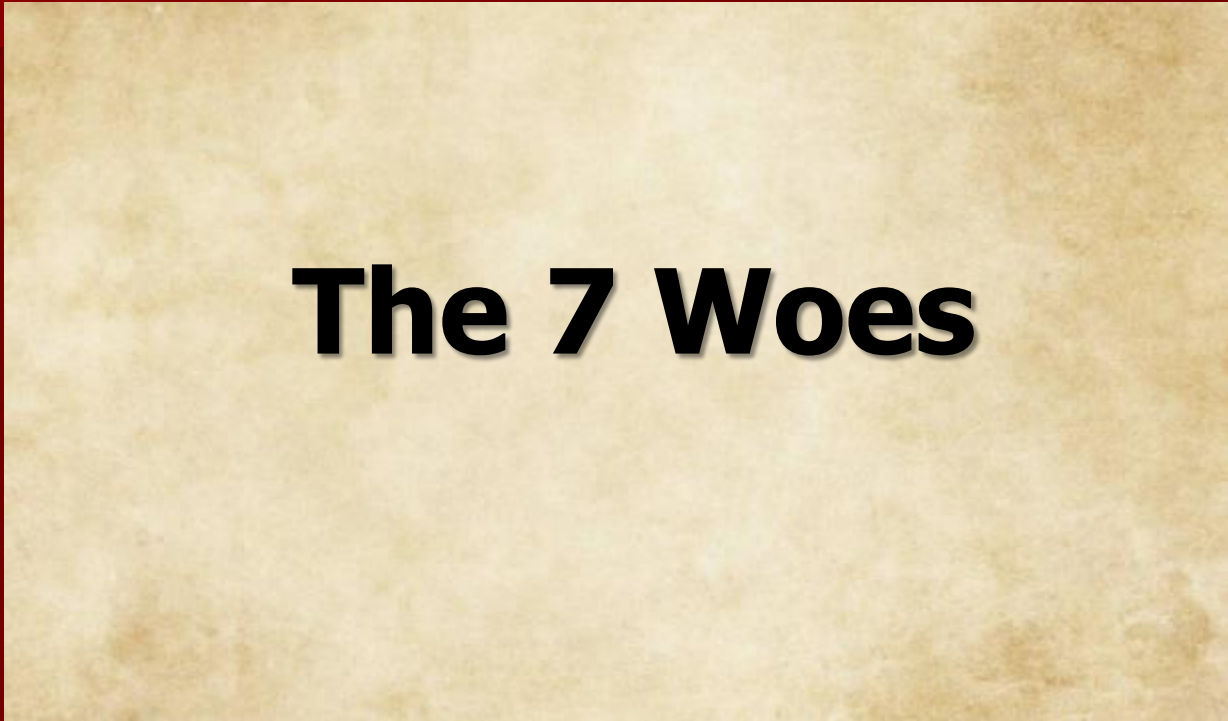


Message



The 7 Woes

Neal Parker

The 7 Woes

- **What is the greatest threat any man or woman faces?**
- **Hypocrisy with Self-Righteousness**
 - **In Matthew 23, Jesus continues in His warnings about these false spiritual leaders, but now he addresses them directly. Seven times Jesus says to them, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.”**
 - **In Matthew 23, Jesus pronounces seven “woes” on the religious leaders of His day. A “woe” is an exclamation of grief, similar to what is expressed by the word alas. In pronouncing woes, Jesus was prophesying judgment on the religious elite who were guilty of hypocrisy and sundry other sins.**

The 7 Woes

■ Hypocrisy

- The practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform.

■ Self-Righteousness

- Having or characterized by a certainty, especially an unfounded one, that one is totally correct or morally superior.
- Convinced of one's own righteousness especially in contrast with the actions and beliefs of others.
- Narrow-mindedly moralistically

The 7 Woes

■ Pharisees: Motivations

- Pharisees surpassed other Jews in their knowledge of the Torah.
- Particularly, they were concerned about bringing the practices of purification necessary for temple participation into their everyday experience.
 - "...Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (Luke 12:1)
 - You hypocrites, Isaiah prophesied correctly about you: These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; they teach as doctrine the precepts of men. (Matthew 15:7-9)

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:1-12

- "...The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So practice and observe everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, burdensome loads and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them..."

– Berean Standard Bible

The 7 Woes

■ **Matthew 23:13-14 / 1st Woe**

- They themselves did not accept Christ as the Messiah. And they did everything in their power to keep others from following after Him either.
- They also hindered the common people from believing in Him, thereby blocking the way to the Kingdom for others. Repentance and faith in Christ is the door of admission into this kingdom, and nothing could be more disagreeable to the Pharisees, who saw no need for repentance in their own lives and attempted to justify themselves by strict adherence to the law.

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:13-14 / 1st Woe

- We need to be wary of false teachers today, people who intentionally or unintentionally mislead the flock. There are many wolves dressed in sheep's clothing. They come in seek to gather people around themselves and their own agenda.
 - Traditions and practices and doctrines could be elevated to take center stage when they are not the most important. Sometimes these lesser matters actually distract us from the important stuff.

The 7 Woes

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:15 / 2nd Woe

- Jesus condemned the leaders for teaching their converts the same hypocrisy that they themselves practiced. They led their converts into a religion of works, but not into true righteousness, making them “twice as much a child of hell” (Matthew 13:15).
- They were not winning people to the true gospel, but instead were converting people to a false religion. It was a religion of works, a religion of impressing people, devoid of a Savior and without a heart of love and compassion.

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:15 / 2nd Woe

- Twice a child of hell - Lead to “out-Phariseeing” the Pharisees
- Focusing exclusively on Prophecy and Geo-political events > Saving yourself > Misalignment of trust > People less hope and faith.

The 7 Woes

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:16-22 / 3rd Woe

- The third woe Jesus pronounced referred to the religious elite as “blind guides” and “blind fools” (Matthew 23:16–17).
- The hypocrites fancied themselves guides of the blind (see Romans 2:19), but they themselves were blind and therefore unfit to guide others.
- Their spiritual blindness caused them to be ignorant of many things, including the identity of the Messiah and the way of salvation.

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:16-22 / 3rd Woe

- They purported to guide the people into the truth, but they were incapable of doing so because they had no personal application of the truth.
- Instead of teaching spiritual truth, they preferred to quibble over irrelevant matters and find loopholes in the rules (Matthew 23:16–22).

The 7 Woes

The 7 Woes

■ **Matthew 23:23-24 / 4th Woe**

- **The religious leaders tithed very carefully. They would even go to the extreme of cutting one tenth of spices or herbs that they had and give those to God. But based on everything we have seen about them in this passage, they did not have the right motivation to do this.**
- **Instead of being motivated by generosity and sacrifice, they were motivated by appearing righteous before others.**

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:23-24 / 4th Woe

- As disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to be careful to major on the majors. We must not stray away from the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- We must not pick out or focus on minor things and let these things distract us, divide us, or in any way become the end goal rather than a means to the end.

The 7 Woes

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:25-28 / 5th & 6th Woes

- The Jewish leaders looked good on the outside, but inside their hearts were rotten. Jeremiah 17:9.
- In the fifth woe, Jesus likened them to dishes that were scrupulously cleaned on the outside but left dirty inside. Their religious observances made them appear clean and virtuous, but inwardly their hearts were full of “greed and self-indulgence”.
 - Proverbs 28:13 – He who conceals a transgression will not prosper.
 - Psalm 90:8 – Our secret sins are in the light of your presence.
 - Isaiah 29:15 – Woe too those who deeply hide their plans from the Lord.

The 7 Woes

- **Matthew 23:25-28 / 5th & 6th Woes**
 - Jesus compared them to “whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean” (Matthew 23:27).
 - The rotting corpse inside a tomb was like the hypocrisy and lawlessness in the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees.

The 7 Woes

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:25-28 / 5th & 6th Woes

- They appeared righteous on the outside, but they were just beautified tombs; inwardly, they were spiritually dead.
- We need to often examine our own heart and motivation and ask why we do the things that we do.

The 7 Woes

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:29-32 / 7th Woe

- They imagined themselves much better than their fathers, saying, “If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets” (Matthew 23:30).
- But in that very statement they acknowledged their lineage: Jesus says they were truly their fathers’ sons; they had inherited their ancestors’ wickedness and were following in their steps.

The 7 Woes

■ Matthew 23:29-32 / 7th Woe

- Jesus knew their evil hearts, which would soon plot to murder Him (Matthew 26:4) just as their ancestors had murdered the righteous men of old.
- So while they verbally distanced themselves from the actions of their ancestors, they would in fact prove themselves to be the same by repeating the same sins.

The 7 Woes

The 7 Woes

■ Vital Lesson Regarding Humility

- The seven woes of Matthew 23 were dire warnings to the religious leaders of Jesus' day.
- But they also serve to warn us against religious hypocrisy today.
- We are called to true godliness, sincere love, and enduring faith.
- Pretension, affectation, and hypocrisy will only lead to woe.

The 7 Woes