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Inner Growth - Jesus 11

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1

Journey - Luke 9:3

Enlighten - Job 33:30

Saves - Psalms 18:31, 1 Timothy 1:15

Unity - Ephesians 4:13

Sinners - Luke 5:32

Jesus continues His ministry in Matthew twenty-three, in **the Sins of the Pharisees section**, where the Son of God speaks to the multitudes and disciples. Jesus begins with verse three to examine what they instruct them to do and not follow them because their actions differ from their words. The Pharisees would tell people to do certain things and would not attempt them themselves. All they love to do is to be seen by others with their performance and be honored and admired. Enjoy being in the front seats, greeted in public places, and expect being called by titled names when addressed by others. Jesus continues to speak to the multitudes and disciples about the Pharisees in Matthew twenty-three, verses thirteen through thirty-six. However, in verse thirteen, under **the woes upon the Pharisees** section, Jesus repeats, "Hypocrites!" several times, calling the Pharisees for their ungodly activity internally, although it may appear godly externally. Jesus' words in chapter twenty-three constitute His most severe condemnation. His words were toward the religious leaders and teachers who

had rejected at least a part of the revealed Word of God by replacing it with their ideas and interpretations, as in verse twenty-three, verse twenty-eight of Matthew twenty-three, chapter fifteen, verses three and six through nine, and Mark seven, verses six through nine. The spirit of Jesus should be noted: Rather than tolerating and accommodating persons who outwardly appear righteous in their religious performance but were unrighteous in their personal lives, Jesus confronted their hypocrisy and sinfulness, as in verses twenty-five through twenty-eight. Like John the Baptist and the Old Testament prophets, Jesus denounced sin and corruption among those in positions of spiritual influence. Jesus' love for the honor of His Father and the integrity of God's Word and His righteous indignation against those who dishonored God and distorted His Word by their practices, as in Matthew fifteen, verses three through nine, chapter twenty-three, verses thirteen and fifteen, was so great that it caused Him to use words like "hypocrites," in verse fifteen "child of hell," in verse fifteen, "blind guides," in verse sixteen, "fools," in verse seventeen, "exhortation and excess," as in verse twenty-five, "whited sepulchers and uncleanness, as in verse twenty-seven, "full of iniquity," as in verse twenty-eight, "serpents, generation of vipers," as in verse thirty-three, and "murderers," as in verse thirty-four. The words from the Son of God may be thought severe and condemning were spoken with a broken heart, as in verse thirty-seven, by one who died for those to whom they were addressed, as in John three, verse sixteen, and Romans five, verses six, and eight. Jesus describes the character of hypocritical religious leaders and teachers: are those who seek to be well-known, significant, and noticed by others, in verse five, that love honor, in verse six, and titles, as in verse seven, and who keep people out of heaven by their distorted gospel. They are professional religionists who appear spiritual and ungodly but are unrighteous, as in verses fourteen, twenty-five through twenty-seven. They speak well of godly spiritual leaders of the past but do not follow their practices or commandments to God, His Word, and righteousness, as in verses twenty-nine through thirty.

The Bible commands believers to beware of such false religious leaders, as in Matthew seven, verse fifteen, and chapter twenty-five, verse eleven. Consider them unbelievers and refuse to support their ministry and fellowship with them, as in Second John nine to eleven. Those in the church who, in the name of love, tolerance, and unity, refuse to share Jesus' attitude toward those who distort the original teachings of Christ and the scriptures, as in Matthew seven, verse fifteen, Galatians one, verses six through seven, and Second John nine are participating in the evil deeds of false prophets and teachers, as in Second John ten to eleven.

Jesus continues His speech in verse twenty-eight about religious leaders and ministers of His day whose public conduct appeared righteous but whose hearts were full of hypocrisy, pride, lust, and wickedness. They were like painted tombs, beautiful on the outside, yet with foulness and corruption hidden inside.

Jesus' lament over Jerusalem section from verses thirty-seven through thirty-nine of Matthew twenty-three depicts the city of Jerusalem repeatedly rejecting the message of the Son of God. Therefore, in sorrow, Christ must withdraw and would not be seen by the chosen people of God again until they acknowledge their offense and call for the Messiah to come as their deliverer. Christ explains the denunciation just given. In a few days, he will be separated from them by death and burial. However, even though he appeared to certain chosen witnesses after his resurrection, God was seen no more by the people, as in Acts ten verse forty-one; their house became deserted. Some take the word "see" in the sense of know, recognize. Still, it seems weak to say, "Ye shall not know me till ye acknowledge me as Messiah," as the knowing and acknowledging are practically identical or simultaneous.