**August 12, 2020**

BIBLE STUDY

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**BLIND GUIDES**

**Matthew 23:23-39**

***Matthew 23:23 "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."***

***Matthew 23:24 "[Ye] blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."***

This is the fifth of eight "woes" (divine warnings) in this chapter. Mint, anise, and cummin are various spices. Some of them were used for fragrance from time to time. They were also, ground up and used for medicine. This really was not what God had in mind when He spoke of the tithe. In honor to God, all tribes (except Levi) were given land and required to tithe of all thine increase to the priest and Levites. The tithe (10 percent) is regarded as the offering due to the owner of the land.

***Leviticus 27:30***

***30And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord.***

***Malachi 3:10***

***10Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.***

But they had gotten so technical with their performance they had forgotten the purpose behind it. They were so caught up in technicalities that they no longer were functional as a church. It would be like us getting so caught up in watching the clock and making sure we did not run a service overtime, that we took no time to minister to the needs of the people. How can someone who is spiritually blind lead someone?

***1 Corinthians 2:14***

***14But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.***

What Jesus was trying to tell them was, stop worrying about formality and get people into the kingdom. Don't worry about who does it or how, just get them saved, and then minister to them.

***Matthew 23:25 "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."***

***Matthew 23:26 "[Thou] blind Pharisee, cleanse first that [which is] within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."***

Here, Jesus was speaking of cleaning up the heart of man. Out of the issue of the heart, the mouth speaketh. Some churches today, believe that just being baptized in water completes salvation. This is not true. There are many people who have been baptized in water that are lost. To be saved, A person must repent (have a change of heart). His heart must be washed in the blood of the Lamb and cleansed from all unrighteousness. He must truly believe that Jesus died on the cross for his sins, and that He rose again. When a person is cleaned up from within, his old desire to sin is washed away, and the desire of his heart is to follow Jesus.

***Acts 2:38***

***38Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.***

***Mark 16:15***

***16He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*.**

Once a person is saved, you can quickly notice a change in his conversation, his habits, and his goals. In fact, the change will be so great everyone will notice. Baptism in water is essential to salvation, but the baptism of the heart must take place first. Truly the order of baptisms is baptism of repentance, baptism of heart, baptism of water, baptism of fire of the Holy Spirit, and baptism of suffering. You see, these pharisees appeared from the outside to be living for God, but their hearts and spirits were not in it.

***Luke 3:7-8***

***7Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?***

***8Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.***

***Acts 19:1-6***

***1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,***

***2He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.***

***3And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.***

***4Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.***

***5When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.***

***6And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.***

***Matthew 23:27 "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."***

Once a year, about the fifteenth of the month of Adar, the Jews painted their tombs with whitewash to denote where the dead bodies were. Jesus, in this statement, was accusing these scribes and Pharisees to be dead inwardly but whitewashed on the outside. Probably, from the world's point of view (the outside), they were super religious, but it was all on the outside. Inside there were dead men's bones. They were covering up their lust of the flesh with this whitewash. To whitewash something today means, to attempt to cover up something very evil. In our society today, we see this in preachers who lead two lives; one for the public to view, and another private life that cannot stand up under the light.

***Matthew 23:28 "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."***

***Matthew 23:29 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,"***

***Matthew 23:30 "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."***

***Matthew 23:31 "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets."***

***Matthew 23:32 "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers."***

It seems that these scribes and Pharisees made large graves and mausoleums to say to the world that they were opposed to the killing of the prophets. In essence, they were saying had they been living instead of their ancestors, they would not have killed them. These scribes and Pharisees had not only rejected the prophets, but they had gone even further and had rejected the very Son of God. It is so easy to say what you would do, if you do not have the decision facing you. These scribes and Pharisees were quick to criticize, but they would make a much more serious denial when they participated in the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ the Son of God. Their cup of iniquity would be more than full.

***Matthew 23:33 "[Ye] serpents, [ye] generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"***

These phony scribes and Pharisees were like the ones Jesus was speaking of that stand before Him at the end and say, Lord have we not done all these wonderful things in your name? Jesus will tell them to get away from Him, that He never knew them. You see, having a form of religion is just not enough. Our hearts are the judge. Were our hearts right with God; was it the desire of our hearts to please God more than mankind. There are only two ways to go. Those who Jesus does not accept go to hell. To answer the question of Jesus above, there is a way to avoid hell. Turn from this whitewashed outward religion, repent, and make Jesus Lord of our lives.

***Matthew 23:34 "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and [some] of them ye shall kill and crucify; and [some] of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute [them] from city to city:"***

***Matthew 23:35 "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."***

Remember, these were the religious people of their day, but itwas an outward religion for show. They had nothing good going on inside them. They (as a whole) would not accept Jesus. In not accepting Him, who was the perfect Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice, it was as if they themselves had killed the prophets that led up to Jesus. Their message was of His coming. In not accepting Him, they did not accept their message, as well.

***Matthew 23:36 "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."***

***Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not!"***

Jesus, here, was speaking of them rejecting the Savior of the world (Jesus Christ). Jesus' desire was that the Hebrews would accept His free gift of salvation. They were the chosen of God. Jesus, like a hen that sees a storm coming and gathers her little chickens and covers them with her wings to protect them, wanted to protect them by covering them with His shed blood. They would not accept Him. They went so far as to crucify the Son of God. Jesus knew this when He made this statement and mourned for Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem."

***Matthew 23:38 "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate***."

Jesus' foreknowledge helped Him see the desperate thing they would do and become totally separated from God.

***Matthew 23:39 "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed [is] he that cometh in the name of the Lord."***

This means that Jesus did not appear to these particular people after the resurrection. At the second coming of Christ (when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord), these people will realize that Jesus is Messiah. The Israelites have always looked for a Messiah that would be a physical king and save them from their neighbors. Jesus will be LORD OF lords and KING OF kings when He returns to earth. They truly will say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

**QUESTIONS**

1. These woes were spoken to whom?
2. What were they tithing?
3. What were they omitting?
4. What did Jesus call them when He said they strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?
5. These people had gotten caught up in what?
6. These blind leaders could be paralleled to whom today?
7. What did Jesus mean when He said they cleaned the outside of the cup but inside was full of extortion and excesses?
8. What was Jesus really telling them to cleanse?
9. What two things must happen for you to be saved?
10. What is the order of baptisms?
11. What were they likened to in verse 27?
12. Inward they were full of what?
13. How often did the Jews whitewash the tombs?
14. What does whitewash mean today?
15. How did these scribes and Pharisees think they were better than their ancestors?
16. What was worse about the scribes and Pharisees?
17. What two names did Jesus call them, when He asked them how they could miss hell?
18. Jesus said they would be guilty of the blood of two men that covered the Old Testament, who were they?
19. What did Jesus compare His desiring to protect them with?
20. What 3 words indicate Jesus mourning for this people?
21. What did verse 39 mean about when they would see Jesus again?
22. What name would they call Him?
23. What will they do to show that they recognize Him?