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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Matthew 23.

(2013)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Matthew 23.

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### Topics.

- The hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes.
- Call no man rabbi or your father on earth.
- Whoever exalts himself will be humbled.
- Eight woes to the scribes and Pharisees.
- Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
- Jerusalem's future.

**The Previous Chapter:** in the previous chapter Jesus told the parable of the wedding feast, he spoke of many being called, but few chosen; outer darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth; raising up children for your brothers widow; paying taxes to Caesar; the greatest commandment in the law; the Sadducees saying there is no resurrection; the resurrected being like the angels in heaven and about David calling Christ his Lord.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### The Hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes.

Matthew 23:1-7 ----- <sup>1</sup>Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup>"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat <sup>3</sup>so practice and observe whatever they tell you— but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. <sup>5</sup>They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, <sup>6</sup>and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues <sup>7</sup>and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi (master) by others.

Phylacteries: are box's the Jews put Scripture in and wore on their arms or foreheads.

**Pharisees:** means the separated ones, they were rulers of the Jews and the most-strict and by far the most influential sect of the three prominent societies of Judaism that were around at the time of Christ (the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essences). Pharisees loved to wear distinguishing garb so as to be easily recognised and were found everywhere in Palestine not only in Jerusalem.

They made three contributions to Judaism so that ultimately Pharisaism and Judaism became almost synonymous. The changes the Pharisees made to the Jewish faith began in earnest after the Babylonian Captivity, the temple worship and the sacrifices had ceased so the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees began to centre the activities of Judaism in Jewish law, tradition and in the religious rites of the Synagogues.

### The three changes the Pharisees made to Judaism: -

1. **Jewish legalism:** the Scribes who were considered experts in interpreting the Scriptures studied the traditional exegesis of the Law which resulted in it becoming a major part of Jewish thought and giving Jewish legalism a great impetus during the New Testament era. The Pharisees closely associated with the scribes organised the followers of the scribes teaching in the Synagogues thus legalism became widespread in the Jewish faith.

2. **Formalised religion:** the Pharisees formalised the religion of the scribes and their interpretation of the law they placed it into the mind of Jewish faith and the practice of it in the synagogues and religious ceremony. The reason the scribes and Pharisees are often mentioned together in the New Testament is because even though the Pharisees were not practical politicians like the more liberal Sadducees, they were the religious leaders of the Jews and the highest qualification for membership into the Pharisees was strict adherence to the Law (Oral or written).
3. **Organisation of Jewish religion:** after the seventy-year Babylonian captivity and the Maccabean Revolt (165 BC) the scribes increased tradition and adapted it with the Mosaic Law, but it was the Pharisees who formulated, developed and organised the scribes' teachings into Jewish religion itself. This increased focus on law and tradition resulted in separatism and an almost new religion, because much of it was the opposite from what had been handed down in the Covenant by the prophets.

### **The Pharisees became a Closely Organised Group**

The Pharisees were very loyal to their own society and to each other, but separate from others and even their own Jewish people, they pledged themselves to obey all facets of the traditions to minutest detail and were sticklers to ceremonial purity. This developed into a feeling of superiority over other nations and people. From this superior feeling as well as religious emotion, pride found its most extreme expression.

The Pharisees were haughty and arrogant because they believed they were the only interpreters of God's word. They made life difficult for themselves and bitter for others, and despised those whom they did not consider their equals. The Pharisees cultivated a national and religious consciousness, which has hardly been equalled. Their teaching that salvation came by maintaining tradition and keeping the law had such a strong influence on the minds of their followers that God's grace was thought to come from self-effort rather than grace so it was only natural that such a religion would ultimately become a matter of externals and not a faith of the heart.

**For further information see title: -**

- Sanhedrin in, Bible Dictionary (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**The Scribes and Pharisees were in the ministry for their own glory, they: -**

- Preached and taught the Scriptures to others, but did not do them themselves.
- Put heavy burdens on their followers but do nothing to help them.
- Everything they did was done to be seen so that they are praised by others.
- Loved the place of honour and the best seats in the synagogues.
- Dressed to look holy and righteous.
- Loved people exalting them and being esteemed by their title (rabbi) (master).

**Scribes:** the Jewish scribes studied and interpreted the law, but sadly added to it because they believed that their diligent search of the Old Testament meanings was virtuous and entitled them to eternal life (John 5:39). They were a class of learned men who made the systematic study of the law and its exposition their professional occupation.

Prior to the seventy-year captivity in Babylon the scribes were public writers, governmental secretaries and copiers of the law and other documents (2 Sam. 8:17) (2 Sam. 20:25) (1 Kings 4:3) (2 Kings 12:10) (Jer. 8:8) (Jer. 36:18) (Prov. 25:1) which at first this naturally fell to the priests (Neh. 8), but as time progressed through history there arose a separate group of professional students who devoted themselves to the preservation, transcription and exposition of the law.

**The scribes in the New Testament:** scribes in the New Testament are also called lawyers (meaning legal experts) (Matt. 22:35) (Luke 7:30) (Luke 10:25) (Luke 11:45) (Luke 14:3) (Acts 5:34) and were also called doctors of the law (Luke 5:17) (Acts 5:34). The majority of the scribes belonged to the Pharisees party because they recognised the legal interpretations of the scribes. Some verses seem to imply that the Sadducees also had their scribes (Mark 2:16) (Luke 5:30) (Acts 23:9).

**The scribes and power:** the scribes had a powerful position in the New Testament which was the result of gradual development over a long period of time. They held undisputed sway as the recognised exponents of the law and the revered representatives of Judaism and proudly claimed the positions of first rank. The scribes were often called upon to serve as judges in Jewish courts because of their legal knowledge.

**The scribes and the people:** the common people in their desire to know the law readily turned to the legal experts as teachers thus the scribes received the deep respect of the people, as indicated in the honourable term rabbi, meaning my master or teacher, but they loaded the people with burdens grievous to be born (Luke 11:46) (Matt. 23:4) and sought public acclaim of the masses demanding the utmost reverence from their disciples.

**The scribes work:** the scribes studied and interpreted the law God gave to Moses, but sadly where they thought there was a lack of details in Moses Law they added to it through the gradual development of an extensive and complicated system of teaching adding to its actual requirements. The vast and complicated mass of scribal teaching was known as the tradition of the elders (Matt. 15:2-6) (Mark 7:1-13) it was orally transmitted and required prolonged study to master. Most of the scribes like Paul (Acts 18:3) followed some trade even though their activity as scribe was primary.

The scribes used their trade so they could supply their judicial affairs without charging a fee so they could profess to be offering their instruction gratuitously (given freely), but Jesus denunciation of the scribe's greed makes it obvious they had indirect ways of securing their fees (Mark 12:40) (Luke 20:47).

It appears the scribes charged a fee for their instructional activities, but not their judicial affairs. They dressed in long robes and liked the nobility (Matt. 23:5-7) (Mark 12:38-39) (Luke 11:43) (Luke 20:46) and because of their zealous intention to safeguard and defend the sanctity of Moses Law the common people believed them to be the true teachers of it.

**The scribes and Jesus:** Jesus refused to be bound by the scribal additions to the law (John 5:10-18) (Mark 7:1-13) and their hypocrisy and unrelenting hatred drew forth Christ's devastating denunciation of them as recorded in (Matt. 23). The scribes were Jesus most watchful and determined opponents and fiercely opposed him throughout his ministry (Mark 2:16) (Luke 5:30) (Luke 14:2).

They played an important part in the death of Jesus (Matt. 26:57) (Matt. 27:41) (Mark 15:1, 31) (Luke 22:66) (Luke 23:10) and in the persecution of the early church (Acts 4:5) (Acts 6:12). Nevertheless not all scribes were wholly bad both Nicodemus and Gamaliel were scribes and no doubt there were others that are not mentioned, but as a whole the scribes were marked by spiritual corruption and were the very quintessence of Pharisaism.

**The pride of the scribes was so great that they loved: -**

- Walking around in long robes to appear holy.
- People greeting them in the marketplaces and esteeming them as important.
- The best seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at feasts.
- Praying long and eloquent prayers to look good.
- Being exalted above the common people.

- Money, they even took it from widows, the defenceless and the poor.
- Looking spiritually superior (Mark 12:38-40).

Even though Jesus says, the scribes and Pharisees will receive the greater condemnation (Luke 20:46-47) he tells the crowds and his disciples to practice and observe what they teach, so the problem is not the teaching, but that they don't do any of it, we can learn two things from this (v1-3).

1. If a teacher is teaching the Bible correctly, but their heart or lifestyle is not right before God, but the heart of the person listening to them is, then the Lord through the word is still able to touch that person's life. This is because it is the condition of the listener's heart before God and the Spirit working on the word that has the power to change a person's life and not the person teaching it.

This is why the apostle Paul while in prison said: -

- Some preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will, the latter do it out of love while the former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, what then should my attitude be? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice (Philip. 1:15-18).
2. A person may have a tremendous knowledge of the Bible and be gifted in proclaiming it, but if their lifestyle is contrary to what it teaches, meaning they are using their ministry for their own gain (i.e. money, importance or fame and they oppress and use their congregations as merchandise to advance their own goals) then at the judgment their great knowledge will count as nothing before the Lord even though others with a right heart attitude may have been saved under their ministry.

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### **Call No Man Rabbi or your Father on Earth.**

Matthew 23:8-12 ----- <sup>8</sup>But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup>And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. <sup>11</sup>The greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup>Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Jesus has just finished speaking against the religious leaders of his era the Pharisees and scribes now he tells his disciples no matter how great the gift that a person may have they should always see themselves together as brothers and sisters in Christ and never seek to be exalted above others in the body.

**Call no man rabbi:** the Pharisees and scribes demanded to be called rabbi (meaning master) because they loved being exalted and having others considering them important. Because of their knowledge and authority their followers exalted them as such, but Jesus is saying regardless of whether a person is a priest, a spiritual leader or a brilliant teacher it is totally wrong to consider and exalt them as their rabbi or master.

**Call no man your father on earth:** father (pater) literally means father or parent. When Jesus says don't call any man on earth your father he is not thinking a natural biological father, we know this because the Ten Commandments tell us to honour our mothers and fathers. Jesus has in mind spiritual priests and teachers he is saying we are never to regard a spiritual teacher as our spiritual father. God is the spiritual Father of all who belong to Christ and He is the one we should consider our spiritual parent and our spiritual father.

**Whoever Exalts Himself will be Humbled.** (v12).

**Exalts:** means, to elevate a person up, the outward action of this inward attitude, to be esteemed is manifested in people using others for their own gain and manipulating people to achieve their own goals to elevate themselves.

**Humble:** in this context means to make oneself low in personality and in the heart, the outward action of this inward attitude is manifested people serving others thus those who serve others will be exalted in the Kingdom while those who use others for their own gain will be humbled.

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### **Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees.**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:13 ----- <sup>13</sup>"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

Hypocrite means an actor under an assumed character (a stage-player) it carries the idea of a person who pretends, speaks or acts under a false part. The scribes and Pharisees had tremendous knowledge yet Jesus says, by their legalistic teaching and lifestyle they shut people out of the Kingdom. This is because knowledge without grace, mercy and love produces formalism and legalism and destroys the Spirit of God and the Spirit of the teaching.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:14 ----- <sup>14</sup>Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore you shall receive the greater damnation.

How hypocritical is this? The scribes and Pharisees go to the widow's homes and pray long prayers over them to appear spiritual and holy and then take the money the poor widow needs to keep her home, no-wonder Jesus was so vehemently rebuking the religious leaders of his era.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:15 ----- <sup>15</sup>Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

Proselyte means a convert to Judaism, the converts of the scribes and Pharisees were called children of hell (gehenna) not because they had doctrinal error but because they were full of pride, they had no mercy, grace and love toward the people. Their legalistic rules, traditions and regulations made it almost impossible for a person to find God; this is why Jesus is so fiercely against them.

Children of gehenna is a perfect description of the disdain the Lord had toward these converts of the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees and how unworthy they were for God's Kingdom since gehenna was the valley in which the inhabitants of God's Holy city Jerusalem threw all their filth, animals and dead bodies to be consumed by the fires constantly burning there.

**For further information see the title: -**

- Gehenna in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:16-22 --- <sup>16</sup>"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>17</sup>You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup>And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>19</sup>You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup>So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup>And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup>And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

Jesus is saying it is the altar and the temple that makes the gold (the money or gift given) holy, but the Pharisees were twisting the word of God for their own gain by teaching the people that if they made an oath (promise) on the altar without giving a gift (usually money) then the promise or oath counts for nothing, but if they make a promise on the altar to give a gift (usually money) then the promise counts and they are bound to give the gift, they cannot change their mind.

The motivation of the religious leaders of Jesus era for distorting the Scripture in this way, was because they were the ones who actually received the gift (usually money) so it became the property of the Pharisees and scribes thus they wanted to make sure if an unforeseen circumstance arose the person could not change their mind and break the promise and keep the gift (money). The Pharisees and scribes exalted the promised gift above the altar and the temple which is a total distortion of Scripture because contrary to the Pharisees teaching it is the altar that made the gift holy and not the gift making the altar Holy as the Pharisees were teaching for their own selfish gain teaching.

**Jesus the altar, the temple and the gift:** Jesus is saying, whoever makes a promise to give a gift by the altar or the temple swears by God who dwells in the temple, thus the altar and the temple are far more important to God than the gift, because the altar is a symbol of God's Holiness and the temple is His House whereas the gift is a symbol of a sinner's faith, but it is God that makes the gift Holy and not the other way around. The altar that makes the gift holy is a symbol of Christ who makes the sinner holy.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:23-24 --- <sup>23</sup>"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup>You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

The Pharisees kept the tiniest detail of the law, but they lacked justice, mercy and faithfulness which are far more important to God than having ceremonial rites correct in every detail and keeping religious laws, traditions and protocol.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:25-26 ---- <sup>25</sup>"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup>You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

The scribes and Pharisees do all the outward things to look good, but inside are full of self-indulgence they put on an eternal show of holiness, but internally are full of greed and self-ambition.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:27-28 --- <sup>27</sup>"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup>So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Pharisees outwardly look good but destroy people's lives spiritually. Dead people's bones means the religious leaders are devouring and destroying people spiritually to feed their own selfish greed. The scribes and Pharisees outwardly appear righteous and holy, but are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness on the inside. They have no spiritual life they can give to the unsaved or even the converted and even worse use their congregations to feed their own selfish desires to feel important, have a sense of fame and be rich and wealthy.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Woe.**

Matthew 23:29-36 --- <sup>29</sup>"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup>saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our

fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'  
<sup>31</sup>Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup>Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup>You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? (geenna) <sup>34</sup>Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup>so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup>Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

The scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites, they said one thing, but did another, all their outward deeds were done to appear holy, but inwardly they had the same murderous spirit as their fathers did. We know this because they plotted to have Jesus killed, and then aggressively pursued all those who belonged to Christ to have them put to death or cast into prison. Thus the scribes and Pharisees would say one thing but their actions told a totally different story.

The scribes and Pharisees believed they were right before God because they descend from Abraham, but Jesus points out to them that by saying they would not have taken part in killing the Old Testament prophets they are acknowledging that they are descendants of murders and even worse they are following in the same spirit as their murderous fathers did.

They say that they would not have killed the prophets yet in their aggressive pursuit to kill Jesus the Son of God they are actually committing a more horrendous crime added to this horror they aggressively set out to persecute, flog, kill and crucify the New Testament prophets and anyone confessing the name of Jesus not only in the Jewish towns, but in their own synagogues is it any wonder Jesus calls them serpents and vipers.

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### **How are you to Escape Being Sentenced to Hell? (Gehenna).**

In the context of the following words: -

- You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? (v33).

The word hell comes from the Greek word gehenna which is often translated into the English word hell. Gehenna was the Hinnom valley near the city of Jerusalem which was named after the son of Hinnom. Both Ahaz and Manasseh kings of Israel sacrificed their sons to Molech in gehenna.

(2 Chron. 28:32) (Kings. 16:3) (2 Chron. 33:62) (Kings. 21:6) (Jer. 32:35).

Jeremiah prophesied a great slaughter of the people in gehenna during the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 19:1-13). After the Old Testament period Jewish apocalyptic writers began to call the valley of Hinnom (gehenna) the entrance to the grave. The English translators of the King James Bible translated the word gehenna to hell. The word hell in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word Sheol which means the grave and the word hell in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word hades which also means the grave.

The word gehenna was later used figuratively as a name for the place (or state) of the everlasting dead since it was a valley where the inhabitants of God's Holy City Jerusalem threw their waste and filth and their dead animals and dead bodies to be utterly consumed by the fires that were constantly burning there.

### **Fire is linked with Gehenna for two reasons: -**

1. During the time of pagan sacrifice the arms of Molech were heated by fire and sacrificed children were placed in them as an offering to the god, thus it was a place of fire and enormous horror grief and sorrow.



2. Gehenna became the place the people of Jerusalem used to discard the cities rubbish and the bodies of the dead etc., so like any refuse place it had continual fires burning.

### **Gehenna and Isaiah's statement, "Their Worm shall Not Die"**

The prophet Isaiah says: -

- They shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh (Isaiah 66:24).

This statement applies to those who have chosen their own way, delight in their abominations, did what was evil in God's eyes and chose to do what God does not delight in. Isaiah in this chapter is saying that the LORD will come in fire and fury and show judgement and indignation to his enemies and those slain will be put to shame, but the nation of Jerusalem will be brought forth in one moment. The LORD will make a New Heaven and a New Earth and all flesh shall come to worship before the Him.

Isaiah presents a beautiful picture of the surviving nations being carried by Jerusalem (personified as a mother) like a baby on a nurse's hip and in the final verse of the chapter he says: -

- They shall go out and look on the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against me, for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh" (Isaiah 66:1-24).

In this chapter Isaiah is not picturing an unseen place of torment for the dead, because he says, people will look at these dead and decaying bodies being eaten by worms. The prophets statement, "Their worm dies not" is a picture of the battle of Armageddon, when Christ returns and destroys the armies that comes against him, there will be dead and decaying bodies lying everywhere, with no one to bury them.

It is graphic prophetic language to depict the horror and enormity of the masses that will be killed. To the Jew it was an absolute insult and abomination to leave a body to be eaten by wild animals and birds or left to decay and rot on the surface of the earth, thus gehenna is a symbol of the horror of sin, with its end result of a shameful and horrible death. gehenna is graphic prophetic language for the death of the wicked that rebel against God.

**NOTE:** should anyone doubt the horrific horror of multitudes of dead bodies being left to be eaten by worms, consider the tsunami and extreme storms we have today that destroy towns and villages (especially in third world countries) in just a few hours and bulldozers, trucks and the army are brought in just to recover the bodies and as quick as they can bury them in a mass grave dug out by modern day excavators to prevent the spread of disease.

**For further information see the following titles:-**

- Hell and Gehenna in, Death (ON WESITE MENU).
- Death (What happens when we Die) in, Death (ON WESITE MENU).
- Molech in, Various Topics (ON WESITE MENU).

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**These things will come upon this Generation.**

The words: -

- That upon you (the scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites) may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation (v35-36).

This generation primarily refers to the prideful scribes, Pharisees and religious hypocrites who had the religious authority over the nation of Israel at that time, because they are the ones in focus and the ones Jesus is directing the eight woes to. All these things refer to the things mentioned in this chapter which means they will be humbled, judged and sentenced to hell (geenna) a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction).

Abel was an innocent and godly man murdered by his brother and Zechariah was a prophet as well as a priest who God raised up to encourage Israel to rebuild the temple when they returned to Jerusalem after their seventy-year captivity in Babylon. Jesus statement, all the righteous blood shed from the time of Abel to Zechariah will come upon this generation referring to the prideful, hypocritical Pharisees and scribes can refer to the following three things: -

1. The death and resurrection of Christ because it totally abolished the need for the temple and all its services, the need for the Pharisees, chief Priests and scribes and the need for the Levitical priesthood. This is because Christ became the eternal High Priest for everyone seeking God, since Jesus resurrection no-one needs a temple, a human priest or priesthood to stand between them and God.
2. To the armies of Rome attacking the city of Jerusalem and not only slaughtering the people, but also bringing the city to ruin and destroying the Jewish temple in 70 AD.
3. Since Isaiah's prophecy climax's with the return of the Lord his prophetic words only rest at Christ's death and resurrection and Rome's slaughter of the people of Jerusalem and the destruction of the city and the temple of God for a short moment and then majestically take up wings and soar through time until Isaiah's prophetic words reach their ultimate end and true fulfillment which will be the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, but this time not as the Lamb to be slaughtered, but as the King of kings and Lord of lords to rule and reign over the Kingdoms of men.

When the prideful powerful hypocritical religious leaders of our world see the victory Christ is having and from jealousy and fear of losing their own power and control entice the unbelieving ungodly armies of the nation's to rise up in battle against him as they did when he rode into Jerusalem of colt and all the people cried, "Hosanna our King."

Only this time he is not coming to be slaughtered, but as a mighty King so of course all the armies of the nations are totally defeated and totally destroyed (Rev. 19:11-16), the world's governments of the defeated armies in turn destroy the worlds powerful and corrupt false religious leaders and Christ rules and reigns as God's King on earth establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace with all those who have been gathered to him.

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### **God's Love for the City of Jerusalem.**

Matthew 23:37-39 --- <sup>37</sup>"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! <sup>38</sup>See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup>For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Wings in the Bible are often used as a symbol of protection, David prays: -

- Hide me in the shadow of your wings (Psalm 17:8).
- The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings (Psalm 36:7).
- In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by (Psalm 57:1).

- Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah (Psalm 61:4).
- In the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy (Psalm 63:7).
- Under his wings you will find refuge (Psalm 91:4).

God is pictured as a loving hen protecting her young, but sadly God's people Israel both in the Old Testament and New Testament constantly rebelled against the LORD. Your house is left to you desolate does not mean that Jerusalem is left without inhabitants, but that it is left without a temple and their true High Priest until the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

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**Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord.**

Jesus words: -

- I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:39).

Refers to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ when he comes as, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign.

In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done.

Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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### **Jerusalem; in the History of God's Revelation to Mankind.**

In those divine acts by which redemption has been accomplished, Jerusalem by far is the most important site on this earth. It was the Royal city, the capital of the only Kingdom God has (thus far) established among men; here the temple was erected, and here alone, during the Kingdom age, were sacrifices legitimately offered. This was the city of the prophets, as well as the kings of David's line. Here occurred the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, David's greater Son. Upon and assembled group in this city the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, giving birth to the Christian church, and here the first Great church council was held.

Rightly did the chronicler refer to Jerusalem as the city which Jehovah had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there (1 Kings 14:21). Jerusalem felt God's presence. She was assured of His love and as never another city on earth has been, of the LORD'S travail for her worthiness of the destiny to which God had called her.

### **Jerusalem's Future.**

Jesus says, Jerusalem is the city of the great King (Matt. 5:34-35) and Zechariah prophesied that Jerusalem's King will come on a donkey and unite Judah and Israel and speak peace to the nations (Gentiles) and his rule will be to the ends of the earth (Zech. 9:9-10), but prior to the latter half of this verse a time will come when the inhabitants of Jerusalem are surrounded by their enemies and look to the LORD for their strength.

The Lord will protect them and destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem, then the inhabitants Jerusalem will look on him whom they have pierced and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn and Jerusalem will again be inhabited in its place.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem will become victorious over all people in the Middle East (Zech. 12:5-11). Jesus will end all forms of war and speak peace to the nations (Zech. 9:9-10) and his rule will be to the ends of the earth (Zech. 9:9-10). Then the kings of the nations will bring their glory into the glorious and majestic New City of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24) (Rev 21:10).

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### **FOOTNOTE.**

When Jesus saw how corrupt the prideful, powerful and hypocritical religious rulers and their priesthood were within God's holy city Jerusalem he cried: -

- Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that, when the Lord returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, he will return to the eternal city his heavenly Father put His name on (Matt. 23:37-39).

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End