

THE CONDEMNATION OF RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY

Matthew 23:1-39

PART ONE – THE GENERAL CONDEMNATION - Matthew 23:1-12

(Continued from last Sunday – March 11th)

Introduction: Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*, has a picture in his office, showing a turtle sitting on top of a fence. The picture is there to remind him of a lesson he learned long ago: “If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he had some help.” Alex says, “Any time I start thinking, ‘Wow, isn’t this marvelous what I’ve done!’ I look at that picture and remember how this turtle – me – got up on that post.” The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day could have used a bit of both Alex Haley’s wisdom and humility. Unfortunately they had neither, as we saw last week how they craved after superiority, prominence and recognition. Like Nebuchadnezzar of old they were self inflated – “*Is not this great Babylon that I have built?*” Jesus’ disciples must be polar opposites in heart attitude to that of Israel’s religious leaders. Jesus knew that they had a long way to go as they continually bickered among themselves, all the way to “The Last Supper”, who would be the greatest (Luke 22:24). What the disciples did not understand was that in God’s Kingdom the term “greatness” was a synonym for “servant”. This certainly did not appeal to the scribes and Pharisees, nor to Jesus’ disciples – or to you and I – unless the Lord changes the natural bent of our hearts by His indwelling Spirit.

I. THE EXPOSURE OF THE PHARISEES – 23:2-7

A. THEIR POSITION EXPOSED – 23:2-3a

B. THEIR PRACTICE EXPOSED – 23:3b-4

C. THEIR PASSIONS EXPOSED – 23:5-7

1. THEIR LUST FOR SUPERIORITY – 23:5

2. THEIR LUST FOR PROMINENCE – 23:6

3. THEIR LUST FOR RECOGNITION – 23:7

II. THE _____ TO THE DISCIPLES – 23:8-12

A. THE SOURCE OF _____ – 23:8

B. THE SOURCE OF _____ -23:9

C. THE SOURCE OF _____ -23:10

D. THE MEASURE OF _____ -23:11-12