.

- Neither were they chargeable with the common vices of drunkenness, adultery, and the like.

- What was it then, which brought down upon them the

Lord's severest judgments?

- Certainly, nothing more or less, than teaching the people to disrespect the word of God.
- And this they did by their own laws.
- Thus invalidating the law of God.

- They compassed sea and land
the Lord told them,
to make one proselyte,
and when this was done,
they made him two-fold more
the child of hell,
than themselves.
(**Matthew 23:15**)

- So far as the Scribes and Pharisees teach reverence for God and respect for men, their teaching is eternally binding and eternally valid.

- But their whole outlook on religion had one fundamental effect.
 - It made it a thing of thousands upon thousands of rules and regulations; and therefore it made it an intolerable burden.
(**Matthew 23:4**)

- Let us be reminded that we have many modern day Pharisees who do just the opposite who negate God's laws by refusing to "preach the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27)

- **Nor would the Pharisees allow**
the slightest relaxation.
- Their whole self-confessed purpose
was to
"build a fence around the Law."
 - **Not one regulation**
would they relax or remove.
 - Whenever religion
becomes a burden,
it ceases to be true religion.

· Let us notice our
Lord's assessment
of religion
as compared to that of
the
Scribes and Pharisees.

- **Matthew 11:28**

**Come unto me, all of you that labour
and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.**

- **11:29** **Take my yoke upon you, and
learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in
heart: and ye shall find rest unto your
souls.**

- **11:30** **For my yoke *is* easy,
and my burden is light.**

- Our Savior gives a withering exposure of the religion of the scribes and Pharisees.
- He sharply rebukes them, both for their doctrine and their practices.

- **Their religion retained**
the Word of God
and
the name of God;
- But it was nothing less than
an utter denial of God.
 - And our Lord
despised it.

- Thus warning us plainly
against the
false shepherds
and
false religion
that surrounds us today.

- Nothing is more abominable in the sight of God than false shepherds and false religion
 - Here are several important lessons to be learned.

- **# 1** It is the solemn responsibility of every faithful servant of God to warn of false teachers and false religion.

- **Matthew 7:14-23**

14 Because strait *is* the gate,
and narrow *is* the way,
which leadeth unto life,
and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets,
which come to you
in sheep's clothing,
but inwardly they are
ravening wolves.

- It is not meekness,
but cowardice,
that causes men to hold back
in denouncing false doctrine.
- No man was ever more meek,
more gracious,
or
more loving
than our Jesus.
 - Yet, no man ever
more boldly denounced
false religion
(**Matthew 23**).

- That man who refuses to identify heresy and heretics is unfaithful to his charge as God's messenger.

- **2 Timothy 4:1-4**

1 **I charge** you before God,

- **2** **Preach** the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove**, **rebuke**, **exhort** with all long-suffering and doctrine.

- **3** For the time will come when they will not endure **sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
 - **4** And they shall **turn away their ears** from the **truth**, and shall be **turned unto fables.**

- **No sin is more sinful**
than silence
when alarm is needed!
 - **2 John 1:9**
Whosoever
transgresses,
and abides not in
the doctrine of Christ,
hath not God.

- **1:10** If there come any unto you,
and bring not this **doctrine**,
 - receive him not
into *your* house,
neither bid him
God speed:
- **1:11** For he that biddeth him
God speed is **partaker**
of his evil deeds.

- **# 2** It is the responsibility of every man/woman to try the spirits and judge preachers and their message by the Word of God (**Matthew 23:2-3**).

- 1 John 4:1

**Beloved, believe not
every spirit,
but try the spirits
whether they are of God:
because many
false prophets
are gone out
into the world.**

- Like the noble Bereans,
we are responsible
to search the Scriptures
for ourselves.
(Acts 17:11)
- We must receive nothing
taught by any man
that we do not find written
in the Book of God.

- **# 3** The secret of greatness in the kingdom of God is service to the kingdom of God.
- The desire of the Pharisee is to receive honor, and to be called “Master.”

- It must not for a moment be thought that Jesus is commending the **Scribes** and **Pharisees** with all their **rules** and **regulations.**

- The desire of the believer is to:
 - Do good to the glory of God
 - Esteeming others better than themselves.

- **“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.**
- **And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted”
(Matthew 23:11-12).**

- Jesus' words in this passage fly from His lips like claps of thunder and spears of lightning.
 - Out of His mouth came the most fearful and dreadful statements that Jesus uttered on earth.

- **# 4** **It is absolutely wrong**
for believers to
give any man the names,
titles, and **honors**
that belong to
our God and Christ alone.

- **“But be not ye called Rabbi:
for one is your Master, even Christ;
and all you are brethren.**
 - **And call no man
your father upon the earth:
for one is your Father,
which is in heaven.**
 - **Neither be ye called
masters
(G-2519 = Guide):
for one is your Master,
even Christ”
(**Matthew 23:8-10**).**

- C. H. Spurgeon

wrote,

**“In the church of Christ,
all titles and honors
which exalt men
and give occasion for pride
are here forbidden.”**

- **Matthew 23**

is one of the most
serious passages
in Scripture.

- Jesus here makes
the word **hypocrite**
a synonym for
scribe and **Pharisee**.

- He calls them:
 - sons of hell,
 - blind guides,
 - fools,
 - robbers,
 - self-indulgent,
 - whitewashed tombs,
 - full of hypocrisy and lawlessness,
 - serpents, vipers,
 - persecutors and murderers of God's people.
- Uttering every syllable with absolute self-control but with devastating intensity.

- Yet Jesus was never **cold or indifferent,** even toward His enemies, and on this occasion His judgment is mingled with **sorrow** and **deep sympathy.**

- **It is not the Son's will**
any more than the Father's
that a single person perish,
 - It is the gracious
divine desire
that everyone would
come to repentance
and salvation
(2 Peter 3:9).

- At the end of His denunciation,
Jesus extended
one last invitation.

- Matthew 23:37

- "Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
you kill the prophets
and stone to death those sent to you!
How often I wanted to gather your
children together the way a hen gathers
her chicks under her wings!
- But you were not willing!

John 6:63

*The words that I
speak unto you,
they are spirit,
and they are life.*

• Are

you

listening?

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



- 11-18-2018 Tryon, NC

