

## Luke 11

Written by K B Napier  
Tuesday, 18 April 2017 16:16

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Jesus is now entering into His last days on earth. Because of this His words become more urgent and the Pharisees become more hateful, changing the response of the people from exultation to apathy.

### Verses 1-4

1.

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2.

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3.

Give us day by day our daily bread.

4.

And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Jesus was praying and, after He had done so, a disciple approached him and asked to be taught how to pray. We also see that John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray. Many Christians, those with 'silver tongues', think praying is easy. True prayer is far from easy! Being able to string together pious phrases is not prayer. Prayer is the response of a saved person to God and life: God gives us His word and prompting and we repeat it in our own words; this is prayer. Even urgent, sudden prayers firstly come from God through the Spirit, as they press down on our soul prompting us to speak with the Father. **(Note: we must not pray to Jesus or to the Spirit, but only to the Father, through Christ).**

Immediately, Jesus gave the disciples an outline of how to pray. What we call the 'Lord's

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Prayer' is not meant to be a learning-by-rote repetitive exercise! It is an example, showing the *kind*

of things we should talk to God about. Note that prayer should always begin with praising God, His name, and His glorious activities.

*"Our Father"* means that God is OUR God, if we are saved. It implies that He is our protector and provider, because of this special relationship. In a very real sense, teaching young children to pray this prayer is fruitless, for unless we know a child is saved by faith, any prayer will fall on deaf ears. That also goes for adults who are unsaved, because God does not respond to anything they say.

The Father is in Heaven and everything about him is Heavenly, holy and perfect. Therefore, *"hallowed"*

is His name... He is beyond human understanding and is the holiest of holies, free from guilt and shame, above all His creation. (In the Old Testament 'hallowed' means to be set apart, dedicated to God, consecrated to Him. The New Testament meaning is similar – to acknowledge the holiness of God and to separate ones' self from what is sinful).

There is no freedom in this to refer to Him as 'Daddy', as impious charismatics claim! Their sinful attitude hides the true meaning of 'Father' when referring to God; He is NOT our earthly 'daddy', but is our Creator! In this case *patēr* means the originator of all things, the founder of His heavenly family; 'Father' is, then, a title bestowing honour on the Lord as King of kings. Therefore, using the word 'Daddy' is over-familiar, suggesting there is no real reverence for God as Almighty. He is indeed our Father in every sense, but this does not allow us to take liberties with His Name.

Sadly, the familiarity of charismatics proves the old saying, that *"familiarity breeds contempt"*.

By using the earthly name of 'Daddy', they show indifference to His holy Name – His *onoma*,

everything His Name covers. The same people would not dare talk to an earthly king like this! They would bow or kneel and use 'Sir' or 'Your Majesty'... not "Hi, Dave". How much more so should they observe the holiness of the Lord! His Name is to be hallowed, kept special, treated with the highest regard, and not like an earthly father from whom we demand sweeties!

*"Thy kingdom come"* should read something like *"Your kingdom will come"* or *"let come the kingdom of thee"*

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That is, His spiritual kingdom, into which ONLY those who are elect will enter. As everything promised by the Lord WILL come to pass, the statement is one of actuality, not mere possibility. If Jesus had given the same kind of statement after He had arisen, the words would have been “*Thy kingdom*

*has come*”;

because He ushered in the new spiritual regime with His death and resurrection. The truth also includes the coming of our final destination in Heaven as a place of eternal rest and joy, as the ‘capstone’ of our salvation. For ALL believers today, God’s kingdom has already come.

The next statement in the Lord’s Prayer is similarly stated in Jesus’ statement to Peter concerning the keys to Heaven and earth. It does NOT mean that Heaven follows our example on earth. It means that whatever we do on earth has its origin in Heaven, with the Father. Thus, the Father has predetermined what He will do at any time, and His will MUST come about at the precise time on earth, complete in all its details. This, like the previous statement, is one to lend encouragement that God is in control and HIS will must come about, destroying or replacing any will of wicked men. The eternal will of God ALWAYS ‘trumps’ the sinful will of men!

We must gratefully thank God for His daily provision of everything we need (e.g. Matthew 6:7,8) . We should not plead with Him on a daily basis for these things, for Jesus has already told us that God *knows* our daily basic needs, and will give them to us. It is, then, almost like an insult, to continually harass Him for basic needs. Whatever happens will happen because God has planned it.

So, He gives us what He knows we need (rather than what we want). He knows every fibre of our being, including the sins we commit. That is why, at some stage in our prayers, we should seek His forgiveness. Note that forgiveness of others is mandatory! Here, Jesus uses the earthly example of those who owe us something earthly – such as money. But, He uses it as an illustration to speak of spiritual forgiveness.

There is an idea that we can forgive even when others do not seek it; this is untrue. Rather, we should ALWAYS be in an attitude of forgiveness towards those who would deny us what is owed, or what is required by God. Yet, scripture itself says that those who need forgiveness must firstly seek it. Always, God demands that we repent and seek forgiveness, before He gives it. (See separate article, A-461, on this subject, proving that we may not forgive without repentance). This attitude includes the idea of not harbouring feelings of hatred towards anyone, because such feelings would deny us God’s forgiveness for our own sins. The emotional idea that we must forgive even if there is no repentance, is wrong, and opposes

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God's word.

We must also ask God to "*lead us not into temptation*". Or, we should ask Him not to let temptation cause us to fail and enter into sin. It does NOT mean God Himself leads us into sin. He does at times cause us to enter into trials that test our holiness and spiritual stability. But, if we fail at these and enter into sin, it is entirely because of our own failings and not the leading of God.

Thus, in this text, 'temptation' refers not to the prelude to sinning, but to testing. He does not test us in order to see us fail, but in order to strengthen our resolve and faith. The request, then, is that He leads us to a better place and not allow us to fail the trials He sets for us. Rather, we ask that in the trials He "*deliver(s) us from evil*". To 'deliver'; is to rescue us from the harm of annoyances, hardships, toils, perils and pain associated with living a Christian life.

### Verses 5-13

1.

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

2.

For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

3.

And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

4.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

5.

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be

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opened unto you.

6.

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

7.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

8.

Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

9.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Though verse 5 appears to be separate, it is actually linked to the statement in the Lord's Prayer concerning saving us from evil. Hence the verse begins with a conjunction, *kai*. Or, 'also' or 'because of this'. Jesus gives a parable that illustrates the love of God towards us in adversity: a man goes to his friend at midnight, waking him up. He needs three loaves of bread, because he has just been visited by someone who has arrived after a long journey, but the host has no food in the house to feed him. The initial response of the man he woke up is annoyance, because he and his family are all in bed, so answering the door is out of the question. But, the man pleads with him to give the bread, so the friend gets up, answers the door and gives him the bread.

Jesus, then, implies some element of pleading (otherwise we could be complacent) when we pray for help. He says that if we ask, God will give us what we ask for (also see Matthew 21:22). The key in the illustration is not so much that we are known to God, but that we plead with Him to answer, which suggests that we should approach Him not with an arrogant knowledge that He will answer, but with humility that He will hear us because of His mercy. So, if we seek we

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will receive. And if we knock the door to Heaven, God will answer.

Many believers have a notion that Jesus stands at the door knocking, waiting for us to answer. This is completely the wrong picture! Jesus does not wait for us to answer His Gospel call, like a salesman selling his wares! He has already elected those who will respond. Thus, the knocking is done by the elected person, not by Christ.

That the person knocking is elect is suggested by verse 11, in which the person asking for something is already related, a son. If a son asks his father for bread, does he give him a stone? Or, if he asks for fish, does he give him a poisonous snake? Or if he asks for an egg, does he give him a scorpion? Of course not: he has the welfare of his son at heart and loves him.

So, says Jesus, if this goodness can come from a sinful, earthly father or friend, what wondrous gifts does our sinless Heavenly Father give to His elect children to seek something from Him? The implication is that there is no real comparison, for God is superior to any friend or earthly father, and so whatever He gives in return for our prayers, through the Holy Spirit, will be superlative and overflowing. Believe!

### Verses 14-20

1.

And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

2.

But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

3.

And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

4.

But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought

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to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

5.

If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

6.

And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

7.

But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Later, Jesus was casting out a demon that caused the person to be dumb. As soon as the demon was cast out, the man could speak again. While most onlookers were amazed by the miracle, some, wishing to do Jesus harm (possibly encouraged by Pharisees), questioned whether Jesus *really* had godly power, or if he was acting on behalf of Satan: “*He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of devils.*”

*(Technical notes: Beelzebub [Aramaic = Beelzeboul] can mean ‘lord of the house’ and was used as a title for Satan. The word is based on the form ‘lord of dung’ or ‘lord of filth’, which adequately describes what Satan is lord over. Some believe the name refers to the false god of the Ekronites [Ekron was a city of the Philistines]: ‘lord of the flies’, though this meaning is only a minor one, following the preference of Jerome. If this is so, it is thought Jews used the title as a name of contempt for Satan [Source: Meyer and Jas Morison, amongst others].*

*Christians think the meaning of Beelzebub is certain, but this is not the view of theologians, because no-one has a clear understanding of the name... does it actually refer to Satan, or to a lesser demonic being, a ‘prince of demons’? The title given in the verse does not really specify if*

**arch**

**ōn**

*– chief – has the meaning of absolute chief, ruler, or leader, or just of a leader of a certain*

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*number. In Hebrew the name is*

**Ba'al Zev**

**ûv**

*; it is the Arabic version,*

**Ba'al az-Zubab**

*that means 'lord of the flies' (power to drive away flies).*

**Ba'al**

*means 'lord' or 'master', and it is usually qualified by a name, to say what the person is lord or master over. But.*

**Ba'al**

*does not just speak of a demonic deity; it was also used of human officials. When used of a deity, it was a substitute for the actual personal name,*

**Hadad**

*: only pagan priests were allowed to use the proper name, so others used the title,*

**Ba'al. Hadad**

*was the god of rain, thunder, fertility, etc.).*

Other critics called for Him to give them a sign from Heaven that what He did was truly of God. Satan was behind this, for you will remember he, too, wanted Jesus to prove Himself with heavenly power; a temptation and not a genuine plea.

Jesus, of course, knew exactly what they were doing! He told them that if a kingdom split itself up into factions it would simply fall into obscurity. And, if every member of a family was always at odds, the family would quickly break-up. So, if Satan cast out his own demons, he would be weakening his own power-base.

Here we see that Jesus used 'Beelzebub' as a name for Satan. He said that if He cast out demons by the power of Satan, then in whose name did the Jews cast them out? Like Him, they did so by the power of God... let their own actions provide the proof! On the other hand, said Jesus, if He cast out demons by the power of God, then it meant that God's kingdom or rule was already with them, in the person of himself, Jesus the Christ.

(Note: Satan can sometimes 'cast out' his own demons, but not in the true way described by Jesus. Rather, if a pretender to faith attempts to cast demons out, Satan will allow it to happen, but as a dupe, to cause the exorcist to think he has power to do so. It is just a ruse used by Satan to capture the exorcist and to draw others into the trap of believing in spiritualistic exercises. In such cases the demons are not really cast out, but play-out a dramatic pretence. Be warned – do not play around with casting out demons, or it can backfire and harm).

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### Verses 21-26

1.

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

2.

But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

3.

He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

4.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

5.

And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

6.

Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Jesus continued his analogy: a palace is strong and peaceful only while its ruler is strong. But, if a much stronger opponent comes along and defeats the owner of the castle, he takes away the former owner's armour and weapons in which he trusted, and takes away the spoils. God is stronger than Satan, and has already defeated him. Until God brings all of time to an end, Satan and his demons will wreak havoc in the world, but, after judgment, they will be cast into the pit forever.

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Jesus then advised His hearers that if they wished to remain with the former strong man (Satan and his earthly followers), they will be scattered like a beaten enemy. Those who followed Jesus would take over from the strong man, because Jesus is stronger than Satan and worldly enemies.

Verse 24 is not directly connected to previous verses, which leads me to think that intervening incidents are not mentioned by Luke. Jesus brings to the disciples' attention the fact that we must be careful when it comes to demonic powers. When a demon is cast out it roams around looking for another person to inhabit (verse 24). If he cannot enter another body he will return to the one he was cast out of.

He looks upon the person he was cast out of and sees that the man has started afresh, but is empty of new resolve; he has not replaced the demons with something or someone better. In other words, his soul is empty of holiness. The demon sees this and quickly calls on seven more demons who were even more wicked than himself. Together, they return to the man and inhabit his body and mind, leaving him in a worse condition than before. This must stand as a severe and dire warning to all believers and unbelievers.

I see this teaching can apply to those who have had 'mental' problems, too. They try to remove their problems by replacing them with humanistic help and theories. But, without God no human agency can help, and so the problems merely get shifted from one locus of attention to another. Though it now has a different name, it is just as sinful, and will get worse.

The same applies to the casting-out of demons; if the person who has been cleansed does not boldly follow Christ, then he will be wide open to further possessions that will be worse than the first. But, to follow Christ he must firstly be elect and born-again. Even the Christian can be harmed by demons, through influence or oppression. He cannot be possessed, but the signs and symptoms will be closely similar, and the cause is usually habitual sin. Obedience and faith are needed to keep demons away. But, retain old habits and sins, and they will return with a vengeance.

### **Verses 27&28**

1.

And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

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2.

But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

As Jesus was speaking, a woman called out, praising Mary for bearing and raising Him. His response is one that does not support the ideas of Romanism. He said, 'No, it is better to bless those who hear the Gospel and keep it.' He thus moved the emphasis from his mother and put it onto those whom God has called.

It must be said that many a true believer was born to, and raised by, pagans and those who hate the Gospel. But, we may not praise the parents for doing so... we should only praise God for causing the offspring to come away from their background to embrace God's call to salvation. And those who do so are truly blessed, for they have moved from death to life, darkness to light, eternal misery to eternal bliss.

There are no blessings to the other side of the equation, only condemnation. Mary was indeed blessed by God for bearing Christ, but she had no part in it – she simply accepted the situation and, as a godly woman she received the blessing of God. She has no other blessings extra to this and has no special place in Heaven as a result.

### **Verses 29-32**

1.

And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

2.

For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

3.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon;

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and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

4.

The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

(Preamble: Once again, we see something historical, that can be applied to what is universal. In strict terms of interpretation all of the proceeding words were spoken to the Pharisees and scribes/lawyers of Jesus' day. He repeats several times that He was talking about "*this generation*" as the one to reap the penalty for their fathers' evil against the prophets, etc.

To apply every word to today is not acceptable. "*This generation*" certainly reaped the dire consequences for failing to hear the prophets and for killing the greatest prophet of them all – the Christ. It would all come to an end when Roman armies destroyed the Temple and scattered the whole nation of Israel in 70 AD.

Today, we can refer to similar principles, but only generally, for the warning was given *specifically* to the people of Jesus' day, not to us. Today, nations are destroying all that is godly and imposing the works of Satan in their place. For this the leaders will reap the whirlwind, and the people who support them will also receive their just reward, in no less a fashion.

The crowd around Jesus grew even larger and Jesus looked upon them with the eye of God. He saw a nation ripe for judgment and He said so. "*This is an evil generation!*" Until now Jesus held His counsel, but with His time on earth coming to a rapid close He could no longer let the people get away with their unbelief and distortion of God's commands.

*"This is an evil generation"*

refers only to the Jews who lived at the time of Jesus. In their older years the same Jews would be punished by God for their evil, which had accrued over centuries. 70 AD was not far away.

More and more, spurred on by the Pharisees and scribes, people demanded a sign from Jesus

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that He was acting on behalf of Jehovah. Jesus refused to give them such a sign – after all, what else was His casting out of demons, divine preaching, miracles and overall divine power, but signs? *“This generation”* would receive no more signs! Except for the *“sign of Jonas”* (Jonah ) – the resurrection of the Christ, just as Jonah was resurrected from the great fish.

This sign would be a **sēmeion** - portending something remarkable... the death and resurrection of Christ, coupled to the darkening of the sun, a violent earthquake, and the rising of the dead in Jerusalem. But, for centuries, the Jews had received many other signs... the exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna... all ignored! Even when Jesus was resurrected the Jews again ignored the significance and meaning of this one last warning sign. Thus, in 70 AD, God allowed the Jews to be destroyed as a nation, as a punishment for their laxity and sin. The *“queen of the south”*

(Sheba) would bear testimony to their wickedness; she travelled to find Solomon to hear his wisdom, and yet Jesus’ own people refused to listen to Him! He was demonstrably greater than Solomon, but the people finally rejected Him. ‘Bread and Circuses’!

Thus, at this time, we see that the crowd responses were changing from adulation to apathy or hatred, intense attention to malevolent disrespect. In my own life I have witnessed this kind of change towards myself as a preacher of the Lord, and yet I have never shown the full power displayed by Christ. People are fickle, in ordinary life as well as in spiritual life! Many Christians are content with lesser truths and lesser men, preferring them and their own wisdom, to that of Christ.

The men of Ninevah, preached to by Jonah, would also stand witness to the wickedness of the Jews, condemning them soundly. When Jonah spoke to them they repented as a people, but Jesus, the Son of God, very God, was now being ignored! Yet, Christ was greater than Jonah.

### Verses 33-36

1.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

2.

The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

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3.

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

4.

If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

We see in Jesus' argument a certain holy anger, that the blind (Pharisees) were leading the other blind (the nation) into a dark pit. So, He drives home His opposition to them. It should not be regarded as a defence, for Christ did not need to defend His own word. Rather, it was more a rebuking command.

What is the point of lighting a candle (remember – candles were very expensive) and then placing it in a hidden place so no-one can see the light? No, the householder places the lit candle on a candlestick, so people entering the room could see where they were going. In a similar way, images enter the eye and are understood and interpreted by the brain.

But, if we cover our eyes we will be in the dark and will see nothing. We will stumble about and fall. Thus, when our eye is 'single' or sound, we will see everything because the light has illuminated it. However, even with eyes open, if we only wish to see what is evil, we are not illuminated but are darkened. Sin ruins the light and damages our entire mind and heart. So, everything we think, say and do is darkened by sin.

Jesus reminds the Pharisees in particular not to 'see' darkness instead of light, implying that they see darkness because they are unfaithful to the Lord. Those who have handed over their bodies and minds to God will only see what is good and light, and what they think, say and do will reflect that light. But, those who have denied Christ will be filled with darkness and will act out what is dark. The Light of the world is Christ, and only those who have Christ will see and act in the Light. The rest are blind and stumble about in their sin; they cannot relate to God and His people, or think with clarity and truth.

### Verses 37-41

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1.

And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

2.

And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

3.

And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

4.

Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

5.

But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

As Jesus was speaking a Pharisee approached to ask Him to dine at his home. Jesus accepted, went in, and sat down to the meal. Some unbelievers today seek social intercourse with believers, but have no interest in being friendly or truthful. Their aim is to trip-up their innocent victim, that they may be ridiculed or otherwise put-down by others. This was the aim of the Pharisee.

So, when he saw that Jesus did not wash his hands before eating, he did not wish to draw Jesus' attention to a ritualistic propriety, but jumped straight in with an accusatory statement. Jesus had shown Himself to be powerful, godly and beyond ordinary human goodness, yet here was a Pharisee daring to question the Son of God! On a human level, I often receive ridiculous scorn for minor issues, even though nothing is said about the overarching major issue I am trying to teach! As Jesus said in Matthew 23:24, they "*strain at a gnat*". That is, they choke in indignation at something that is irrelevant, but say nothing about things of heavenly importance.

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I get much of this kind of superficial straining at gnats!

If we follow the Pharisee's logic, a man in the desert without water but with meat, would have to starve to death because he had no water with which to wash his hands! In this way the ridiculous becomes sublime!

On this occasion, Jesus was unwilling to bear the foolishness of Pharisees, because there was little time left. He did not mince His words but was frank. He told the Pharisee that he and his kind were very careful to clean exterior things that others could see, but took no care at all with what was important and inwards. They were like merchants who sold rotten meat after scraping off the outer parts. But, what they sold as looking good would poison the buyer.

Jesus did not simply tell the man that the Pharisees were making a mistake – He was blunt: they were wicked robbers, of both God and man (at that time the Pharisees became rich by stealing the homes of new widows). They stole from God by being superficial hypocrites (as He says in verse 42) and not teaching truth.

Hence, Jesus called them fools! They seemed oblivious to the fact that the God Who made their minds and hearts also made their bodies, and knew everything about their thoughts and motives. "*Fools*", *aphrōn*, means they were senseless and stupid, without true intelligence or reason. There are many within and outside the churches of this type, including highly intelligent men and women, whose intelligence is nil because they do not acknowledge God.

As if to cut across this basic fact about their spiritual state, Jesus then commanded them to give alms to the poor (possibly to help make up for their theft from widows), to cause them to think again and to turn back to purity. Jesus could have told them to do many other things, but we are not made privy to it. It is possible that the giving of alms was a symbol reflecting their general state. And, of course, giving away their ill-gained riches would certainly have torn at their real love!

### Verses 42-44

1.

But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

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2.

Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

3.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Jesus then begins a deeper rebuke, with the conjunction “*but*”. Here it means ‘moreover’. This kind of conjunction leads from a lesser to a cardinal (important) matter. What Jesus said before was important, but, He then followed it up with an even more important matter.

*“Woe unto you, Pharisees!”*

What was the matter? He tells them in no uncertain terms. He had already told them of their wickedness and robbery. He now explains why. They gathered free plants, mint, rue and herbs, that grew on their own requiring no input, but gave nothing at all of compassion, a compassion God required of them and which proved genuine belief and obedience. Some think this passage teaches tithing, but this is not the case; tithing is not the issue here. The Pharisees tithed what was minor but did not do what was major... they did not judge properly, did not love God truly, and so left undone what God demanded of them. They did well to tithe plants, as they ought, but were deviant in not showing compassion and true godly love.

*“Woe”* is an exclamation of grief, and Jesus uses the term again (verse 43) with another rebuke. This time He spoke of their arrogance and pride, as they sought to be seated in the prominent parts of the synagogues, and loved to be greeted by those they thought were subservient to them.

Once again, Jesus repeats his woe on them, adding the charge of hypocrisy. While other men saw them and thought they were holy, in reality they were like hidden graves containing rotting corpses; graves others did not know about and so walked over them. The people were led to think of the Pharisees as extra-pious, but they did not see the inner man, the wickedness of the Pharisaical heart.

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Many today are like this! Many mislead others with pseudo-piety. Many hide their hatred well and exude a sickly-sweet 'love' that is no love. God knows.

### Verses 45-48

1.

Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

2.

And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

3.

Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

4.

Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

When Jesus had finished His rebuke, a lawyer standing by took umbrage. 'By accusing the Pharisees, you also include us!' He did not like being accused. But, Jesus did not hold back. "*Woe unto you also, ye lawyers!*"

The lawyers were trained in the Mosaic law, so they ought to have known what God wanted. But, instead, they made the law of God into something ruinous to the people. God demanded reasonable actions, but the lawyers extended what God wanted by adding their own rules and regulations, creating a virtual minefield of sub-laws. Though they created these extra legalities, they did not observe them in their own lives. They just expected everyone else to obey!

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Jesus again proclaims “Woe” to them for building graves for the prophets and yet, it was their forefathers who killed them. Was this fair? Yes, it was, for the lawyers of Jesus’ day had the same wicked hearts as those who killed the prophets years before. They bore witness to their fathers’ sins by being exactly the same in heart. We see this in our churches in abundance.

### Verses 49-52

1.

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

2.

That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

3.

From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

4.

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

Jesus was not yet finished with them! He continued: God still sent His prophets and apostles, knowing that the people would treat them in the same way as their forefathers. Men sent by God, whether then or today, are persecuted for telling the truth, and some are put to death. Nothing has changed, except that the persecution is now gaining momentum. And behind much of it are the modern Pharisees.

Note again, that the punishment for this slaying of the prophets would come before the generation living at the time of Jesus died. They would live to see the destruction of their Temple and nation. 70 AD was NOT brought about only by Roman brutality; it was determined

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by God, prophesied as a penalty on the Jews for what they had done to the prophets and Jesus. The text applied ONLY to the Jews who lived at the time of Christ. The same *kind* of penalty will come to the whole world at a time very soon, for doing the same things to the preachers and teachers of the Lord, but the text itself applied only to the Jews at that time.

The lawyers stole the key to knowledge of God, by interpreting wrongly and with wicked intent. Not only did they not understand God's word, but they also prevented others, who they taught, from understanding. For this there was no excuse. There is no excuse today for preachers and teachers who deny the truth of scripture and who teach the world heresy and evil.

### Verses 53&54

1.

And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

2.

Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Jesus had now struck a huge nerve in the Temple hierarchy. They were furious and clamoured at once to ask Him many other questions and to make Him give many other statements. They hoped that by pushing Jesus, He would make basic errors against the law, so that He could be taken prisoner. Ever watched debates on TV about homosexuality? Ever noticed how many homosexuals were in the audience? They turn out in force to drown God's word in their own filth. The same happens in protests in the street. They gather like locusts to eat up the truth and leave nothing behind. The Pharisees used the same mob behaviour, so that the mob and not truth prevailed. And this kind of behaviour was to increase, as the Pharisees agitated crowds to finally reject Christ.

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