THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH

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

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 15 First Evening c. 5:15 P.M.)

Wed., 12th Nisán (Apr. 1), A.D. 33: Inconsistency in Ceremonial Cleansing (6) Mt. 23:25.26

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.).

On their way to The Temple, Jesus taught His disciples Lessons on Faith, Prayer, and Forgiveness.

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

After Jesus entered The Temple early in early morning, the religious leaders inquired of Him about His authority. He 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.

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

This parable indicated that there are two kinds disobedience: Blatant Resistant Disobedience and Reserved Disobedience which is implied consent to do what the father ordered but failed to comply. Both kinds result in eternal punishment in The Lakeof 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 all people 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 and Herodians with a question followed by a tax coin 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. 1:45 P.M.)

This lesson teaches 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. There is on the one hand The Resurrection of Absolute Life in union with The Lord Jesus Christ and for all others 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.).

This Lesson on False Religion covers four segments: Futile Resolve, Faulty Reflection on Scripture, Fallible Recognition, and Fatal Rebuke.

a. The Reproof of Futile Resolve.

A lawyer-scribe challenged Jesus with the question, Which sort of commandment in The Law is great and offirst of all? His answer

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demonstrated That The God expects all to 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. 3:15 P.M.).

Jesus dealt with four areas of Faulty Rendering of Truth which needed to be reproved and corrected: 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.

In dealing with the matter if Christology, He 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.

6. The Lesson on Reproof of Fallible Recognition (c. 3:45 P.M.).

Then in mid First evening (c. 3:45 P.M.), The Lord Jesus warned the crowds and His disciples against three serious categories in which the Pharisees used to obtain special recognition and avid attention: 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, which things were condemned by The Lord.

7. The Lesson of Reproof by Fatal Rebuke c. 4:00 P.M (Mt. 23:13-36).

Later Wednesday afternoon c. 4:00 P.M. The Lord Jesus pronounced eight woes upon hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees for being engaged in eight areas of damnable deeds. It was noted that the Greek word translated 'woe' is **Ovaí** (ouwah-ée), an interjection which indicates "a lasting state of deep distress and affliction." In the context in which The Lord Jesus used this term eight times, it refers to the judgment to The **Géh-ehnnah**, the place of fiery torment for Sin. The severity of these eight woes multiplies nine times the intensity of Woe that The Lord Jesus Christ pronounced upon these religious Pharisees and all religious people who are guilty of the same sins. All shall receive this same condemnation to The Géh-ehnnah according to the severity of their works, thus degrees of punishment as deserved in The Lake of Fire. a. The First Woe! (c. 4:00 P.M.) Prohibitive Oppression (Mt. 23:13).

The 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 proclaiming the substitution of 'works,' instead of emphasizing 'repentance and faith,' which The God requires.

So it is today, the 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 works to obtain Salvation.

b. The Second Woe! (c. 4:15 P.M.) Pretentious Praying (Mt. 23:14; Mk. 12:40; Lk. 20:47).

There are two reasons for which this woe was pronounced:

(1) For Devouring that which Belonged to Widows:

It was noted that the accusative plural of **οίκία** (oikéeah) means 'dwellings' with the metonymical meaning of 'household, goods, property, and means.' It was not just houses of the widows that the scribes and Pharisees were devouring but also their means of livelihood.

Two ways that the scribes and Pharisees could be accused to be the

so-called devourers of the widows was to be Appointed as Executors of a recently deceased husband's estate and to be Honored at Sumptuous Feasts. They also persisted in using their religion to increase their own coffers while decreasing those of the widows, thus profiting financially from their religion and their religious teaching. (2) For Pretentious Praying.

This is the second reason for condemnation in the second woe that The Lord Jesus pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees. They assumed the appearance of interceding 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 nothing more than long sessions of prattle in a sanctimonious tone to themselves in public to be heard and revered.

This lesson teaches that false preachers, false teachers, and false pastors that are in their profession for the money under false pretenses have their lot cast with historic scribes, Pharisees, and false prophets under the curse and woe pronounced by The Lord Jesus Himself.

c. The Third Woe! (c. 4:30 P.M.) Persevering Proselytizing (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. This helps us to understand the difference between a truly regenerated disciple-saint of The Lord Jesus Christ and not just a proselyte-disciple. It behooves us to examine our true relationship to The Lord Jesus Christ and to discern, but <u>not ever</u> 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 from merely believing to regeneration and growth to maturity in union with The Lord Jesus?

d-g. The Fourth to Seventh **Woes** come under The Category of Inconsistency in four areas: d. Inconsistency in Conformity to The Scriptures in Relation to Swearing with an Oath; e. Inconsistency in Stewardship in Relation to Tithing; f. Inconsistency in Ceremonial Cleansing; and g. Inconsistency in Seemingly Righteous Living (Mt. 23:16-28). We are considering these one at a time.

d. The Fourth Woe! (c. 4:45 P.M.) <u>Inconsistency in Conformity to The</u> Scriptures in Relation to Swearing with an Oath (Mt. 23:16-22).

The Lord Jesus continued to upbraid the hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees, titling them blind guides and morons (the Greek neuter plural adjective used as a noun is $\mu\hat{\alpha}pot$ (mōroí) literally meaning 'foolish- or stupid-thinkers'! He stated that their erroneous interpretation reflected their foolish thinking. They made an invalid, stupid assertion of distinction as the basis for an oath in order for them to evade the consequences and at the same time invalidate the oath.

This fourth woe upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees was pronounced upon them for moronic thinking in seeking to evade consequences in swearing and to cover up their prevaricating.

But The Lord was not finished yet. He proceeded to deal with erroneous teaching in relation to consecrated gifts. The hypocrite-Pharisees negated The Law's fifth commandment by instituting their oral precept regarding proper legal responsibility and declaring whatever their parents may be benefited by them, A consecrated gift! In this way they evaded any more responsibility to care for their aged parents.

Then He declared The God's rejection of a consecrated gift if the offerer has caused offense to a brother and refuses to reconcile. A consecrated gift from one out of union with his brother was not accepted and that one could not enter into The Kingdom. And if this is so, then one claiming to be a disciple and follower of The Lord Jesus Christ and yet will not take the necessary steps for reconciliation specified by Jesus Himself is consequently out of union with The God, with The Lord Jesus Christ, and with His Church and **not** accepted by The God and will **not** enter into The Kingdom of The God. There must be reconciliation first with The God, The Lord Jesus Christ, and then with one another and The Church, which results in unity.

All this makes clear the mind of The Lord Jesus Christ concerning His rigid stand on separation, He demands every regenerated disciple to be in union with Himself, His Father, and His Church until He comes again.

e. The Fifth Woe! (c. 5:00 P.M.) <u>Inconsistency in Stewardship in Relation to Tithing</u> (Mt. 23:23,24).

The Lord Jesus pronounced this woe upon the hypocritical Pharisees because of their inconsistency in stewardship, especially in regard to tithing. In some areas they went beyond The Law by meticulously tithing minute matters and abandoning due consideration of heavier matters more meaningful and bringing greater judgment.

This is the same reason for castigation as that that He gave for the first of six woes that He pronounced upon the Pharisees after He ate breakfast with one of them who invited Him, five months before this in mid-Heshvan (early Nov.), A.D.32 (Lk.11:42), previously mentioned. However, that time He indicated that they tithed "the mint, the rue, and every kind of garden herb." He stressed that they "violate the judging and the love for The God" as the reason for castigating them.

Here (Mt. 23:23) The Lord Jesus called attention to the Pharisees' tithing of the produce of three small herbs used as condiments, which The Lord Jesus considered as small and insignificant matters of The Law, while they were abandoning three of most important matters of The Law: the judging, the mercy, and the faith as well as, and not instead of, tithing the other things.

We noted the definite article before each of these nouns! Its presence indicates one particular aspect of each. The Lord Jesus did not mean just any aspect of judgment, mercy, and faith, but on the contrary, a specific judgment, a specific mercy, and a specific faith. Without the article, however these Truths could be conjured in the minds of people as to what each understood individually. But on the contrary, The Lord Jesus wanted the people to give thought to the particular Truth that He intended to convey.

'The judging' to which The Lord Jesus referred is found in the context of His teaching throughout the day. Three times in this last hour The Lord Jesus referred to the judging (judgment) to The **Géh-ehnnah**, The Lake of Fire.

'The mercy' to which The Lord Jesus referred is the mercy that The God showed to His People Israel expressed in His covenant and demonstrated through the centuries and was presently being offered through The Lord Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and resurrected-ascended. This same mercy is to be shown to the poor, the fatherless, and the widows as was shown to disobedient and sinning Israel. This is in contrast to the Pharisees practice of devouring widows' dwellings (Mt. 23:14).

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'The faith' which The Lord Jesus referred to is The Faith of The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, which Faith He was about to demonstrate beginning in two days. It is not just your faith nor my faith, but our faith in The Faith of The Lord Jesus Christ Who died in His Faith and resurrected in His Faith and The Faith that His Death and His Resurrection-ascension would save those who placed their faith in His faith, which Faith embraces all the great doctrines of Salvation and All Scripture.

It is the undivided attention and total commitment to these three heavier matters of The Law which pre-shadowed The Christ and all He came to provide summed up in these three aspects: the judging, the mercy, and The Faith, which are absolutely necessary to fulfill.

Then The Lord Jesus concluded His pronouncement of the fifth woe by indicating the foolishness of the Pharisees' thinking by using two creatures to illustrate the magnitude of the heavier matters in contrast to the minutest matters. Jesus labeled these religious law teachers, 'blind guides' as all false religious teachers are. They magnify the minute and minimize the weightier or more consequential matters.

d. The Sixth Woe! (c. 5:15 P.M.) Inconsistency in Ceremonial Cleansing (Mt. 23:25,26).

The sixth woe Jesus pronounced upon the hypocritical Pharisees was because of their inconsistent blind regard for ceremonial cleansing, while giving greater concern for the outer aspect of living than the inner aspect. This was evidenced by the extreme meticulous regard for the eating and drinking vessels and the hands that convey food and drink to the mouth. In order to be ceremonially clean they gave greater regard for oral precepts that were delivered by humans and were added to The Commandments, Statutes, and Judgments of The God which were delivered by Moses rather than giving the greater regard for The God-given Commandments themselves. But they abandoned The God-given Commandments.

"25Woe to you&, O hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees! because you& cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter, but inside they[the contents] are full to capacity by means of plundering and uncontrolled behavior. ²⁶O blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the platter in order that the outside of them become clean also." (Mt. 23:25,26 APT).

This is not the first time The Lord Jesus addressed this issue of ceremonial cleansing to The Pharisees midst their inconsistent living and being. But He addressed the matter to them twice before: first in the Plain of Gehnnaysahréht on the northwest shore of Galilee in early Nisán (April), A.D. 32 (Mt. 14:34;15:1,2; Mk. 7:1-8); and secondly, five months earlier at breakfast in the home of a Pharisee in mid-Heshvan (early November), A.D. 32 (Lk. 11:39) on His journey with His disciples from Baythah-néeah to Baythahbahráh. Therefore only a summary statement was sufficient to bring His position on ceremonial cleansing to mind. The Pharisees were more concerned, yea, obsessed with being sure the body is not defiled in legal purity by mouth than they were of their being filled to capacity with excessiveness and incontinence or uncontrolled behavior by means of their plundering, extortion, and wickedness.

Let us revisit the first time confrontation occurred between the Pharisees and The Lord Jesus Christ. Actually the Pharisees approached Him with a question concerning His disciples whom they claimed were not walking according to the oral traditional precepts (Mk. 7:1-6).

"And the Pharisees and certain of the scribes who came away from Jerusalem&[Heeehroh-sóh-lumah] gather together to[the face of] Him. ²And when they beheld some of His [/]disciples eating bread loaves with defiled [common, unclean] hands, that is with unwashed ones, they found fault[complained]. ³For unless the Pharisees and all the Jews for themselves wash their [article as pronoun] hands with a fist, they do not eat, thus holding fast[taking hold of mightily] the oral precept of the elders. ⁴And when they come away from ⁰marketplace, unless they dunk[baptize] themselves they do not eat. And many other [same kind]~ things are what they accept[with the mind, culminative aorist] to hold fast[take hold of mightily]: immersings[baptisms or ceremonial dippings] of cups and of pitchers and of brazen[or copper] utensils and of couches. 5Thereupon the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, Because of what are Your\$ /disciples not continually walking according to the oral precept of the elders, but [on the contrary] they are eating bread loaves with unwashed hands?" (Mk. 7:1-6 APT).

At this point the Holy Spirit directed Matthew to pick up the conversation which Mark condensed. And instead of answering their question, The Lord Jesus asked them a question which put them on the defense and silenced them as He so often did. Then He followed this question with rebuke (Mt. 15:3,6b).

" ³But He answered and said to them, Because of what do you[&] yourselves also transgress the commandment of The God by your[&] oral precept? . . . ⁶. . . In fact you[&] rendered the commandment of The God null and void by means of your[&] oral precept' (Mt. 15:3,6b APT).

The Greek noun translated 'oral precept' is $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\sigma\sigma\iota s$ (pahráhdohsees) which was translated by many as 'traditions.' It is derived from the verb which literally means 'to give over' or 'to give alongside.' It carries the meaning of:

"tradition by instruction, . . . objectively, . . . the substance of the teaching: so of Paul's teaching; . . . again of the body of precepts, especially transmitted in unbroken succession to subsequent generations, . . . which precepts both illustrating and expanding the written law, as they did, were to be obeyed with equal reverence" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 481-482).

Therefore 'oral precept' appears to be the closest translation to the precise meaning conveyed by the Greek word. Then we return to Mark for a fuller account of the confrontation by the Pharisees from Jerusalems (the plural=the main city and surroundings bearing the name Jerusalem cf. Isa. 64:10) and the rebuke The Lord Jesus gave to them (Mk, 7:6-9).

"6But He answered and said to them, 'Well has Isaiah prophesied concerning you& the hypocrites, as it stands written^[Isa. 29:13; Mt. 15:8,9], This 'people respectfully cherish and highly esteem Me as precious value^[with tender affection] with their lips, but the heart of theirs is altogether far distant away from Me. ⁷In fact they vainly^[without profit, void of reason] revere^[devote to] Me, teaching ⁰commands of humans^[generic] for teachings. ⁸For by abandoning the commandment of The God, you& hold fast^[taking hold of mightily] the oral precept of 'humans^[generic]: immersings [baptisms or ceremonial dippings] of pitchers and of cups and many oth-

er^[same kind] such much like things you are constantly doing.' ⁹And He was repeatedly saying to them, Well are you continually setting aside the commandment of The God in order that you keep your oral precept watchfully secure' (Mk.7:3,6-9APT).

Then Matthew recorded how He went on to rebuke the Pharisees, labelling them hypocrites and quoted Isaiah the prophet (Mt. 15:7-9).

"70 hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you saying, [Isa. 29:13, LXX] 8This /people draw near to Me with the mouth of theirs and they respectfully cherish Me with tender affection [as precious value] with their lips; but the heart of theirs is altogether far distant away from Me. 9In fact vainly [without profit] they revere Me, teaching commands of humans [generic] for teachings" (Mt. 15:7-9 APT).

[This prophecy of Isaiah was pronounced c. 730-740 years before this occasion. This indicates how long the patience of The God stretches out to His people before His patience is exhausted.]

Then He turned and summoned the crowd to Himself and explained defilement of the human. That which exits the mouth defiles the human and not what enters the mouth. What we say is the defiling factor and not what we eat. Therefore the Pharisees and their elders had it all wrong! Then Peter asked Him to expound the parable to the

disciples (Mt. 15:10-20).

And after summoning the crowd to the face of Himself, He said to them, Continually hear! and continually understand! 11Not what~ thing entering into the mouth, defiles[makes ceremonially unclean] the human: but[on the contrary] the thing making exit out of the mouth, this thing defiles [makes ceremonially unclean] the human. 12At that time His /disciples approached[the face of] and said to Him, Are You\$ aware that, when the Pharisees heard the saving, they were offended[scandalized, caused to stumble]? 13Then He answered and said, Every plant, which My /Heavenly /Father has not planted, shall be uprooted. ¹⁴Abandon them! They are blind⁺ guides of blind ones. Now if (and it may take place) a blind⁺ one guide a blind⁺ one, both will fall into a ⁰ditch. ¹⁵Then /Peter answered and said to Him, Expound this 'parable to us at once! 16But 'Jesus said, Are you& vourselves still also unintelligent⁺ ones? ¹⁷Do you& not yet comprehend that everything which makes entrance into the mouth customarily finds room in the stomach[cavity] and it is being cast out into a 0toilet[seat away]? 18But the~ things making exit out of the mouth exit out of the heart. And those things defile [make ceremonially unclean] the human. ¹⁹For out of the heart exit: wicked contrivances, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. ²⁰These are the things persistently defiling [making] ceremonially unclean] the human. But the act of eating with unwashed hands is not defiling [making ceremonially unclean] the human' (Mt. 15:10-20 APT).

Therefore the spiritually blind who rely upon the teaching of blind teachers, preachers, prophets, and orators will end up in the ditch of eternal condemnation in **Géh-ehnnah**. Therefore beware lest you be led astray from The Truth and become eternally condemned with the hypocrites!

These Pharisee-hypocrites made a fair show in the flesh openly to be something they were not. But in reality they were completely the opposite to what they seemed to appear. And The Lord Jesus exposed them for what they were, blind guides pretending to know and

seeking to lead blind ones to the same **Géh-ehnnah** to which they are unknowingly going because they will not obey the plain teaching of Scripture and persistently prefer what they have learned of themselves and from their false teachers to Scripture Truth. This sixth woe concerned ceremonial cleansing which cannot cleanse the defiled heart. Only The Lord Jesus Christ can do that and that only by His shed blood offered in death and then applied on The Mercy Seat in Heaven by The Perfect High Priest, The Resurrected-Ascended Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:12, 24-26; 1 Jn. 1:9). For cleansing from sin the human must invite The Lord Jesus Christ to apply His shed Blood to your heart by faith. Otherwise the heart of every human, no matter how tender, or how compassionate, or how loving, or how giving, or hoe sharing, or how seemingly good-hearted or righteous one may be, that one's heart is defiled and that one is destined for Géh-ehnnah unless and until that heart is cleansed, changed and regenerated by the blood of The Lord Jesus Christ and that one becomes a persistent disciple of His.

Conclusion:

Today, we resumed our study of the teaching of The Lord Jesus Christ during Wednesday, 12 Nisán (April 1), A.D. 33. We examined His continued teaching on eight woes upon hypocrites. The Lord Jesus had launched into a tirade censuring the hypocrite-Pharisees for their inconsistency in conformity to The Scriptures, titling them blind guides and morons because of the devious ways they used to evade fulfilling The Law. In this lesson we noted the exposition of the sixth woe.

The Lord Jesus exposed the Pharisees' inconsistent blind regard for ceremonial cleansing, while giving greater concern for the outer aspect of living than the inner aspect of the heart. In order to be 'ceremonially clean' they gave greater regard for oral precepts that were delivered by humans and were added to The Commandments, Statutes, and Judgments of The God delivered by Moses, rather than giving the greater regard for The God-given Commandments themselves. But they abandoned The God-given Commandments.

These Pharisee-hypocrites made a fair show in the flesh openly to be recognized as something they are not, but in reality they were completely the opposite to what they seemed to appear. And The Lord Jesus exposed them for what they were, blind guides pretending to know The Law and what It required and seeking to lead blind ones to the same **Géh-ehnnah** to which they are unknowingly going, because they will not obey the plain teaching of Scripture. They prefer to hold fast to what they have learned of themselves and from false teachers instead of holding fast to Scripture Truth taught in The God's Word.

Application: What will you do beginning **today** to apply these three Truths in your priorities for daily living and to include them in your discipling of others?

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: Read and meditate upon: Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (early first evening c. 5:30 P.M.): The Seventh Woe: Perverted