

## What do you think about the Christ? Mt 22:41-46

In Matthew 22, the Pharisees, Sadducees and the Herodians all took turns to try and entrap Jesus asking three tough questions:

- 1) Is it lawful to pay Caesar taxes?
- 2) Whose wife in the resurrection?
- 3) What is the greatest command?

Jesus' answered all three with great reasoning and they were left speechless. With their opportunity now over, it was now Jesus' turn to ask a question for them.

Matt 22:41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "{The son} of David."

- This was a simple question for the Pharisees to answer, for the coming Christ would be a descendent of King David. Though the Pharisees struggled to see Jesus as the Christ, they knew that the Christ would be coming through the lineage of David, for the OT made it quite evident.
  - 2 Sam 7:13-14 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,
  - Isa 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of {His} government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.
  - Isa 11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
  - Jer 23:5 "Behold, {the} days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land.
- When they identified the coming Christ as the "son of David", it was simply a matter of fact for the Pharisees. Even though Jesus was a descendent of David's lineage, they simply had a problem with Jesus being the Christ because He threatened their authority. With their answer of the Christ being a descendent of David, Jesus will leave them to struggle with the following question.

Matthew 22:43-46 He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 44 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet"'? 45 "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" 46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

- Jesus is quoting Psalm 110. This was a commonly known Psalm among the Jewish leadership concerning their perception of the coming Messiah.

They believed the Christ would come as a mighty King and establish a kingdom like David. He would defeat Rome and all other enemies, humiliating them as his feet and ruling them permanently. Read the Psalm and visualize the Messiah through the eyes of a Pharisee.

- **Ps 110:1-2 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet. <sup>2</sup> The LORD will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, {saying} "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies."** (When the Christ comes, He will be seated in power and will set things right. He will make Caesar bow down at His feet in humiliation! He will smite them to the ground for all their unholiness!)
- **<sup>3</sup> Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Thy youth are to Thee {as} the dew.** (There will be a great volunteer army of warriors to serve with this Messiah, a force far greater than Rome ever assembled!)
- **<sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."** (He will serve as a mighty Priest for His people, a Priesthood without end!)
- **<sup>5</sup> The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. <sup>6</sup> He will judge among the nations, He will fill {them} with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. <sup>7</sup> He will drink from the brook by the wayside; therefore He will lift up {His} head.** (As predicted, He will utterly destroy the present evil rulers of this world and He will judge the heathen nations. The body count will be high and there will be no other rulers. He will bring peace and contentment to the land and will hold His head high in victory!)
- Is it any wonder that during a time of great persecution against Israel that this became one of the more popular Psalms? The nation had a history of great military times in the past, but this would be the greatest victory of all. They really thought there was going to be a great war to settle it all. In fact the apostles still thought this even up to forty days after the resurrection from the dead. *Acts 1:6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"*
- The problem was that Jesus did not fit the description because to them He was a poor, humble, smooth-talking carpenter from a nowhere place in Galilee. He did not fit the mold of a general of that caliber. They just would not see it.
- The popularity of this Psalm is reflected in its usage in New Testament as well, for it is the most quoted verse from the Old Testament. In these quotes we find a Jewish mindset also focusing on the Christ.
  - Jesus is quoted twice in the gospels to explain Whom He is (above and Luke 20:43)
  - Peter quoted is in the sermon on Pentecost to explain Jesus as the Christ (Acts 2:34-35).
  - The writer of the Book of Hebrews quotes it five times in his explanation of the Christ (Heb 1:13, 5:6, 7:17, 9:8, 10:13)

- The key to understanding the conversation is found in the opening of the text "*The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."*" The first word for LORD that is used in the text is *Jehovah*, God the Father. Whenever you see the word LORD with all capital letters, it is JEHOVAH. It is in the second "my Lord", which is *Adonai* and means Sovereign Master.
- The Pharisees admitted this coming Christ was the descendent of David. How could David prophetically state by the Holy Spirit and in the presence of *Jehovah* (the Father) that his descendent (Jesus) was His real Master? That would make David, the writer of this very popular Psalm, nothing more than a blasphemer, the very thing that they accuse Jesus of.
- To this they have no answer, for to comment on it would only further point out their ignorance about who the real Christ was. Before the great crowd of delighted listeners, the Pharisees were shut up once and for all. If they could not answer a simple question like this, then how could they be trusted in saying that Jesus was a blasphemer and not the real Christ? They were the greatest minds in all Israel, yet they could not answer an uneducated Galilean. Jesus answered all their questions with ease, but they could not even comment on one of their favorite text. Their reputation and opinion was pretty much useless.

1 Cor 1:18-21 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not {come to} know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

- Stop listening to all the denominational thinking out in the world today.
- Stop listening to Oprah who says that Jesus is not the only way.
- Stop listening to all the PHDs that have pooled together their ignorance in the name of wisdom only to come up with a foolish plan of salvation.
- 1 Cor 3:19-20 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "{He is} the one who catches the wise in their craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless."
- The Bible is the only Book and Jesus is the only way. God has spoken through His Spirit from the mouth of David and Jesus is confirmed the Sovereign Master.

### What do these verses have in common?

- James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.
- Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.
- 1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."
- 1 Jn 3:7-8 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;
- Eph 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
- 1 Cor 3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise.
- Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception..."

Obviously the common theme to all these verses is deception. One of the primary words in the Greek for *deception* is *planao* (plan-ah'-o) and means to go astray from safety. Another word used is *exapatao* (ex-ap-at-ah'-o) and it refers to a seduction that lures away. Basically to be deceived is the process of being seduced or tricked into thinking one is in safety, but in reality are in grave danger. The worst part about it is the one that is being deceived does not know they are being deceived or they would not be deceived.

The Pharisees were probably one of the greatest examples of a people that were self-deceived. They knew the scriptures like the back of their hand and had the Christ right before them, yet they felt completely justified in their hostilities toward Jesus. The apostle Paul, a former Pharisee, in his previous manner of living, thought with a clear conscience that persecuting the Christians was doing God a favor, but he was self-deceived. These Pharisees are no different in their approach to Jesus in thinking they are doing God a favor by killing Him.

What if there was a way to confirm whether or not you are being deceived? The aim of this lesson is to examine the "Woes" text of Matthew 23 and listen to test that Jesus puts before the rabid Pharisees. They have just finished a major attempt to trap Jesus in a verbal argument with no avail. Now it is Jesus' turn to point out the deception through eight "Woe" statements.

### Eight Woes that Reveal Deception

1) If you are leading people from God instead of to God, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED.

23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

- It was not bad enough that the Pharisees would not believe the words of Jesus, but they aimed at preventing anyone from believing in Him. The common people heard their ridicules. The few friendly Pharisees that sided with Jesus like Nicodemus were rebuked. The down-trodden and hurting were warned to not trust Jesus, calling Him everything from a drunk to the Prince of demons. They were obviously deceived for they should have been leading them to this Messiah.
- Why is it that we are not always so quick to see this in ourselves? I know many preachers in pursuit of the "Good Ole Religion" that have driven far more from Jesus than to Him. I know many zealous souls in my past, including myself, that have turned people off from God.
- There was a time very early on in my Christian life that I came on too strong and turned people away from Christ and His church. I was momentarily deceived like many others. We must make sure that this is not the case or we MIGHT BE DECEIVED.

2) If you withhold mercy and yet offer prayers to God, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED.

Mt 23:14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, even while for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation.

- Many of the Pharisees were savvy and shrewd in their business dealings. In fact they were sometimes outright dishonest and uncaring with the poor. Since women could not legally own property in the ancient Middle-East, it often led to difficulties for widows when they had no sons. These Pharisees would come in and pay little or nothing for the property in taking advantage of these women. You think that would hinder their prayer life, but it did not. They would continue to offer their long public prayers while the widow was left homeless. If that is not deception then what is?
- We are no different when it comes to this. There are many brothers and sisters that will live like a heathen Monday through Saturday, yet still offer their prayers to the Father. There are men that I have known from the past that offered the most beautiful prayers before the congregation, yet they were cheating on and beating on their wives earlier in the week. These men were living in a world of deception, for to withhold mercy at the same time they were offering their prayers unto God proves it.

3) If your evangelism produces rebellious disciples, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED.

Mt 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

- It was a common thing for disheartened pagan to inquire to a Pharisee about a more pure way of living. The Pharisees would latch on to these people and would begin to teach them their form of legalism. These young converts would often channel their zealous ways into something that was far worse than even what the Pharisees had taught them. They actually became radical Israelites similar to a radical Muslim, being filled with hate and anger. They were producing a group of disciples that were of no use to society or the kingdom of God. These Pharisees were being deceived into thinking they were doing good, but the fruit of their converts proved otherwise.
- We are really no different than they are we? I know some in the brotherhood that work hard in evangelism, making many converts through their teaching and preaching, yet their converts have great joy in attacking other churches. This is because they learned this from their teacher, the deceived one. You can recognize them, for they write books blasting the brotherhood and anyone that does not agree with them. I knew one preacher that actually obtained a directory for a two-thousand member congregation and sent a letter of condemnation to all two-thousand of them. His own congregation spent over \$1000 on this effort, for they were his disgruntled converts over the past few years. Do you think he knew that he was deceived?

4) If your honesty is regularly called into question, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED.

23:16-22 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.' 17 "You fools and blind men; which is more important, the gold, or the temple that sanctified the gold? 18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, {that} is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering upon it, he is obligated.' 19 "You blind men, which is more important, the offering or the altar that sanctifies the offering? 20 "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears {both} by the altar and by everything on it. 21 "And he who swears by the temple, swears {both} by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. 22 "And he who swears by heaven, swears {both} by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

- The Pharisees ruled that a person could only take an oath on something that could be collateralized, for how could you assign value with something priceless? You could not swear an oath by the name of the temple, but the gold of the temple you could. They forgot that God owns it all and that your yes should be yes and your no should be no. You have to be able to stand on your word and stop making all these sneaky lawyer tricks. They were actually deceived into thinking they could bolster their lies through the invoking of something collateralized and associated with holiness. Just be honest!
- Let me ask you a question, do you think that a person that often has his honesty called into question might be deceived. Recently there was a politician that was confronted with the prospect that he was having an

affair. He looked right at the camera and denied it all while swearing it was the slimy media behind it. It looked like he was guilty, he sounded guilty and acted guilty, but his lips said he was innocent. A few weeks later, he was proven a liar when he went on national television and confessed. Do you think this was the first time he had his honesty questioned? Not at all for he was a politician and a lawyer that made millions twisting words for decades and now it caught up to him. He was being deceived and was deceiving, for his honesty was called into question.

#### 5) If you focus on rules more than principles, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED

Mt 23:23-24 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 24 "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

- The Pharisees took their giving so seriously that they not only tithed of their funds, but also the herbs of their gardens. The text said they were taking ten percent of all their mint leaves, dill seeds and cumin and giving that away as well. They were fanatics about the ten percent rule, but overlooked the more important principles of justice, mercy and faithfulness. They were deceived into thinking they were doing the whole will of God.
- We also must pass the same test of not focusing on the rules as much as the principles of Christianity. Yes worship starts at 10:30 AM and it is good to dress-up for the service, but to get bent out of shape about it and exclude people from worship and service in light of it misses the principle altogether. Yes it is good to have small-group home Bibles studies in the home, but to forget the concept of evangelism would be a big mistake. Yes it is good to focus on the "rules" that we have made our own, but to miss the principles of love and faithfulness would be a real deception on our part. Do not be deceived in this way.

#### 6) If you focus more on appearance rather than substance, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED

Mt 23:25-26 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

- They Pharisees had a knack for putting on a show for the people. They gave their tithes to be seen of men, prayed before men and fasted before men. Jesus warned them of this in Matthew 6 and He is doing the same here. They are so concerned with how things look that they have forgotten that it is what God sees on the inside. They have allowed themselves to be deceived and will not get away with it.
- We also can be guilty of the same thing. Let me ask, are you more concerned what others might think ahead of what God might think? Do we know that God is seeing everything we do and knows everything we are

thinking? It is so important that the life we live is not more driven by what man thinks, but what He thinks, for to do otherwise might point out a deceptive streak.

7) If your outer man does not match your inner man, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED.

Mt 23:27-28 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 "Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

- Not only was there not a soul cleansing on the inside of the Pharisees, but they actually strove to cover it up with other actions. They were like white-washed tombs, which is actually a great description. Jews were not permitted to come into contact with a dead body lest they become unclean and this is why they rushed the bodies to the tombs shortly after death. The Jews had a habit of painting the tombs a pure white, but it was still filled with dead man's bones. This is what it is like for the Pharisees for their outer man did not line up with the inner man. They were hypocrites and deceived.
- We must make sure that we are not living two lives in the same way. If we can come to church and walk, talk, think and breath Jesus, but once we are alone we live like the devil, that is deception and cannot be allowed. 2 Cor 13:5 Test yourselves {to see} if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test? Do not be deceived in this way.

8) If you behave like those that you condemn, YOU MIGHT BE DECEIVED.

Mt 23:29-32 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had been {living} in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in {shedding} the blood of the prophets.' 31 "Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 "Fill up then the measure {of the guilt} of your fathers.

- The Pharisees are no different than their ancestors, for they killed the prophets and the people of God. It does not matter that they say they are not like their fathers. It does not matter that they have built monuments for the dead prophets in their honor, for the mere fact they want Jesus dead tells us that they are living a life of deception.
- How many times have you heard a brother or sister complaining about what is wrong with someone else, only to find out that they are doing the same thing? I know of a preacher that is doing a series of sermons on Diotrefes the preeminent one of 3John 9 all the while he is behaving in the exact same way. I knew of another person that was critical of the pornographic industry, but was later found to have the exact same



sickness. If you condemn the same behavior that you are doing, there is a great deception that is going on and you don't even see it.

There it is, eight "Woes" pointing out eight signs of deception that not only the Pharisees struggled with, but we can also. Heed the "Woes" and reveal what is really in your heart, then work on it.