

## OUTWARDLY vs. INWARDLY

(a Jewish lesson)

**"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments," Mt 23:5.**

Chapter 22 of Matthew ends with, "...no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man ask Him any more questions," (V 46). After explaining the subjects of "God and Caesar" and fielding questions about the resurrection, our Lord really opens up to the "multitude, and to His disciples" (Mt 23:1). He minces no words.

One cannot find any more straight-forward statements than what Jesus said about the religious leaders of the day - the **Scribes and Pharisees**; two sects of the Jews who loved to show their righteousness by outward standards they practiced and demanded from other Jews.

Jesus said that they **loved to adorn** themselves with clothing that was easily recognizable; they **loved to sit** in the best rooms at feast time; and, they **loved to hear double recognition** by the greeting of, "**Rabbi, Rabbi**" (vv 6 & 7).

That's the way it was in the day of Jesus. A Spiritual warfare was on! The Jewish religious system was basically bound by the legality of the Law.

While, every Rabbi was always more than willing to "**pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin**" - demanding that all the Jews do the same; Jesus said they should have sought the **weightier** matters of the Law: "**judgment, mercy and faith,**" (Mt 23:23).

Is service to God, **outwardly or inwardly**? Well, in Matthew's recorded account, one that exposed the error of the Scribes and Pharisees, we see the **outward** begin to wane. Here, the leaders should have recognized the teaching; for, Jesus is only stating what is found in the Old Testament Prophet of Micah. We think that these Jewish leaders knew these verses, well.

Our Lord quotes from Micah, chapter 6, verses 6-8, about approaching God. Micah asks, "**With what shall I come to the Lord, and bow myself before the God on high?**" Further, Micah muses, "**Shall I come to Him with: 'burnt offerings,' 'yearling calves,' 'thousands of rams...' 'a thousand rivers of oil?' "**

Micah even questions if his first-born, the fruit of his body, will take care of his sinful acts and sins of the soul (V 7). But, in verse 8, we see what is good and what the Lord requires. "**...to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with**

thy God." It's the same words used by Jesus - 'be just, love mercy and walk humbly in faith.'

But, there are many passages that carry the exact meaning. So many that Jesus could be referring to another prophet, like Moses, who said, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord, thy God, require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all they heart and with all thy soul," Deut. 10:12.

By quoting from the Old, Jesus acknowledged that the Law was still in place. He had not yet remove it, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinance which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS**;" Col. 2:14.

Jesus is looking forward to that time, however. He teaches that the Law, in every age, is to be received within the heart. It's as if Jesus is citing Romans 2:28 & 29, instructing about what an inward faith, actually is.

Jesus wants everyone to know that we have not been called to do religious things **outwardly** (Rom. 2:28). But, He wants us to know that, like father Abraham, "He is a Jew, which is one **inwardly**; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God" (V 29).

And, because serving God is of faith - of the heart and inwardly, Jesus taught us to look upward, calling only God our Father (Mt 23:9); calling only Jesus, the Christ, our Master (23:10).

To the multitude and His disciples, Jesus taught that the great ones come from serving our fellow man; and, if we are to be lifted up, we must humble ourselves (V 11 & 12). But, after verse 12, Jesus turns again to Scribes and Pharisees, taking up their hypocrisy. He doesn't stop until the 36th verse of Matthew 23.

Jesus is very candid, here, using scary words of "Woes" for those that have love for an **outward** recognition. Unless they repent; yea, unless every man repents, every woe is fraught with meaning of eternal misery.

Yet, for the Jew, the Lord wanted to "gather together His people, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," 23:37. But, because they would not, He said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," Matthew 23:38.

However, Jeremiah announces that things will change for the Jew. The Jewish nation will turn to the Lord with their heart. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people," Jeremiah 31:33.

On that day, salvation will be an **inward** reality for the Jewish nation; just as it was for His disciples.