

“Woe to the Scribes & Pharisees – Part Two”

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: Christ the King

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.**
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

In our study we are in the last week of Christ’s earthly ministry which involved a series of conflicts between Jesus and the religious leaders of Israel. After they did their best to try and stump Jesus with “gottcha questions” and yet were unsuccessful. It was then Jesus turn. He asked them why the Messiah (the Son of David) was called “Lord” by David in Psalm 110:1 which left them speechless.

This is then followed by Matthew 23 in which essentially the entire chapter is given over to exposing and denouncing these hypocritical religious leaders. They were spiritual poison for the nation.

Slide # 2

- 23:1-12 – Jesus Exposes the Scribes and the Pharisees
- **23:13-36** – Seven woes of Judgment Pronounced on the Scribes and the Pharisees
- 23:37-39 – The Fate of Jerusalem

Slide # 3

Matthew 23:1-12 **Scribes & Pharisees Characterized by...**

- v. 2 – Self-made
- v. 3 – Hypocrites
- v. 4 -Legalistic/Unmerciful
- v. 5 – Piously Self-Promoting
- v. 6 – Selfish
- v. 7-12 – Self-Exalting

Slide # 4

Matthew 23:13-24

WOE to the Scribes & Pharisees...

- v. 13 – **HINDER** those “entering to go in” the kingdom.
- v. 14 – **EXPLOIT** the vulnerable (widows).
- v. 15 – “**HELLRAISERS**” (Turn converts into twice the “sons of hell”).
- v. 16-22 – **VOW-BREAKERS** (Small view of God).
- v. 23-24 – **INCONSISTENT LEGALISTS**

But Jesus is only about half way through in dishing out “Woe” pronouncements against the scribes and Pharisees. As we pick it up at Matthew 23:25 He says...

Matthew 23:25–36 (NKJV)

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

“Woe” is a pronouncement of judgment that is indicative of forlorn misery. Miserable judgment is headed their way.

Repeatedly all the way through chapter 23 Jesus has in His sights the scribes (religious lawyers and teachers) and the Pharisees who were the religious conservatives who were also legalists. The word “Pharisee” means “separated one”. Both the scribes and Pharisees as a general rule were full of religious pride and saw themselves as the spiritual elite.

But Jesus put His finger right on their most basic problem – they were “hypocrites”. The word “hypocrite” means “one who plays a part”. It was used in the theater of an actor. It is the idea of being a pretender or an actor. Religious hypocrites pretend to be real, but they are phony. They lead “double lives”. As emphasized by Jesus, HYPOCRISY was the KEY defining trait of these religious leaders.

In their hypocrisy they made the outside look good with all their legalistic rule keeping, but the problem was INSIDE.

Does this ever happen at your house? Once in a while we go to get what appears to be a clean cup but then on closer inspection, we see foreign material clinging to the inside. What do you think we do? Do we say, ***“Oh well, it doesn’t matter.”*** No way! We put it with the dirty dishes and get a clean one – one that is clean not only on the outside but also on the inside – especially on the INSIDE!

The problem with the scribes and Pharisees was that they had an inside problem which is to say a HEART problem – a character problem.

And Jesus spells out the filth on the inside as being ***“full of extortion and self-indulgence”***. They were hypocrites because outwardly they made it look like they were such holy men giving up whatever for God, but in truth they were masters at exploiting the people.

The word “extortion” is the idea of “grasping after something greedily”.

As we noted last time in verse 14 (cf. Mk. 12:40; Lk. 20:47) they took advantage of the widows – and if they were willing to do that, they would also greedily take from anyone they could. For them it really was about “getting for self” and not giving for the sake of others.

“Self-indulgence” is the idea of being given over to self-gratification with a lack of self-control.

These religious leaders were all about “preying” on others for self-enrichment purposes.

26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

In their blindness they could not see that the most important thing is to CLEANSE the inside of the cup first – which then leads to the outside also being clean. The most important thing is internal cleansing.

Religious legalists focus on the externals, but God's essential focus is on the HEART! How do you cleanse the inside? Well, this is what the ministry of John the Baptist was all about as he called the people to repentance and then to indicate that in getting baptized which was an outward picture of inward cleansing.

Slide # 5

Mark 1:4 (NKJV)

4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Repentance was key to this internal cleansing that Christ called for- which if real would also change the outward. That is the order – first the inward and then the outward. By the way this was the problem with the Pharisees and Sadducees when they came to get baptized by John. He saw through them – that they were just about doing another outward ritual, but the real essential thing was the internal repentance which they were not willing to do.

Slide # 6

Matthew 3:7–8 (NKJV)

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.

These religious leaders were sticklers for avoiding outward defilement. Every year before Passover they would make sure the tombs were whitewashed and shining brightly so that no one might inadvertently touch one and thereby be defiled ceremonially and because of this not be allowed to partake of Passover.

Slide # 7**Numbers 19:16 (NKJV)**

16 Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, **or a grave**, shall be unclean seven days.

They were hypocritical in that they made the outside look all beautiful but inside they were defiled just like the graves contained the uncleanness of dead people's bones. Again, their problem was an inside problem!

Slide # 8

As a young boy my mother made me memorize 2 verses a week in order to receive an allowance. I quickly learned that some of the shortest verses in the Bible are found in Proverbs. One of the verses I memorized was Proverbs 20:9.

Slide # 9**Proverbs 20:9 (NKJV)**

9 Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin"?

It was a short verse and easy to learn but it was a stumper to me because I understood it to rhetorically be saying that no one can say they have made their heart clean. I understood correctly and that bothered me.

There is nothing externally that will cleanse the inside. This was the problem with the Pharisees. They were trying to cleanse themselves from the outside in – when in reality what God demands is an inside cleansing. This was the fundamental problem with the Jews – they were depending on outward legalism to make themselves right with God.

Slide # 10

Romans 10:1–4 (NKJV)

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

2 For I bear them witness that they have a **zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.**

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and **seeking to establish their own righteousness,** have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

4 For **Christ** is the end of the law for righteousness **to everyone who believes.**

How can one have internal cleansing? There are two things you need to know. 1) The provision for cleansing is 100% God's doing through Christ.

Slide # 11**1 John 1:7 (NKJV)**

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

1 Peter 1:18–19 (NKJV)

18 knowing that you were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

19 but with the **precious blood of Christ,** as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The second thing you need to know is that the truth of Christ must be appropriated by FAITH from that heart! Christ did it all – but you must receive Him by faith as your Savior. You must personally apply the truth.

Slide # 12**Acts 15:8–9 (NKJV)**

8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,

9 and made no distinction between us and them, **purifying their hearts by faith.**

We must personally appropriate the truth of Christ as our Savior by faith. As our Savior He died for all our sins as Lord over all He arose the third day. This is the gospel and when we believe on Christ as our personal Savior and living Lord we are saved!

Slide # 13**Romans 4:5 (NKJV)**

5 But to him who **does not work** but **believes on Him** who justifies the ungodly, **his faith** is accounted for righteousness,

There are those who are trying to work their way to heaven through being religious, through rules and rituals. That is an external emphasis like the Pharisees. In contrast a true saving faith is all about the HEART. Saving faith does not depend on my works to save me but rather believes in Jesus ALONE for salvation. This is this person who has saving faith and not the one trying to work their way to heaven.

So here is the question – are you trusting in externals like religious rituals or sacraments to cleanse you from sin or are you solely believing in Christ as your Savior! Don't be a Pharisee – majoring on the externals – but inwardly being full of uncleanness. Only a faith that trusts in Jesus ALONE for forgiveness will get you to heaven.

One of my favorite songs is titled: “***Are you washed in the blood?***”

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?
 Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
 Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?
 Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

In the book of Revelation, we read about the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:27). All those Who truly trust in Jesus – the moment they come to trust in Him as their Savior have their name written down in this book. It is the Lamb's book because only those who trust in Jesus as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world have their name written down there (Jn. 1:29). It's Jesus' special book and when you put your faith in Him as Savior and Lord He writes your name down there. Are you in Jesus' book – the Lamb's book of life?

So, are you “whitewashed” or are you “washed white” in the blood of the Lamb? The difference between this is heaven and hell.

In Acts 20:21 Paul summarized his ministry as calling both Jews and Gentiles to “***repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ***”. In repentance we acknowledge our sin problem before God and desire to be right – in faith we find the answer to our sin problem in Jesus ALONE Who is the Savior of all who believe in Him (cf. Acts 19:4).

28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

They put on a real show outwardly, but inside they were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Again, hypocrisy denotes deception and pretense. Lawlessness denotes behavior that has no real regard for God's authority. They claimed to be all about "God's law" but inside they were hypocritical rebels who paid more attention to their own legalistic rules than to the weightier matters of God's law involving justice, mercy, and faith (v. 23).

The irony of this is that these who prided themselves in the Law were condemned for not being under control of the Law. – ***Ed Glasscock***

Lawlessness denotes doing their own thing instead of truly following God. By way of application, I think we see this all the time in the Church at large today where people are really about following their own rules instead of truly following what God says.

I read an article this week about love and the question was asked, "*When people walk into church off the cultural street here in the Western world, what do they think love is?*" And the answer was this: "Love is self-expression. Love is self-discovery, self-definition, self-realization, self actualization. If you love me, you will let me be who I am. This view goes so deeply into our cultural DNA that even as Christians, we come into the church building on Sunday morning with these views of love." (Response of Jonathan Leeman in an interview with Mark Ward)

I think that is pretty accurate! This redefining of love in a self-centered way is exactly the kind of thing the Pharisees were doing. It really amounts to twisting God's word to where now everything revolves around SELF! Selfism is what defined the Pharisees which at core was what their lawless hypocrisy was all about. They pretended it was all about God – when in their hearts it was really about them! When religious selfism rules a person it really amounts to a type of Pharisaic hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,

Again, the key denunciation is their hypocrisy. Outwardly they really made over the dead prophets – elaborately building up their tombs and adorning their monuments.

30 and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

They admitted that their forefathers had abused and killed the prophets but hypocritically said “we would not have been partakers with them”. Of course, they were hypocritical liars for in fact they had the very same spirit because at this very time they were plotting on how they might kill Jesus (cf. Mt. 21:38-39, 46; Mk. 11:18; Lk. 19:47; Jn. 11:47-53).

Slide # 14

John 11:53 (NKJV)

53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

31 “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Jesus picks up on the admitted association that they were the sons of those who murdered the prophets. In effect, Jesus intimates that it is indeed “**like father, like son**”. In effect, he was telling them that their fruit hadn’t fallen far from their forefather’s tree. In spirit they are indeed the sons of their murderous forefathers even though hypocritically they want to distance themselves from them.

In Hebrew thought the idea of “sons” is to share in the same characteristics. What they failed to realize is that not only were they the physical sons but also the spiritual sons of these murderers. They shared in the very same nature.

This is exactly what Stephen told the Jewish religious leaders just before he murdered him in Acts 7.

Slide # 15

Acts 7:51–52 (NKJV)

51 “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; **as your fathers did, so do you.**

52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,

Jesus exposed these Jewish religious leaders as having the very same murderous spirit that was in their forefathers, and shortly, they would prove it in leading the people to rally for Christ’s crucifixion.

32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt.

In effect they were continuing the very same practice as their forefathers; namely that of violently rejecting God's prophets who uncompromisingly share God's message with the people. Thus, they were guilty by association in carrying on with the very same spirit.

The sense here is almost like when Jesus told Judas, "***What you do, do quickly.***" (Jn. 13:27) In a sense He is giving them over to their reprobate ways which will bring to completion the guilt that has long been building toward a climactic judgment. One commentator says the nuance is: "***Go on, finish what your fathers started***".

The Jewish leadership in the nation had persecuted and killed prophet after prophet who were the forerunners to the Messiah. And now the ultimate prophet as found in the Messiah was on the scene and in climactic form they were rejecting Him and plotting His demise. Thus, the guilt mounting through the centuries was coming to a climactic head.

God's method as seen in redemptive history is to allow GUILT to build up until finally when the cup is full to then bring down severe judgment. We saw this in relation to the flood.

Slide # 16

Genesis 6:3 (NKJV)

3 And the LORD said, "**My Spirit shall not strive with man forever**, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be **one hundred and twenty years.**"

God at this point was giving mankind 120 years before God would destroy mortal man. But the point is God continued to give space until the cup of iniquity was full.

Slide # 17

Genesis 15:13 (NKJV)

13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs [Egypt], and will serve them, and they will afflict them **four hundred years.**"

Genesis 15:16 (NKJV)

16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.**"

God was waiting for the Amorites cup of iniquity to be completely filled before He allowed the children of Israel to take over the land of Canaan.

In like manner God had patiently been waiting and allowing the Jews cup of iniquity to get fuller and fuller as they rejected His prophets, but now that cup is about to be filled up in the murder of the Messiah. And so, Jesus said, “***Fill up then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt***”. The mounting guilt of the fathers was about to find a climactic fulfillment in this generation.

Slide # 18

1 Thessalonians 2:15–16 (NKJV)

15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they **do not please God** and are contrary to all men,

16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always **to fill up the measure of their sins**; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

The fathers had filled the cup of murder part way by killing the prophets. The scribes and the Pharisees would soon fill it to the brim by killing the Lord Jesus and His followers, thus bringing to a terrible climax what their fathers had begun. – ***William MacDonald***

What Jesus is saying here connects to the parable He had just taught in 21:33-39 in which the tenant vinedressers killed the owner’s servants and then conspired to also kill his son so that they might have the inheritance. Jesus then followed that up by quoting from Psalm 118 which speaks of the rejected stone becoming the chief cornerstone (Matt. 21:42-46).

33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

Here we have a severe interjection followed by a daunting rhetorical question.

Jesus first tells them what they are by nature – spiritually speaking. Serpents were symbols of evil. Early in Genesis we have Satan identified with the serpent in Genesis 3. And in Revelation – the last book of the Bible he is specifically described in this way.

Slide # 19

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

In John 8:44 Jesus said to the Pharisees “You are of your father the devil” and like their father they too are liars and have murder in their hearts. As “serpents” Jesus is metaphorically depicting that they have an evil nature like the devil (cf. Mt. 13:38).

“Brood of vipers” is evidently a parallelism added for emphasis. Vipers were small poisonous snakes that looked like dried twigs thereby taking on a deceptive quality. If one was picking up sticks it would be easy to mistakenly grab one and be bitten and die (cf. Acts 28:3, 6). Therefore these snakes were known for being both deceitful and deadly. Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that is what they were like – spiritually speaking.

This is a put down no matter what – but for an esteemed religious leader this was a total insult beyond measure – but in fact Christ spoke words of sober truth.

Being evil hypocrites Jesus then asked, “***How can you escape the condemnation of hell?***” That is the ultimate question! How can depraved wicked religious leaders escape hell fire? The implication is clearly that on their current path they are on their way to hell!

How can these who are filling up the measure of sin of their forefathers who are in character serpents and vipers – how can they possibly escape the condemnation of hell? This is deadly serious stuff – eternally serious!

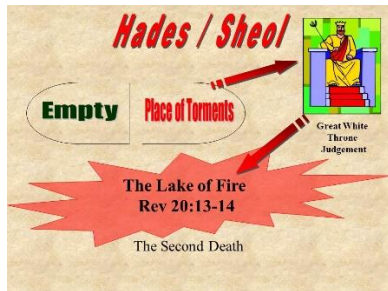
It was common in the Bible times for farmers to burn the stubble off a field in preparation for the next year’s planting. As the flames approached the vipers’ dens they would scurry to try and escape.

Jesus said, in effect, “You wicked and deceitful men, do you really think you can outrun God’s fire of judgment?” – ***John MacArthur***

Here again Christ used the word “***geenna***” which is translated here as “hell”. ***Geenna*** refers to the final abode of the damned which is called the lake of fire in the book of Revelation. This is the final destiny of the lost where they will be cast on judgment day.

Right now when the unsaved die their souls go to a temporary holding place of torment called Sheol in the Hebrew OT, but translated as Hades in the Greek NT.

Slide # 20



Slide # 21

Revelation 20:15 (NKJV)

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

In Mark 9:43 Christ described geenna as a place of “*fire that shall never be quenched*”.

Christ is telling them in no uncertain terms that they are on their way to eternal hell fire and rhetorically asking them how shall they escape (cf. Matt. 3:7; 12:34).

But even here there was some grace offered. After asking how they could escape eternal hell fire, Jesus then in effect told them how as seen in verse 34.

34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

Here was the way of escape – if they could only see it. It was in Christ sending to them prophets, wise men, and scribes who would convey to them God’s truth in the gospel by which one can be saved. The warning was severe but the way of escape was clearly being presented to them by these emissaries whom Christ would send.

The language here of prophets, wise men, and scribes is couched in the language of the OT but everyone agrees that Christ evidently has in view His apostles and their early Church prophetic ministry, and people like Stephen who spoke with irresistible wisdom as seen in Acts 6-7; and also people like Phillip the evangelist (cf. Acts 6; 8; 21:8).

This category of people clearly brought forth the message of Christ with power following the resurrection which served as a further powerful witness to the whole of Israel. Thus, the way of escape was clearly made known.

By the way John the Baptist used this very same language when he called the Pharisees and Sadducees **“Brood of vipers”** in Matthew 3:7. He too solemnly warned them saying, **“Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”** But then he also included a measure of grace saying, **“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance”** and in so doing indicated that the way of escape was via repentance.

Sadly, these religious leaders (with rare exception) were not willing to listen and instead responded exactly the way Christ said they would when he said, **“some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city”** (cf. Mt. 10:17, 23).

This is a prophetic commentary on what happened in the book of Acts. It came to pass exactly as Christ predicted. These religious leaders then took the lead in persecuting Christ’s special witnesses following the resurrection. The night before His crucifixion Jesus warned His disciples of this very thing.

Slide # 22

John 16:2–3 (NKJV)

2 They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

3 And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.

The statement “you will kill” was to draw attention to their guilt, even as their fathers were guilty of killing those sent them from God. Their boast of v 30 [“we would not have been partakers with them”] was thus exposed. This prophecy of persecution of Christ’s servants was clearly fulfilled in the book of Acts. – **Ed Glasscock**

And the consequences of this accumulative rejection will be as follows...

35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

The blood of the righteous refers to people of true faith who were martyred throughout the OT era. Abel was the first person murdered because of his righteous faith as seen in Genesis 4:8.

There is a lot of debate about the identity of Zechariah the son of Berechiah. Some think this is actually Zechariah the prophet mentioned in Zech. 1:1 as he is specifically stated there to be the son of Berechiah. However, there is no mention of how he died.

Therefore, others think that the Zechariah mentioned here by Jesus is the Zechariah who was martyred as recorded in 2 Chron. 24:20-22. They argue this makes sense because 2 Chronicles was the last book of the Jewish Bible in terms of how it was laid out. So it would be like Jesus saying, in the whole history of the OT from Genesis to the end of the book. The problem is that Zechariah in 2 Chron. 24 is said to be the son of Jehoiada and not that of Berechiah.

Lots of possible explanations are given regarding both of these men named Zechariah. Scholars go round and round with no conclusive argument as to whether this is talking about the Zechariah in 2 Chron. 24 or Zechariah the prophet as mentioned in Zech. 1.

Suffice it to say Jesus is really talking about accumulative guilt that essentially covers the whole of the OT era that was now coming to a climax in reference to the generation in which Jesus lived as stated in verse 32.

But do note that Christ is specifically talking about the history of counterfeit believers who have killed the righteous. Cain was a professing worshiper who killed his righteous brother Abel. Zechariah was killed in the context of the temple by people professing to belong to God. So in view is the guilt of "religious people" who while professing to be God's people are guilty of killing God's true people.

Slide # 23

The Pharisees and their kind are guilty of all the righteous blood shed in the name of "religion." – **Warren Wiersbe**

They are religious killers who are totally hypocritical in their profession. And there was a lot of accumulative guilt that was now coming to a head.

The scribes and Pharisees had all the accumulated revelation of the Old Testament, and for three years they had even received the perfect revelation of God's own Son. And the more they accumulated God's revelation without believing and following it, the more they accumulated God's wrath and judgment in direct proportion.

They and their generation could be held guilty for all the righteous blood shed on earth, because no generation in history has had or will ever have more of God's light. They had God incarnate in their midst, who was Himself all truth and all light, yet they would not have Him.

– **John MacArthur**

This generation continued to share in the same character as their forefathers – so much so that because of their solidarity of spirit Christ could say “**whom you murdered**” speaking of the Zechariah who was martyred in the OT at the temple.

Make no doubt about it, Christ was labeling these scribes and Pharisees as murderers just as liable as the forefathers because in their hearts they had the same complicit spirit of murder and were about to carry out the same type of atrocities (cf. Mt. 21:33-46; Acts 7:51-53).

And in fact, the generation Christ was addressing was even more liable because they had all this accumulative revelation culminating in the ministry of the Messiah that they were rejecting. And because of this Christ said...

36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

The killing of righteous servants of God definitely came to a climax in reference to the generation living during the time of Christ as they committed the ultimate crime of killing the Holy Messiah (Acts 3:14; 7:52).

“**All these things**” refers to the accumulative guilt and judgment that has been accruing towards the persecutors of God's people from the beginning of time – which was now about to fall on this generation.

The general consensus of almost all Bible scholars is that what is in view is the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70. That marked a major JUDGMENT event in the history of the world.

This event happened less than 40 years later after Christ had spoken these words. In Luke 21:22 Jesus called these “the days of vengeance”.

In AD 66 a Jewish revolt broke out against Rome. Titus the Roman general brought 80,000 troops to Jerusalem and demanded that it surrender. The Jews defied that order with mocking ridicule. The result was an almost indescribable slaughter. The Jewish historian Josephus said about 1.1 million Jews were killed.

In AD 70 the city of Jerusalem was completely destroyed and the glorious Temple of the Jews was burned to the ground. The defeat was so crushing that Israel at that time ceased to exist as a nation. This began the time of dispersion for the Jews as they began to scatter and were persecuted almost everywhere they went which eventuated in them being scattered throughout the entire world.

Indeed, that generation did in fact see the horrific judgment of God fall on them which impacted them as a people not being a nation for almost the next 2000 years.

In Deuteronomy 28 God promised blessing upon Israel for obedience and curses for disobedience. In Leviticus 26 there are 5 stages of discipline for disobedience with the final state involving expulsion from the land. This was the most serious form of discipline.

Slide # 24

Lev. 26:14-17 – The first stage of discipline

Lev. 26:18-20 – The second stage of discipline

Lev. 26:21-22 – The third stage of discipline

Lev. 26:23-26 – The fourth stage of discipline

Lev. 26:27-39 – **The fifth stage of discipline**

Leviticus 26:33 (NKJV)

33 I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.

Slide # 25

Deuteronomy 28:64–65 (NKJV)

64 “Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone.

65 And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul.

Follow the history of the Jews and you will see that A.D. 70 set in motion this very experience for the Jews as they were scattered to the 4 winds.

Israel is one of the key apologetics for the Bible and the God of the Bible. God has permanently identified Himself with this people. Prophetic history swirls around this people and this land. What God says about Israel has a fulfillment. That is true of the curses but will also be true of the blessings. He is not done with them yet. Just as sure as the curses have been fulfilled, so will be the yet future blessings. But – there is a condition that must be met; and that condition is REPENTANCE.

Jesus will deal with this in the concluding verses of the chapter as there in His final words to the nation of Israel He lays out coming desolation for them until they finally come to repentance.

Let me conclude with two points of application.

First to you, the Church.

We know that the world is on a collision course with God’s judgment. We know that we are living in the last days. As Paul says we are those “upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

The world’s cup of sin is getting fuller and fuller and is almost to the brim and when it is completely full then God will rapture His Church out of the world and bring His unparalleled judgment on the whole world. Judgment day is coming. As Acts 17:30-30 says God, “now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness”.

Our job is to warn the world and to invite the world to come to Jesus and thereby escape the wrath of God that is about to come upon the whole world. We are to be like Lot who warned his family of impending judgment. We are to be like Noah who warned the world.

After spelling out the worldwide judgment that is headed for the world the book of Revelation ends with this invitation.

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV)

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

This is our place in the world today - we are warning the world and inviting them to come while they still have the opportunity!

Then let me challenge you if you happen to be listening today and you are not saved. If you are "a little religious" but not saved, if you have churchianity but not Christianity, if you are living the double life of a hypocrite – take Christ's all-important question to heart: "***How can you escape the condemnation of hell?***"

The answer is found in the acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior. It is apropos that the writer to the Hebrews also asks, "***how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation***"? (Heb. 2:3). And the answer is we won't.

There is only ONE God ordained way of escape...

Slide # 26

Romans 5:8–9 (NKJV)

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us.**

9 Much more then, having now been **justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**

Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, having been **justified by faith,** we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

And since we are focused on ultimate questions, I leave you with this:

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow'r?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Come to Jesus! Now is the accepted time! This is the way of ESCAPE!