

Lesson 20: [“Woe unto You, ... Hypocrites”](#)

Class Member Reading: Matthew 21-23; John 12:1-8

21 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” (Does this seem like donkey rustling to anyone else? 😊) ⁴This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, ⁵“Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (This would have been the most explicit claim to be a king of any of Jesus’ actions—the symbolism is quite clear. Remember that he was executed for claiming to be the “King of the Jews”)⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “**Hosanna to the Son of David!** Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” ¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?”¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the **prophet** Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.” Celebrating Jesus as prophet and Messiah.

¹²Then Jesus entered the temple (This would have been in the “Court of the Gentiles”, which was massive... the temple complex 500x325 yards, big enough to enclose 25 football fields! Jesus didn’t really disrupt anything, but was enacting a symbolic action that predicted God’s destruction of the temple) and drove out all who were **selling and buying** in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³He said to them, “**It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a den of robbers.**” Personal application: Make sure we are keeping spiritual aspects central and engaging in worship and religion, not business. ¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured

them.¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became angry¹⁶ and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?’”¹⁷ He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

¹⁸In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry.¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once.²⁰ When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”²¹ Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree (What, kill random plant life? This is a strange story. In the context of the surrounding narratives, this action is a sign of judgment against those who control the temple), but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done.²² Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

²³When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.”²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Sharing when people are ready to hear/have sincere intent.

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went.³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go.³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did

not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him. The ideal is to make a good decision and then follow through. But it is far better to change our mind if we do make a poor decision rather than promising to do the right thing and then not following through.

³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.³⁴ When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce.³⁵ But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.³⁶ Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.⁴⁴ The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet. This is a dark and harsh parable that has its origin in Jesus’ followers seeking to understand why Jesus died and how the Jewish people could have failed to accept him as the Messiah. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 was seen as God’s judgment on the Jews for rejecting Jesus.

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and

my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business,⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city (This seems to be evidence that Matthew was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70).⁸ Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy.⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe,¹² and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ (Read OBC on this passage—quite obscure) And he was speechless.¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said.¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality.¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?”¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites?¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius.²⁰ Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?”²¹ They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then he said to them, **“Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”**²² When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away. I think Jesus’ brilliant response prompts us to reflect on balance and priorities in our lives. What do we owe to God? What do we owe to our community? What do we owe to our relationships, to ourselves?

²³The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying,²⁴ “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.’²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother.²⁶ The second did the same, so

also the third, down to the seventh.²⁷ Last of all, the woman herself died.²⁸ In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her.” (The Sadducees are pointing out the absurdity of certain conceptions of marriage in heaven)²⁹ Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God.³⁰ For **in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage**, but are like angels in heaven.³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God,³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is God not of the dead, but of the living.”³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching. **Discussion point: how does marriage work in heaven?**

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together,³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”³⁷ He said to him, “‘You shall **love the Lord your God** with all your **heart**, and with all your **soul**, and with all your **mind**.’³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall **love your neighbor as yourself**.’⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Such a rich passage worth reflection and discussion. Matthew 25 makes clear what King Benjamin’s speech does: we love and serve God precisely *by* loving and serving each other.

⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question:⁴² “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.”⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’? ⁴⁵If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?”⁴⁶ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. **This is one of the scriptures that led to Jesus’ followers worshipping him as divine.**

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, (we need to be careful about how we discuss this chapter and those like it)² “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat;³ therefore, **do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.** Hypocrisy: When our representations do not align with reality, when we are

not as we seem. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but **they themselves are unwilling** to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They **do all their deeds to be seen by others**; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ⁶They **love to have the place of honor** at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, **Jesus is condemning the motivation for status and glory/the approval of humans.** ⁷and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. ⁹And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. ¹¹**The greatest among you will be your servant.** ¹²**All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.** Such a powerful truth. If we seek status and glory they will be false and unsatisfying—but if we live in such a way to *deserve* status, it will come to us but not corrupt us (talk about wu wei).

¹³“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them. ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. ¹⁶“Woe to you, **blind guides**, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.’ ¹⁷You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? ¹⁸And you say, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.’ ¹⁹How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; ²¹and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; ²²and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it. ²³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and **have neglected the weightier matters of the law:** justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. **Important teaching about balance here—Jesus is saying that we should follow the details of religious observance, but they must never ever get in the way of the “weightier matters of the law”.** **Important principle to discuss life application.** ²⁴You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! ²⁵“Woe to you, scribes and

Pharisees, hypocrites! For **you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.** (Makes me think of priests who do anything on Saturday and bless the sacrament on Sunday, with all of the other age-appropriate correlations. We can ask ourselves if we make ourselves look righteous to our peers while not having our hearts and lives aligned with God) ²⁶You blind Pharisee! First **clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.** Our external actions must stem from our insides being clean, our heart being in the right place. ²⁷“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. ²⁸So **you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.** ²⁹“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, ³⁰ and you say, ‘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.’ (Do we defend ideas just because they are familiar? Are we open to new prophets, new revelation?) ³¹Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. ³³You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?

³⁴Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, ³⁵so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah (the author confuses two men; see 2 Chr 24:20-22, who was killed, and Zech 1:1, which describes Zechariah son of Barachiah), whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation. ³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸See, your house is left to you, desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

I would add **Luke 18:9-14**, which expresses similar ideas even more clearly:

⁹He also told this parable to some **who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt:** ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, **this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.**” *When we are humble we can see our weaknesses, limitations, shortcomings, which opens the path to improvement, even transformation. If we cannot see our weaknesses we are in a quite literal way damned.*

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” ⁶(**He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; (making up a story to cover true intentions)** he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

Additional Reading: [Matthew 26:6–13](#); [Mark 11–12;14:3–9](#); [Luke 11:37–51](#); [19:29–48](#); [20](#); [John 12:12–18](#); Bible Dictionary, [“Pharisees,”](#) 750; [“Sadducees,”](#) 767; [“Spikenard,”](#) 776.

[Matthew 26:6–13](#)

⁶Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. ⁸But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, “Why this waste? ⁹For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.”¹⁰But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. ¹¹For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. ¹³Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told **in remembrance of her.**” (The title of an importance work of feminist New Testament scholarship).

[Mark 11–12;14:3–9](#)

11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹¹Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

¹²On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry.¹³ Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.¹⁴ He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it. (Mark’s version is a bit more awkward and confusing)

¹⁵Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves;¹⁶ and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.¹⁷ He was teaching and saying, “Is it not written,

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” (Note about the historical context of Mark)

¹⁸And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching.¹⁹ And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

²⁰In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots.²¹ Then Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.”²² Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God.²³ Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.²⁴ So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

²⁵“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.”²⁷ Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him²⁸ and said, “By what authority are you

doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?”²⁹ Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.³⁰ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me.”³¹ They argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’³² But shall we say, ‘Of human origin?’” —they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet.³³ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

12 Then he began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.² When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard.³ But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed.⁴ And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted.⁵ Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed.⁶ He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’⁷ But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’⁸ So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.⁹ What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.¹⁰ Have you not read this scripture:

‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
¹¹this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes?’”

¹²When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

¹³Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said.¹⁴ And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?¹⁵ Should we pay them, or should we not?” But

knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.” ¹⁶ And they brought one. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s.” ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were utterly amazed at him.

¹⁸ Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, ¹⁹ “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that ‘if a man’s brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.’ ²⁰ There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; ²¹ and the second married her and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; ²² none of the seven left children. Last of all the woman herself died. ²³ In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her.”

²⁴ Jesus said to them, “Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? ²⁵ For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ²⁶ And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ ²⁷ He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.”

²⁸ One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ³² Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; ³³ and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’ —this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

³⁵While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared,

‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet.”’

³⁷David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

³⁸As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! ⁴⁰They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Mark 14:3-9

³While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴But **some were there** (Notice how it is vague in the earlier gospel of Mark but specific in John, where this question is attributed to Judas alone) who said to one another in anger, “Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.” And they scolded her. ⁶But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷For you always have

the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

[Luke 11:37–51](#)

³⁷While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to dine with him; so he went in and took his place at the table. ³⁸The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not first wash before dinner. ³⁹Then the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹So **give for alms** those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you. ⁴²“But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect **justice and the love of God**; it is these you ought to have practiced, without neglecting the others. ⁴³Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honor in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without realizing it.” ⁴⁵One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us too.” ⁴⁶And he said, “Woe also to you lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them. ⁴⁷Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. ⁴⁸So you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹Therefore also the **Wisdom of God** (Note the personification—Wisdom is a female divine figure) said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ ⁵⁰so that this generation may be charged with the blood of all the

prophets shed since the foundation of the world,⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation.

Luke [19:29–48](#); [20](#)

²⁹When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples,³⁰ saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here.³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’”³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them.³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”³⁴ They said, “The Lord needs it.”³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road.³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen,³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.”⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

⁴¹As he came near and saw the city, **he wept over it,**⁴² saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side.⁴⁴ They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.” (This also seems to be a specific reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70. Mark lacks anything as specific)⁴⁵ Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there;⁴⁶ and he said, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer’; but you have made it a den of robbers.”⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him;⁴⁸ but

they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

20One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and telling the good news, the chief priests and the scribes came with the elders ²and said to him, “Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?” ³He answered them, “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: ⁴Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” ⁵They discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ ⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us; for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” ⁷So they answered that they did not know where it came from. ⁸Then Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

⁹He began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, and leased it to tenants, and went to another country for a long time. ¹⁰When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants in order that they might give him his share of the produce of the vineyard; but the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹Next he sent another slave; that one also they beat and insulted and sent away empty-handed. ¹²And he sent still a third; this one also they wounded and threw out. ¹³Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴But when the tenants saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance may be ours.’ ¹⁵So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Heaven forbid!” ¹⁷But he looked at them and said, “What then does this text mean: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? ¹⁸Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” ¹⁹When the scribes and chief priests realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to lay hands on him at that very hour, but they feared the people.

²⁰So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor. ²¹So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you

are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth.²² Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?"²³ But he perceived their craftiness and said to them,²⁴ "Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?" They said, "The emperor's."²⁵ He said to them, "Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's."²⁶ And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said; and being amazed by his answer, they became silent.

²⁷Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him²⁸ and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.²⁹ Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless;³⁰ then the second³¹ and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless.³² Finally the woman also died.³³ In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her."³⁴ Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage;³⁵ but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.³⁶ Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.³⁷ And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.³⁸ Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive." **The Sadducees only considered the Torah authoritative, so Jesus is meeting them on their ground.**

³⁹Then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well."⁴⁰ For they no longer dared to ask him another question.⁴¹ Then he said to them, "How can they say that the Messiah is David's son?⁴² For David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,⁴³ until I make your enemies your footstool.'"⁴⁴ David thus calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?"⁴⁵ In the hearing of all the people he said to the disciples,⁴⁶ "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets.⁴⁷ They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the

greater condemnation.”

[John 12:12–18](#)

¹²The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord— the King of Israel!” ¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: ¹⁵“Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” ¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him. ¹⁷So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. ¹⁸It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him.

Bible Dictionary, [“Pharisees,”](#) 750; [\(Read Oxford Companion for these\)](#)

A religious party among the Jews. The name denotes separatists. They prided themselves on their strict observance of the law and on the care with which they avoided contact with things gentile. Their belief included the doctrine of immortality and resurrection of the body and the existence of angels and spirits. They upheld the authority of oral tradition as of equal value with the written law. The tendency of their teaching was to reduce religion to the observance of a multiplicity of ceremonial rules and to encourage self-sufficiency and spiritual pride. They were a major obstacle to the reception of Christ and the gospel by the Jewish people. For the Lord’s judgment on them and their works see [Matt. 23](#); [Mark 7](#); [Luke 11:37–54](#). [This is a very skewed perspective. Paul was a devout Pharisee before his vision of Jesus \(Philippians](#)

3:5).

[“Sadducees,”](#) 767

A party or caste among the Jews. The name is probably derived from Zadok, the high priest in Solomon’s time. The party consisted of old high-priestly families who came to the front during the Maccabean war. They formed the Jewish aristocracy and were powerful, though quite small in numbers. In their treatment of religious questions they held to the letter of the Mosaic revelation and denied the authority of ancient tradition; they taught complete freedom of the will in moral action; they were opposed to the Pharisees as to the belief in angels and spirits; they refused also to accept the doctrine of immortality as a necessary part of the Jewish faith. It was through their influence that Greek culture spread in Israel. Their opposition to our Lord was the result of His action in cleansing the temple, which they regarded as an infringement of their rights. They opposed the work of the Apostles because they preached the Resurrection ([Acts 4:1–3](#); [23:7–8](#); see also [Mark 12:18–27](#)).

[“Spikenard,”](#) 776.

The Greek word denotes pistis nard, *pistic* being perhaps a local name; some take it to mean “genuine”; others, “liquid.” Nard was made from the root of a tree, with a strong aromatic odor ([Song 1:12](#); [4:13–14](#); [Mark 14:3–5](#); [John 12:3–5](#)).

Scripture Chain: [Matthew 22:37](#); [Joshua 24:15](#); [1 Nephi 3:7](#); [Omni 1:26](#); [D&C 4:1–2](#); [D&C 20:37](#)

[Matthew 22:37](#)

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

[Joshua 24:15](#)

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose you this day** whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

[1 Nephi 3:7](#)

7 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.

[Omni 1:26](#)

26 And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and **offer your whole souls as an offering unto him**, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved. [I love this idea—giving ourselves over the gospel and power of transformation and growth, holding nothing back.](#)

[D&C 4:1–2](#)

1 Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.

2 Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your **heart, might, mind and strength**, that ye may

stand blameless before God at the last day.

D&C 20:37

*37 And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism—All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with **broken hearts** and **contrite spirits**, and witness before the church that they **have truly repented of all their sins**, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a **determination to serve him to the end**, and truly **manifest by their works** that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.*