

Pharisees

Scripture Reading:
Philippians 2:1-11

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. 2 If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; 3 but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

Pharisees

• Arrogant – God chose *them*.

- Self:
 - Physical, not spiritual
 - Appearance and honor
 - “Weightier” matters of the law
 - Self exalted

Arrogance:

- **Romans 9:4-5** 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.
- **Matthew 3:9** and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.
- **John 4:9** Therefore the Samaritan woman *said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

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Matthew 23:13-14

- 13 But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. 14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

Barnes Commentary

- 1. They claimed a very exact knowledge of the law and a perfect observance of it. They pretended to extraordinary justice toward the poor, friendship for the distressed, and willingness to aid those who were in embarrassed circumstances. They thus induced "widows" and poor people to commit the management of their property to them as guardians and executors, and then took advantage of them and defrauded them.
- Long prayer - Their prayers are said to have been often three hours in length.

Matthew 23:15

- 15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Barnes Commentary

- "The Pharisees gained them either to swell their own numbers, or to make gain by extorting their money under various pretences; and when they had accomplished that, they took no pains to instruct them or to restrain them."
- "...they were consequently left to the full indulgence of their vices."
- The Jewish writers themselves say that the proselytes were "scabs of Israel," and "hindered the coming of the Messiah" by their great wickedness.

Matthew 23:16-22

- 16 Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' 17 You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? 18 And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' 19 You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? 20 Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. 22 And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

Matthew 23:16-22

- 16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.'"
- The offering: Exodus 25:1-6 – gold, silver and bronze...
- The temple: Exodus 25:8 – Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.
- Emphasis on the physical

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Outward Appearance

- Concerned about outward appearance
- Legalism – Strict, literal adherence to the law or to a particular code, as of religion or morality.
- literal interpretation of the words (the “letter”) of the law, but not the *intent* of the author. (loopholes)
- spirit of the law follows the intent of the law, but not necessarily adhering to the literal wording.

Matthew 6:1-4

- Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.
- [Matthew 6:16-18](#)
- [Matthew 23:5-12](#)

Outward Appearance

- Mark 7:9-13
- 9 He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to [d]be put to death’; 11 but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’ 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; 13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

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Matthew 23:23-28

- 23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

Matthew 23:23-28

- 27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

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Matthew 23:29-30

• 29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’”

- We would have done better than them...

Luke 18:9-14

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Pharisee – A Caution for us

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Humble –

Matthew 8:14 Whoever then **humbles** himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.