

"Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them' and immediately he will send them.' All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'Tell the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt the foal of a donkey."'"

"So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! "Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!" Hosanna in the highest!' And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?' So the multitudes said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.'" -Matthew 21:1-11

The multitudes praised Jesus and cried, "Hosanna!" Hosanna means, "save now." Jesus allowed them to praise Him because this was the time of their visitation. Jesus, the Messiah came at the appointed day spoken of in Daniel 9:24-26, and this event was a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey." -Zechariah 9:9

Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He knew that though the multitudes praised Him, they would soon reject Him, their Messiah, and kill Him. They did not recognize the day of their visitation, though they had the scriptures! Zechariah 9:9 told them to look for their King on a donkey and colt. Daniel 9:24-26, made it possible for them to know the exact day! The religious ones, the scribes and Pharisees, should have known the time, but they missed it.

Luke 19:39-44 says, "And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.'" Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.'"

Now is the day of salvation! Jesus is coming again, soon!
Are you ready for His return? Are you born again?



**The Messiah's Visitation;
Jesus, The King, Rides Into Jerusalem On A Donkey
Matthew 21:1-11**

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. colt- ~~a young donkey~~ young male of horse family
2. donkey- a symbol of peace
3. foal- a male offspring of horse or mule (filly or colt)
4. horse- a symbol of power
5. hosanna- literally means, "save us now" or "help now." It became a common form of wishing safety and prosperity.
6. moved- to disturb in mind, put in commotion
7. Son of David- referring to the Messiah (Jesus), who was promised to come through the line of King David
8. Zion- sometimes refers to the whole of Jerusalem (Ps. 51:18); sometimes it meant God's chosen people (Ps. 87:5); sometimes it meant the Church (Heb.12:22-23); sometimes it meant the heavenly city (Rev. 14:1)

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matthew 21:1-3. Jesus rode in on a donkey to symbolize _____ (See vocabulary). What did Jesus come to do? (John 3:17)

b. When Jesus returns, He will ride in on a white horse. A horse symbolizes _____ (See vocabulary). What will His mission be when He returns? (Rev. 19:11)
2. Read Matthew 21:4-5. This day was prophesied by more than one prophet, Zechariah 9:9 and Daniel 9:24-25, and sung about in Psalm 118 (see verse 24). The exact day is revealed- see handout, "The Triumphal Entry" for a detailed explanation. What was this day all about?
3. Read Matthew 21:6-8. For what kind of person was it the custom to do this? (II Kings 9:13)
4. Read Matthew 21:9. This was taken from Psalm 118:26 and sung by Jewish pilgrims on their way to Passover. Who are they singing it to now?
5. a. Read Matthew 21:10-11. The leaders were shook up. What did they tell Jesus to do? (Luke 19:39)

b. Why would the leaders be afraid of Jesus presenting Himself as King?

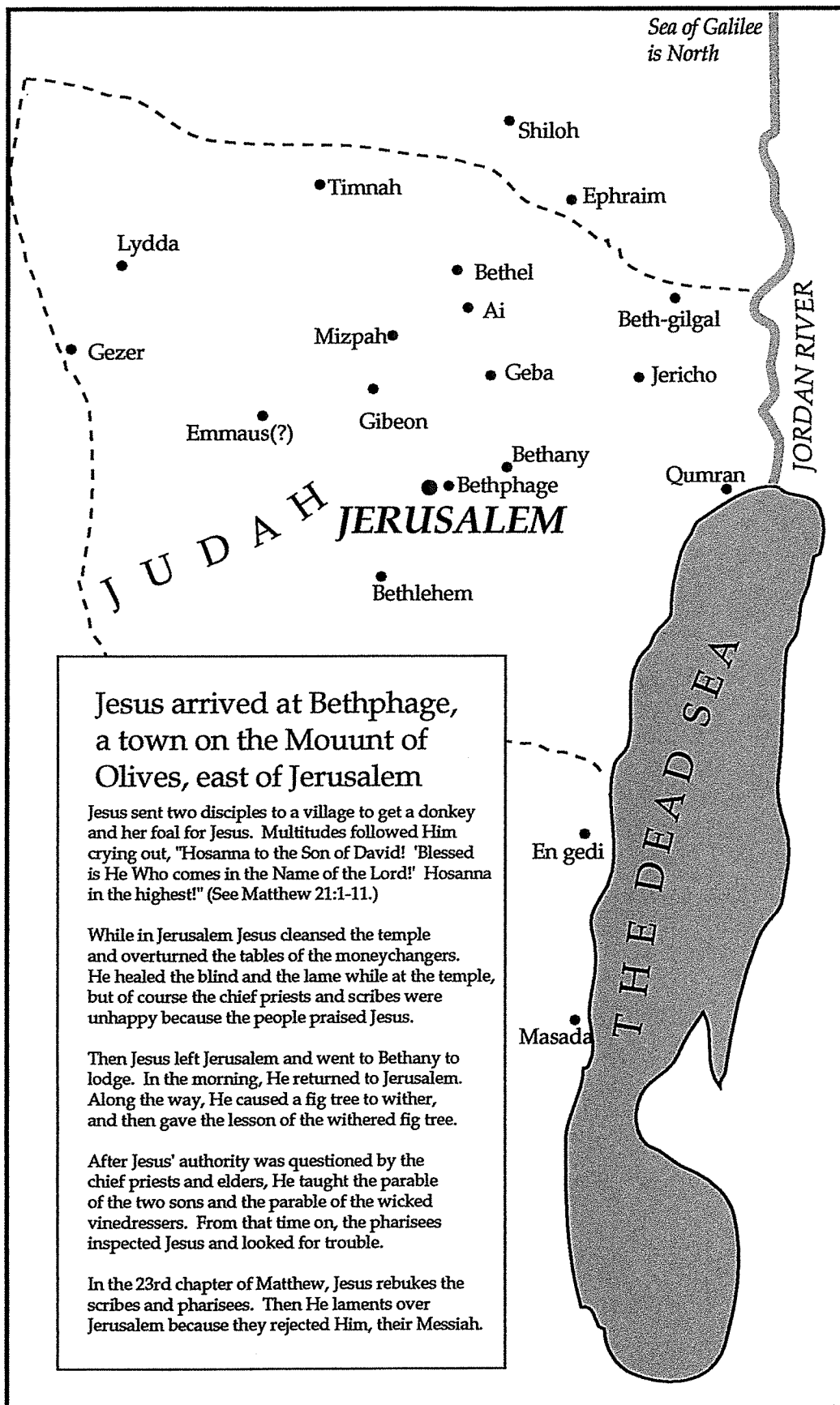
c. What was Jesus' response to the leaders? (Luke 19:40)

d. How did Jesus hold them accountable for not recognizing His day of presenting Himself as King that was promised so long ago? (Luke 19:41-44)

Today's Memory Verse

"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity." Psalm 118:24-25 (NKJV)

Apply Within for Kids- Matthew 21, 22 & 23



THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

"Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there *shall* be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times." Daniel 9:25 (NKJV)

In verse 25, Gabriel gives Daniel the first portion of the seventy weeks. Notice that Gabriel divides the weeks in a unique way. Verse 25 presents seven weeks or 49 years. The verse also mentions threescore-and two weeks, which is 62 weeks or 434 years. The total then so far is 69 weeks or 483 years. Verse 27 covers the remaining one-week or seven years. This unique dividing shows the separations within the 490 years. It will later be demonstrated that the 490 years are not contiguous.

Gabriel tells Daniel to know and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore-and-two weeks or 483 years. When Daniel wrote this down, Jerusalem laid in ruins. A commandment or decree yet future would commence the 70 weeks. Old Testament history reveals four such decrees concerning Jerusalem, three are in the Book of Ezra and one is in the Book of Nehemiah. The decrees of Cyrus (Ezra 1), Darius 1 (Ezra 6) and Artaxerxes 1 (Ezra 7) all pertain to the temple within Jerusalem. Only one decree, the decree given by Artaxerxes I in Nehemiah 2 pertains to the restoration and rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem.

This decree was given in the month of Nisan which would be our March, March 14, 445 B.C. to be exact. With this decree, the 70 weeks began. Accordingly, seven weeks and threescore-and two weeks, or 483 years later, Messiah the Prince would arrive. The word Prince here in Hebrew is Nagid and literally means King not Prince. This distinction will help avoid confusion with the prince that is mentioned in Daniel 9:26.

Let's delve into the seven weeks and threescore-and two weeks. The seven weeks equate to 49 years and interestingly enough, that is exactly how long it took to rebuild the city and walls of Jerusalem. With this in mind, we can understand the first division of seven weeks. This leaves threescore-and two weeks or 434 years. The prophecy tells us that at the conclusion of these 434 years, the Messiah would arrive. Now did this happen?

The commandment or decree to restore and build Jerusalem occurred March 14, 445 B.C. This restoration was completed 49 years later. Add 434 years to this and we have a total of 483 years or 173,880 days. Now what occurred in history 173,880 days after the decree was given on March 14, 445 B.C.?

We read in the Gospels how people tried at different times to establish Jesus as King. Each of these attempts failed as Jesus said; "Mine hour is not yet come." (John 6:15, 7:30, 44) Yet, one day, Jesus not only arranges it, but allows Himself to be worshipped as King, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

This day is so important, it's recorded in Psalm 118:24 and in each of the four Gospels. (Matt. 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; John 12:12-16) It was on this very day that Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, entered Jerusalem on a donkey. This wondrous day turned out to be the 10th of Nisan or April 6, 32 A.D. The significance? Jesus' triumphal entry occurs exactly 173,880 days from the decree given March 14, 445 B.C.!!

We read in Luke 19:41-44 that the Lord held Israel accountable to recognize this day. After all, they had Daniel's words, Zechariah's words, as well as other prophecies in the Old Testament to go on. Yet they failed to recognize this special day and suffered severe consequences as a result.

Continuing in verse 26 of Daniel 9, we see that after these 69 weeks or 483 years, the Messiah would be cut off. The word cut off, literally means executed. This happened right after the triumphal entry, Jesus was tried, convicted and brutally executed on the cross. But notice, the verse says "but not for Himself." The New Testament teaches that Jesus died for the world, He voluntarily gave His life for sinful man. He went to the cross with nothing, He came for that which was His own and they rejected Him.

The precise dates are subject to debate. However most scholars concur that the time-frame depicted in Daniel Chapter 9 begins with the decree given in Nehemiah 2 and ends with Jesus' triumphal entry.



Jesus Cleanses The Temple

"Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they were indignant and said to Him, 'Do You hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes. Have you never read, "Out of the mouth of babes an nursing infants You have perfected praise"?' Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there." - Matthew 21:12-17

There was corruption in the temple of God. Jesus' own people, the Jews, thought their King had arrived to set them free from the oppression of the Roman Empire. Instead of Jesus marching into the government buildings to overturn their tables, He went into the temple and dealt with the corruption in His Father's house first. When Jesus comes again, He will deal with the corruption of this world. "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the Gospel of God?" - 1 Peter 4:17

The priests and those who were in authority within the temple had become corrupt. When the people would bring an animal into the temple to be sacrificed, the priests would tell the people their sacrifice wasn't good enough. Then they would point to the market where they could purchase their sacrifices for a lot of money. The temple was getting rich while they robbed God's people. There will always be churches and ministries who do not want to serve God's people by freely giving to them, but rather, they want to be served and take money from God's people.

What was Jesus' response when dealing with the corruption? It was righteous anger.



What should take place in the temple (the church, and you, because you are the temple of God if you're born again) ?

- 1) PRAYER (COMMUNICATION WITH THE LORD)
- 2) MINISTRY (TO OTHERS, THE BLIND & LAME)
- 3) PRAISE & WORSHIP (GOD IS WORTHY, HE IS GOOD)
- 4) TEACHING THE WORD (PART OF MINISTRY)

Jesus Cleanses The Temple Matthew 21:12-17

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. anger- (1) God's righteous anger - a strong disapproval of wrong doing; (2) man's anger - a strong feeling of hurt that makes one want to fight or get even, that leads to bitterness
2. bought and sold- refers to the animals considered clean for making sacrifices
3. den of thieves- the temple became a place of personal gain and overcharging on required exchanges
4. doves- sold as sacrifices to be offered by the poor (Lev. 5:7)
5. fear- used of a person in an exalted position, meaning "standing in awe." This is not simple fear, but also reverence, whereby an individual recognizes the power and position of the individual revered and gives him proper respect. (Ps. 76:7)
6. hosanna- literally means, "save us now" or "help now." It became a common form of wishing safety and prosperity.
7. indignant- angry; resentful
8. money changers- they exchanged other coins for the half-shekel (the temple's own currency) necessary to pay the temple tax (Ex. 30:13-16). These originally were legitimate services for worshipers, but were corrupted by excessive fees and locating the stands in the outer court of the temple itself.
9. Son of David- refers to the Messiah (Jesus) who was promised to come through the line of David (Jer. 23:5)

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matt. 21:12. What were they selling in the temple? Why? (John 2:14; vocab. bought and sold, doves)
b. What was going on that was so bad? (See vocab. den of thieves, money changers)
c. Why was Jesus so angry and why did He rebuke them? (Ps. 69:9; John 2:16-17; II Pet. 2:3)
d. Why was it okay for Jesus to be angry? (Prov. 14:29; John 2:14-17)
e. What causes God's anger and how does He handle it? (Num. 32:14; Ps. 78:21-22)
f. There is a time for anger. How does God's word instructs us how we should handle our anger? (Prov. 14:16-17; Prov. 14:29; Prov. 15:1; Prov. 22:24-25; Eph. 4:26; Eph. 4:31; James 1:19-20)
g. When we do not follow God's instruction on how to handle our anger, what kind of work are we performing? (Gal. 5:19-20) w_____ e__ t__ f_____
2. h. If we are in Christ, what is done with the desires of the flesh? (Gal. 5:24)
2. Read Matthew 21:13. Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. Jesus called the temple a "house of prayer." We can see throughout the Bible that Jesus holds prayer close to His heart. How are we to pray? (Phil. 4:6-7; I Thes. 5:17)
3. Read Matthew 21:14-15. List the difference between Jesus' anger (Mark 3:1-6) and the chief priests' and scribes' anger (Prov. 29:22; Gal. 5:19-21).
4. Read Matthew 21:16-17. Do you think that the people understood what they were saying when they praised Jesus by saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David"? Who put the praise in their mouths? (Rom. 2:29)

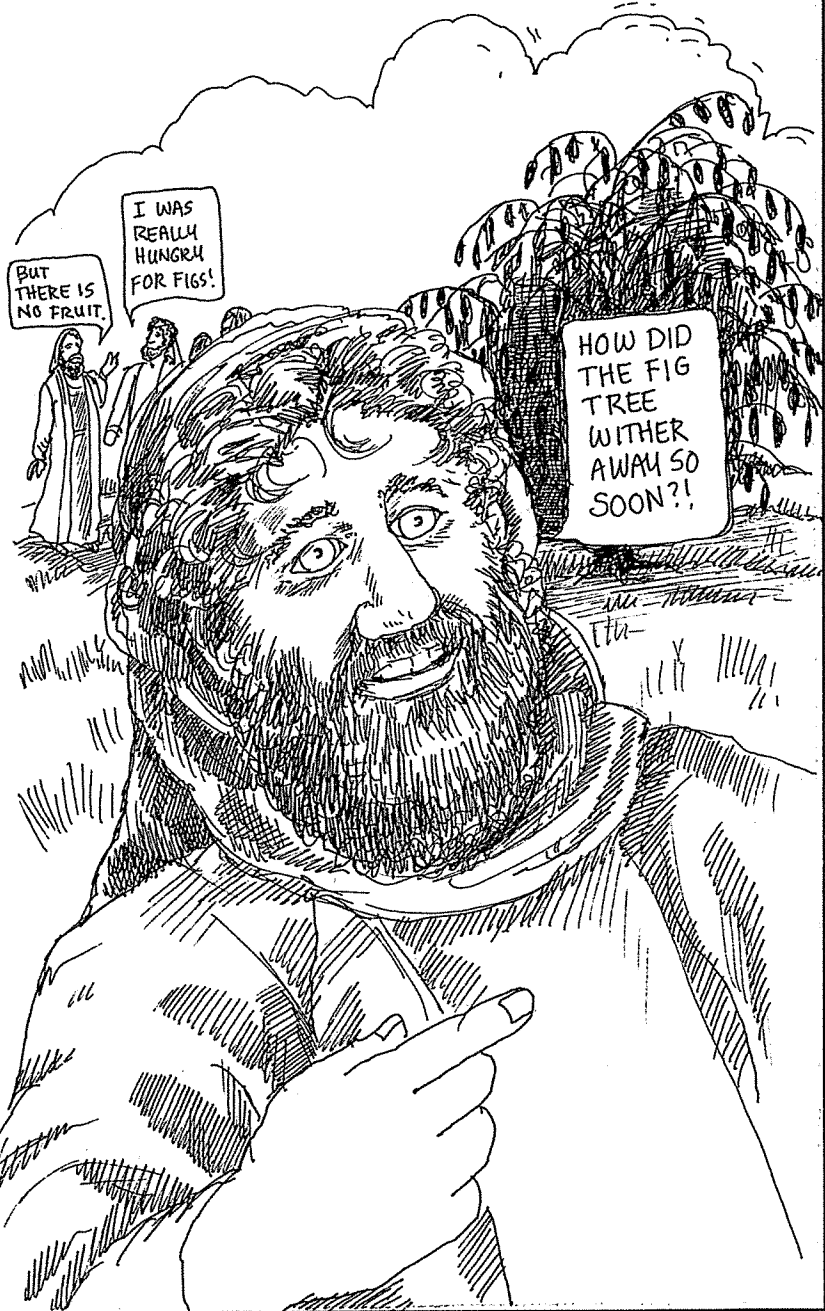
Today's Memory Verse

"Be angry and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath..."
Ephesians 4:26 (NKJV)

The Withered Fig Tree

"Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, 'Let no fruit grow on you ever again.' Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither away so soon?' So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.'" - Matthew 21:18-22

The fig tree represents the unfruitfulness of Israel as a nation, and their Jewish leaders. Just as Jesus was hungry and sought some fruit from the fig tree, so are we hungry for the Word of God. The Pharisees looked like nice fruit trees, yet they had nothing to offer a hungry soul. Jesus then caused the tree that bore no fruit to wither. It looked nice on the outside, yet there was no fruit. Jerusalem had rejected their Messiah.



Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the Word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and my Words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." - John 15:1-8

Just as those who reject Him and do not abide in Him are gathered and thrown into the fire, so will Jerusalem be burned in 70AD. This world (and those who reject Jesus) will be burned at the end of the age.

The Withered Fig Tree

Matthew 21:18-22

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. abide- to remain in or with someone, to be and remain united in heart, mind, and will
2. doubt- hesitate, waver, lack confidence in
3. faith- see Romans 4:13, 21-22 and Hebrews 11:1
4. fig tree- represented the hypocritical Jewish leaders
5. found nothing- lack of fruit stood for their rejection of Jesus
6. leaves- symbolized outward religious observances

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matthew 21:18-19. What did Jesus find on the tree? Was there any fruit?
b. What happened to that tree?
c. Can a bad tree bear good fruit? (Matt. 7:17-18)
d. What happens to trees that do not bear good fruit? (Matt. 7:19)
e. How can we bear good fruit? (John 15:1-8)
f. Were the Jewish leaders bearing good fruit? (See vocab. fig tree, found nothing, leaves.)
g. Read Matthew 21:19 again. Who do you think that Jesus was talking about when He said, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again."?
2. a. Read Matthew 21:20-22. What is faith? (Rom. 4:13, 21-22; Heb. 11:1)
b. Whom should we put our faith in? Why? (Matt. 28:18)
c. When Jesus was talking about faith, believing, and asking in prayer, He was not talking about asking for things we (our fleshly desires) want. To apply this to our lives, we must abide with Jesus and in doing so we walk by faith to do God's will, not our own will. Give some examples from the Bible of those who walked by faith. (Heb. 11:1-31; Luke 22:42)
d. How do we get faith? (Rom. 10:17)
3. a. Read Matthew 21:21 again. We have doubt when we take our eyes off of Jesus. Read Matthew 14:26-31. Peter had faith, but what happened to him when he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the storm around him?
b. When Peter lacked in faith and started to sink, who did he cry out to, to save him?

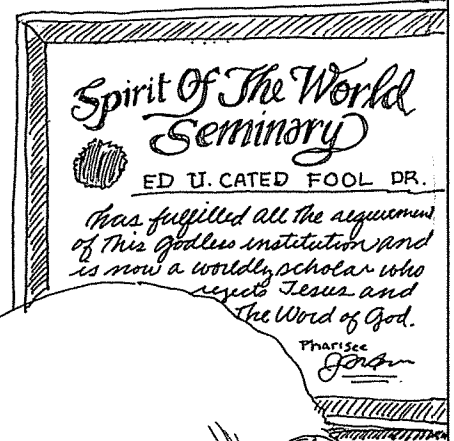
Today's Memory Verse

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

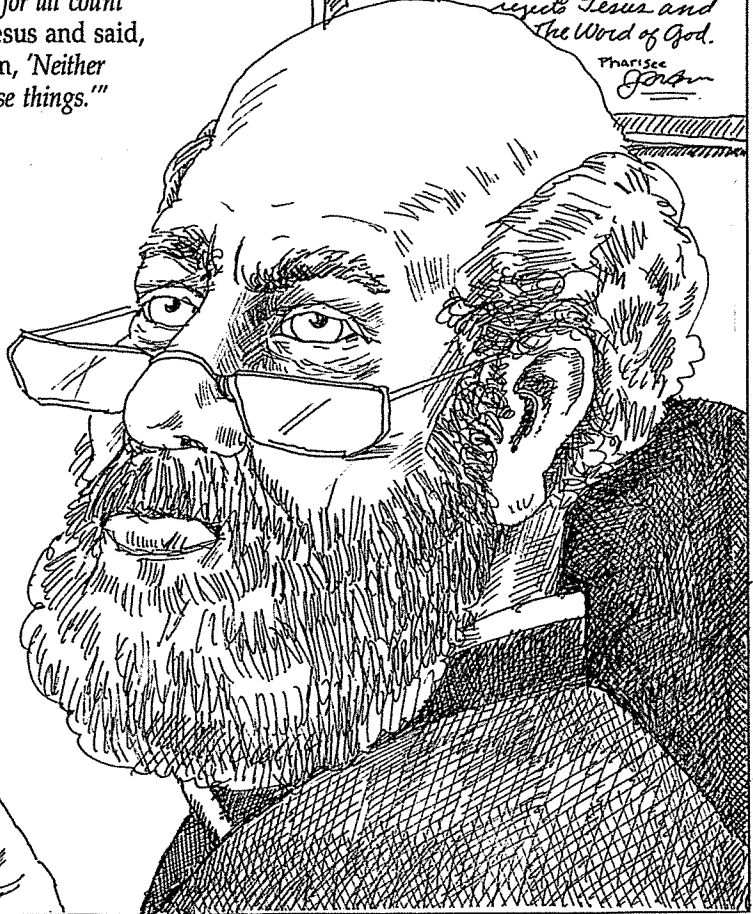
The Religious Ones Question Jesus' Authority

"Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?' But Jesus answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men," we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.' So they answered Jesus and said, 'We do not know.' And He said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'"
- Matthew 21:23-27



My vast education has taught me that not everything you read in the Bible is exactly correct! There are many ways to God! Jesus didn't really mean that He is the only way! That would be very narrow-minded, I think!

Always test the words of religious ones! Do their words match Jesus' Words - The Word of God?



The "religious" people were always trying to trap Jesus. They got their authority from men, and through being born into aristocratic priestly families, but Jesus and John the Baptist were from families who were not wealthy or famous. The religious leaders knew that John the Baptist was sent by God, and they saw the things that Jesus did, yet they would not believe He was the Messiah. They were so prideful and well-educated that they could not see the Lord. The same happens with us when we have a lot of "head" knowledge about the Lord and His Word. We need to remember who we are (sinners saved by grace) and helpless apart from Him. Any gift we have is by His hand, not our great abilities. There are many religious leaders today who have gone to seminary and have all the right man-made credentials, yet they have never been "called" by the Lord. Those who are not called have fruitless works that may look good on the outside, but there is no life. They are like withered fig trees. Apart from Him we can do nothing. We can bear no fruit apart from Him.

Matthew

Chapter 21:23-27

Discussion Questions

1. Read Mt. 21:23; Who questioned Jesus' authority as He taught in the temple?
2. Read Mt.21:24-25; What was Jesus' reply when His authority to teach was questioned?
3. Read Mt. 21:26; Why didn't Jesus' detractors answer His question?
4. Read Mt. 21:25-26; Why were the religious leaders afraid of Jesus?
5. Read Mt. 21:27; Was the answer the detractors gave to Jesus an honest one?
6. Read Mt. 7:15-20; How do we test a teacher's words? (Acts 17:11)

Memory Verse

"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11 (NKJV)

The Parable Of The Two Sons

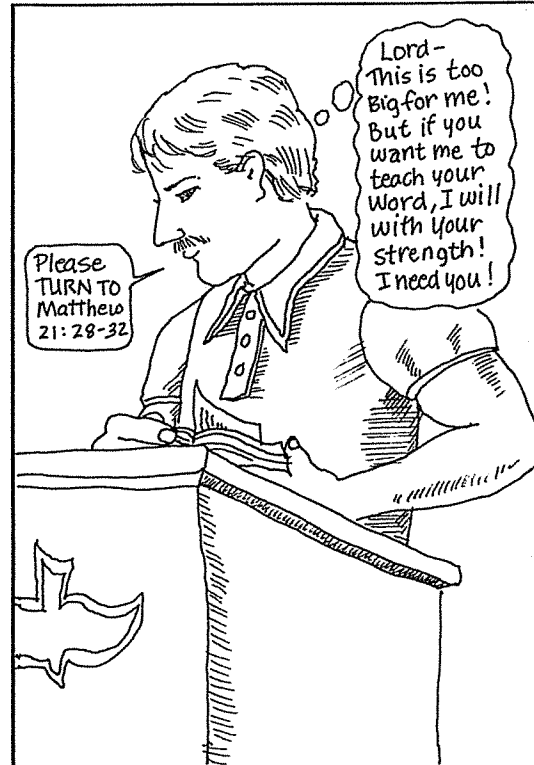
“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.’” - Matthew 21:28-32

- The first son was honest. He said that he would not go, but then regretted it and went. It's like us so often. We have a hard heart, but then we repent and go do the things He has called us to do. Jesus tells the Ephesian church, “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.” - Revelation 2:5

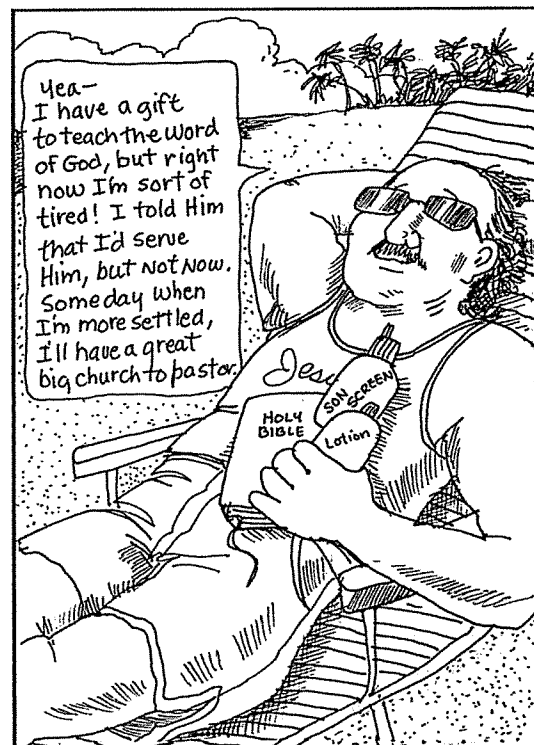
- The second son knew the right things to say, yet he did not do what he agreed to do. He was like the Pharisees who looked and sounded so holy and right-on, yet inside, they were unchanged and evil. Remember the parable of the vineyard workers? Jesus told us that the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen. (See Matthew 20:16.) The Pharisees saw themselves as first in God's kingdom. But, they had so deceived themselves that they didn't see the truth about their sinful state and their need to repent. They did not accept John's message to repent. The harlots and tax collectors will enter the kingdom before the Pharisees. The harlots and tax collectors were more likely to see the truth about their sinful state than the Pharisees. This Book of Matthew was written by a tax collector who repented and followed Jesus.

“But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” -James 1:22-25

“...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” - James 4:6



FIRST SON



SECOND SON

The Parable Of The Two Sons

Matthew 21:28-32

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. extortioner- one who steals secretly and deliberately
2. fast- to abstain from food; not eat
3. parable- a comparison in which the hearer has to catch the analogy in order to be instructed
4. Pharisees- (separated ones) - a religious and political party of the Jews in Palestine New Testament times. The Pharisees were known for insisting that the Law of God be observed as the scribes interpreted it.
5. regretted- felt remorse
6. relent- regret it
7. scribes- ones who would explain the Law in schools and synagogues
8. tithe- giving one-tenth of money or possessions to God and His purpose (Gen. 14:18-20; Lev. 27:30; Deut. 14:22, 27-29)

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matthew 21:28-32. Which son is Jesus comparing the Jewish leaders to?
b. In Matthew 21:30, the second son had, on the outside, the right words and appearance. But what was he like on the inside? (Matt. 23:25, 28)
2. a. Read Luke 18:9-14. How does this parable compare to the one we just read in Matthew 21:28-32?
b. Re-read Luke 18:11-12. How had the Pharisee deceived himself? (Prov. 30:12; I John 1:8)
c. Re-read Luke 18:13-14a. Why did the tax collector go down to his house justified? (I John 1:9)
d. Re -read Luke 18:14b. How does God treat the proud vs. the humble? (James 4:6)

Today's Memory Verse

"...for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:14b

The Parable of The Wicked Vinedressers

"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?' They said to Him, 'He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.' Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet." -Matthew 21:33-46



Whose vineyard?

"Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and break down its wall and it shall be trampled down. I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help." - Isaiah 5:1-7

• The Lord sent judgment on Jerusalem, and Titus burned Jerusalem in 70 AD. Israel disappeared as a nation and the Jews were scattered into all the world in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28:64-65. After 6 million Jews were killed under Hitler, the world (by God's promise) gave the Jews their homeland once again in 1948. The land of Israel was dry and worthless, but now the desert blooms and fruit is grown there. Many Jews have returned. God is still using the Gentiles to bear spiritual fruit, but He has promised to use Israel again. (See Isaiah 61 & 62, and Amos 9:11-15.)

The Parable of The Wicked Vinedressers Matthew 21:33-46

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. a nation bearing fruits of the Kingdom of God- represents the Church; those who are born again (John 3:3-17)
2. far away country- represents the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 25:14)
3. landowner- represents God the Father
4. landowner's son- represents God the Son (Jesus)
5. lease- to hire out for one's own benefit
6. parable- a comparison in which the hearer has to catch the analogy in order to be instructed
7. render- to give; to give or to do something necessary in fulfillment of an obligation or expectation
8. servants- represents the Old Testament prophets
9. the other vinedressers- Gentiles
10. vinedressers- represents Israel as a nation
11. vineyard- represents the kingdom of God

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matthew 21:33-41. Who planted the vineyard and whom does the vineyard belong to? (Matt. 21:33)
b. There was a tower in the vineyard. Who is our tower? (Prov. 18:10)
c. How was Israel like the vinedressers? (Matt. 23:37; I Thes. 2:15)
d. Can you name some of the servants (prophets) that God has sent?
e. Why did the vinedressers want to kill the landowner's son? (Matt. 21:38)
f. What is His inheritance? (Ps. 2:7-9)
2. Read Matthew 21:42. Who is the Chief Cornerstone and who rejected Him? (Acts 4:10-12)
3. a. Read Matthew 21:43. Who did God take the kingdom from and whom did He give it to?
b. Does this mean that God is finished with Israel? (Rom. 11:1-7,25-27)
c. Now that God has given the kingdom to the Church, does this give us reason to boast? Why or why not? What should we do? (Rom. 11:16-24)
4. Read Matthew 21:44. Once again, Jesus is the stone. When we come to Jesus we must be broken (Matt. 5:3) and we will fall at His feet (Rev. 1:17). If we don't "fall on the stone," and repent and come to Jesus, what will the stone do to us? (Is. 8:14-15; Dan. 2:34, 44)
5. Read Matthew 21:45. How did the chief priests and Pharisees know Jesus was talking about them and why did they hate Jesus? (John 3:19-21)
6. Why were they not able to lay hands on Jesus? (Ecc. 3:1; John 7:6-8)

Today's Memory Verse

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."
Psalm 118:22 (NKJV)

**The Parable of
The Wedding Feast
Matthew 22:1-14**

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. all whom they (the servants) found, both bad and good- represents the Gentiles
2. bride- represents the Church
3. invitation to the wedding- the Gospel of Jesus Christ
4. king- represents God the Father
5. king's son- represents Jesus Christ, God the Son
6. outer darkness- represents hell
7. parable- a comparison in which the hearer has to catch the analogy in order to be instructed
8. servants- represents the Old Testament prophets and the apostles of Jesus
9. spitefully- boldly disrespectful in speech or behavior; malicious; to treat shamefully and therefore to injure or abuse
10. the man without wedding garments- represents man's righteousness (Is. 64:6)
11. those who were invited to the wedding- represents Israel
12. wedding garments- Jesus' righteousness

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 22:1-14. Jesus gave a parable of the wedding feast. Explain this parable in your own words.
2. a. Read Luke 14:15-24. This parable is similar. But in this parable what were the invited guests doing to get out of going to the feast?

b. Have you ever made an excuse to avoid someone or to get out of something? Explain.

c. Can you think of one excuse that would be good enough to miss out on Jesus' invitation to be forgiven of all our sins and have eternal life in heaven?

d. Is it difficult or complicated to accept Jesus' invitation? What do we have to do? (Rom. 10:9-10; I John 1:8-9)
3. a. Read Matthew 22:14. Who are called? (Matt. 11:28; John 3:16)

b. Who are chosen? (John 10:26-28)

Today's Memory Verse

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."
Romans 10:9 (NKJV)

What About Paying Taxes?

"Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?' But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, 'Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.' So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription is this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way."

- Matthew 22:15-22

Again, the Pharisees attempted to trap Jesus. If Jesus had told them not to pay their taxes, they would have reported Him to Caesar. The Word of God tells us that we must be subject to governments, and obey the laws of the land.

"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." - 1 Peter 2:13-17

In all of this, don't forget to give to the Lord what is His, whether it be your time, talents, or tithes.



What About Paying Taxes?

Matthew 22:15-22

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. Caesar- the title taken by each of the Roman emperors, in this case it would be Emperor Tiberius
2. denarius- a coin that equaled about a day's wage; this coin bore the image of Emperor Tiberius and so it supported Rome's right to collect taxes
3. entangle- to lay snares for, snare, trap
4. Herodians- a Jewish political party with a devotion to the Roman emperor and Herod his deputy; the Herodians would brand Jesus a traitor to Rome if He did not support Roman taxation
5. hypocrite- pretending to be what one is not; this term is what the Greeks would call an actor on stage who would act the part of a character; this is where we get our term "two-faced"
6. Pharisees- (separated ones)- a religious and political party of the Jews in Palestine New Testament times; the Pharisees were known for insisting that the Law of God be observed as the scribes interpreted it
7. render- to give; to give or to do something necessary in fulfillment of an obligation or expectation
8. taxes- a percentage of income, property value, etc. required as payment to support a government, in this case to support the Roman occupation

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matthew 22:15-16. What did they mean in Matthew 22:16 when they said, "... nor do you care about anyone, for you do not regard the person of men.?" (Acts 10:34)
b. What are the Pharisees and Herodians doing? (Is. 29:13; Matt. 22:15)
c. Re-read Matthew 22:16. Just like many false religions of today, what did the Pharisees and Herodians call Jesus?
d. Who is Jesus? (Matt. 16:13-17)
2. a. Read Matthew 22:17. According to the Bible, should we pay taxes? Why or why not? (Prov. 21:1; Rom.13:1-7)
b. When do we not submit to governing authorities? (Acts 5:27-29)
3. Read Matthew 22:18. How did Jesus know what was going on? (Psalm 44:21)
4. Read Matthew 22:19-22. What did Jesus do to the Pharisees and Herodians? (Job 5:12-13)

Summary: We render to "Caesar" or government what belongs to them. We pay our taxes and follow the rules (as long as they don't contradict God's Word). But this money we give them is of this earthly kingdom and will not last. We also render to God what is God's. We are God's. We were bought with a price (the blood of Jesus) and are no longer our own. We render our heart, obedience, and loyalty through faith. When we give to God, there are eternal rewards. These things will never pass away.

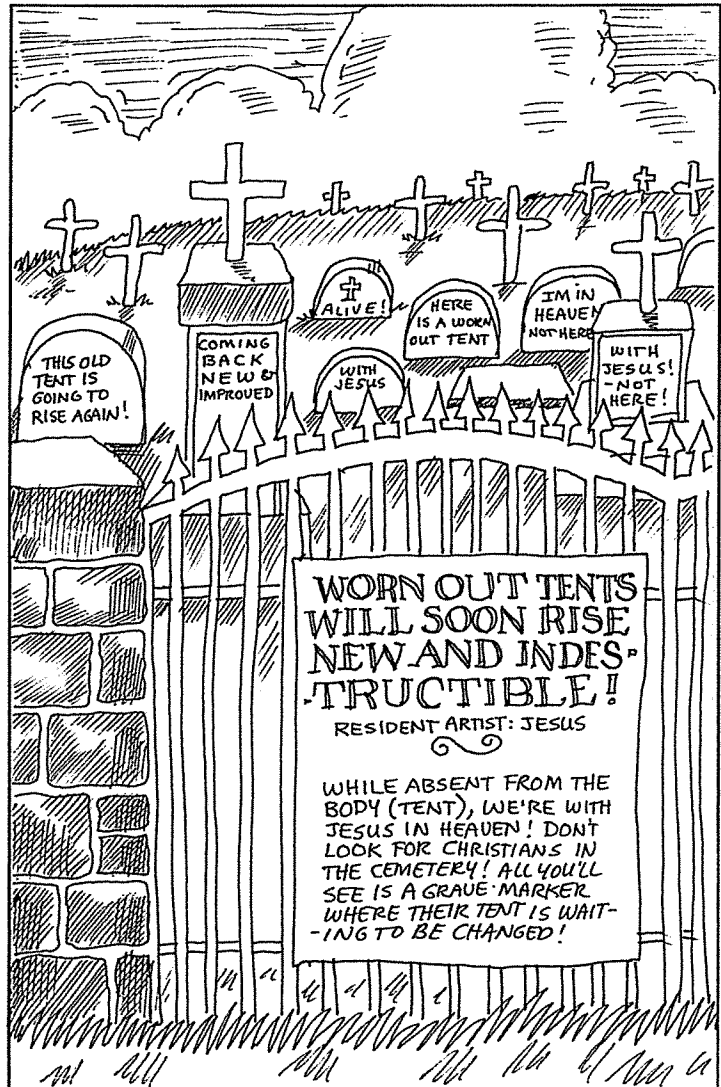
Today's Memory Verse

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
Matthew 6:33 (NKJV)

What About The Resurrection?

"The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: 'Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.' Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching."

- Matthew 22:23-33



The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. That is why we say, "They were 'sad, you see.'" But it really doesn't matter what they wanted to believe. Their believing otherwise does not change the truth that there will be a resurrection. "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live." - John 5:25

"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." - John 5:28-29

Who has done good? No one. But Jesus is our righteousness. Who has done evil? All of us. Are you born again and forgiven of your sins? Are you clothed in His righteousness?

Jesus said...,"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

- John 11:25-26

"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

- 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

Remember Matthew 17? Moses and Elijah were seen speaking with Jesus. Moses had physically died many years before Jesus came. Elijah was taken up without dying physically. Elijah is like those who will be taken in the rapture, and Moses, like those taken in the resurrection. Moses isn't dead! Just like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All are alive with the Lord.

What About The Resurrection?

Matthew 22:23-33

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. astonished- amazed
2. resurrection- a dead body returning to life
3. Sadducees- a Jewish sect in opposition to the Pharisees. They rejected "the traditions of elders" made up of customs, rulings, and interpretations that the scribes passed on as the authoritative way in which God's Law should be applied. They accepted the teachings of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy) only and rejected the later books of the Old Testament. They did not believe in the resurrection of man, but believed that the soul dies with the body (Matt. 22:23). They interpreted the Law literally and tended to support a strict justice as opposed to mercy toward the offender.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 22:23. What do you think the Sadducees are up to? (Matt. 16:1; Matt. 22:15)
2. a. Read Matthew 22:24-28. Once again, what are they calling Jesus? (Matt. 22:24)
b. Who is Jesus? (Matt. 16:13-17)
c. What were the Sadducees using to try and trap Jesus in His words? (Duet. 25:5)
d. Who else used the Word of God to test Jesus? (Matt. 4:1-11)
e. What do you think Jesus will do next? (Job 5:12-13)
3. a. Read Matthew 22:29-32. What point is Jesus making here? (Ex. 3:6; Luke 20:37-38)
b. Who will be resurrected? What are the two resurrections? (John 5:28-29)
c. How can we obtain the resurrection of life? (John 11:25-26)
d. After our resurrection to life, what promise can we hang on to? (Rev. 21:4)
4. Read Matthew 22:33. Did Jesus accomplish Job 5:12-13?

Today's Memory Verse

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.'
John 11:25 (NKJV)



Which Is The Greatest Commandment?

"But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- Matthew 22:34-40

Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

- Matthew 5:17-19

If we love the Lord, we will love our neighbor (1 John 3:10). Though many people teach it, self-esteem has no place in our walk with the Lord. We need to stop esteeming ourselves and esteem God first, and then others (our neighbors) second. Lay down your life for the Lord and others.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." - Philippians 2:3

Whose Son Is The Christ?

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They said to Him, 'The Son of David.' He said to them, 'How then does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'?" If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?' And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore."

- Matthew 22:41-46 (See Psalm 110:1.)

During all His examinations by the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Jesus was found to be without blemish. The Passover lamb (Exodus 12:5) needed to be without blemish before it could be used as a sacrifice for sins. Jesus was inspected by the priests and He was without a flaw or a blemish.

MATTHEW

Chapter 22:34-46

Discussion Questions

1. Read Mt. 22:34-35; Why did the Pharisees and Sadducees join forces against Jesus?
2. Read Mt. 22:36; What question did the Pharisees and Sadducees ask Jesus, hoping to "trip" Him up?
3. Read Mt. 22:37-40; What did Jesus say to them?
4. Read Mt. 22:40; Did Jesus come to destroy or fulfill the Law or the Prophets? (Mt. 5:17-19)
5. Read Mt. 22:44; In verse 44 which "Lord" refers to God the Father and which "Lord" refers to God the Son? (Ps. 110:1)
6. Read Mt. 22:45-46; What question did Jesus ask that stumped His detractors?

Memory Verse

"Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, and with all you mind.' "

Matthew 22:37 (NKJV)

Jesus' Last Public Sermon; Addressed To The Hypocrites, The Scribes & Pharisees

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.'"

- Matthew 23:1-3

Though the scribes and Pharisees studied the Law, which Moses wrote according to the Word of the Lord, they did not do what it said. They knew the Word and could quote it, yet they did not do it.

"For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments."

- Matthew 23:4-5

JESUS CARRIES HEAVY BURDENS

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:28-30

REWARDS FROM MEN, OR FROM YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

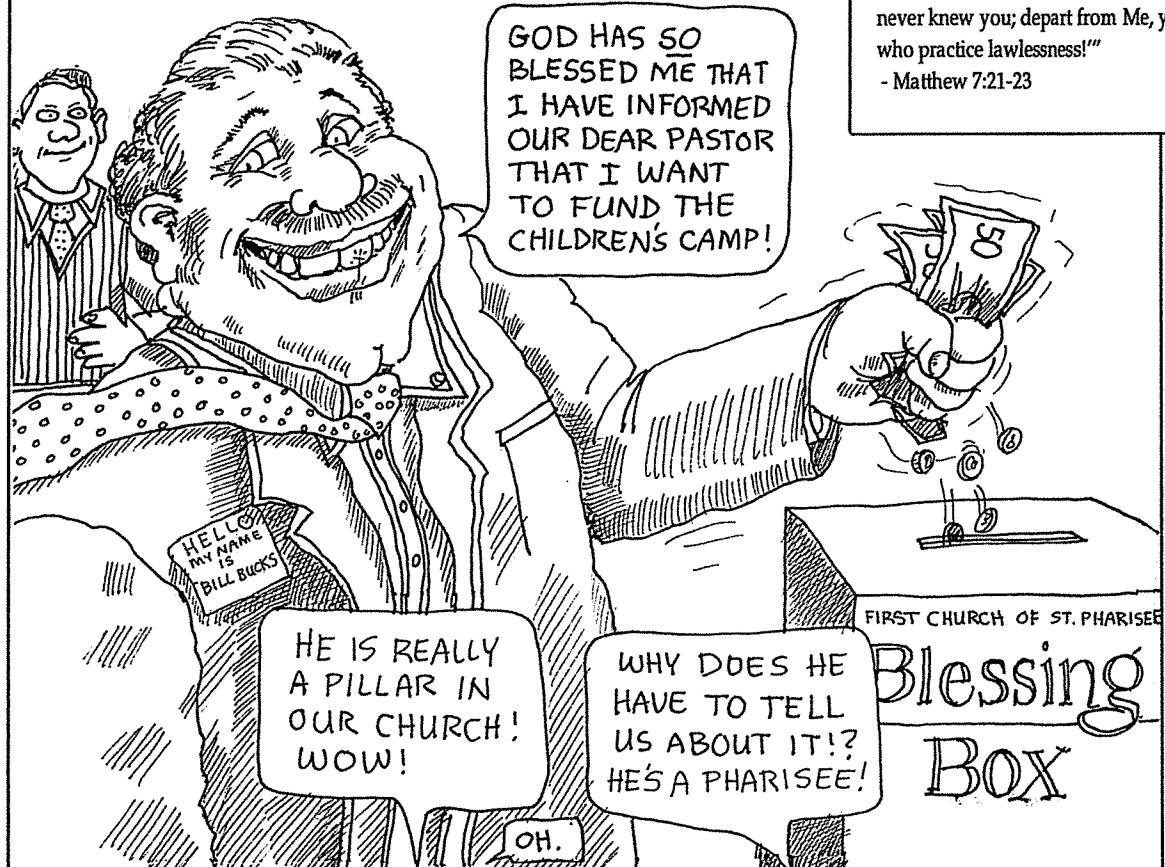
Jesus said, *"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."*

- Matthew 6:1-2

DOING THE WILL OF THE FATHER

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

- Matthew 7:21-23



MATTHEW

Chapter 23:1-5

Discussion Questions

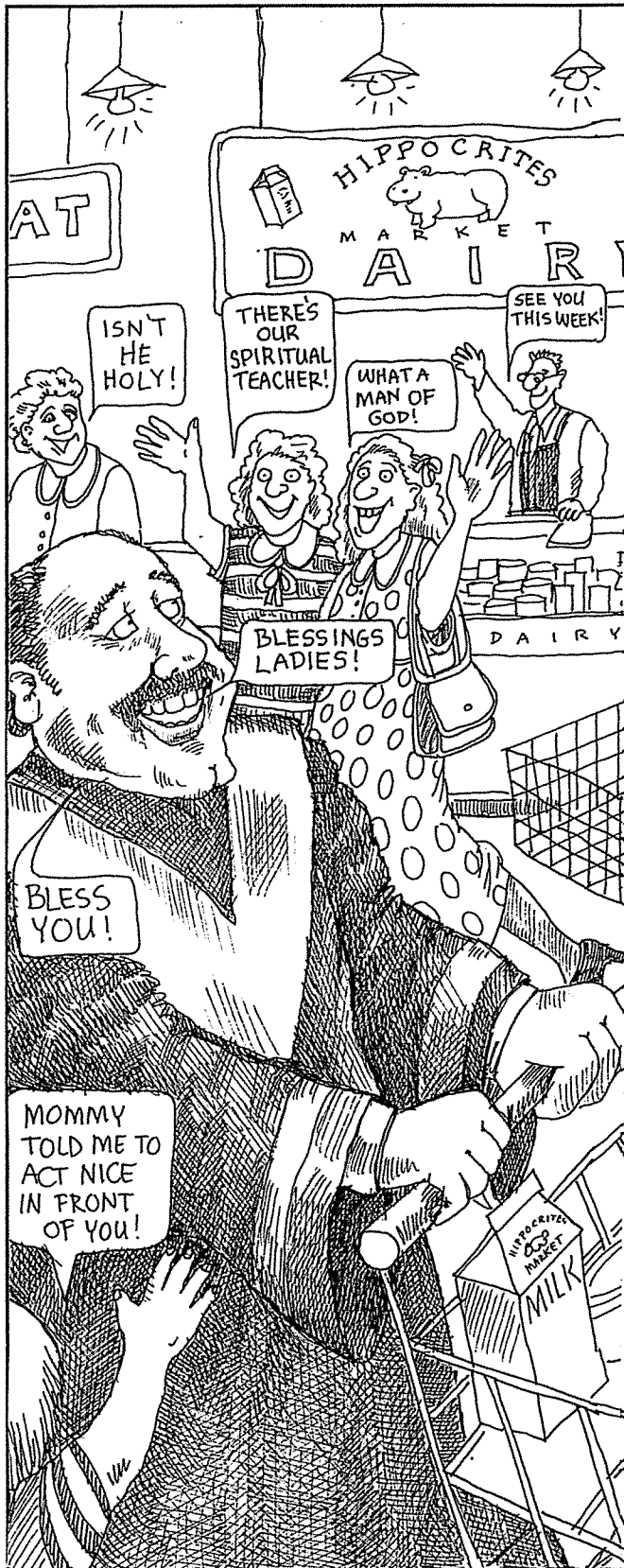
1. Read Mt. 23:1-3; Did Jesus tell the multitudes and His Disciples to break the Law?
2. Read Mt. 23:3; Why did Jesus tell the people to not follow the example of the Pharisees?
3. Read Mt. 23:4-5; Did the Scribes and Pharisees put burdens on the people that they themselves would not carry?
4. What does Jesus say about His burdens? (Mt. 11:28-30)

Memory Verse

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28 (NKJV)

Apply Within For Kids - Matthew 23:6-12



Jesus' Last Public Sermon; Addressed To The Hypocrites, The Scribes & Pharisees (Continued)


"They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, 'Rabbi.' But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." -Matthew 23:6-12

SERVANTS SHALL BE THE GREATEST AND THE HUMBLE WILL BE EXALTED.

Unlike the Pharisees' prideful example, Jesus showed the multitudes how to be truly great, by becoming a servant rather than being served. Jesus was humble and lowly. He didn't even ride into Jerusalem on a large beautiful stallion, but rather, on a lowly little donkey. He will return on a horse in the second coming. The hypocrites loved to be seen and exalted before men. *"...he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One Who serves."* - Luke 22:26-27

GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR TEACHER.

The Holy Spirit is given to all those who are born again. God lives inside each believer, and He is our Teacher. Jesus tells us in John 16:13-15; *"...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."*

There is only One Holy Father, and that is God. 

MATTHEW

Chapter 23:6-12

Discussion Questions

1. Read Mt. 23:6-10; Do you think Jesus approves of braggers and people making up holy-sounding names for themselves? (Phil. 2:3-4)

2. Read Mt. 23:11-12; How did Jesus show us to behave? (see front of lesson)
(Luke 22:26-27)

Memory Verse

"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Matthew 23:12 (NKJV)

Jesus' Last Public Sermon; To The Hypocrites, The Scribes & Pharisees (Continued)

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." - Matthew 23:13

The Pharisees were stumbling blocks to those who were seeking the Lord. The Pharisees had a form of godliness, yet there was no power there. God's Law had become a list of rules and traditions of men.

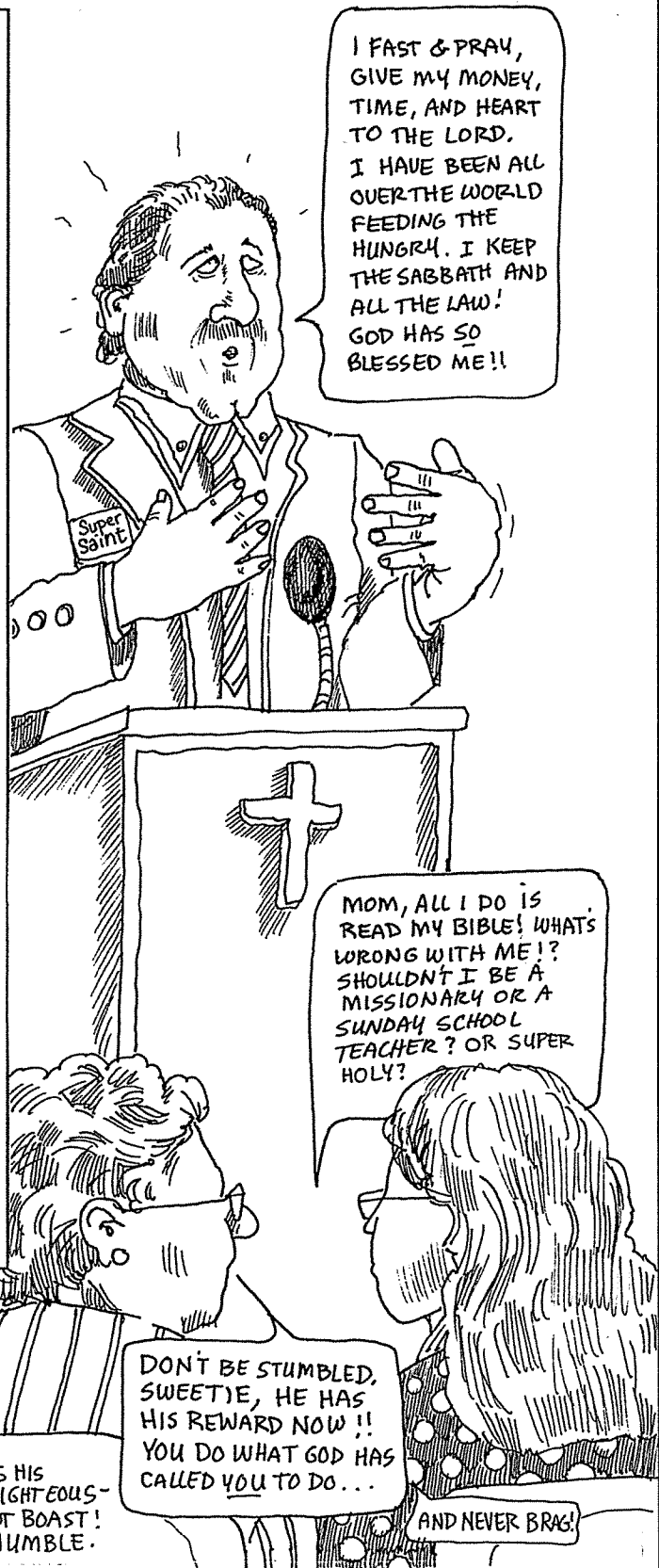
Jesus said, *"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."* - Matthew 5:20

OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS FROM JESUS,
RATHER THAN BY KEEPING THE LAW

Who could live more righteously than the scribes and Pharisees, who were experts of the Law? No one, except Jesus. There is no other Righteousness apart from taking the Righteousness that Jesus gives us when we are born again. We are hypocrites like the Pharisees if all we have is knowledge of the Word. We must have changed hearts so we can DO what Jesus told us to do. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to walk with the Lord and not be hypocrites.

JESUS IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jeremiah 23:5-6 says, *"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*



Jesus' Last Public Sermon; To The Hypocrites, The Scribes & Pharisees (Continued)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation." -Matthew 23:14

They cheated widows. What does God say is pure religion?
"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

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! 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." -Matthew 23:15

BAD TREES PRODUCE BAD FRUIT

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them." - Matthew 7:15-20

"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold on the temple, he is obliged to perform it'. Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 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.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it."
-Matthew 23:16 - 22

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH US ABOUT SWEARING OATHS?

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one." - Matthew 5:33-37

The Pharisees took ^{up} corrupted the simple Word of God with their own traditions, and created their own loop-holes. Rather than the Law being the delight of God's people (Psalm 119:92), the scribes and Pharisees made God's Law burdensome.



MATTHEW

Chapter 23:14-22

Discussion Questions

1. Read Mt. 23:14; Why will the Scribes and Pharisees receive greater condemnation? (James 1:27)
2. Read Mt. 23:15; Why are the 'converts' of Scribes and Pharisees turning out very badly? (Mt. 7:15-20)
3. Read Mt. 23:16-22; What did Jesus teach about making oaths? (Mt. 5:33-37)

Memory Verse

"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."

Matthew 5:37 (NKJV)

Jesus' Last Public Sermon;
To The Hypocrites,
The Scribes & Pharisees
(Continued)

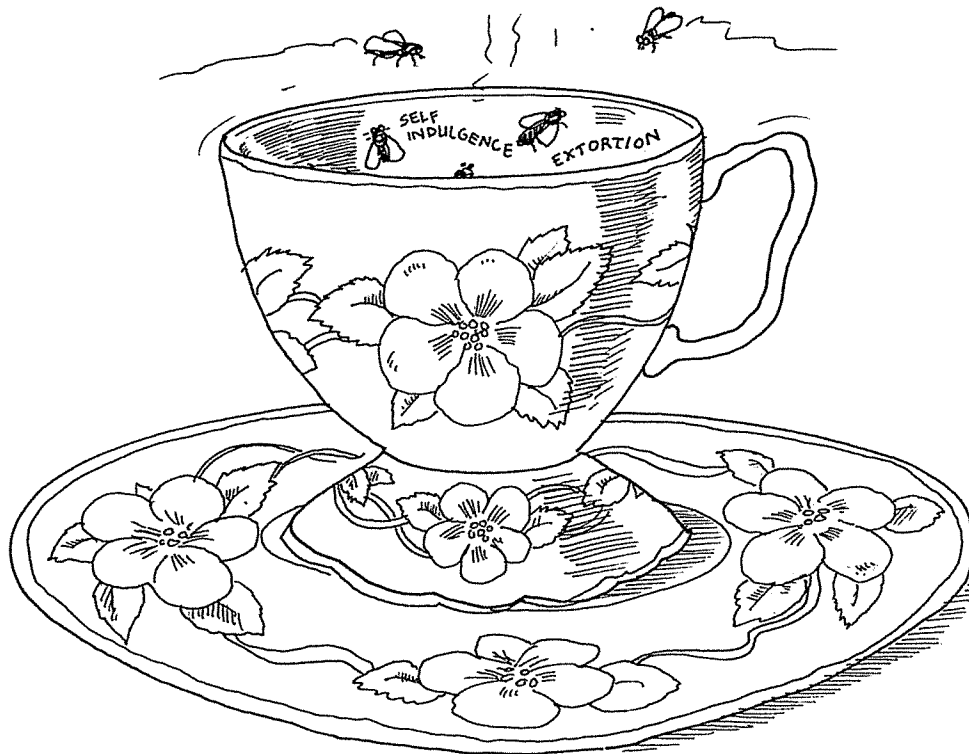
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" -Matthew 23:23-24

The Pharisees outwardly kept the requirements of the Law, especially those things that could be seen by others, but they didn't do the things that only God could see, such as things of the heart. *"...For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* - 1 Samuel 16:7. The Pharisees looked for the tiniest offenses, yet overlooked the weightier matters such as justice, mercy and faith. We need to be just and fair, because God is a just God. We must be merciful, because God has mercy on us. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also." - Matthew 23:25-26

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." -Matthew 23:27-28

Picture a pretty china tea cup and saucer sitting on the table. It has a beautiful outward appearance, yet upon picking it up to get a drink, you discover that there is moldy tea and bugs on the inside! That is a picture of hypocrisy. Tombs were white-washed in Israel so that they could be seen and not stepped on. Even though the tombstones were white and clean, the tombs still held the unclean contents of a dead body. We must be born again and changed on the inside, then the outside will be clean too!



**Jesus' Last Public Sermon:
To The Hypocrites, The Scribes and Pharisees
(Continued)
Matthew 23:23-28**

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. anise, cummin, mint- spices; spices were valuable and expensive, and considered a luxury among the Jewish people
2. extortion- getting something from someone by violence, threats, misuse of authority, etc.
3. hypocrites- a person who says one thing and does another; pretending to be what one is not; this term is what the Greeks would call an actor on stage who would wear a mask and act the part of a character; this is where we get our term "two faced"
4. Pharisees- (separated ones)- a religious and political party of the Jews in the New Testament times. They were known for insisting that the Law of God be observed as the scribes interpreted it. Also, they held their traditions as important as the Law, and when contradictions between the two arose, many times they would follow their traditions instead of the Law.
5. righteous- 1.) when referring to God: right, just, holy 2.) when referring to men or self-righteousness: Judges 17:6; Isaiah 64:6
6. scribes- ones who would interpret the Law, and explain the Law in schools and synagogues. They also passed on their traditions as being as important as the Law and in some cases valued their traditions more than the Law.
7. tithe- to pay or give one-tenth of one's money or possessions
8. woe- an interjection of grief; a warning of misery to come and showing pity for the recipients

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matthew 23:23-24. This talks about the scribes and Pharisees doing part of the Law, but not all of it. They have left out some of the more important things. What did they leave out?
b. What does the Bible say we do when we do this?(James 2:10)
c. Who is the Law for? (I Tim. 1:8-10) Who does that include? (I John 1:8-10; Ecc. 7:20)
d. What does the Law do? (Rom. 3:20)

Note: Remember, the Law showed us that we are unable to keep it and we are all sinners and unrighteous in need of a savior. Jesus did not destroy the Law but fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 10:4). He has made a new covenant with us. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He is our righteousness if we believe on Him. When we do this we become a new creation (II Cor 5:17). Now we should want to obey Christ and do His will (John 15:9-14). To do this it is very important to read God's word on a regular basis so that we will know what His will is and what His will isn't. (Josh. 1:8; II Tim. 3:16-17)

2. a. Read Matthew 23:25-26. Where does sin start? (Matt. 15:18-19; Jer. 17:9)
b. What were the scribes and Pharisees trying to do? (Rom. 10:1-3)
c. What does the Bible say about man's righteousness? (Is. 64:6)
d. How do you clean the inside of the cup? (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:26-27; Titus 3:5)
3. a. Read Matthew 23:27-28. How does Jesus say the scribes and Pharisees appear before men?
b. Does the outside match what is on the inside? What is the difference?

Today's Memory Verse

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

Apply Within For Kids - Matthew 23:29-33



REMEMBER THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS?

Israel was the vineyard and all the vinedressers beat, killed, and stoned the servants that were sent by the landowner. Then the landowner sent His Son, and thought that they would respect His Son. But instead, they hated Him because He was the Heir, so they cast Him out of the vineyard and killed Him. What did the landowner say He would do? "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." - Matthew 21:41

Jesus' Last Public Sermon; To The Hypocrites, The Scribes & Pharisees (Continued)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 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.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" - Matthew 23:29-33

JOHN THE BAPTIST CALLED THEM VIPERS

"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? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'" - Matthew 3:7-10. 1 Peter 2:4-5, says, "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." We are those stones. (Also see Revelation 2:17!)

EARLIER, JESUS CALLED THEM VIPERS

"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." - Matthew 12:33-35

We just looked at the withered fig tree (Matthew 21:18-19). Israel and the religious leaders were fruitless trees. John the Baptist warned that an ax was already laid to the root of the tree. Israel rejected the Lord, and judgment was coming.

**Jesus' Last Public Sermon:
To The Hypocrites, The Scribes and Pharisees
(Continued)
Matthew 23:29-33**

Vocabulary in Context with Today's Lesson

1. adorn- decorate; it was the custom of the Greeks as well as the Jews to construct and also to repair and decorate monuments of those who deserved honor or who had suffered an undeserved death.
2. brood of vipers- offspring of poisonous snakes
3. hypocrite- a person who says one thing and does another; pretending to be what one is not; this term is what the Greeks would call an actor on stage who would wear a mask and act the part of a character; this is where we get our term "two faced"
4. Pharisees- (separated ones)- a religious and political party of the Jews in the New Testament times. They were known for insisting that the Law of God be observed as the scribes interpreted it. Also, they held their traditions as important as the Law, and when contradictions between the two arose, many times they would follow their traditions instead of the Law.
5. scribes- ones who would interpret the Law, and explain the Law in schools and synagogues. They also passed on their traditions as being as important as the Law and in some cases valued their traditions more than the Law.
6. woe- an interjection of grief; a warning of misery to come and showing pity for the recipients

Discussion Questions

1. a. Read Matthew 23:29-30. What did the fathers of the scribes and Pharisees do to the Prophets? (Matt. 23:30)
- b. What did the scribes and Pharisees say they would not have done if they lived in the days of their father?
- c. What have they been planning to do to Jesus, not only the greatest Prophet, but also the Son of God? (Matt. 12:14; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 21:45-46; Matt. 22:15)
2. Read Matthew 23:31-32. What is Jesus saying that the scribes and Pharisees are guilty of? (Review the parable of the wicked vinedressers: Matt. 21:33-46.)
3. a. Read Matthew 23:33. Who else referred to the Pharisees as a "brood of vipers"? (Matt. 3:4-7)
- b. There is one way that they can escape the condemnation of Hell. What is it? (John 14:6)

Today's Memory Verse

"Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6 (NKJV)

Jesus' Last Public Sermon; To The Hypocrites, The Scribes & Pharisees (Continued)

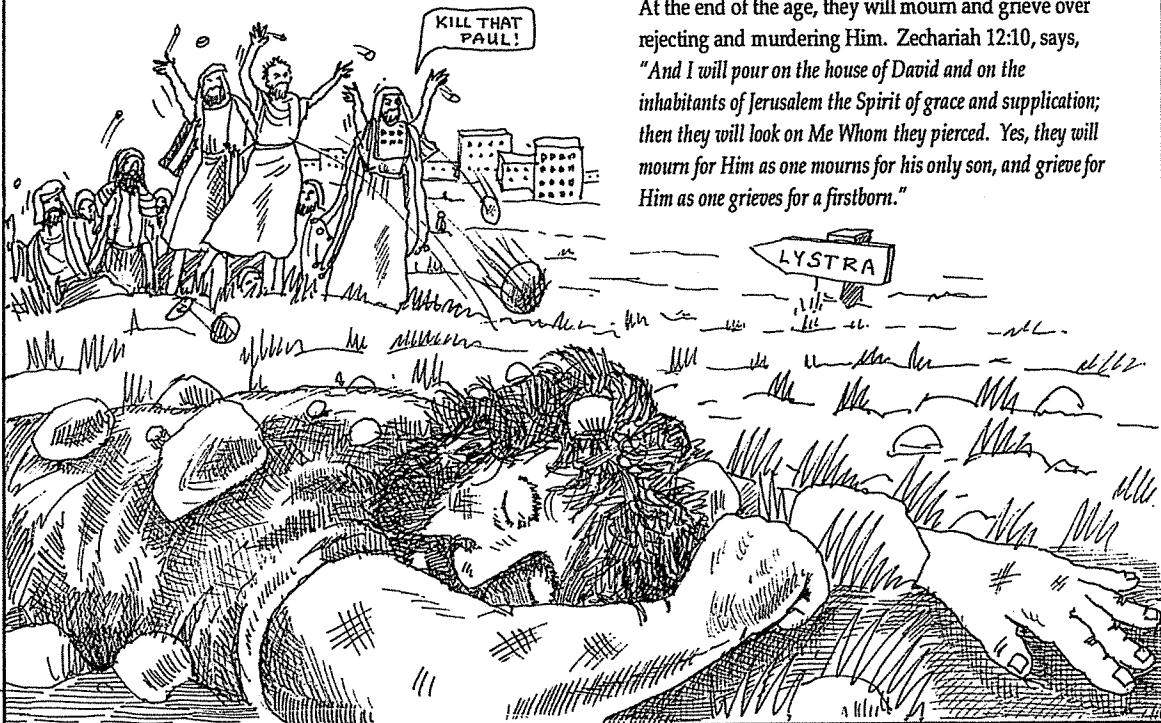
"Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." -Matthew 23:34-36

Jesus is now foretelling future events. He will continue to send prophets, wise men, and scribes. If you read the New Testament from Acts to Revelation, you will see that the persecution continued has continued even until this very day. Jesus warned them that judgment was coming to that generation. Israel had rejected their Messiah.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; 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.'" -Matthew 23:37-39

Jerusalem rejected Jesus, their Messiah. He was constantly moved with compassion while He walked among His people. Psalm 36:7 says, "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings." Jesus longed to tuck them under His wings, but they would not have Him. They rejected Him. Remember the parable of the wicked vinedressers? They did not respect the son of the landowner, but desired to kill him. Israel will not say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,' until the end of the age. Their lips cried out, 'Hosanna,' earlier, but their hearts were far from Him.

At the end of the age, they will mourn and grieve over rejecting and murdering Him. Zechariah 12:10, says, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me Whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."



see Acts 14:19-20

Matthew

Chapter 23:34-39

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matt. 23:34. To whom did God send the prophets, wise men, and scribes?
2. Read Matt. 23:34-36. What fate is Jesus prophesying for the messengers He will send to the Jews?
3. Read Matt. 23:37. Explain the comparison Jesus uses regarding His love for the Jews.
4. Have the Jews been willing to gather under the promises of Jesus' gift of eternal life? Are YOU willing?! (John 3:3)
5. Read Matt. 23:38 and Zech. 12:10-11. Whose house will be left desolate? Why? Does this prophecy also refer to the actual destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.?
6. Read Matt. 23:39 and Psalm 118:26. Jesus never leaves us without hope. Even though He is lamenting over His people rejecting Him, He prophesies exactly what they will say when they accept Him. What are those words?

Memory Verse

"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"
Matthew 23:39b (NKJV)