

# Studies in the Gospel of Matthew #65

## Condemnation of False Spiritual Leaders

Matt 23:13-33

### Introduction:

1. Throughout its pages, Scripture highly honors genuine spiritual leaders who rightly and faithfully represent God and seek no self-glory.
2. God lifts up His true servants and presents them as examples for others to follow and respect.
3. Many Christians today are greatly concerned about the rising influences of humanism, secularism, and social injustice.
  - a. Yet those evils, great as they are, do not together pose the threat to Christianity that false shepherds and pastors do.
  - b. Throughout the history of redemption, the greatest threat to God's truth and God's work has been false prophets and teachers, because they propose to speak in the name of the Lord.
4. That is why the Lord's most scathing denunciations were reserved for the false teachers of Israel – claimed to speak for God but they were liars
5. Yet believers today often are hesitant to confront false teachers with the seriousness and severity that Jesus and the apostles did
6. As in ancient Israel, the further God's people move away from the foundation of His Word, the more false religion flourishes in the world and even in their own midst.
7. We need to be discerning
  - a. We need to must recognize and denounce those who twist and undermine God's Word
  - b. Those who corrupt churches and who lead lost people still further away from God's truth and from salvation.
8. In these verses Jesus relentlessly condemned the false spiritual leaders of Israel, in particular the scribes and Pharisees, who then held the dominant power and influence in Judaism.
9. In verses 1-12 of this chapter Jesus had declared that the scribes and Pharisees, typical of all false spiritual leaders, were without authority without integrity without sympathy without spirituality without humility and therefore without God's approval or blessing.
10. Now speaking to them directly, He asserts they are under God's harshest condemnation.
  - a. He pronounces 8 curses, or woes, on those wicked leaders.
  - b. In our day of tolerance the kind of confrontation Jesus had with the scribes and Pharisees seems foreign and uncharitable.
  - c. A person who speaks too harshly against a false religion or unbiblical teaching or movement is considered unkind, ungracious, and judgmental.
11. Jesus' indictments here are so inconsistent with the idea of Christian love held by some liberal theologians and Bible scholars, for example, that they conclude He could not have spoken them.
  - a. What Jesus really said, they maintain, was modified and intensified either by the gospel writers or the sources from whom they received their information.
  - b. But the nature of Jesus' condemnation of those corrupt religious leaders is perfectly consistent with the rest of Scripture
  - c. Out of Jesus mouth on this occasion came the most fearful and dreadful statements that Jesus uttered on earth.

## I. False Leaders Are Cursed for Their Exclusion – vs 13

**13** But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

### A. False Religion Keeps People Out of Heaven

1. The chief evil of every false religion is that it shuts people out of God's kingdom.
2. False religion may have an appealing, benign, and promising front but it is still false religion and it will send people to hell
3. It may raise their moral standards, increase their worldly success, and improve their outward relationships with other people, but it will not remove their sin or improve their relationship to God.

### B. The Picture Shown Here

1. The picture Jesus gives here suggests the scribes and Pharisees standing just outside the gates of the **kingdom** and slamming them shut in the faces of those who were about **to go in**.
2. People who came to those religious leaders for direction and help in finding God were actually being **shut off** from Him
3. Jews lived under the delusion that, because they were His called People and the receivers and human custodians of God's law ([Rom. 3:2; 9:4-5](#)), they were somehow automatically destined to live under God's approval.
4. Jesus declared that they had no part in God's **kingdom**, which is the sphere of His reign and power
5. Jesus had come to Israel to proclaim the kingdom of God and to provide entrance for all who would believe in Him.
  - a) *But as soon as a Jew showed interest in the gospel, the scribes and Pharisees would step between that person and Christ, as it were.*
  - b) *Tragically, they turned many seekers away.*
6. The false leaders took away the key of knowledge by misinterpreting the Word of God, by denying the Messiah, by denying the need for repentance, and by denying salvation by grace.

### C. The Greatest Battle in the World

1. That is why the greatest battle in the world is not against communism or humanism or secularism or social injustice.
2. The greatest battle by far is the battle for men's souls
3. The great challenge of NT churches in our day is to clearly and boldly articulate God's truth and just as clearly and boldly to expose Satan's falsehoods.
4. The great need of the world today is to turn from its falsehoods and to hear and heed God's truth and be saved.
5. When men's eternal souls are at stake, we cannot be passive and indifferent.
6. MacArthur said, "Some years ago, a young man called and informed me that he was planning to leave our church and join Mormonism, two workers from which were going to visit him again shortly. I immediately drove to his house and confronted him with the extreme peril of what he was about to do. I told him that if he was not now a true Christian, they would damn his soul by leading him away from Christ and that if he were a Christian they would make a shambles of his spiritual life. When the workers arrived I refused to discuss doctrine with them but rather in the spirit of [Matthew 23](#) presented the true gospel of Christ and denounced the unbiblical and damning errors that their sect taught. However, the young man fell into the cult and was not able to escape for a number of years."

BYZ **Matthew 23:13** Οὐαὶ δὲ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι κατεσθίετε τὰς οἰκίας τῶν χηρῶν, καὶ προφάσει μακρὰ προσευχόμενοι· διὰ τοῦτο λήψεσθε περισσότερον κρῖμα. (Mat 23:13 BYZ)

Ye shut the kingdom of heaven (kleiete tēn basileian tōn ouranōn). In Luke 11:52 the lawyers are accused of keeping the door to the house of knowledge locked and with flinging away the keys so as to keep themselves and the people in ignorance. These custodians of the kingdom by their teaching obscured the way to life. It is a tragedy to think how preachers and teachers of the kingdom of God may block the door for those who try to enter in (tous eiserchomenous, conative present middle participle).

Against (emprosthen). Literally, before. These door-keepers of the kingdom slam it shut in men's faces and they themselves are on the outside where they will remain. They hide the key to keep others from going in.

## II. False Leaders Are Cursed for Their Misappropriation

**14** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

- The religious leaders were very interested in money, so much so that they would through unscrupulous tactics obtain money from people.

### A. The People in the Misappropriation

1. "Ye devour widows' houses"
2. No one was easier to fleece out of their money than widows.
3. They were preyed upon by these leaders.

### B. The Pretense for the Misappropriation

1. "For a pretense make long prayer".
2. One of the methods of pilfering money was by making long prayers for money.
3. The church of Rome does this yet—give the priest enough money and he will promise to pray your loved one out of purgatory.

### C. The Punishment for the Misappropriation

1. "Ye shall receive the greater damnation" ([Matthew 23:14](#)).
2. God does not think well of such tactics, and those guilty of pilfering money craftily through religious means will pay a high price in judgment.

## III. False Leaders Are Cursed for Their Subversion

**15** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

- Jesus cursed the scribes /Pharisees for their subversion of the people.
- They not only excluded them from the true faith but subverted them with false faith.

### A. The Effort – "compass sea and land"

1. For most of her history, Israel loathed the idea of pagans repenting, being saved and enjoying the same standing that they enjoyed
2. Like Jonah who didn't want Nin. to repent / enjoy God's forgiveness
3. But by the time Jesus began preaching the Jews were zealously trying to win converts.
  - a) *As the result of those efforts, many synagogues had regular Gentile worshipers who had turned from paganism.*
  - b) *Because Jews had such an unsavory reputation Gentile proselytes were not easy to make, and each one was prized*
4. That Jewish effort would have been commendable, because Israel had been called to be God's channel for reaching the world for Himself.

### B. The Effect – "child of hell"

1. Many of the proselytes became extremely zealous for their new faith, some of them even more zealous than those who converted them.
2. Because they were brought into a false religious system such a **proselyte** became 2x as much a son of hell as the scribes Pharisees
3. They sometimes surpassed their mentors in fanatical zeal, but because their zeal was not godly it simply led them more certainly to **hell**.
4. Every believer ought to be one who opens the door to others.
  - a) *All saints have the saving gospel of Jesus Christ ([Matt. 16:19](#))*
  - b) *When confronted by a representative of a false cult, sect, or religion, they should explain the way of salvation in Christ to him, hoping to snatch him out of the fire, as it were ([Jude 23](#)).*
  - c) *But they should not debate theology or the merits of various sacred writings or interpretations of the Bible, thereby "casting pearls before swine,"*
  - d) *But firmly denounce the teachings of that group as ungodly and damning—just as their Lord did with the scribes and Pharisees.*

**BYZ Matthew 23:14** Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι κλείετε τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ὑμεῖς γὰρ οὐκ εἰσέρχεσθε, οὐδὲ τοὺς εἰσερχομένους ἀφίετε εἰσελθεῖν.

**BYZ Matthew 23:15** Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι περιάγετε τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν ποιῆσαι ἓνα προσήλυτον, καὶ ὅταν γένηται ποιεῖτε αὐτὸν υἱὸν γεέννης διπλότερον ὑμῶν.

Twofold more a son of hell than yourselves (huion geennēs diploteron hūmōn). It is a convert to Pharisaism rather than Judaism that is meant by "one proselyte" (hena prosēluton), from proserchomai, newcomers, aliens. There were two kinds of proselytes: of the gate (not actual Jews, but God-fearers and well-wishers of Judaism, like Cornelius), of righteousness who received circumcision and became actual Jews. But a very small per cent of the latter became Pharisees. There was a Hellenistic Jewish literature (Philo, Sibylline Oracles, etc.) designed to attract Gentiles to Judaism. But the Pharisaic missionary zeal (compass, periagēte, go around) was a comparative failure. And success was even worse, Jesus says with pitiless plainness. The "son of Gehenna" means one fitted for and so destined for Gehenna. "The more converted the more perverted" (H.J. Holtzmann). The Pharisees claimed to be in a special sense sons of the kingdom (Matthew 8:12). They were more partisan than pious. Diplous (twofold, double) is common in the papyri. The comparative here used, as if from diplos, appears also in Applan. Note the ablative of comparison hūmōn. It was a withering thrust.

#### IV. False Leaders Cursed for Their Perversion – vs 16-22

##### A. The Limiting – vs 16-18

**16** Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! **17** Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? **18** And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

1. Jesus did not call His opponents hypocrites but **blind guides**, emphasizing their unawareness that they were ignorant of the truth.
2. As God's chosen people, entrusted with His Word, the Jews had long considered themselves as guides to the blind
3. Jesus had earlier called them "blind guides of the blind.
4. The religious leaders perverted their interpretation of Scripture to limit obligation to fulfilling an oath.
5. They would lower the standard of conduct.
6. Wicked religious leaders are always lowering the standard of conduct

##### B. The Learning – vs 19-22

**19** Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? **20** Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. **21** And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. **22** And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

1. Learn About the Temple
  - a) *Their double standard for swearing gives evidence that their concern was not for truth but for the evasion of it when it did not suit their selfish interests.*
  - b) *A person could lie all he wanted, provided he swore **by the temple** and not **by the gold of the temple**.*
  - c) *To make absolutely certain that someone was telling the truth or would live up to an agreement, he would make him swear **by the gold of the temple**, which supposedly made his word binding.*
  - d) *A person who broke his word after taking such an oath was subject to penalties under Jewish law.*
2. Learn About the Altar
  - a) *The religious leaders applied the same twisted logic to swearing **by the altar**, which was considered to be **nothing**, that is, nonobligatory and to swearing by **the offering upon it**, which was thought to make a person **obligated** to keep his vow*
  - b) *The whole idea was both theologically and logically preposterous.*
  - c) *Those standards were nothing more than wicked pretenses for using holy things to disguise their unholy propensity to lie.*

#### V. False Leaders Are Cursed for Their Inversion – vs 23-24

- Jesus cursed the **scribes and Pharisees** for inverting divine priorities.
- They magnified the insignificant and minimized the essential.

##### A. The Practice

**23** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

1. **Mint, anise and cummin** were garden herbs used as kitchen spices
2. They were not generally considered farm produce, of which the Mosaic law required a **tithe** be paid ([Lev. 27:30](#)).
3. Tithing produce (see also [Deut. 14:22](#)) related to marketable farm crops such as grains, olive oil, wine, fruits, and vegetables.
4. But with all their carefulness in such insignificant and often noncompulsory matters, they **neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness**.
5. They counted leaves and seeds but were indifferent to basic ethics.

BYZ **Matthew 23:16** Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, ὀδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ, οἱ λέγοντες, Ὅς ἂν ὁμόση ἐν τῷ ναῷ, οὐδὲν ἐστίν· ὃς δ' ἂν ὁμόση ἐν τῷ χρυσῷ τοῦ ναοῦ, ὀφείλει. **17** Μωροὶ καὶ τυφλοὶ· τίς γὰρ μείζων ἐστίν, ὁ χρυσός, ἢ ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἀγιάζων τὸν χρυσόν; **18** Καί, Ὅς ἂν ὁμόση ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ, οὐδὲν ἐστίν· ὃς δ' ἂν ὁμόση ἐν τῷ δῶρῳ τῷ ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, ὀφείλει. **19** Μωροὶ καὶ τυφλοὶ· τί γὰρ μείζων, τὸ δῶρον, ἢ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ ἀγιάζον τὸ δῶρον; **20** Ὁ οὖν ὁμόσας ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ ὁμνύει ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ· **21** καὶ ὁ ὁμόσας ἐν τῷ ναῷ ὁμνύει ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ κατοικήσαντι αὐτόν· **22** καὶ ὁ ὁμόσας ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὁμνύει ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. **23** Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι ἀποδεκατοῦτε τὸ ἡδύοσμον καὶ τὸ ἄνηθον καὶ τὸ κύμινον, καὶ ἀφήκατε τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου, τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὸν ἔλεον καὶ τὴν πίστιν· ταῦτα ἔδει ποιῆσαι, καὶ κεῖνα μὴ ἀφιέναι.

Ye tithe (apodekatoute). The tithe had to be paid upon "all the increase of thy seed" (Deut. 14:22; Leviticus 27:30).

The English word tithe is tenth. These small aromatic herbs, mint (to hēduosmon, sweet-smelling), anise or dill (anēthon), cummin (kuminon, with aromatic seeds), show the Pharisaic scrupulous conscientiousness, all marketable commodities. "The Talmud tells of the ass of a certain Rabbi which had been so well trained as to refuse corn of which the tithes had not been taken" (Vincent).

## B. The Portrayal

**24** *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

1. False religions usually strongly magnify the insignificant and minimize or entirely ignore the truly spiritual.
2. It is also possible for true believers to become caught up in minutiae.
  - a) *Some Bible students, for instance, claim to have ascertained the meaning of virtually every obscure sign and symbol in Scripture*
  - b) *Yet they give scant attention in their lives to the Bible's clear and unambiguous moral truths.*
3. The **gnat** and the **camel** represented the smallest and the largest, respectively of the ceremonially unclean animals
  - a) *Fastidious Pharisees would drink their wine through clenched teeth in order to filter out any small insects in the wine.*
  - b) *Those Jewish religious leaders were more concerned about being contaminated by a tiny **gnat** than by a huge **camel**.*
  - c) *They were painstaking about formal, ceremonial trivialities but were unconcerned about their hypocrisy dishonesty cruelty greed, self-worship, and a host of other serious sins.*

## VI. False Leaders Are Cursed for Their Self-Indulgence

### A. The Cleaning – vs 25

1. To illustrate again their hypocrisy, Jesus used the figure of cleaning the **outside of a cup and... dish, but not the inside**.
  - a) *The idea is of a person who offers a guest a seemingly lovely meal served with the best wine.*
  - b) *But it turns out that, although the utensils are beautiful and ceremonially purified, the food served on them was putrid.*
2. Outwardly the religious leaders gave the appearance of pious devotion to the Lord
  - a) *But inwardly they were **full of the moral and spiritual filth of robbery and self-indulgence**.*
  - b) *Harpagē (robbery) = plundering, pillaging, and extortion*
  - c) *Akrasia (self-indulgence) = lack of self-control and was often used to denote unrestrained self-gratification.*
  - d) *They were ceremonially immaculate and attractive but spiritually squalid and repulsive.*

### B. The Command – vs 26

1. Making the accusation more personal and direct, Jesus said, "**You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.**"
2. No utensil is clean that holds ill-gotten food or drink.
3. Throughout history false religious leaders have become rich and fat by fleecing those they pretend to serve.
4. Outwardly they appear righteous, caring, and exemplary but inwardly they are rapacious wolves.

## VII. False Leaders Cursed for Their Contamination

- Jesus cursed the scribes and Pharisees for spiritually contaminating everyone they touched.

### A. The Comparison – vs 27

1. After the spring rains had ceased, Jews in NT times had the custom of whitewashing houses, walls, and particularly tombs.
2. They began this task on the fifteenth of Adar (March) in order to make their communities more attractive for Passover pilgrims.
3. They wanted to identify graves for unwary travelers to avoid becoming disqualified to participate in Passover
4. Because of all the whitewash, Jerusalem and its environs glistened in the sunlight during the Passover season.

BYZ **Matthew 23:24** Ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ, οἱ διϋλίζοντες τὸν κώνωπα, τὴν δὲ κάμηλον καταπίνοντες.

**25** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

BYZ **Matthew 23:25** Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι καθαρίζετε τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τῆς παροψίδος, ἔσωθεν δὲ γέμουσιν ἔξ ἀρπαγῆς καὶ ἀδικίας.

**26** *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

BYZ **Matthew 23:26** Φαρισαῖε τυφλέ, καθάρισον πρῶτον τὸ ἐντὸς τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τῆς παροψίδος, ἵνα γένηται καὶ τὸ ἐκτὸς αὐτῶν καθαρὸν.

**27** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*

BYZ **Matthew 23:27** Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι παρομοιάζετε τάφοις κεκονιαιμένοις, οἵτινες ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνονται ὡραῖοι, ἔσωθεν δὲ γέμουσιν ὀστέων νεκρῶν καὶ πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας.

## B. The Character – vs 28

**28** Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

1. Like the **whitewashed tombs**, the scribes and Pharisees **on the outside** appeared **beautiful, but inside they** were also like the tombs, **full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness**.
2. They were spiritually dead and had no genuine regard for God's law despite their outward praise of it and claim to be its true interpreters and teachers.
3. In an infinitely worse way than the tombs ceremonially defiled those who touched them, the scribes and Pharisees spiritually defiled those whom they touched.

## VIII. False Leaders Are Cursed for Their Pretension

- Jesus cursed the **scribes and Pharisees** for their pretension in presuming to be superior to others, including their forefathers.

### A. The Conduct – vs 29

**29** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

1. For many hundreds of years these leaders had been in the vanguard of ventures **to build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous** saints and heroes of Israel.
2. They would have been on the speaker's platform in ceremonies honoring the great men of the past and would have voiced the loudest adulations.

### B. The Claim – vs 30

**30** And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

1. Realizing that many of those saints had been persecuted and martyred by their own forefathers, the scribes and Pharisees made vehement disclaimers for themselves, asserting self-righteously...

### C. The Condemnation – vs 31-33

**31** Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. **32** Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. **33** Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

1. But Jesus repudiated their pretension and exposed their true character
2. At that very moment they were plotting to kill Jesus, their Messiah and the Prophet of prophets, proving they were even more wicked than their ungodly ancestors.
3. They were so consumed by hatred of the truth and righteousness of God that they were totally blinded to the fact that they were about to crucify the very Son of God.
4. *Ophis* (**serpents**) was a general word for snakes, but *echidna* (**vipers**) referred to small poisonous snakes that lived primarily in the desert regions of Palestine
  - a) *Because they looked like a dried twig when they were still, a person collecting wood for a fire would often pick one up inadvertently and be bitten*
  - b) *As happened to Paul on the island of Malta.*
  - c) *That particular viper was deadly and when Paul suffered no harm from the bite, the superstitious islanders thought he was a god (Acts 28:3, 6).*
  - d) *Vipers therefore had the understandable reputation for being both deadly and deceitful.*

BYZ **Matthew 23:28** Οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνεσθε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δίκαιοι, ἔσωθεν δὲ μεστοὶ ἐστε ὑποκρίσεως καὶ ἀνομίας.

BYZ **Matthew 23:29** Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι οἰκοδομεῖτε τοὺς τάφους τῶν προφητῶν, καὶ κοσμεῖτε τὰ μνημεῖα τῶν δικαίων, The tombs of the prophets (tous taphous tōn prophētōn). Cf. Luke 11:48-52. They were bearing witness against themselves (heautois, Matthew 23:31) to "the murder-taint in your blood" (Allen). "These men who professed to be so distressed at the murdering of the Prophets, were themselves compassing the death of Him who was far greater than any Prophet" (Plummer). There are four monuments called Tombs of the Prophets (Zechariah, Absalom, Jehoshaphat, St. James) at the base of the Mount of Olives. Some of these may have been going up at the very time that Jesus spoke. In this seventh and last woe Jesus addresses the Jewish nation and not merely the Pharisees.

BYZ **Matthew 23:30** καὶ λέγετε, Εἰ ἡμεν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, οὐκ ἂν ἡμεν κοινωνοὶ αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι τῶν προφητῶν.

BYZ **Matthew 23:31** Ὅστε μαρτυρεῖτε ἑαυτοῖς ὅτι υἱοὶ ἐστε τῶν φονευσάντων τοὺς προφήτας·

BYZ **Matthew 23:32** καὶ ὑμεῖς πληρώσατε τὸ μέτρον τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν.

BYZ **Matthew 23:33** Ὅφεις, γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς φύγητε ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς γεέννης;