

## Lesson 45 Matthew 23.1-39 (1) Jesus teaches that truth taught needs to be co-ordinated with life lived

### *Jesus emphasised serving or ministry*

The Mosaic Pharisees burdened the people with laws and failed to lift a finger to help them carry the load. Jesus took the heavy end of the cross as he went to Calvary and Simon of Cyrene who shall be typical of the disciple lifted the light end after Jesus. Jesus dispensed with the titles "Rabbi" "Patriarch or Father" and "Teacher" laying claim to be Master (Greek *καθηγητης*—"the one who establishes what is to be taught") of His people. He dismissed public encomium and special treatment for religious leadership and called for that lowliness we associate with the carpet which serves long and makes others feel comfortable and at home.

### *Eight woes for ineffective rabbinic leadership: Woe to you for:-*

1. Eternity/ **Shutting** the kingdom of heaven in the face of the nations and not entering but preventing those who would enter
2. Prayer/ **Swallowing** the profits made from the sale of widows' houses on the pretext of offering lengthy prayers-you will receive outpoured judgement
3. Growth/ **Travelling** desert and overseas to make one proselyte twice as sure of hell as yourselves
4. Oaths/ Blind guides **swearing** by temple gold before the house(of prayer) itself and swearing by the gift before the altar(of atonement). Don't swear by heaven or earth-God's throne and footstool.
- 5 Tithing/ **Tithing** mint dill and cummim whilst neglecting mercy judgement and faith. Tithe indeed but do not neglect more important matters. You filter out gnats but swallow camels
6. Sexual conduct/ **Cleaning** the outside of cups and plates but your vessels are full of rape and incontinence
7. Righteousness/ Whitewashing tombs full of bones and are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness
8. Christ/ **Building** the prophets' tombs and deny blood guilt in this your day. Vipers as John said, "How will you escape hell?" The Lord then invites them to look ahead. "Behold I am going to be sending you prophets and wise men whom you will beat and persecute from city to city. On you will come all the blood from Zechariah till now. Zechariah the prophet you slew between the Holy of holies and the incense altar.

### *The appeal of Jesus*

"O Jerusalem Jerusalem how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing-but you would not" Once again Matthew gives us one of his telling "Behold's" (No.41) saying, "Behold your house is left desolate and you will not behold me from this very time until the day you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD"(Psalm 118.26)

### *From paper to practice*



- 1 How important have titles and prima donnas now become in the church?
- 2 Are we in danger of hypocrisy on any of the eight charges preferred by Jesus?(see above)
- 3 The Master craves for our fellowship-is today's chief failing in the devotional life?