

40—Woe to You Hypocrites!

Matthew 23:1-39; Mk 12:38-44; Lk 20:45-21:4

1. What, typically, is the perception of Jesus held by the typical person walking down the street? Scan through Matthew 23 and what traits of Jesus catch your eye upon a cursory reading of the text?

2. What role, according to Jesus, did the “scribes and Pharisees” hold (Matthew 23:2)? What does he encourage his audience to do with regard to their teaching (23:3)?

3. On the other hand, what did Jesus warn His audience about with regard to this same group (Matthew 23:3)? What were some of the flaws of these men Jesus points out in Matthew 23:4-11?

Morning prayer

Phylacteries, called tefillin in Hebrew, are worn by observant Jewish men each weekday morning during prayer.

A reminder

- Two small leather boxes contain verses from the first books of the Bible; boxes are attached to leather straps

One tied to arm, the other placed on head

- Worn as a reminder of God and to follow Jewish law daily
- Removed at conclusion of morning prayer services

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4. Read Matthew 23:13-15; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47. What were the Pharisees doing to “shut up the kingdom?” What, specifically, does Jesus condemn about the proselytes of the Pharisees? What is a “proselyte?”

5. Read Matthew 23:16-22. What actions of the Pharisees does Jesus condemn within this passage?

6. Read Matthew 23:23-24. Does Jesus tell the Pharisees they should have neglected to do the little things? What is it he specifically condemns about their actions in this text?

7. Read Matthew 23:25-28. What two illustrations does Jesus use to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the Pharisees? How can we be in danger of a similar misplaced emphasis of focus in our lives?

8. In Matthew 23:30-36, what does Jesus say about the “fathers” of these “scribes and Pharisees?” Rather than being righteous, what was the historical reputation of these leaders?

9. Would history repeat itself with these leaders? What would be the consequence of these generational sin (Matthew 23:35-36)?

10. According to Matthew 23:37, what was the real problem with these Pharisees? What was the “house” of the Jews and what does Jesus say would happen to it (Matthew 23:38-39)?