

Luke 20:41-47
Great David's Greater Son

41 And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David?
 42 "Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,
 43 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." '
 44 "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?"
 45 Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples,
 46 "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts,
 47 "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

Which category of sinner do you think receives the greatest condemnation from Jesus? It's not the tax collectors, the adulterers, the prostitutes. It's not even the men who physically nailed him to the cross. Jesus prayed to the father for the Roman soldiers who were in the process of crucifying Him saying, "***Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.***" No, the people Jesus reserves the greatest approbation for are the hypocrites. Those people who feign religiosity but who are in fact, "***whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.***"

To the hypocrite, religion and the Word of God are merely tools for achieving another end. In this case the desire of the hypocrites in Christ's day was to be honored and venerated, to have power over the common people and to use their position for their financial and social benefit and so they used the misused the scriptures and the synagogue and the temple to achieve those ends. They took the good gifts of God and twisted them for their benefit. We've seen an example of that in the way the outer courtyard of the temple which had been intended to be a place where even the gentiles might come and pray had been converted into a religious marketplace. We've also seen how by adding all sorts of their own invented traditions and rules to the word of God they had made themselves indispensable to the common man. After all they taught that salvation could only be obtained by the righteous man who kept the Law of God, and only a scribe could hope to keep track of all of the rules and loopholes the Rabbis had added to the law.

But the saddest thing was that the very men who were posing as indispensable interpreters of the Law, to paraphrase Christ's rebuke in Matt. 22:29, knew neither the scriptures nor the power of God.

Jesus exposed that fact to the people by asking the Scribes a crucial question about the interpretation of the Word of God.

Now it was common knowledge that the Messiah would be the Son of David, one of the physical descendents of the great king. God had promised David that he would establish His throne forever, and the prophets themselves had said that the coming Messiah would be a great and mighty Son of David who would not just rule for a time, but forever. Perhaps the most famous example of this being in Isaiah 9:6-9:7

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Or in the less familiar promise in Jeremiah 33:14-17

' Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:

15 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

16 In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

17 "For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel;

Even the poor blind beggar Bartimaeus knew that, and that is why when Jesus passed by Him he cried out "***Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!***"

And Jesus starts with that premise, the people say that the Christ, the Messiah, is the Son of David. But then He takes them to Psalm that everyone knew was Messianic, that is it spoke of the coming reign of the Messiah, Psalm 110 and he asks them a question about the first line:

"The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Christ's question is a real zinger. How can David's Son also be David's Lord? After all, the Pharisees knew that the ancestor was accorded greater honor than the descendent. Also, why would David call a mere man, LORD – Adonai - One of the names of God.

The Scribes cannot answer, because the truth is something that they refused to believe, that the Messiah would not only be a descendent of David according to the flesh, he would also be the God Himself. The Messiah would be not only the Son of David, but also the Son of God. That is the key to unlocking verses like Isaiah 7:14 "***Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.***" How could a virgin conceive? She could only conceive if she was with Child by the power of the Holy Spirit, why would that Child be called Immanuel? Because Immanuel means "God with Us" and that is who the Messiah is - Jesus the Son of the Virgin Mary, a descendent of King David through his mothers bloodline, was also the long awaited Immanuel - God with Us. None other Messiah would do, because only a Messiah who was also God Himself could save his people from their sins, and be unto them "***The Lord Our Righteousness.***"

But the Scribes, the Scribes don't see it. The theology they subscribe to is so far from being the teaching of the Bible that the truth about the Messiah is totally incompatible with their beliefs. I mean where do you begin, why would they need to be saved from their sins, they were the righteous ones? They wanted a king who would advance their interests and save them from the Romans and the sinners. But in the meantime they wanted a theology that would fill their

moneybags and win them honor and acclaim. None of this denying self and taking up ones cross, ***no thank you.***

It's amazing how little things have changed over the years regarding religious hypocrisy isn't it?

Let me give you two quick examples of that fact.

The Televangelists: If ever you need an example of men who ***"who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers"*** it is the televangelists. They prey disproportionately on the poor and the elderly conning them into sending them donations in the hope of blessing, with many assurances that they will pray for them. Robert Tilton, for instance, used to tell people who sent him money to include a prayer request and he would pray for them, then a news team discovered that Tilton's workers merely opened the envelopes took out the cash and checks, and threw the prayer requests in the dumpster. And what of their theology? Well you only generally need to have them on for a few minutes before they say something weird and heretical and totally at odds with the Christian faith. In fact, most of them have bought into a hideous money centered aberration called Word of Faith theology which in effect states that faith is a power that brings things into being and that it can be used to ensure that you remain healthy and wealthy. In fact they tell their viewers that sending them money is planting a faith seed, and that God will in turn give them money back. Give to get, not even the Scribes of Christ's day had such an obvious religion of Greed.

But for an Older Example we have ***The Roman Church:*** Here we have the men ***who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts.*** Vestments and Titles and Honors, and once again a works based theology were they make themselves absolutely indispensable to those seeking salvation. Now we know that Christ intended to build a church, but that is not the church he intended to build. One which would convince men that unless a priest administered a sacrament salvation was impossible. Brothers and Sisters, if you have the Word of God, you have all that is necessary for your salvation.

But if you consider how pervasive just those two institutions are worldwide, you'll see why it was Christ warned you about them, steer clear.

Let me give you 2 Applications of these verses

- 1) We have already seen the warning against hypocrisy but not also what Christ warns the religious hypocrite of. He says ***"These will receive greater condemnation."*** Just as Christ taught by the parable of the talents that there will be degrees of reward in heaven, he also teaches that there will be degrees of punishment in Hell and the hottest spots will be reserved for the hypocrites. Now at this point many of you might be thinking ***uh-oh, I've been guilty of hypocrisy in the past, is Jesus saying I'm doomed to the hottest spot in hell?*** Brothers and Sisters, there is not one person in this room, except for perhaps the very youngest, who has not been guilty of hypocrisy. I myself do not want people to know what kind of lousy husband I am, what kind of impatient father, so all too often I am guilty of masking it, fooling even myself because the truth is much too shameful for even me to face. What hope do hypocrites like me and you have? Immanuel, great David's greater son.

Your hope and my hope is in the Messiah who came to save men not from the Romans but from their sins. Your hope lies not in a greater effort to conceal your sins, but in turning from them to Christ. Brothers and Sisters, the only Hypocrites who have no hope are the ones who like the scribes will stubbornly refuse to do that, will refuse to even concede that they have need of Jesus and will instead trust in a thin whitewash of righteousness while simultaneously pursuing their own carnal desires.

2) The only Messiah who could save us could never merely be a man. ***Kid's what did Jesus do on the cross?***

Can a man pay for our sins on a cross? No! even the best of men couldn't hope to atone for their own sins by dying on the cross? The high priest himself had to offer a sacrifice on Yom Kippur for his own sins as well as the sins of the people. But Christ being God, had no sin, and his sacrifice alone had the power and the worth to atone for our sins. Only He could obey the law and give us the perfect righteousness we needed to be saved. Now Jesus said that He was the Messiah, the God man, he blessed his apostles when they confirmed that:

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

But how do you know that is true?

Kids what happened three days after Jesus was buried in the tomb?

Could Jesus have risen from the dead if he was just a man? No. But he did to prove that he was not only David's Son, but David's Lord.

Now because Christ is God, you can be the greatest sinner and hypocrite on the face of this planet, and yet be saved from your sins. That is why Paul could confess himself to be "Chief of all Sinners" and himself an ex-hypocrite of the worst of kind, and yet know himself to be saved and be able to confess: ***"I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."***