

Matthew 23:1-39      “Seven Woes: A Warning to Hypocrites”      August 23, 2015  
Deuteronomy 27  
Psalm 26

To whom do the curses of Deuteronomy 27 belong?

The curses of the covenant in Deuteronomy 27 are not directed at foreigners – outsiders.  
The curses of the covenant belong to God’s people.

If you are part of God’s people – but you do these wicked things –  
then the curses of the covenant belong to you.

There are 12 things named:

worshiping idols, dishonoring father or mother, moving a neighbor’s landmark  
(this is theft, because moving the “landmark” means taking away his land)  
misleading the blind, perverting justice for the weak,  
committing incest or bestiality,  
murdering your neighbor, taking a bribe to shed innocent blood –  
or refusing to confirm the words of this law by doing them.

The first eleven curses focus on the *worst* forms of disobedience.

But the last curse extends to every form of disobedience.

“Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.”

In other words, it’s not enough to *say* that you agree with God’s covenant.

You have to *do* what God says!

This last verse will be quoted by Paul in Galatians 3:10.

“For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written,  
‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written  
in the Book of the Law, and do them.’”

God’s curse is upon all Israelites  
who do not confirm the words of this law by doing them.

So if you are relying on works of the law to save you, then you are under a curse!

But as Paul goes on to say,

“Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law,  
for ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’

But the law is not of faith, rather, ‘the one who does them shall live by them.’

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us –  
for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’ –  
so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles,  
so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.” (Gal 3:11-14)

There is no way that righteousness could come from the Law.

That wasn’t the purpose of the Law.

The Law holds forth the standard of righteousness and justice –  
but the Law gives us no power to be righteous or just!

By itself, the Law simply condemns.

Our Psalm of response is Psalm 26.

Psalm 26 describes the life of the righteous.

And so the Psalmist opens by saying, “Vindicate me, O LORD”

Declare me innocent!

Test my heart and my mind.

“For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness.”

The Psalmist declares that his life matches his profession.

But the Psalmist is *not* saying that he relies on works of the Law to justify him.

The Psalmist relies on *God* to justify him –

“Your steadfast love is before my eyes.”

Jesus is the great singer of Psalm 26 –

but we also sing Psalm 26 in him.

Have you ever been treated unjustly by others?

Have you ever felt beat up and crushed unfairly?

Well, that’s why Psalm 26 is given for us to sing!

Sing Psalm 26

Read Matthew 23

### **Introduction: They Do Not Practice What They Preach (v1-12)**

Twenty years ago, you often heard people say,

“I don’t go to church because the church is full of hypocrites.”

I haven’t heard that one for a *long* time.

This generation is too cynical.

They understand that *everyone* (at some level) is a hypocrite!

A hypocrite is a pretender –

someone who pretends to be someone other than he is.

Jesus explains in verses 1-7 what it means to be a hypocrite:

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,<sup>2</sup> “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat,<sup>3</sup> so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.<sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear,<sup>[a]</sup> and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.<sup>5</sup> They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,<sup>6</sup> and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues<sup>7</sup> and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi<sup>[b]</sup> by others.*

At the very heart of hypocrisy are three things:

First, “they do not practice what they preach” (v3) –

Second, they burden others – but do nothing to help (v4) –

and Third, “they do all their deeds to be seen by others.” (v5)

There is a disconnect between what they *say* and what they *do*.  
And even what they *do* is simply done for outward show.

They sit on Moses’ seat – they are the ordained teachers in the Jewish community –  
so do and observe whatever they tell you,  
but do not do the works they do.

Please don’t think of this as a strong endorsement of Pharisaic teaching!  
The Pharisees are hypocrites.  
But hypocrisy is so dangerous *precisely* because it comes so near the truth!  
In other words, Jesus is saying that the Pharisees get a lot of stuff right –  
but you cannot trust what the scribes and Pharisees *say* –  
because it is not matched by what they *do*.

And the heart of their failure is in how they burden others:  
“they tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders,  
but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.”

Jesus said “Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”  
Jesus *removes* burdens – the Pharisees inflict them!

The Pharisees are more concerned with outward show than with the heart.  
That’s why they love places of honor at feasts – they love being called “rabbi.”  
They love the outward trappings of religion – but they don’t care for the heart.

In verses 8-12, Jesus exhorts his disciples to take a different path:

<sup>8</sup> *But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers.* <sup>9</sup> *And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.* <sup>10</sup> *Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.*

Jesus is not saying that you should not call your dad “father.”  
Neither is he saying that no one should be called teacher or instructor.

“Teacher” is one of the most common terms used for Christian pastors in the NT.  
And Paul says to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 4:15,  
“I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

So there is nothing wrong with referring to pastors as “teachers” or “fathers” –  
so long as you do what Paul did in 1 Corinthians 4:15!  
“I became your father *in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*”

The point is that we *must not* follow the pattern of the scribes and Pharisees  
who preached but did not practice.

They prided themselves on their position – and flaunted their status.

I knew a pastor once who preached regularly on the exalted status of the minister.  
He thought that our society had become too egalitarian,  
and so he wanted people to know that the pastor bears the authority of Christ.

If the pastor bears the authority of Christ,  
then let him show it in his humility – not in his titles and status!

As Jesus says:

<sup>11</sup> *The greatest among you shall be your servant.* <sup>12</sup> *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

Now it is important to note that Jesus has just said that the Christ is David's Lord.

Jesus does not shy away from the truth of who he is!

We have seen throughout Matthew's gospel  
that Jesus frequently claims to say and do  
what only Israel's God could say and do.

He does not use the prophetic "thus saith the LORD" –  
he declares, "I say to you."

Moses was a reporter – a mediator – who declared the Law of another.

Jesus declares his own Law – "Truly, I tell you..."

And from that day, the scribes and Pharisees did not dare to ask him any more questions.

Having repulsed their verbal assault on him,

Jesus now goes on the offensive.

Having declared the blessings of the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount (ch 5),  
Jesus now declares the curses of the Kingdom against the hypocrites.

The seven woes consist of three pairs, concluding with one summary curse.

The first two woes focus on the relation of the scribes and Pharisees to the Kingdom.

### **1. Woe to Those Who Slam the Door of the Kingdom of Heaven in People's Faces (v13)**

<sup>13</sup> *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in."*<sup>[d]</sup>

Remember that Matthew only gives us what he thinks we need to hear and know about Jesus.

Yes, it is true that the scribes and Pharisees "shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces."

But this is not given to us as a bare historical fact.

"Woe to those naughty Pharisees! Tsk! Tsk!"

From the epistles we know that the first century church dealt with this problem as well.

And, I'm sorry to say, we are still plagued with it!

Think of all the legalistic churches with all their extra rules.

If you just raise your children this way, dress this way, educate this way,  
then everything will turn out fine!  
There are churches who require all members to home school their children!  
That's crazy!

Think about what they are saying!

They are saying that in order to follow Jesus, you have to home school.

The very heart of Pharisaism is adding extra rules in order to ensure that we obey God.

Jesus says that by adding extra rules we turn people's eyes away from him –  
or to use his phrase for it, we “shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces.”

“If you follow my rules, I will take you to Jesus!”

NO! No!

Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!”

Do not return to the yoke of the law!

The law *never* could give life!

And the second woe expresses the result:

## **2. Woe to Those Who Make Converts into Children of Hell (v15)**

<sup>15</sup> *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell<sup>[e]</sup> as yourselves.*

We don't have much evidence for Pharisees “traveling across sea and land” to proselytize.

But it is certainly true that there were many Gentile “God-fearers”

who were attracted to Jewish monotheism and came regularly to synagogue.

The Pharisees certainly would have been eager to persuade such Gentiles

to become circumcised and follow the law of Moses.

But when we become obsessed with getting people to follow our rules,

we do not convert them to Jesus – we convert them into children of hell!

I don't comment much on pop news stories –

mostly because I don't want you to think that the sensation of the day

is what really matters!

There were scandals that rocked the Roman world in the first century –

but you won't find the apostles talking about them.

There might be allusions here and there –

but what mattered to them (and what should matter to us)

is the fact that God has raised a man, Christ Jesus, to sit at his right hand.

But as we watch scandals erupt in various conservative circles,

we need to remember that when rules replace Jesus,

we simply make people children of hell.

I think of a woman whose husband was a serial adulterer  
(he had had a series of affairs with both women and men).  
Her Christian counselor and her pastor  
had both encouraged her to reconcile with her allegedly repentant husband.

I'm not sure how long she would have lasted.  
She was being told that obedience to God  
meant reconciling with her lying, cheating, adulterous husband.  
You hear it all the time:  
“We must protect the sanctity of marriage.”  
But what does the Word of God say:  
“Let marriage be held in honor among all, *and let the marriage bed be undefiled,  
for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.*” (Hebrews 13:4)

When defending “family values” matters more to us than following Jesus,  
then we have become Pharisees who turn our followers into children of hell.

I've noticed this in some circles where Mormons are being accepted as evangelicals  
because they are socially conservative!  
Mormons reject the Trinity.  
They do not believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God.  
The only way that someone could accept Mormons as evangelicals  
is if social conservatism is more important than Jesus.

So the first two woes warn us against teaching and teachers  
that put “our rules” ahead of following Jesus.

Woes three and four focus on the Pharisaic emphasis on the outward forms of the Kingdom.  
In particular verses 16-22 reminds us of the importance of our *words*.

### **3. Woe to Those Who Swear Lightly (v16-22)**

<sup>16</sup> “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

Three times in these 7 verses Jesus refers to the Pharisees as blind:  
“blind guides” in v16,  
“blind fools” in v17, and  
“blind men” in v19.

The scribes and Pharisees are spiritually blind.

They are unable to discern what is good and true.

Jesus has already taught us, “let your yes be yes and your no be no.”

You shouldn’t need an *oath* to make your word mean something!

There’s nothing wrong with swearing an oath,

but you are bound by your word.

In an oath you call witnesses to testify against you if you break your word.

God himself frequently takes oaths in the OT,

calling heaven and earth to witness – or the surrounding nations to witness.

Jesus points out here in verses 18-22 that when you call objects to bear witness

you are really calling on God as witness.

This is why the modern judicial oath is so simple:

“I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, *so help me God.*”

But then in verses 23-24 Jesus turns to a different set of outward forms:

#### **4. Woe to Those Who Neglect Justice and Mercy and Faithfulness (v23-24)**

<sup>23</sup> *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe the mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.*

In the OT, the agricultural tithe was designed to provide for the priesthood.

The scribes and Pharisees applied this to garden herbs – not just the major crops.

Jesus says, “Sure, that’s fine.”

But you are focusing on minor points of application –  
while missing the *central theme* of the Law.

“Justice and mercy and faithfulness.”

Micah 6:8 immediately comes to mind:

What does God require of you?

But to act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Jesus is saying *nothing new* here.

This is *precisely* what the prophets had said to Israel over and over again.

This is why we are going through the book of Jeremiah on Sunday evenings.

<sup>24</sup> *You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!*

Both the gnat and the camel are unclean animals.

You can imagine a conscientious Pharisee straining a gnat out of his wine

so that he does not become unclean by consuming an unclean insect!

But he will swallow a camel without batting an eyelash!

The absurdity of this is what makes it so powerful:  
the conscientious Pharisee counting up his mint leaves  
and carefully putting every tenth leaf in a separate pile *to give to God!*  
While outside his door, a poor widow is looking for scraps  
to feed her starving children.

But I would be remiss if I left you tsk-tsking at those silly Pharisees.  
Because we are in *grave* peril!  
How often do we confuse small matters of detail with the weightier matters of the law?  
Hold on!  
“Small matters!!?”  
Tithing is a matter of God’s law –  
love for God demands that we give our tithes to God!  
The prophet Malachi said that failure to tithe is *robbing God!*  
How can you say that is not one of the weightier matters!?”

So how do you know when you are swallowing a camel?  
Think about that question for a moment!  
How do you know when you are swallowing a camel?

It should be fairly obvious when you are swallowing a large hairy mammal!  
If you find that you are “too busy” doing pious things  
so that you don’t have time to pay attention to justice and mercy and faithfulness  
that is a good clue that you are swallowing a camel.

We’re starting up our shepherding groups in the next few weeks.  
We believe that it is important for us to study the Bible and pray in these groups.  
But it *also* important to use these groups to do justice, mercy, and faithfulness.  
We’ll be going through the book of Ephesians.  
How does Ephesians help us to do justice in our relationships?  
How do we look around our neighborhoods, work places, and schools  
and show mercy to those who need help.

Showing mercy can be as simple as helping someone find a good mechanic,  
a good plumber, or a good lawyer.  
But showing mercy can also require a more intensive effort  
to help someone obtain justice.

The next two woes focus on the Pharisees’ preoccupation with appearances –  
“they do all their deeds to be seen by others.”

### **5. Woe to Those Who Clean the Outside – Not the Inside (v25-26)**

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.



The Pharisees look good on the outside – but inwardly they are full of greed and self-indulgence.  
Cleaning the outside of the cup will never deal with your heart.  
The Pharisees were famous for their humility and self-denial.  
People did not think of the Pharisees as “greedy” and “self-indulgent.”  
Jesus is pointing out that if your religion prompts you to focus on outward appearances  
then you *are* greedy and self-indulgent by definition.

Think about how James says it:

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this:  
to visit orphans and widows in their affliction,  
and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (James 1:27)

Does your religion prompt you to care for orphans and widows?  
To do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with your God?

Wait, you might say, but isn’t that focusing on “outward appearance”?  
No!!

Focusing on outward appearance is coming to church with bright smiley faces,  
putting your check in the offering every week,  
bringing some food for the food pantry – asking prayer for Aunt Tilly –  
  
and then spending the rest of the week feeling like you have  
“done your religious duty”  
and so you can ignore the fact that your boss just tore your colleague to shreds.

Loving your neighbor is *not* focusing on outward appearances.  
Loving your neighbor – focusing on justice and mercy and faithfulness  
in our relations to those who are created in the image of God  
is at the *heart* of what it means to follow Jesus.

The sixth woe has a similar theme:

### **6. Woe to Those Who Focus on the Outward Appearance of Righteousness (v27-28)**

<sup>27</sup> *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

Whitewashed tombs.

Think of all the monuments and mausoleums that men have erected to be remembered.  
The pyramids of Egypt and the tombs of the Pharaohs are among the most amazing –  
but graveyards all over America there are grand memorials to great men.  
Whitewashed tombs – “which outwardly appear beautiful,  
but within are full of dead men’s bones.”

(I agree in principle with the ESV’s “dead people’s bones” –

but the phrase “dead men’s bones” has a more evocative ring to it!)

In Jewish regulation, not only touching a dead body – but even walking over a tomb – would make you unclean.

So they regularly whitewashed tombs – not so much to make them beautiful, but to warn you that there was a tomb there!

Jesus says that the Pharisees are like whitewashed tombs.

They stand out – they are obviously different from their surrounding culture. But at their heart they are *worse* than the surrounding culture.

As Stanley Hauerwas puts it:

“This is a reminder that to live a life of immorality is not to live as if we are dead, but quite literally to live a deadly life...

Hidden immorality draws its power and its results from death and our fear of death.

The result is to impose our fear of death on others, requiring that they acknowledge our immorality as righteousness.

Deadly exchanges are necessary to keep up the appearances.” (Hauerwas, 198)

Pharisees must always be tearing others down – must always be destroying others – in order to prop themselves up.

I once knew a man who was a master of this!

In every conversation he sounded so pious and so persuasive – but you came away from every conversation thinking *less* of others.

His words destroyed people.

“Deadly exchanges were necessary to keep up appearances.”

And the theme of “deadly exchanges” and tombs continues in the final woe:

### **7. Woe to Those Who Persecute the Prophets (v29-36)**

<sup>29</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup> Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

You say that you are different from your fathers –

but in identifying them as your fathers, you confess that you are their sons.

What does this mean?

Our recent sermons on Jeremiah have dealt with this precise point!

Jeremiah’s message was that Jerusalem was doomed.

There is no way for God’s people to save Jerusalem.

If the Pharisees had understood the message of Jeremiah,

they would have *renounced* their fathers.

In other words, when John the Baptist came with his “baptism for repentance”  
they would have believed John, and turned away from their foolish hope  
that Israel’s obedience could somehow save Jerusalem.  
You are sons of those who murdered the prophets –  
you are believing the same lies that they believed!

You have no hope of salvation – Jesus says – unless you repent and believe in me.  
But you won’t do that!  
And so Jesus echoes the language of John the Baptist:

*<sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah,<sup>[f]</sup> whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.*

Jesus was not the first to be killed by these men.  
And neither will he be the last!  
You can see the book of Acts prefigured in Jesus’ words.

Notice that Jesus says that he will send prophets and wise men and *scribes*.  
In our egalitarian day we tend to de-emphasize this –  
but Jesus says that:  
The church needs prophets who will proclaim the word of the Lord Jesus to his people.  
(Prophets in the Bible do not necessarily “predict the future” –  
but they do proclaim the word of the Lord!)  
The church needs wise men who will lead by word and deed in showing the way of life.  
The church needs scribes – experts in the scripture, who can expound and teach.

And these prophets and wise men and scribes will bear the brunt of persecution.

What does Jesus mean by “this generation”?  
Many have said that it must mean this cohort of Jewish leadership.  
This generation is the generation that rejects Jesus.

And it is true that all the blood of the righteous will come upon this generation –  
because *they* will be the ones who crucify Jesus.  
Jesus reminds them of all the martyrs of the OT  
“from Abel to Zechariah” covers all of OT history,  
because the first martyr was Abel (killed by his brother, Cain),  
and the last martyr was Zechariah –  
last, not in time, but in canonical order  
(since the Book of Chronicles is the last book in many editions of the Hebrew OT)

But the word “generation” in Greek can have a broader meaning than just a “cohort.”  
It can mean a tribe, a race, a particular family stock.

And in this passage, Jesus is emphasizing how the scribes and Pharisees  
are “sons of your fathers” who killed the prophets.  
So “this generation” does not just mean – “this cohort of Jewish leaders.”

Because there is another sense in which Jesus is pointing forwards as well:  
This is what is going to characterize his church.  
Matthew does not just give us interesting historical information.  
He tells us what *we* need to know if we are going to follow Jesus.

The multiple nuances of “generation” come into play in this passage:  
Yes, judgment will come upon “this generation” in the “cohort” sense  
(in AD 70, the Romans will destroy the temple).  
But Jesus also has a longer perspective on the situation.

“This generation” – this unbelieving Jewish leadership –  
is no different from the unbelieving Jewish leadership in Jeremiah’s day –  
“this generation” stands a warning to all generations!

In my ordination vows I was asked:  
“Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel,  
and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church,  
whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?”

If the prophets and wise men and scribes whom Jesus sends  
should forget our mission and become like the Pharisees –  
then we too will fall under their condemnation.

And so Jesus laments:

**Conclusion: The Lamentation of Jesus (v37-39)**

<sup>37</sup> “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!  
How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her  
wings, and you were not willing!” <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you  
will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

As we have seen repeatedly in the Jeremiah series,  
the fact that God is the one who brings judgment  
does *not* mean that God *likes* to bring judgment.

In Jeremiah, God regularly *weeps* over Jerusalem.

And so now, God in the flesh weeps over Jerusalem.  
Just as in the days of Jeremiah, the Jews are trusting in the temple to save them.

But now “your house is left to you desolate.”

That’s a poignant image!

Your house – the place where you live –  
is uninhabited – deserted.

And Jesus laments that “from now on you will certainly not see me” –  
until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

And in Greek – as well as in English – the “until” gives no promise that this will ever happen!

If Jerusalem never sings Psalm 118 again –

if Jerusalem never says “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” –  
then Jerusalem will never see Jesus again.

Jerusalem will get a chance!

Just a day or two later, the crowds will gather.

What will Jerusalem say of their king?

“Crucify him!”

“His blood be on us and on our children!” (27:25)

Such terrible words – as they invoke upon themselves and upon their children  
the guilt of the crucifixion of Jesus!

And yet our only hope is that those words become true of us in *another sense!*

“His blood be on us and on our children!”

Let us pray.