

The Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Religious Spirit

Part Two

Who Else Did Jesus Say, “Depart From Me, I Never Knew You.”

Now that we have studied the wedding traditions during the time of Jesus, we have established the proper roles and definitions of characters and symbolism in the parable of the Ten Virgins. Now we will examine the characteristics of the foolish virgins by looking at who else Jesus turns away claiming He did not know them.

The Foolish Virgin – (Who else did Jesus say He did not know?)

Matthew 7: 21-23

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven [will enter]. “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘**I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.**’*

Luke 13:23-27

*And someone said to Him, “Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin standing outside and knocking on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up to us!’ and He then will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from.’ Then you will begin saying, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets!’ And yet He will say, ‘**I do not know where you are from; leave Me, all you evildoers.**’”*

By these two examples, it seems there are people who will be attending church, working in ministries, teaching the Word, even performing miracles who do not actually know (ginosko) Jesus. They will have the appearance of knowing (oida) Him; but will not in reality be saved. Let us go further and see what Jesus says to the Pharisees, another group who He says will not get into heaven.

Jesus’s Words to the Pharisees

Matthew 5:20

“For I say to you that unless your righteousness far surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 6: 1-5

“Take care not to practice your righteousness in the sight of people, to be noticed by them; otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, so that they will be praised by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your charitable giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. “And when you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they will be seen by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.”

Matthew 6: 16-18

“Now whenever you fast, do not make a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they distort their faces so that they will be noticed by people when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But as for you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that your fasting will not be noticed by people but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

Matthew 23:1-36

“Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses. Therefore, whatever they tell you, do and [comply with it all, but do not do as they do; for they say things and do not do them. And they tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as their finger. And they do all their deeds to be noticed by other people; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the seats of honor in the synagogues, and personal greetings in the marketplaces, and being called Rabbi by the people. But as for you, do not be called Rabbi; for only One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for only One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for only One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest of you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.’”

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven in front of people; for you do not enter it yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but

whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.’ You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? And you say, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the offering that is on it is obligated.’ You blind men, which is more important, the offering or the altar that sanctifies the offering? Therefore, the one who swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. And the one who swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells in it. And the one who swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the Law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may also become clean.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you too, outwardly appear righteous to people, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs for the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, and you say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You snakes, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?”

Pharisees and the Religious Spirit

The Pharisees were a fraternal order or a religious society in biblical days. The highest qualification for membership was strict adherence to the Law, oral and written. They had placed themselves in a position of authority for the teaching of the Law. *“The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses.”* (Matthew 23:2) The chair of Moses was a bench placed at the front of the synagogue. Sitting on this chair signified that you were the authority on the law and all spiritual teaching.

These men were highly regarded among the people for their piety and appearance of holiness. Yet Jesus warned them that they would not escape the sentence of hell (Matthew 23:33). He even called the Pharisees whitewashed tombs. A person who stepped on a grave became ceremonially unclean. Graves were whitewashed to make them easily visible, especially

at night. This phrase was given to people who were hypocrites, they appeared clean and beautiful on the outside, but they were dirty and rotten on the inside.

The Scribes and the Pharisees were the very ones whom the people depended on for spiritual guidance. It was these who studied the scriptures and practiced righteousness more than anyone else. They knew better than anyone the signs pointing to the coming of the Messiah. **Yet they missed their Savior when He was standing right in front of them.**

Jesus called the Pharisees and scribes hypocrites. According to Websters Dictionary, a hypocrite is 1) a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion. 2) a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings. Also according to Websters Dictionary, a pharisaical spirit is: (adj) addicted to external forms and ceremonies; making a show of religion without the spirit of it; ceremonial; formal; hypocritical; self-righteous.

Using Jesus' words that described the character of the Pharisees, we can further determine the character of those who Jesus states He does not know. Below is a list of their characteristics:

- When they fasted, they acted as though it was a hardship, but they did it anyway for the "glory of God."
- They said things but did not do them. They taught the Law and required obedience in the smallest of detail, but they did not follow themselves.
- They pretended to have virtues and morals, but in reality they were filled with wickedness.
- They were big on the external show of ceremony, but they did not have the spirit of it.
- They paid attention to what the law required even to the minutia of detail. However, they did not practice what God required: to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God.
- They were more concerned with outer purity than with purity of their hearts.
- Assumed leadership roles either in the church or in the lives of others they influence.
- Took the superior role in given situations, considering themselves as the expert or more knowledgeable person.
- Assumed to themselves the duties and esteem of an office.
- Assumed the place of honor even outside of the synagogue setting.
- Expected the veneration for their position. They were concerned about their reputation and wanted to be recognized and paid honor.

- They liked to be seen and recognized; treated with respect in the marketplace. Sought attention and wanted to be treated with elevated honor and admiration in all settings.
- They are more interested in their image and appearance, considering this reflected their true character and godliness. But inside they were conspirators and would do anything to maintain their position and status.
- They did their deeds to be noticed by men.
- They made these phylacteries broad, that they might be thought more zealous for the law than others.
- The Pharisees made their fringes larger than others, as if they were thereby more religious and kept the commandments more than others.
- Glorified themselves not God by practicing their righteousness before men to be noticed.
- Gave notice of their offerings, so as to gain attention for their generosity.
- Prayed in such a way that others notice. They offered long prayers in pretense and for appearance. Speaking long soliloquies, even sounding pious not for the sake of praying, but for the sake of impressing others.
- They were more interested more in their appearance and reputation, then actually doing the right thing.
- In their jealousy they falsely accused Jesus as being of the devil.
- In their jealousy, the Pharisees planned in intrigue and collusion to falsely accuse and ruin Jesus.
- Instead of rejoicing for the miracles, they saw Jesus as a rival. For fear of losing their position and popularity, they made up reasons to undermine and discredit Him.
- Placed more importance and reverence for money than they did on the House of God.
- They did not consider themselves as sinners in need of a Savior; but having a righteousness of their own.
- They did not give of themselves in love.
- They taught about God, but not about the love of God, so they lost the key to heaven and prevented others from entering as well.

- They praised God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him.
- They insisted on signs as proof of Jesus' divinity. However, they did not consider the healing of the sick and His working miracles as good enough.
- They claimed they would never have persecuted and murdered the prophets when, in fact they were doing just that with Jesus.
- Placed works as more important than grace.
- Professed to be teachers, they did not sympathize with the troubles of those they taught.
- They required the strictest adherence to the traditions and laws they taught. Even if that adherence would cause hardship for the people.
- They would drive people into poverty through their demands for offerings or payments in the name of religion, even if those payments included the seizure of a widow's estate.
- They would place burdens on the people but would not help them when the people were in need.
- They were judgmental and critical of the people they were to minister to. They judged people by their appearance.
- They considered those outside their order as beneath them.
- Condemned Jesus as a wine bibber and a glutton because He dined with sinners and tax collectors. (The people who needed to hear about God.)

In summary we can say that those with a pharisaical spirit are hypocrites, assume leadership, and are greatly concerned with their reputation. In addition, they are legalists, jealous, judgmental and critical. They may study the law but do not know God.

Using these characteristics, the next and section will offer questions to the reader to help examine their hearts to discern a religious spirit.