

Matthew 23:13 Woe to Those who Enter Not the Kingdom of God

Introduction: Prior to this verse Jesus had talked about the scribes and Pharisees. In this verse He talks directly to them. He begins a series of denunciations of them. Never has a sharper rebuke been uttered: verses 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24 and 25, 26, 27, 29, 33. Do you get the impression that Jesus has had it up to here with these Pharisees?

I. The pronouncement of woe.

- A. The word, woe, expresses and expectation of great sorrow and distress; impending doom.
- B. This verse is a warning from the Son of God that the judgment of God will come.

II. The contrast with the blessing pronounced in Matthew 5:3.

- A. The expression “poor in spirit” means to be stripped of all self importance and self worth.
 - 1. It describes one who is truly repentant toward God.
 - 2. It describes one who is totally dependent on mercy.
- B. The reason they are so blessed is because “their's is the Kingdom of heaven.”
 - 1. They are unworthy sinners.
 - 2. But because they have repented God has forgiven them of their sin.
 - 3. When they die they will go to heaven.
- C. But the self righteous scribes and Pharisees were not poor in spirit and Jesus said, “Woe unto you.”

III. Two reasons for the woe pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees.

- A. Reason #1: Because they do not enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - 1. In contrast to the poor in spirit to whom the Kingdom is given, the scribes and Pharisees do not enter.
 - 2. It is not that they have had no opportunity. (John preached to them that the Kingdom was here; John announced Jesus as the Messiah; they saw the miracles of Jesus; they had heard Him pronounced as Messiah in the Triumphal entry.)
 - 3. But these egotistical, self-righteous know-it-alls rejected Him as Messiah and as the Savior. (And determined to get rid of Him.)
 - 4. The reason they did not enter the Kingdom was because they rejected the Christ. (Nobody gets in the Kingdom who rejects the Christ, John 3:18; John 14:6.)
- B. Reason #2: Because they were hindering others from entering the Kingdom.
 - 1. They had passed a rule that anybody who professed that Jesus is the Christ would be excluded from the synagogue, John 9:22.
 - 2. They used trick questions to try to discredit Him.
 - 3. They deliberately tried to discourage men from believing in Him.
 - 4. Any who was willing to face the displeasure of the Pharisees would be saved, and they could not prevent it.
 - 5. But many who were on the verge of trusting Jesus were hindered by them and were never saved.

IV. Woe to all who do not enter the Kingdom of heaven.

- A. All who reject Jesus Christ – all who neglect to trust in Jesus Christ come under this same woe.
- B. Because they do not enter the Kingdom they will enter the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, John 3:18, 36; I John 5:12; Revelations 21:8.

V. Woe also to those who hinder others from entering.

A. Seldom does an unsaved person go to hell alone.

1. He almost always influences someone else to go also.
2. It may be a friend or neighbor, sister or brother, son or daughter, grandson or granddaughter.

B. Even a saved person may hinder someone.

1. They may hinder someone by ungodly living or by neglect.
2. They themselves will not lose their salvation, but they will suffer chastisement of God.

Conclusion:

1. Woe to you if you enter not the Kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are you if you do enter the Kingdom of heaven.
3. Woe to you if you hinder others from entering.
4. Blessed are you if you influence others to enter.

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