

## Matthew 23:25-39 The Pronouncement of the Eight Woes Part 2

We are finishing up what we started last week, The Pronouncement of the Eight Woes, verses 13 through 36. We left off at verse 24 last week. Lord willing, we will finish out the chapter today. And next we get into the prophecies of the end times, Matthew chapter 24.

Remember, we are still in the events and circumstances concerning Jesus Christ in His last week of public ministry. It is the Passover week. In Chapter 21 He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to make His appearance. By the end of the week, He will be crucified and resurrected from the dead. But in the meantime, in between, the Lord has some confrontations with various leaders in the crowd at Jerusalem. There could be over a million people there for Passover week. And He is not only dealing with the religious leaders, but He is also ministering to the people themselves as we see in this pronouncement of the eight woes.

The word *woe*, οὐαὶ (ouai) is an expression of grief over the destruction of someone. So the Lord is not only pronouncing the condemnation for judgment for rejecting Him to the people, but He is also expressing His grief over it. He is not happy over it.

So, we study The Condemnation of the First Woe in verse 13. **Woe to the scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** Remember the word *hypocrite* (ὕποκριτής, hupokritēs) is not just a name you call someone, but rather it means *to answer according to the script*. It is the word for *actor*. So He says, all you are doing is answering according to script, your heart is not in it, you scribes and you Pharisees. **But woe to you, because you shut up the kingdom of Heaven before men; for you yourselves do not enter, nor do you allow the ones entering in to enter.** We saw last week from Luke 11:52 that the lawyers were guilty of keeping the knowledge of God from the people. The people wanted to enter in, but they kept them from entering in by giving them traditions and false teachings.

Verse 14 the second woe, The Condemnation of the Second Woe. **Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour the houses of widows and praying at length as a pretext. On account of this you will receive more abundant judgment.** So they did not help the widows. When the widows lost their husbands, they had no way to support themselves nor keep their houses. So they stepped in and took it from them and used it for their own benefits and own profits. No mercy at all. **On account of this you receive the more abundant judgment.**

The Condemnation of the Third Woe, was **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you go around the sea and the dry land and make one proselyte.** A *proselyte* is somebody who is on the outside that you bring into a new religion. And the Jews made great efforts to travel by sea and travel by land in order to make a proselyte of a Gentile. And He says, **Whoever has become so, that is, a proselyte, you make him twofold more a son of Hell, than yourselves.** Very hard language.

The Fourth Woe, **Woe to you, blind guides, the one saying, whoever should swear on the Temple, it is nothing, but whoever should swear on the gold of the Temple is indebted.**

They had a very corrupt oath system that was not taught by God. In fact, in order to keep their promise they would put their hand on a valuable object and take an oath that they will repay the debt. The problem is there are certain things that had more value than others to them. So if they put their hand on the Temple, and took an oath and said, "I will repay you," but then when it came time to pay it, said, "I am not going to pay you." They would bring it and take it to the priests and the priests would determine whether the payment needed to be paid or not. And according to their corrupt system, if the oath was taken on the Temple you did not have to pay it back. You are free to not pay your debt. But if your ~~prayed~~ swore on the gold Temple, you put your hand on the gold and took an oath, that is more valuable to them so they said then you have to pay it back. So whether you kept the oath or not depended upon the value of the object that you placed your oath. Jesus said, **Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold, or the Temple which is sanctifying the gold?** You cannot have valuable gold inside the Temple without the Temple. So He refuted their twisted logic and of their taking of an oath for their own profit, and for their own satisfaction.

The Condemnation of the Fifth Woe, verses 23 and 24, that we left off with last week. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you tithe the mint and the dill and the cumin and left aside the weightier things of the Law: judgment, mercy, and faith. It was necessary to do these,** that is, to tithe, **but those not to leave outside.** The Jews had two categories for the law. One was the heavier category of the laws, and the others were lighter laws. They put judgment and mercy and faith in the lesser law, the lighter laws. But tithing the garden herbs they put at the top of the list, said, "This is a weighty thing. This is heavy." So they put more importance on tithing the garden vegetables, than they did judgment, mercy, and faith. **It was necessary to do these,** that is, to tithe, **and those not to leave aside.** You have left them aside.

**Blind guides, the one straining out the gnat, but swallowing the camel!** The gnat and the camel - the smallest and the largest of the unclean animals that they could not eat. They are defiled if they were to eat them. But they would strain at the gnat - they would put a net over their drink, so that they would not accidentally swallow a gnat in their drink. But He says, **You strain out the gnat, but you swallow the camel.** In other words, you are rejecting your Messiah, but you are straining at a little gnat, so you will not become unclean. Again, taking the lesser of importance and putting it in priority over not receiving Christ as Messiah.

For today verses 25 and 26, The Condemnation of the Sixth Woe. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within they are full of robbery and lack of control.** So they would ceremonially baptize their dishes and their hands in order to be ceremonially clean. They would go through a certain ritual for their dishes and for their hands. They would take their hands in a praying position and put their hands underneath the water and let the water run down and then reverse their hands and let the water run down the other way so that all the surface would get covered by water. And this would make them ceremonially clean to eat. He says, **But inside.** He says, **You cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of robbery and lack of control. Blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the dish, in order that also the outside of them might become clean.** You are more concerned with the outside than the inside and you ought to be more concerned about the inside, then the outside will be clean.

In verses 27 and 28 The Condemnation of the Seventh Woe. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you are like whitewashed tombs which outwardly indeed appear beautiful, but within are full of bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness.** According to Numbers 19:16, it said if you touched a dead body, even walked upon a grave, you are considered unclean for seven days. So here are over a million people coming to Jerusalem for the Passover, and so they would beautify the city. They would paint the city. They would whitewash the tombs. They would paint white on the top of the graves so that people would not walk on them and become unclean. So He says, **You are whitewashed tombs. You are beautiful on the outside but within you are full of bones of dead and of all uncleanness.** So you are so concerned about being unclean for Passover activities by stepping on a grave, yet you are like these graves. You appear beautiful on the outside, but inside you are full of dead bones and of all uncleanness.

**This way you also indeed outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.** Again, religion emphasizes the outward appearance; God emphasizes the heart. Jesus is saying that the Pharisees spiritually defiled those that they touched. They are like the whitewashed tombs.

The Condemnation of the Eighth Woe. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the tombs of the righteous.** In other words, there is nothing wrong with that, they built the tombs of the saints and the prophets who came before, that the forefathers put to death. **And you decorate the tombs of the righteous. And you say, if we were in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers of them in the blood of the prophets. So now that you witness to yourselves that you are the sons of the ones having murdered the prophets. And you yourselves fill up the measure of your fathers.** In other words, the same tombs that you are decorating are the ones the prophets the forefathers killed, and you are about ready to kill Me and the prophets and the servants I am about ready to send to you. He is talking about the future, not only of Himself but others. He says, **Serpents, offspring of vipers.** *Serpent* is the word for *snake*, ὄφις, ophis. Viper, ἔχιδνα (echidna) is the Greek word, and it is a poisonous snake, a viper is.

In Matthew 3:7 John the Baptist was baptizing in the unbelieving and unrepentant scribes and Pharisees were coming to him and he called them a brood of vipers. Same word, poisonous snakes. Because they came to be baptized but it is not really what they were after - the inward change, it is the inward heart of submission. They were outwardly wanting to participate in something they did not really believe with.

Verse 34, **On account of this, behold I Myself, send you prophets and wise ones and scribes. And some from them you will kill and crucify, and some from them you will whip in your synagogues and will persecute from city to city.** This is how they are going to fill up the evil of their fathers. They are going to commit the same sins. They are going to kill the prophets. They are going to kill Jesus, the Messiah.

**So that it should come upon you all the righteous blood being poured out upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah**

**whom you murdered between the Temple and the altar.** Abel in Genesis 4:8 was the first murder in the Bible. Zechariah is the last murder in II Chronicles 24:20-21. This is according to the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible Genesis is the first book, and II Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew Bible. So Jesus is saying, all of the blood shed from Abel through Zechariah is going to be held and accountable to this generation. You are just going to fill up what has already been started. You will be guilty for all the righteous blood shed from Genesis 4:8 to II Chronicles 24:21.

**Truly I say to you, All these things will come upon this generation.** The word *generation* means *race or kind of people*. It does not mean forty years. Some people will tell you that the word generation means forty years. There can be a generation of forty years, but the word *generation* means *race or kind of people*. This generation meaning the race or kind of people, the Jews, will be held accountable for all the blood shed from Abel through Zechariah, and of course those whom the Lord is going to send in the future.

In Matthew 23:37-39, The Proclamation Over the House of Israel. He now stops with the woes, the eight woes, and He says, **Jerusalem, Jerusalem.** He is speaking now of the condition of Jerusalem. **Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one killing the prophets and stoning the ones having been sent to her. How often I desired to gather together your children which way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings! And you did not desire it.** King James says, "And you would not." It literally means, *and you did not desire it*. And that is the key. All of these woes upon them and the judgment coming upon them is because they rejected the Lord's invitation to come to Him. And they rejected it. But this is not a random rejection, this day had been prophesied for years. It is not just a random appointed time. It is an appointed time by God Himself. This time that Jesus speaking of here has been prophesied.

In Luke's Gospel in Luke 19:42 he says He wept over Jerusalem, and He said, **Jerusalem, Jerusalem saying, if you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong to your peace! But now it is hidden from your eyes.** Emphasize what the Greek text says, that if you had known this your day. *This the day of you*, is a specific and particular day that Jesus is making reference to.

All prophecy is centered on Daniel 9:24-27. We will be discussing this as we get into the prophecies of the end times next week. But in Daniel 9:24-27, all prophecy is centered around those Scriptures and has to do with this day that Jesus is talking about. In Daniel 9:24-27 he starts out by saying, **Seventy sevens.** Literally *seventy weeks* as the English would say it, but literally it is seventy sevens or 490 years. **Have been decreed upon your people and upon your holy city.** Verse 25 of Daniel chapter 9, **There from the going out of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah the ruler shall be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens.** If we understand the sevens to be sevens of years, we understand that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in March 14, 445 BC (given to us in Nehemiah 2:1-8). So for seven sevens, the city would be built up and rebuilt - that is 49 years. Plus, an additional sixty-two sevens or 434 years. Until after sixty-two sevens the Messiah will be cut off. So there are sixty-nine sevens or 483 years from the time the decree went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, till the time the Messiah was going to be cut off and killed. That week, that very week, He would be cut off and killed.

The text goes on to say in Daniel 9, that after Messiah is cut off then there will be a grace period - which we are in now called the church age. That is our terminology, not the Bible. And when the antichrist shows up, he is going to make a covenant with the world. The world going to be in chaos, more so than it is now. Everybody thinks we are in the last days, we are leading up to the last days. And we will get into it next week, the antichrist is going to enter on the scene when everything is in chaos in the world and he is going to make peace with all the nations. He is going to become the world leader and he is going to make a covenant with all the nations for one week, that is the seventieth week of Daniel. All prophecy that we deal with has to do with the seventieth week of Daniel, the tribulation period.

So after Messiah is cut off and there is a grace period, he is going to make a covenant with the nations for seven sevens - not seven sevens but one seven, which is seven years. **And in the half of the seven he will cause the sacrifice and the offerings to cease and upon the wing of the altar abominations causing desolations.** That is when antichrist is going to set up his image on the holy of holies and he is going to make all people bow down and worship his image.

It is actually a religious movement. It is not an economic movement where everybody says be careful of taking the number. Basically, if you want to buy or sell at that time you will have to take the number of antichrist and by taking the number you have to join his religion and worship his image. You cannot get the number any other way, other than joining his religion. So at the halfway point of the seven year period he is going to set up the abomination of desolations - his image in the holy of holies. And then what is called The Great Tribulation, verse 21 of Matthew chapter 24 tells us it is called The Great Tribulation, the last three and a half years of the tribulation period will take place.

But what is interesting is that after sixty-nine sevens or 483 years, from the word sent out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah is cut off it is 483 years. A man by the name of Sir Robert Anderson has done an excellent job of taking the numbers using a 360 day prophetic calendar, and figuring from March 14, 445 BC, which is when the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem). March 14, 445 BC until Jesus rode into Jerusalem was exactly 483 years. One hundred seventy-three thousand eight hundred eighty days. So when Jesus says, "If you had known this your day," in other words in essence, I do not want to put words in His mouth but in essence what He is saying is, if you had calculators somebody would have been keeping track and known that the very day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem was the very day that was prophesied in Daniel's prophecy and you would not have rejected Him. But they did reject Him. It was prophesied they would reject Him.

Back in Matthew 23:38-39, The Conclusion for Jerusalem. **Behold, "Your house is being left to you desolate."** That is a quote from Jeremiah 22:5, **Your house is being left to you desolate.** We will see more on that next week as Jesus is going to talk about each stone of the Temple is going to be torn down stone by stone. **For I say to you, You should never see Me from now on; until you should say, "Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord."** That is from Psalm 118:26, **Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord.** That is what they said to Jesus when He rode into Jerusalem back in chapter 21 verse 9, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," as they were hailing Him as the Messiah as He was

coming in on that day. *This their day.* So He is saying you are not going to see me again until I come back to you and you proclaim Me as your Messiah. Judgment for them, but, yet the timetable shows that God was exact. The Lord expressed grief even those prophesied that He would be cut off that week.

Let's close with prayer.