

July 8, 2018

Matthew 23:13-36

Seven Woes Against Hypocritical Leaders

Jer 23:1 Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" declares the Lord

- The number seven is used to demonstrate completion or fullness (**Gen. 2:2-3**).
- Jesus is not condemning religion but the way the Jewish religion was being taught and practiced by their leadership.
- Jesus proclaims that the leadership had completely (7) failed to make God's people fit for His presence and worship through the Law because of their teachings and practices (**Ezek. 34:1-10**).
- They had added their own practices and regulations to the Law.

Mark 7:7 ...in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines [as necessary] the commandments of men

- God created the old covenant Law and Levitical legislation as the way into His presence until Christ perfectly fulfilled all the stipulations of the law for the creation of the New Covenant in His blood (**Heb. 9:1-10; Luke 22:20**).

- Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant through His obedience to the Word of God.

1 John 2:5 ...whoever keeps His Word, in him truly the love of God is perfected...

- Jesus pronounces the Judgment of God upon all man-centered religion because they are devoid of the love of God.

John 5:42 ...you do not have the love of God within you

- At the cross, Jesus' love for the Father and for His will put to death all the effects of our self-love to freed us from the tyranny of our own natural self-love by giving us His own love in its place.

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full

- As a result, we have been given the very love of God (**Rom. 5:5; John 17:26**).
- Our own natural self-love is now being progressively replaced by God's kind of love as we are being transformed by the renewing of our minds (**Rom.12:2**).
- The true religion of God is defined in **Deut. 6:4-5** and **Num. 19:18**.
- False religion was introduced into humanity by Satan in **Gen. 3:2**. Now our god of self needs to be worshiped, served, obeyed, protected, and promoted.

- For us to be freed of the bondage to our self-love, God must replace our self-loving hearts with a heart that loves with His love (**Ez.36:25-27**).
- The essence of Christianity is the activity of God's love in and among us producing a love for Him and for one another (**1 John**).

1st woe>>>v.13 (14) Jesus condemns the Pharisees for effectively closing the door of the Kingdom against others rather than opening it

2nd woe>>>v.15 Jesus condemns the Pharisees' zealous proselytizing of Gentiles which resulted in them becoming more zealous for hypocritical works

The apostle Paul is an example: taught by Gamaliel [Acts 22:3], ...a son of the Pharisees... [Acts 23:6], Paul became more zealous for the outward observance of the law [Phil. 3:3-6] which drove him to persecute Christ [Acts 9:4] and to become ...the chief of sinners... [2 Tim. 1:15]

3rd woe>>>v.16-22 Jesus told the Pharisees that they were blind leaders of the blind by the way they on biblically handled vows... let your yes be yes [Matt. 5:37]

4th woe>>>v.23-24 Jesus condemns the Pharisees elevating the minor issues of the law over the major issues such as elevating the practice of giving over the more important issues of justice, mercy and forgiveness

5th and 6th woes>>v 25-28 Jesus continued His condemnation of the Pharisees' practice by condemning their outward piety as corrupt, not motivated by inward piety, but by pride and self ambition and self honor

7th woe>>v.29-32>>Jesus told them that outwardly they loved the prophets but inwardly they were plotting to kill the prophets' Prophet