



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2020 ~ Scribes and Pharisees Denounced.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Today's *Bible Adventure* is about giving genuine service to God, which includes giving ourselves for whatever service He sees fit.

In most cultures around the world, people who spend years learning and studying to acquire specialist knowledge are given great respect. People listen to what they say because it's assumed that they have gained the keys to great understanding and are therefore someone worthy to know. This isn't always the case, however, as today's drama shows.

In the Temple, there was a specific court allocated for women, for women weren't allowed to enter the main Temple area. Not all women went to the feasts at Jerusalem either, so these ladies relied on their husbands and sons to tell them everything that had happened while they were away.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound.](#)

The passages on 'Woe to the Pharisees' are listed in Matthew, Chapter 23, Mark, Chapter 12 and Luke, chapters 11 and 20.

The scribes, teachers of the Law and Pharisees thought that they were the most devoted and dedicated followers of God. They looked down on everyone else as being far inferior to them. In Matthew, Chapter 23, the Lord Jesus speaks in opposition to the teachers of the Law and Pharisees, who were the leaders of the Jewish people at that time. However, this chapter was written concerning all religious leaders who act improperly and misuse their authority.

The Lord Jesus called such religious leaders hypocrites, because they tried to appear righteous outwardly but inwardly, they were full of sin. All leaders are in danger of pretending to others that they are godly when really they are harbouring sin deep within their hearts.

Jesus told His disciples and the crowds that the teachers of the Law and Pharisees were the official interpreters of Moses' Law. Jesus said that when they taught the true law, the people were to obey and follow everything that they were told to do.

But the Pharisees and teachers of the law had added many unnecessary rules of tradition to the main Jewish law that God had provided. These rules weren't from God and placed great unnecessary burdens on the people. The religious authorities didn't set a good example for these people to follow, nor did they help carry such burdens themselves. The end result was that they discouraged the people from seeking God.

By contrast, the Lord Jesus in Matthew, Chapter 11, issued an open invitation to all people: "Come to Me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest ... For the yoke I will give you is easy and the load I will put on you is light."

Everything the Jewish leaders did was so that they could receive praise from the people. Their authority for the religious practices of the day gave them much respect and many looked up to them, thinking that their learning had made them much closer to God. But God always looks at our motives. We can do the right things on the outside but from the wrong reasons on the inside.

The Jewish authorities loved to be called 'Rabbi', which means 'great one'. They especially loved to receive praise in public where all could see them being honoured. However, this is the opposite of Jesus' teachings to be humble and when we help a needy person, to do it in such a way that even our closest friends won't know about it. Jesus warned His disciples that they must not seek honours from people. They have only one Master and one Rabbi and that's Jesus Himself. Compared to Jesus, all other Christians are equal with each other and are brothers and sisters in the family of God.

It then means that Christians mustn't call another man their spiritual 'father'. Only God is our spiritual Father. When we asked Jesus to make us a child of God, we were born anew in our hearts by the Spirit of God. We didn't receive our new life from any man, only from God Himself. Instead of seeking to be great among people, the disciples of Christ are to be servants and blessings to others. Those who are most submissive to God's will and servant-like to what they are called to do will stand highest in God's favour.

The Jewish authorities showed no compassion on poor widows when they took away their houses but pretended to be so holy by saying long prayers in the Temple courts. These men were living proof that it's possible to study about God and who He is and spend one's whole life doing this but at the end, still not know anything about God's nature, ways and plans. This great error has remained true to our modern times as well. Preachers and teachers can be so taken up with some sideline doctrine that they miss the main meaning of Jesus Christ's mission to earth.

It is possible to completely misunderstand what is important to God and miss the attributes of God that make Him majestic, marvellous and supreme. His patience, holiness and grace can be overlooked entirely while self-interests are ruthlessly pursued, even in the church and among Christian organisations.

It's also possible to study God in a historical context that has no practical relevance to life here and now. Even though history shows that the prophets of the Bible and King David himself had a close personal relationship with God, many people remain unconcerned about knowing God and His Son Jesus intimately and personally within their hearts.

It is possible to study God and not have any desire to please Him. This is called gaining knowledge but saying it has no relevance to daily living. No one can make their life into little compartments, some of which are open to God's ways while others are held back and kept under personal control.

Jesus then brought a number of charges or 'woes' against the Jewish leaders. 'Woe' means grief, disaster and distress. The first charge was that the Jewish leaders prevented people from entering heaven through their false teaching. They taught that a person can only be saved by obeying the Law of Moses, but Jesus said that that isn't true. We can be saved only by believing that Jesus is the way to God through faith.

The Apostle Paul said in Galatians, Chapter 1, that God doesn't choose us to become Christians by our works or worthiness, but according to His grace. He chose us before creating the heavens and earth as we know it. He calls us to be saved from our sinful, selfish hearts and become His adopted children. Then He directs us to some task or service that He's prepared for us to do.

The Jewish leaders refused to repent and believe in Jesus. They refused to accept that He and He alone, is the only way to heaven. Sadly, by their bad example, they prevented many others from believing in Jesus and finding salvation for themselves too.

The teachers of the law weren't supposed to charge a price for their religious services but they made people feel bound to give them something. They developed trust in the people by the long prayers that they prayed. The poor and widows respected them yet they took financial advantage of them. These teachers were really wolves in sheep's clothing and will receive a great condemnation for their false actions at a judgment day that is still coming.

The second charge Jesus brought against the Jewish leaders was that when they tried to win converts to the Jewish religion, the leaders trained them to be like themselves – outwardly pious but inwardly wicked. Such converts received no benefit from becoming a Jew but were judged by God as being twice as wicked.

The Jewish leaders also swore an oath whenever they made an agreement or promise to another person. But then they tried to invent all sorts of ways to avoid keeping their promise. Their system which said things sworn by had to be kept and what ones didn't, were inconsistent to the value of the objects being sworn by. In reality, these people didn't intend to keep the oaths that they had made in the first place. Jesus taught that we shouldn't make oaths at all. If a person is honest and sincere, he doesn't need to swear an oath in business. Swearing oaths is a sign of dishonesty.

The practice of taking oaths is still found to be a tradition for politicians and witnesses in courts of law. In James, Chapter 5, it says: "Say only 'Yes' when you mean yes, and 'No' when you mean no, and then you will not come under God's judgment."

The Jews always tithed. They set aside one tenth of all their crops and animals and offered them to the Lord. This was good and all Christians should strive to give at least a tenth of their income to the Lord as well. New Christians sometimes have to clear a backlog of debts before they can manage to honour the Lord in this way.

The Jewish leaders were so careful about this requirement that they tithed even the leaves on the herb garden bushes. Yet Jesus charged them with doing the less important things and neglecting the really important parts of the law, like imparting justice, mercy and faithfulness. As a result, they scorned the love of God and His great care for each one of His people. In Hosea, Chapter 6, God says: "I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me."

The Jewish leaders kept many rules concerning the cleansing of cups and dishes. Jesus also charged them as being like cups washed on the outside but not on the inside. They obeyed the law outwardly so people would praise them, but they didn't keep the law in their hearts. They were full of greed and self-indulgence. If the inside of a cup is dirty, the contents will also become dirty and unusable. Jesus told the leaders to first clean their hearts so that their inner motives would be pure. God always looks first at a person's heart rather than any outward deeds.

The Jewish leaders of Jesus' time honoured the Old Testament prophets by building large tombs for them that became martyrs' memorials. The leaders admitted that their ancestors had killed the prophets but they themselves wouldn't have done such a thing if they had lived back in those times. Yet even while they were saying this, they were planning to kill Jesus, the Messiah. They were no better than their ancestors. Jesus warned them that the full punishment for killing all the prophets would fall on that generation of Jews. And it came to pass as Jesus said it would – in 70 AD when Jerusalem and its people were destroyed.

Jesus Himself was a Jew and He loved the Jewish people. He longed to protect them from the coming anger of God. But the people and religious leaders wouldn't accept His protection. They wouldn't accept Him as their Saviour and Messiah either. So they killed the only One who could have saved them. Jesus ended his confrontation with the Jewish leaders by telling them that they would never see Him again until He came at the end of the world. All people will recognise Him then as King of kings and Lord of lords but the people who rejected Him in this world will call out to Him in fear. For them, Jesus can no longer be Saviour but only Judge. They can never enter His kingdom at this point, but must remain forever in hell.

Have you been like the Pharisees, serving God without any spiritual commitment to Him first? Are you reading your Bible without the understanding that God's Spirit gives us? The meanings in this book are revealed by God's Holy Spirit only to God's adopted children. Through faith in the Lord Jesus, ask Him to forgive all of your wrongdoing; accept Him and join His spiritual family. Then at the end of the world, you'll be able to shout with joy with many others the words from Psalm 118, Verse 26: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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