

Introduction:

Today we will be in our second study looking at, *the Passion Week*.

Things we will look at in this lesson:

Matthew's Account (Part One): The Passion Week, Day Three

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01. What did the cursing of the fig tree warn of?

02. What would admission that John was a prophet require the Jewish leaders to do?

03. What did Jesus imply by identifying himself as the stone?

04. What did Israel's rejection of Jesus as their Messiah reveal?

05. What is the parable of the wedding banquet?

06. What did the Sadducees believe happened at physical death?

07. What two Old Testament verses summarized the essence of God's demands in Scripture?

Article 1)

Love Your Neighbor:

Christians are required to love all people (Gal 6:10; 1Th 3:12), including their enemies (5:44). But they are also commanded to love all true followers of God in a special way (Jn 13:34; Gal 6:10; 1Th 3:12; 1Jn 3:11).

(1) Christians' love for their spiritual brothers and sisters in faith, their neighbors (all those around them and anyone they may encounter) and their enemies must flow from their primary love and devotion for God.

(2) Love for God is the "first and greatest commandment" (vv. 37–38). For this reason, God's holiness (purity, perfection, spiritual completeness and separation from evil), his purposes and the standards revealed in his Word must never be compromised in our efforts to show love for people. In other words, love for God must come first, and nothing we do to demonstrate love to others should compromise our devotion to God.

Article 1) Continued...

(3) If we love God completely (v. 37–38) and love others unselfishly (v. 39), then all of our attitudes and actions will end up aligning with all of the commands, instructions, guidelines and standards of God's Word (v. 40).

08. What did the title “Lord” portray Christ as in regard to David?

Article 2)

Woe to You...Hypocrites:

In classical Greek, a hypocrite was an actor in a play. The actor, of course, was not expected to live out in his daily life the character he played on stage. Jesus used the term for people who were putting on an act in public that was only a pretense. Their religious appearance was a mask that concealed their spiritual blindness and the corruption within their hearts. Jesus' words in ch. 23 express his strongest accusations, criticisms and condemnation against those who acted as if they were devoted to God, yet resisted everything Jesus was doing and teaching. His words were directed against religious leaders and false teachers who had rejected at least a part of the revealed Word of God (with which they were very familiar) and replaced it with their own ideas and interpretations (vv. 23, 28; 15:3, 6–9; Mk 7:6–9).

(1) Jesus' spirit, or attitude, in this passage should be noted. It is not the tolerant, permissive and accommodating attitude of someone who is worried about offending anyone. He is ultimately concerned about faithfulness to God and his Word. Jesus was not a weak preacher who tolerated sin and hypocrisy. Being true to his mission caused him to be angry about evil (21:12–17; Jn 2:13–16) and to denounce sin and corruption in high places (vv. 23, 25).

Article 2) Continued...

(2) Jesus' love for God's Word, as well as his concern for people who were being harmed or destroyed by those who distorted the Word (see 15:2–3; 18:6–7; 23:13, 15), was so great that it caused him to use words like “hypocrites” (v. 15), “son of hell” (v. 15), “blind guides” (v. 16), “fools” (v. 17), “greed and self-indulgence” (v. 25), “whitewashed tombs ... unclean” (v. 27), “full of ... wickedness” (v. 28), “snakes,” “brood of vipers” (v. 33) and murderers (v. 34). Keep in mind that these words, though harsh and condemning, were spoken with a broken heart (v. 37) by the One who would eventually give his life for those he challenged so severely (Jn 3:16; Ro 5:6, 8).

(3) Jesus describes the character of false teachers and preachers as those who seek to be popular with others (v. 5), who love honor (v. 6), who want to be highly honored because of their positions and titles (v. 7) and who keep people out of heaven by presenting a twisted version of God's true message (v. 13;). They are “professionals” who appear spiritual and godly, but are really unrighteous and rebellious (vv. 14, 25–27). They say good things about godly spiritual leaders of the past (such as the prophets), but they do not follow their instructions or their example. They are not truly committed to God and his Word (vv. 29–30), and they lack an authentic personal relationship with God.

(4) The Bible commands us to beware of such false religious leaders (7:15; 24:11), regarding them as unbelievers (Gal 1:9) and refusing to support their ministry or to associate with them (2Jn 1:9–11). Keep in mind that this does not give us the right to withhold support from our churches simply because we do not appreciate or agree with a minister who challenges us when we may, in fact, be wrong.

(5) Those in the church who—under the pretense of love, tolerance and unity—refuse to recognize and speak out against this false behavior according to God's Word (7:15; Gal 1:6–7; 2Jn 1:9) are actually participating in the evil works of false prophets and teachers (2Jn 1:10–11).

09. By rejecting Jesus, what did Jerusalem ultimately reject?
