

Matthew 23:14 Woe to Those who Receive the Greater Damnation

Introduction: Jesus pronounced the first woe on the scribes and Pharisees because they were not entering the Kingdom of heaven and because they were hindering others from entering. Now He pronounces a second woe upon them.

I. The two reasons for this second woe.

A. Reason #1: Because they devoured widows' houses.

1. What they were doing was to take advantage of helpless widows for their own financial gain.
2. One way they would do this was to persuade the widow to let them manage her estate.
(Then they would pay themselves a huge salary or skim off sums without her knowledge.)
3. Another way was to persuade her to make huge contributions to the synagogue.
(As synagogue officials they kept part of the contribution for themselves.)

B. Reason #2: Because they prayed long prayers.

1. Not that there is anything wrong with praying.
2. Not that there is anything wrong with praying a long prayer.
(If it is sincere and if it is in private.) Luke 18:1
3. Historians say that the Pharisees prayed three hours. (One hour in silent prayer and meditation; one hour aloud; another silent. No wonder they used vain repetitions.)
4. Thus they persuaded people (especially the widows) that they were devoted, trustworthy people.
5. To rip off helpless widows is a sin; it is a greater sin to use prayer to help accomplish the rip off.
6. We are supposed to help widows, not rip them off, James 1:27.

II. A sharp contrast to the blessing pronounced on the merciful.

A. In Matthew 5:7 Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who are merciful.

B. But the scribes and Pharisees were merciless and Jesus pronounced woe upon them.
(Would not obtain mercy.)

III. A greater damnation.

A. The woe which Jesus pronounced upon them was the woe of greater damnation.

B. Everybody who does not go to heaven will go to hell.

1. Everybody who goes to hell will suffer great agony.
2. But some who go there will suffer greater agony than others.
3. The scribes and Pharisees will be in that number.

IV. A modern day example.

A. I am told that one religious leader in Henderson is getting more and more property in Henderson – most of it from widow women and most of it by using somewhat the same tactics as the scribes and Pharisees.

B. It is none of my business how many widows give him property or how much property they give him, but if he is using his religious office to rip off widows it is God's business and woe to that man when God deals with him,

C. That is the tactic used by Jim Jones.

V. Many to receive the greater damnation.

A. Many people will indeed receive the greater damnation.

1. And they are not all scribes and Pharisees.
2. They are not all hypocritical religious leaders.
3. They are not even all religious and not all hypocrites.

B. What causes one to receive the greater damnation is his greater sinful deeds, Revelation 20:12-13.

Conclusion: I wonder if I am talking to someone who is on his way to hell; I wonder if I am talking to someone who will suffer the greater damnation. I am here to tell you that you can be saved. If you deserve the greater damnation and Jesus has saved your soul then you ought to love Jesus with a greater love.

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