

THE BIGGEST HYPOCRITE OF ALL

Matthew 23:29-39

I. PROPHETS WHO ARE DEAD, THEY PRETEND TO HONOR. Vs. 29

- A. This is the eighth and last time, in which these words are delivered in this exact form by our Lord, in this chapter; this is the most serious of all the “woes.”
- B. These outwardly godly men honored the prophets’ memory while renouncing their message.
- C. One despising God’s heralds, scoffing at his prophets, and murdering those innocent people who refuse to go along with you is being “The BIGGEST hypocrite of all.” See 2 Chron. 36:16

II. PROPHET KILLERS, THEY PRETEND TO CONDEMN. Vs. 30

- A. This is a nice speech, but a glaring admission of their guilt.
- B. This may be compared to one facing the “Vietnam Memorial,” in tears, while burning the U.S. flag.

III. PROPHET KILLER’S SONS ARE THEY. Vss. 31-33

- A. In what way did these hypocrites betray themselves as being murderers? Vs 31
 - 1. They confessed without shame to being sons of prophet killers.
 - 2. Beneath the veneer of high devotion, Jesus sees the same superficiality and ceremonialism.
 - 3. They further incriminated themselves by saying that these prophets were true prophets. Deut. 18
 - 4. Jesus predicted they would repeat the past. **Matthew 5:12** "Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (NASB)
 - 5. They knew the standard against which their fathers sinned and still repeated it.
- B. This clearly shows that God can and will give up on some, even chosen, people. Vs. 32
 - 1. Jesus is not ordering folks to repeat their ancestors wickedness; He rather envisions them doing so.
- C. 1. Almost word for word from his cousin’s censure. See Matt. 3:7 (instead of wrath there is Hell)

IV. PROPHETS, THE NEW WAVE, THEY WILL ALSO KILL. Vs. 34

- A. Therefore, the Lord will do the totally unexpected and astonishingly unpredictable.
 - 1. In spite of the murderous project of this wicked men, our Lord stills sees the necessity of going the distance to the cross and sending in new recruits to fill the ranks of fallen prophets.
 - 2. These new martyrs will not simply be cannon fodder, but will be used to double the love of God for the salvation of the Jews as well as the Gentiles.
- B. Behold, I send you prophets: Who does He think He is anyway? Only the Lord God sends prophets (2 Chron. 36:15f.). See also: Eph. 2:20; 4:1; 1 Cor. 12:28
 - 1. Prophets like Steven and Philip (Acts 7, 8). Those in Antioch (Acts 13:1). Agabus (Acts 11:27ff.) Judas and Syllas (Acts 15:32). Philip’s daughters (Acts 21:9)
 - 2. Wise men like Barnabas and Appolos (Acts 18:24ff).
 - 3. Scribes like Luke and Mark who had to be prophets also.

V. PROPHETS, FROM THE FIRST TO THE LAST, THEY ARE GUILTY OF KILLING. Vss. 35-36

- A. They will be answering for the murder of the martyrs.

1. Even if it meant the sacrifice of His heralds, He was offering complete amnesty to anyone who would surrender.
 2. Nobody was forced, no one's freedom compromised. Everyone could cast his personal vote, for, or against, Jesus of Nazareth, but no one could escape the inevitable consequences of his individual decision.
- B. Three questions remain to be considered:
1. Why should all this guilt be required of one single generation of Jews?
 - a. "Injustice! To blame one generation for all the world's innocent victims is unworthy of God!"
 - b. Jesus' generation is composed of the sons of those who murdered these witnesses for God (23:31).
 2. What is involved in the great time-span from Abel to Zechariah?
 - a. Abel could have been the first prophet of sorts. His message came from God (Heb. 11:4).
 - b. But who is Zechariah? Because the book of Chronicles occurs last in the Hebrew canon, the last martyred prophet of God in the Hebrew Old Testament is the priestly Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, stoned to death in the court of the Temple (II Chron. 24:20ff.)
 3. Who is this Zechariah and what has Abel to do with Jesus' basic point?
 - a. Because the past had prepared for the present. It may require generations for these to come to a head. But the past would lose with the present. The ancient, prophet-murdering fathers would now lose all they had so carefully transmitted to posterity, as their descendants were swept away in the fury of God.
 - b. Because the present welcomed the past. By murdering God's Son, persecuting His apostles and other messengers, Jesus' contemporaries would sin in full light of their own history's lessons.
 4. No wonder the wrath of God was timed to explode in that generation (this crowd - this people)! More astonishing yet is the forty years of grace God bestowed on His people before outraged justice lashed Jerusalem in a holocaust of blood in 70 A.D. See Matt. 21:40.

VI. PROPHET KILLERS ARE ACCRETED TO JERUSALEM. Vss. 37-39

- A. Jerusalem was the theocratic center of the nation; as Jerusalem went so went the nation. This city was the mother of its inhabitants and would be accountable for them.
- B. He repeats the word Jerusalem, Jerusalem to emphasize the fact of His deep love for it.
- C. The hen/ chicks illustration shows the closeness and bravery in times of danger in the city.
- D. "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate."

Matthew 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it." (NASB)

Matthew 22:7 "But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire." (NASB)
- E. They shall see Jesus no more as the Son-of Man or the incarnation; but if they ever see Him, it will be by the eye of faith. If they choose to see him by sight again, it will be in judgment.