

Woe To You!

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray and then healed a demon-possessed man. However, instead of acknowledging Jesus' goodness, power, and authority, they blasphemed the Holy Spirit who worked within Jesus. We continue the discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees.

Note: I've enjoyed and recommend Mark E. Moore's "The Chronological Life of Christ." Some of my comments can be found in his material by coincidence (he's not the only one making such observations articulated in his material), and other times, I've leaned on his accurate and helpful observations. He's done an excellent job making 1st-century culture and practices available.

No events occurred between last week's lesson and today.

The Southern Queen, Jonah & Leaders (Luke 11:29-36)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - We learn from Matthew & Mark's account how the Pharisees and scribes asked to see a sign from heaven (shocker). This resulted in Jesus sighing and addressing the crowd.
 - Jonah: See Jonah 1:17; 3:5. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection will be the ultimate sign. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and nights before being spat out, so will the Son of Man be in the belly of the earth before His resurrection. The men of Nineveh stand as judges against Jesus' accusers. What's the Pharisee's excuse? Jonah didn't come with great signs, compassion, or teaching to the degree of Jesus, yet the Ninevites repented!
 - Southern Queen: 1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chronicles 9:1-12. **"SHEBA OF ARABIA** A region in southwestern Arabia—modern-day Yemen—that prospered as a great trading center." (The Lexham Bible Dictionary). I love this queen because she didn't just hear what had been done - she sought to confirm it. She was a seeker! She asked and was answered. Sought and found. Knocked, and Solomon opened the door. She was left blessed in more than one way. However, she was impressed with human wisdom while the Jews were face to face with God and didn't trust Jesus.
 - Take note: we have to examples of "outsiders" acting as judges against God's servant.
 - Something great than Jonah and Solomon was present!
 - Leaders: Pretty straightforward illustrations. Jesus was the light, but they were closing their eyes to Him. If only they would open them and let Him in!
- *Something to meditate on:*
 - It's never good enough for some people. Jesus had performed miracles before in Judea and was doing so again (not to mention all the signs performed in Galilee). Have you ever been in a debate where solid points are conveniently ignored? Ever seen this in politics? Even worse - ever see in among the faithful? Ever see it in yourself? What a joy to stop fighting against Jesus and let Him in.

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers (37-54)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*

- This parallels Matthew 23, but that rebuke will come later (about 4 months), right before His crucifixion. This means that Jesus delivered this rebuke more than once.
- Jesus has been hit with this criticism in Galilee (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23), but now He's in Judah.
- "The Pharisees were the religious right-wing. Originally they were a group of laymen who sought to separate themselves from the impurity of their society by applying OT principles to all aspects of their lives. Their motives, at first, were very good. However, in their zeal for purity they built a 'hedge about the law' through many and minute oral traditions. Unfortunately, the further they went, the more interested they became in rituals and the less interested they became in people. This led to the kind of corruption that Jesus is about to rebuke." (Moore - pg. 388).
- "Jesus didn't wash before he ate. This washing was not for physical cleansing but for ceremonial cleansing. Furthermore, it was not a regulation of the Scriptures but a tradition of the Elders. All the Jews were supposed to wash their hands with at least a half an eggshell of water, poured over the hands with the fingers pointing down so as to wash the sin off the hands downward rather than washing them up your sleeves (cf. Butler, p. 239). They accuse Jesus of ritual uncleanness. Jesus accuses them of spiritual uncleanness. They are clean on the outside but filthy on the inside. Jesus' teaching is clear and simple: Clean up the inside and your outside will be clean too." (Moore 389).
- Lawyers and scribes were typically Pharisees as well. They copied and taught the law, feeling superior to other Jewish leaders. As you know, knowledge can puff up. They want Jesus to understand they're offended because He's not separating/acknowledging them as different.
- Blood from Abel to Zechariah. It's the blood of the innocent and righteous.
- *Something to meditate on:*
 - Pay attention to what gets your attention.
 - Who are you inside your home vs. out in public? What do your children see?
 - Give alms (probably to the poor) and be clean.
 - "Don't major in the minor." Someone told me this several years ago and it hit me between the eyes. Funny how the minor things make us feel secure. Maybe because they're easier to do? Yet, these things make us feel safe, secure, and superior. Or do they? Should they?
 - Some of us are the walking dead. Yet, we don't care as long as others think we're alive. What's that all about? Just because others accept you doesn't mean God does. I'm thinking of my in-law's sign in their house that reads something like, "Do not confuse the will of the masses with the will of God." Amen! And do not confuse the acceptance of many with the acceptance of God. Are you alive or dead?
 - Basic question: do you practice what you preach? Are you laying something on another's shoulders when you won't lift a finger?
 - Hypocrisy. Brethren, the bottom line is this: focus on what you do vs. what you say. Remember, what you do will have more impact than what you say. What they'll do is kill the greatest prophet to ever live. This will impact others. Listen, if you don't want to enter the kingdom of God, that's your choice, but don't pull others down with you.