
"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

(Matthew 23:13)

I. Woe to You, Who Do Not Lead to Christ

- a. We must not read the “Woes” with the idea that Jesus lost His temper. Jesus was upset with them, but His attitude was one of painful sorrow.
 1. For example, a parent will be deeply disappointed in the direct disobedience of a child yet while still loving the child. Hypocrisy was the sin of the Pharisees.
- b. *Woes* generally have three parts: the addressee; the sin; the judgement. (Read Mat. 26:64)
- c. Jesus directs the first three “Woes” to the *Bible teachers* and their *false teaching*. (James 3:1)
- d. *Woe #1 – The Closers of Doors* (v.13)
 - e. The scribes and Pharisees are phonies because they *know* they are saying one thing and doing another. Or they think they are doing the right thing but are doing the wrong thing.
 1. Charlatans, flimflam artists, and con men are in every religious community.
 2. To close the kingdom door is to teach the will of God in Scripture falsely. Also, they interpret God’s Word from its plain meaning, which is the kingdom is both a present and future reality. We do not have to do flips and tricks to know Christ and His will.
 3. They bind people to human traditions rather than to God’s truth of freedom found in His Son.
- f. *Woe #2 – Crossers of Seas* (v.15)
 1. This Woe teaches the church that a minister can be so consumed with God’s mission in the world that they can create fellow fanatics.
 2. The Pharisees created man-made polices that were mandatory for their proselytes, which turned them into replicas of themselves (literally, *sons of hell*)
- g. The main thing to learn from the first two Woes is suspicion of religious zeal. *Men never sin more grievously than when they act from religious motives.* (Branch Davidian, Jim Jones)
 1. We should never confuse activity or size with authenticity or truth.

II. The Practical Application of God’s Word

- a. Where is verse 14? The point to remember is that it doesn't make much difference why it was omitted from Matthew, because it is in the parallel accounts of Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47, so no information was lost or added.
- b. If pastors do not have passion for God and His kingdom, what will the people follow.
- c. Unreliability in leadership is disastrous for a congregation.
- d. Woe to the weak ministers who do not carry out what they have promised because of fear!
- e. Woe to skeptical ministers who promise at their ordination to accept and teach the faith of the Bible and do not do it!
- f. True Christians must stand uncompromisingly against all teaching which, requires strict following of religious rules that go against the Word of God. Beloved, know God’s Word for yourself.