

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH

IV. Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (cont.)

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 12 late First Evening c. 4:30 P.M.)

Wed., 12th Nisán (April 1), AD.33: The Reproof of Fatal Rebuke (3)

Persevering Proselytizing Mt. 23:15

Introduction: We have been considering the lessons which The Lord Jesus Christ taught along the way to and in The Temple on Wednesday two days before His Crucifixion

A. Lessons Taught on the Way to The Temple (c. 5:50 to 7:15 A.M.).

The Lord Jesus and His disciples spent the night on the south west end of The Mount of Olives. On their way to The Temple, Jesus taught them three Lessons on Faith, Prayer, and Forgiveness.

B. His Ministry in The Temple (c. 7:30 A.M. to c. 6:00 P.M.).

Jesus entered The Temple early in the morning and began teaching and evangelizing. The religious leaders (chief priests, scribes, and elders) inquired of Him about His authority. Jesus challenged them by answering with a question of His own about John the Baptizer. After refusing to answer His question, Jesus told parables and began teaching lessons in eight categories: **Faithful Service**, **Fatal Wrath**, **Financial Responsibility**, **Future Living**, **False Religion**, **Fallible Recognition**, **Fatal Rebuke**, and **Faithful Giving**.

1. The Lesson on Faithful Service (c. 9:00 A.M.).

This parable indicated two kinds disobedience: Blatant Resistant Disobedience and Reserved Disobedience which is implied consent to do what the father ordered but failed to comply.

The Prevailing Principle: all sinners who repent and persistently obey The Father God's will and commands shall pass on and enter into The Kingdom of The God before religious hypocrites, who do not enter but shall be punished eternally by perishing in The Lake of Fire.

2. The Lesson on Fatal Wrath (c. 10:00 A.M.) - Two Parables

a. The Parable of the Housemaster and the Fruit of his Vineyard.

This parable teaches that we all shall be called into account for complete obedience to all four of The Lord Jesus Christ's Commands and thereby render to Him the fruits of their work of discipleship. But failure to render the fruits of the vineyard to The Housemaster results in **Fatal Wrath of Eternal Destruction**.

b. The Parable of the Wedding Feast (c. 11:00 A.M.).

This parable teaches that failure to respond to the invitation to The Wedding Feast and wear the provided Wedding clothing results in **Fatal Wrath** by being cast into outer darkness, suffering in anguish forever with weeping and gnashing of teeth in The Lake of Fire.

3. The Lesson on Financial Responsibility (c. 1:00 P.M.)

Jesus responded to the question by the delegation of spies composed of Pharisees, chief priests, and scribes with a question followed by an example and another question which He turned into a visual aid to teach The Truth that it is equally important in the eyes of The God to render to each authority over us that which rightfully belongs to each.

4. The Lesson on Future Living (c. 2:00 P.M.)

The prevailing principle in this lesson is that The God expects every human to live in the light of life after death and the resurrection which follows. Every human must face The Judgment Throne of The God whether or not that one believes it and permanently commits trust to The Lord Jesus Christ. There is on the one hand The Resurrection of Absolute Life in union with The Lord Jesus Christ and on the other

hand the resurrection for judging to Eternal Damnation. We must live so as to avoid that tremendous eternal cost and to face life after death.

5. The Lesson on False Religion (c. 2:30 P.M.).

The Lesson that The Lord Jesus taught on False Religion covers four segments: Futile Resolve, Faulty Reflection upon Scripture, Fallible Recognition, and Fatal Rebuke.

a. **The Reproof of Futile Resolve (c. 2:30 P.M.).**

A lawyer-scribe challenged Him with the question, Which sort of commandment in The Law is¹ great and⁰first of all? The answer: We must sovereignly prefer The Godhead **FIRST** in all things and put all that concerns Him **FIRST** before all earthly desires and ambition!

b. **The Reproof of Faulty Rendering of Scripture (c. 3:00 P.M.).**

There were four areas of Faulty Rendering of Truth which needed to be reproofed and corrected; concerning: the resurrection, the impact and priority of The Law and the priority of love; Theology, especially Christology; and which Commandment of The Law was great.

Jesus questioned them repeatedly asking the same question, “What do you suppose concerning The Christ? Whose son is He?” His next two questions called for proper reflection upon this Scripture Truth and revealed their ignorance of three doctrines: Theology, Messianic Truth, and the paradox of the true natures (plural) of The Messiah, The Son of The God, both His human and spiritual or Divine natures.

We carefully examined and explained the two meanings of ‘Lord’ and the two aspects of His Sonship. The Lord Jesus Christ is David’s Lord and Supreme Master and at the same time He also is Jehovah ‘**LORD**,’ David’s Redeemer, The Second Person of The Godhead. In this way His Lordship is twofold. Firstly, He is The Son of The God. Secondly, He is The Son of Man (lit.: The Human), born of woman.

6. The Lesson on Reproof of Fallible Recognition (c. 3:30 P.M.).

Then in mid First evening (c. 3:30 P.M.), The Lord Jesus warned the crowds and His disciples against seeking Fallible Recognition from fellow humans, and described the various ways the Pharisees used to obtain special recognition and avid attention in three serious categories: Lives Inconsistent with their Teachings, Insolent Appearance, and Intentness that their Status Be Honored. Although all these things may not be present at the same time, many of them are present in the lives of constituents and proponents of various religions of today, even in those who claim to be Christian. In conclusion of His reproof of fallible recognition especially in seeking honor, The Lord Jesus stated a vital Truth: (Mt. 23:12). After stating that those who exalt themselves shall be humbled, The Lord Jesus Christ pronounced seven woes upon the hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees.

7. The Lesson of Reproof by Fatal Rebuke c. 3:45 P.M. (Mt. 23:13-36).

Later that Wednesday afternoon (c. 3:45 P.M.) in His teaching His Disciples and the great crowd gathered in The Temple, The Lord Jesus pronounced eight woes upon hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees for being engaged in eight areas of damnable deeds: a. Prohibitive Oppression, b. Pretentious Praying, c. Persevering Proselytizing, d-g. Perverted Interpretation in Inconsistency in four areas: Conformity in relation to The Scriptures, Stewardship in relation to Tithing; Ceremonial Cleansing; and Righteous Living, and h. Persecution of The Lord’s Prophets.

a. **The First Woe! Prohibitive Oppression c. 3:45 P.M. (Mt. 23:13).**

These religious Pharisees and all religious but unrighteous, unregenerated people are guilty of the same sins. All shall receive this same

condemnation to The **Géh-ehnnah** according to the severity of their of their works.

This first Woe that The Lord pronounced upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees before the face of His disciples was because of their prohibitive oppression upon the people to keep them from committing trust unto Him by shutting off the way to The Kingdom of The Heavens by constantly seeking to be intently gazed upon by humans and by proclaiming the substitution of 'works,' instead of emphasizing 'repentance and faith,' which The God requires.

To fully comprehend the full impact of this pronouncement of woe by The Lord Jesus, we noted the necessity first to understand the way Scriptures portray and use the term The Kingdom of Heaven. We noted The New Testament used the term The Kingdom of Heaven and the gospel concerning it. Then it was noted that The Gospel of The Kingdom of The God was first introduced by Mark (1:15). Both The Kingdom of Heaven and The Kingdom of The God (Mt. 6:33) were mentioned in Matthew alone but only The Kingdom of The God was recorded in Mark and Luke. Many similarities are observed. There is a distinct separation between the two Kingdoms after the Crucifixion and again when The Lord Jesus Christ comes in the air for His redeemed and The Regenerated Church until He returns to Earth with her. And there is a distinct difference between the gospel of The (Messianic) Kingdom of Heaven proclaimed to Israel by John the Baptizer and The Lord Jesus in Israel before His Crucifixion and The Gospel of The Lord Jesus Christ which has been proclaimed throughout the World since His Death, Burial, and Resurrection-Ascension.

Because of this dastardly deed of keeping others out of The Kingdom of The Heavens by proclamation of false doctrine, especially substituting works and church attendance instead of Repentance and Faith in The Lord Jesus Christ as the means of obtaining Salvation; and by refusing to enter into The Kingdom themselves, the calamity of eternal punishment lasting forever in The **Géh-ehnnah**, the place of fiery torment for Sin, shall certainly come upon those hypocrites, both scribes, Pharisees, and the unregenerate, unrighteous people at the end of time, unless they repent and turn to The Lord Jesus Christ and commit personal, persistent trust unto Him.

So it is today, this same condemnation awaits all who refuse to enter themselves and/or seek to bar or hold back those who attempt to enter The Kingdom by whatever Satanic means, especially false teaching particularly concerning Salvation. Such a terrible end for religious but not righteous people, who mean well but do not yield to, nor understand The Truth! Unless we truly believe this Truth and totally commit to proclaim it everywhere to religious but not righteous people as well as to lost sinners, we shall be held accountable and be judged for assisting Satan in his propagation of his damnable heresy to deceive people into thinking **Géh-ehnnah** really will not happen to them, but some how their good works, charity, and or church attendance will count for something to enable them to escape such an horrible eternity, when anything short of total persistent committed trust and obedience shall not suffice.

b. The Second Woe! Pretentious Praying c. **4:00 P.M.** (Mt. 23:14; Mk.12:40; Lk.20:47). There are two reasons why this Woe was pronounced.

(1) For Devouring that which Belonged to Widows;

A clarity of the meaning of The Greek feminine noun **οικίας**

(oikéahs) which means ‘dwellings’ with the metonymical meaning of ‘household, goods, property, and means’ was given. The noun **οἴκοι** (oikoi) is ‘houses.’ It was not just the widows’ houses that the scribes and Pharisees were devouring but also their means of livelihood.

Two ways that scribes and Pharisees could be accused by The Lord Jesus to be the so-called devourers of the widows was: to be appointed executors of a recently deceased husband’s estate and to be honored at sumptuous feasts provided by the widows. Thus the scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, and false teachers were in the process of devouring the widows’ dwellings or households in these two ways. They also persisted in using their religion as a means of increasing their own coffers while decreasing those of the widows, thus profiting from their religion and religious teaching.

(2) For Pretentious Praying.

This is the second facet of condemnation in the second woe The Lord Jesus pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees. The Greek noun **πρόφασις** (prófhahsis) means primarily ‘a pretended reason’ or secondarily ‘fair show or pretext’ i.e. ‘assuming an appearance in order to cloak the real intention’. Thus they assumed the appearance of desiring to intercede with pretentious prayers for grieving widows in order to extract or extort worthy presents from them.

It was also noted that what the scribes and Pharisees were praying are not prayers but as The Lord Jesus said above (Lk. 18:11) were nothing more than long sessions of prattle to themselves in public and in a sanctimonious tone. They prayed for the purpose to be heard and revered. It was noted from this, that long repetitious public praying before others was condemned by The Lord Jesus Christ Himself as was the selfish prayers of The Pharisees.

This lesson teaches that false preachers, teachers, and false pastors are in their profession for the money under false pretenses. Their lot is cast with the historic scribes, Pharisees, and prophets under the curse and woe pronounced by The Lord Jesus Himself. We must beware of such like ones and refrain from listening to them lest we be deceived into embracing their false doctrine and end up with them in The Eternal Lake of Fire in torment. And let us be ever so careful not to be taken in with their false teaching and doctrine by persistently engaging and learning more Truth to enable us to quickly recognize false doctrine and also warn others to avoid such teachers and propagators of false doctrine

c. The Third Woe! Persevering Proselytizing c. 4:30P.M. (Mt. 23:15).

The third **woe** that The Lord Jesus pronounced upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees before the face of His disciples was their persistent persevering proselytizing to make Pharisee Jews that follow their doctrine and practices (Mt. 23:15).

“¹⁵Woe to you[&], O hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees! because you[&] compass the sea and the dried-up land to make one proselyte and whenever he becomes lone, you[&] make him twofold more a son of [place of fiery torment for sin] **Géh-ehnnah** than you[&]” (Mt. 23:15 APT).

We shall consider five pertinent facts about ‘proselytes’ that will enlighten us to the reason for The Lord Jesus to express condemnation of the Pharisees: (a) The Meaning and Usage of The Word, (b) The Materialization of Proselytizing, (c) The Missionaries of the Pharisees, (d) The Mentions in Scripture, and (e) The Meaning to Us.

(a) The Meaning and Usage of The Word;

The Greek masculine noun *προσήλυτος* (prohsáylutohs) literally means 'a newcomer' but in The New Testament means 'a proselyte, a convert from paganism to Judaism.' However a proselyte in English initially and generally today indicates 'one converted from one alien religion or sect to another religion or sect or cult.' In Bible times it referred to 'Gentiles (heathen) of another religion converting to Judaism' and particularly 'to become a Pharisee.' However through the centuries in English it particularly came to mean 'a convert from one sect in Christendom or otherwise to another sect.' Scripturally it does **not refer** to regeneration, but simply to conversion to a religious sect, denomination or cult.

(b) The Materialization of Proselytizing;

Prior to the days of the Maccabees, the Pharisees were a small sect of Jews adhering to The Mosaic Law. The persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes (c. 170 B.C.) caused the Pharisees to be scattered abroad to every country and ocean with missionary zeal to spread their doctrine of Pharisiasm around the world. There was a wide-spread attempt to convert the heathen (Gentiles or '**Gôyeem**' as they were called) as they sought to proselytize through their missionary efforts. Even in the days of the public ministry of Christ, **Saûlos** of Tarsus, **Kilikía** (Cilicia) pronounced Keeleekéeah, later called Paul, who, although a Jew by birth, was also a Roman citizen taught by Gamaliel (Gahmahleeáyl) in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3), and belonged to the strictest sect of the Pharisees (Acts 26:5). Remember how fierce and avid a persecutor of The Lord Jesus Christ and His Church he was. He claimed that he was a Pharisee in the strictest sense of the Jewish religion (Acts 26:5)

To become a full proselyte of Judaism years of training in The Law were required. He must be circumcised, baptized, offer sacrifices, and submit to the whole Law. Discipleship unto a full proselyte was a requirement for admittance as a member of the congregation. There were many formalistic and pretentious conversions but only a few converted proselytes were genuine and true to their faith and manifested its spiritual principles.

(c) The Missionaries of the Pharisees;

The religious Pharisees travelled far and near to make just one proselyte-disciple and spent many hours training him. It was the missionaries of Pharisiasm that gave their sect worldwide acceptance for a 150 years before Christ began His public ministry. It was more active when Jesus stated that, after a Pharisee succeeds in making a proselyte, the proselyte becomes twice the son of **Géh-ehnnah** than the one training (discipling) him, that is, the Pharisee brings greater judgment upon the proselyte being disciplined. This is so because he was more profitable to his fellow humans as a moral heathen or uncommitted Jew than becoming a hypocritical Pharisee, who with all hypocrites shall receive greater damnation.

The Pharisees made proselyte-disciples by indoctrinating them with their damnable doctrine and deeds instead of fulfilling their position and obligation of communicating Truth of The God and His Promised Son as Messiah and focusing the attention of those they disciplined upon both The God and His Beloved Son, The Messiah and Coming King, coming at The Father's determined time which was then in 33 A.D. first, before being rejected by the nation of Israel and crucified, and later after The Tribulation of Israel during

‘The Abomination of Desolation’ spanning seven years is complete. This was clearly announced by The Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Mt. 24:15-30 cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).

(d) The Mentions in Scripture (Mt. 23:15; Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43); Scripture mentioned the word ‘proselyte’ only four times, first in today’s text and three times in Acts.

The First mention of ‘proselyte’ is in reference to the discipled proselytes mentioned by The Lord Jesus here in today’s text (Mt. 23:15) who become twofold more a son of **Géh-ehnnah** [place of fiery torment for sin] than those Pharisees who discipled them.

The following quote concerning Pharisees was gleaned from *Peoples’ Commentary on Matthew* by Edwin W. Rice, The American Sunday-School Union, 1987. p. 230).

“They performed all the worst outward features of the religion, and none of the better inward doctrines. They have a representative in modern sectarian zeal, that seeks to extend a particular creed more than to promote faith and life in Christ.”

The second mention of ‘proselyte’ is in reference to the constituents that gathered on the Day of Pentecost, whom The Holy Spirit baptized into The True Church (Acts 2:10). These were Gentiles, converted Roman proselytes who were genuine and true to their faith and manifested its spiritual principles and had travelled from locations throughout the Roman Empire to observe Passover and Pentecost at Jerusalem. Perhaps, some were among the ones who asked of Philip that they behold Jesus (Jn. 12:20,21).

The third mention of ‘proselyte’ is in reference to the early Church at Jerusalem one of the seven deacons chosen and appointed to handle funds of the domestic service in caring for the widows. He was **Neekóhlah-ohs**, a proselyte from **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** (Antioch), Syria. Most likely he was a Greek converted to Judaism and later converted To The Lord Jesus Christ and regenerated by The Holy Spirit. Perhaps he also was among the ones who asked of Philip that they behold Jesus (Jn. 12:20,21). **And**

The fourth mention of ‘proselyte’ is in reference to those devoted proselytes at **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** (Antioch) of **Peeseedéeah** in **Gahlahtéeah** (Galatia), who attended the synagogue and heard Paul’s sermon on his first missionary journey in spring, A.D. 48. These readily responded to The Gospel of The Christ and The Holy Spirit’s ministry (Acts 13:43).

But how does all this appertain to us?

(e) The Meaning to Us.

Firstly, understanding the difference between a true regenerated disciple-saint of The Lord Jesus Christ and not just a proselyte-disciple behooves us to examine our true relationship to The Lord Jesus Christ. Am I truly a disciple-saint persistently walking closely to Him or pretending to be more spiritual than I really am? Am I pointing others to Him as The Way, The Truth, and The Life or am I propagating sectarian doctrine. Am I seeking to disciple others to come to Him, follow Him, live for Him, and learn more about Him? And am I teaching others what I have been learning about Him?

Secondly, understanding the difference between a true regenerated disciple-saint of The Lord Jesus Christ and not just a proselyte-disciple behooves us to discern, but not ever to judge, where others

we love and with whom we share friendship, stand in relationship to The Lord Jesus Christ. Are they truly disciple-saints of His or rather merely proselytes who need our help in discipleship?

Thirdly, understanding the difference between a true regenerated disciple-saint of The Lord Jesus Christ and not just a proselyte-disciple behooves us to consider the importance of discipleship both our own and to be on the lookout to help others by offering to disciple them from merely believing to regeneration and growth to maturity in union with The Lord Jesus Christ?

Should not we be more earnest and faithful in discipling the lost with this Truth?

(Now note The Progression of Truth that The Lord Jesus Christ taught in The Temple on that Wednesday.

Firstly, He taught complete persistent obedience to The God's Word and the failure to enter The Kingdom of The God by those who claim to be obedient to The God's Word and put on a front that they are obedient ones, but actually are not. These The Lord Jesus Christ called religious hypocrites, all of which shall not enter the Kingdom of The God.

Secondly, then The Lord Jesus taught that The God expects His vineyard to bear fruit and render the fruits thereof in due season and be rendered to Him. He holds both the leaders and the workers accountable and will call every one individually to give account of the results in severe judgment for failure and great rewards in Eternity for fulfilling each one's role acceptably.

Thirdly, The Lord Jesus taught that all people of all nations are invited to the marriage feast which The Father provided for His Son. Those who respond to the invitation of The Gospel, and willingly wear the wedding garment, which The Father provides, will spend Eternity with His Son. But those who refuse to wear the provided wedding garment, The Robe of Righteousness, shall face Fatal Wrath by being cast into the outer dark and shall suffer in anguish forever with weeping and gnashing of teeth in The Lake of Fire.

Fourthly, The Lord Jesus taught that in addition to those under The Old Covenant, all are financially responsible to render, to every government over them, the taxes assessed by each governing body and at the same time all are equally legally obligated to be financially responsible to The God to see that He receives the proper proportion (the tithe, 10%) of all gross income plus other additional tithes to The Lord God in order to be sure that His True Church that has spiritually qualified leaders (deacons) being spiritually guided in handling The God's finances is properly distributed to His bondslave- ministers for the spread of The Gospel as well as the care for the poor committed disciple-saints through offerings in addition to the tithe (10%).

Fifthly, The Lord Jesus taught that The God expects every human to live in the light of life after death and the resurrection which follows and which every one must face whether or not that one believes it. There is on the one hand The Resurrection of Absolute Life in union with The Lord Jesus Christ and on the other hand the resurrection for judging to Eternal Damnation. The tremendous cost of denying resurrection and failing or refusing to persistently obey The Lord Jesus Christ and live for Him and not for self, results in the resurrection for judging to Eternal Damnation of agonizing pain and suffering in The Lake of Fire according to one's works.

Sixthly, The Lord Jesus taught that it is absolutely necessary to sovereignly prefer The Godhead **FIRST** in all things and put all that concerns Him **FIRST** before all earthly desires and ambition!

Seventhly, He taught that all are to be aware of Faulty Rendering of Scripture in areas of Theology, especially Christology: He Himself is The Lord of All, David's Lord and Son, and at the same time He is The **LORD, Jehovah**, Who is The Messiah, both **LORD** and Lord.

Eighthly, He taught the need to perceive fallible recognition in hypocrites in three ways: a. by means of lives inconsistent with their teachings and proclamations; b. by seeking attention by means of distinctive dress and outward appearance; and c. by seeking attention positively by use of irreverent titles for themselves and others of their religious system indicating acknowledgment thereof and gaining attention negatively by use of irreverent titles for fellow humans which names belong to The Godhead alone.

Ninthly, He reinforced and reemphasized His pronouncement of **woe** "a lasting state of deep distress and affliction" upon those who prohibitively oppress people to bar them from the kingdom by teaching false and misleading ways and substitute 'works in place of 'repentance and faith' as that which will appease the anger and impending fearful Judgment of The God and then refuse to enter themselves.

Tenthly, The Lord Jesus further extended His pronouncement of **woe**, 'a lasting state of deep distress and affliction' upon those pharisaical hypocrites who were known for their pretentious praying long prayers in public places, not from their hearts, but rather as a pretense of being religious.

And today **Eleventhly**, He pronounced an even greater **woe** by upbraiding hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees for their persevering proselytizing to make Pharisee Jews that follow their sectarian doctrine and practices. Since they travel far and near to make just one proselyte-disciple and spend many hours training him in false doctrine, how much more should we put forth effort to properly disciple others with the true doctrine of The Lord Jesus Christ?

Conclusion: Today we continued our study of the third day of The Last Week in The Life of The Lord Jesus Christ on Earth. In first evening (c. 4:50 P.M.) Wednesday, 12 Nisán (April 1), A.D. 33, He warned the scribes and Pharisees of the severe and more abundant judgment that which awaits them for their proselytizing with their false doctrine. We must recognize the seriousness of proselytizing and becoming a proselyte or converting to another sect of Christendom rather than a local church belonging to The True Church of The Lord Jesus Christ.

Application:

What will you do beginning **today** to insure that you will properly discern hypocrites, false prophets or false preachers or false ministers of The Gospel or false teachers and separate from them in order that the unity of The Spirit in Truth shall not be disrupted.

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: Read and meditate upon: Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (early first evening c. 4:45 P.M.): **The Fourth Woe: Perverted Interpretation:** (4) Inconsistency in Conformity to Scripture (Mt. 23:16-22).