

(10) Jesus' Last Sermon (Mt. 23:1-39; Mk. 12:38-40; Lk. 20:45-47)

1. Jesus' final public message is for the crowds and His disciples (Mt. 23:1). Still to come are His Upper Room Discourse (Jn. 13-17), and the Mount Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24-25), which were private messages.
2. This Great Hypocrisy Discourse is not typically included in Matthew's Five Great Discourses, but it ought to be. Likewise, Matt. 11:2-30 is not exactly a short message but if we label it the Discourse on John the Baptist then we can think of Matthew's Seven Great Discourses.
3. The introduction establishes the theme for the entire chapter (Mt. 23:1-12).
 - a. Jesus set the example of not taking His seat until the Father granted it (Mt. 22:44). Satan (Isa. 14:13) and his brood (Mt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33) claim seats for themselves (Mt. 23:1).
 - 1) James and John were vulnerable to this prideful rebellion (Mt. 20:20-23).
 - 2) Nebuchadnezzar testified to the great reality of God's dealings against Satanic pride (Dan. 4:37).
 - b. The chair of Moses has an inherent authority. Obedience to the Word of God is always expected, despite the illegitimate leadership.
 - c. The hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees is summarized (Mt. 23:3b-7).
 - 1) Their speech doesn't match their actions (v.3b).
 - 2) They control others but exempt themselves (v.4).
 - 3) They do everything for their public image (v.5).
 - 4) They crave social courtesies of respect (vv.6,7).
 - d. The introduction concludes with warnings and reminders (Mt. 23:8-12).
 - 1) The warnings are against emulating the Mishnaic era of Judaism under the descriptive terminology of Rabbi, father, and leader (vv.8-10).
 - 2) The reminder is that self-exaltation leads to divine humiliation (vv.11-12).
4. Luke's gospel recorded a similar message on an earlier occasion (Lk. 11:37-54) [LJ&PM12: Judgment Against Lawyers and Pharisees]. Matthew's gospel records multiple occasions in which Jesus warns His disciples against Pharisee hypocrisy/leaven (Mt. 16:5-12 cf. Lk. 12:1).
5. Jesus delivers seven woes in a manner reminiscent of numerous Old Testament prophets (Mt. 23:13-33). οὐαὶ οὐαὶ ^{#3759}_{46x}: interjection denoting pain or displeasure: *woe, alas*. הוי הוי ^{#1945}_{51x}: *ah! alas!* & אױ אױ ^{#188}_{25x}: *woe!* (Num. 21:19; 24:23; 1st Sam. 4:7,8; Prov. 23:29; Isa. 3:9,11; 6:5; 24:16; Jer. 4:13,31; 6:4; 10:19; 13:27; 15:10; 45:3; 48:46; Lam. 5:16; Ezek. 16:23; 24:6,9; Hos. 7:13; 9:12).
 - a. Woe #1: Scribes & Pharisees a.k.a. Hypocrites are unsaved and actively hinder the salvation of others (v.13 cf. Lk. 11:52).
 - b. Woe #2: Scribes & Pharisees a.k.a. Hypocrites expend maximum satanic effort for minimum earthly results with doubled hellish consequences (v.15).
 - c. Woe #3: Blind Guides a.k.a. Fools & Blind Men draw fine lines in their manipulations and distortions of obligations and duties to God (vv.16-22).
 - d. Woe #4: Scribes & Pharisees a.k.a. Hypocrites a.k.a. Blind Guides get lost in legalistic minutia and completely miss the big picture for a life that pleases God (vv.23-24).
 - e. Woe #5: Scribes & Pharisees a.k.a. Hypocrites fixate on external purity in complete denial of their internal corruption (vv.25-26).
 - f. Woe #6: Scribes & Pharisees a.k.a. Hypocrites fixate on external beauty in complete denial of their internal death (vv.27-28).
 - g. Woe #7: Scribes & Pharisees a.k.a. Hypocrites refuse to see where they are in the unfolding plan of God (vv.29-33).
6. Devouring widows houses (Mk. 12:40; Lk. 20:47; Mt. 23:14*) is a vivid condemnation for self-righteous religious leaders and their victimization of the vulnerable (cf. Ezek. 34:3,4).

7. Jesus follows the seven woes with a personal prophecy (Mt. 23:34-36) and a lament (Mt. 23:37-39).
 - a. This prophecy is personal because Jesus promises to personally send divine messengers.
 - 1) "Prophets, wise men, and scribes" uses terminology that His immediate audience would relate to, and in a context that alludes to the close of the OT and the destruction of the first temple (2nd Chr. 36:15-19).
 - 2) The earlier message recorded by Luke (see point 4, above) referenced the wisdom of God (cf. Prov. 8:12; 1st Cor. 1:24,30) sending prophets and apostles (Lk. 11:49), in a way that could not totally be understood until the mystery of the Church was unveiled (Eph. 3:5).
 - 3) One of the earliest roles of the Church was to serve as a warning to national Israel that their stewardship has been suspended and their city and temple were facing an imminent destruction (Isa. 28:11-13; Acts 2:4-12,36-41; 1st Cor. 14:20-22a).
 - 4) The 70AD destruction of Jerusalem was cumulative and compound divine discipline on the nation of Israel for all OT martyrs (Abel to Zechariah, Matt. 23:35) and the ultimate Martyr, Jesus Christ (Mt. 27:25).
 - 5) "This generation" must be recognized in the immediate context and MUST NOT be confused with "this generation" that will be studied in the Mt. Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:34).
 - b. The lament is over Israel's national rejection of their Messiah King (Mt. 23:37-39).
 - 1) The sovereignty of God is always achieved, yet the volition of man is always respected (Mt. 23:37).
 - 2) The desolate house describes Israel's suspended stewardship (Mt. 23:38). It has a future, but in the meantime other stewards will serve the Father's plan (Rom. 9:24-26; 11:1-5,25-27).
 - 3) The Second Advent of Jesus Christ will not take place until the nation of Israel repents and accepts the King they crucified (Mt. 23:39; Zech. 12:10).