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Luke 11:14 - 11:54



Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg analyzes Luke 11:14-54 and explores the common theme of casting out demons. He highlights the significance of Jesus' ability to command demons and the importance of followers acting upon preserving their gains. Gregg also delves into the attitudes towards ceremonial cleanness, the expansion of Pharisees' ideas of uncleanness, and religious rituals. He concludes by discussing the uncomfortable nature of certain passages in the Bible that speak unkindly of the Jews, using examples from Paul's writings.

Transcript

Picking up again, Luke at chapter 11, verse 14. There's a turn in subject matter here, it would appear. In chapter 11, verses 1-13, all the teaching there seems to be one way or another as concerning prayer.

It began with Jesus' disciples asking him to teach them about prayer, to teach them how to pray, and so he does. He talks about prayer. But now, in verse 14, something new.

It says, and as he was, excuse me, as he was casting out a demon, which he did on a frequent basis, but this was a particular case that led to some claims against him by his enemies. And it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke, and the multitudes marveled.

But some of them said, he casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. And others, testing him, sought from him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.

If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub, and if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace, they're secure.

But when a stronger than he comes upon him, and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor, in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." Now this is one of those cases where Luke is giving us a story in a certain connection and context, and there's a very similar story, if not the same one, in Matthew. There is reason to believe it's a different story that's very much like it.

For one thing, everything that happens in the story are things that might have happened very commonly in Jesus' ministry. One, he cast out a demon. That's not uncommon in Jesus' ministry.

Two, they claimed he was doing it by Beelzebub. That also apparently was not uncommon. Matthew and Luke both seem to testify that this kind of a thing was brought against him more than once, this charge that he was in league with the devil, and that's why he was able to do these things.

And then Jesus gives an answer such as this in both cases. The other case, by the way, is in Matthew 12, and one could easily suggest that it's the same case, but that Matthew has put it in a different context than Luke. And while that is a possibility, there are differences sufficient to really question whether it could be the same case.

For the most part, the beginning of the story sounds the same. Jesus casts out a demon at the beginning of the story, and in this case, it says the demon was mute. And when the demon was cast out, the demon-possessed person was able to speak.

Now in Matthew 12, 22, the demon was also mute, but also blind. In Matthew 12, 22, it says, Then one was brought to him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute, and he healed him so that the blind and the mute both spoke and saw. Now this could be, of course, the same man.

It could be that he was blind and mute, and Luke only mentions the muteness and doesn't mention the blindness, although I would think the blindness would be every bit as important to mention as the muteness, so it could be two different demon-possessed men. We know that demon possession and Jesus casting out demons was not at all a rare thing in Jesus' ministry, and there may have been cases very similar to each other. In the case of Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus cast this demon out, the crowds were amazed and said, surely this is the Son of David, which means the Messiah.

And it says, when the Pharisees heard the people saying that, they said, this fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. So we have the same charge made here, but there's no reason to doubt that once this charge had been suggested among the Pharisees, that that would be their standard answer. Every time Jesus cast out a demon and was making a profound impression on the crowds, this would be the standard reply of the Pharisees, he's doing it by Beelzebub.

So this could be a different case. We do not read in Luke's case about the people proclaiming Jesus to be the Son of David here or the Messiah. It could be something Luke simply omits, but it also is an important part in Matthew's Gospel of the reason why the Pharisees brought the charge, and it's not mentioned here.

But more than that, Jesus answers very similarly in both cases, but differently too. And that's one of the things that makes me think it could be a different occasion. Because although he says some of the same things, he said if Satan's casting out Satan, then his kingdom's going to fall.

True. He says if I'm casting out demons by Beelzebub, then you're going to have to explain how your sons are casting them out, because the Pharisees also had their own exorcists of the Jewish religion. The seven sons of Sceva were among them.

They were Jewish exorcists. And the Jews had exorcists too. Apparently not quite as successful as Jesus and not at all using the same methods.

Because exorcism was usually done by incantations and rituals, even as the Roman Catholic Church still practices when they do exorcisms, they have this holy water sprinkling and these rituals that they read and so forth, and the Jews had their own rituals for exorcism as well. Jesus never used rituals. He just commanded the demons to go, and the demons recognized who he was and went.

And this was something that made his exorcisms completely different than those of others. However, Jesus casting out demons was not doing something that others didn't do. That is to say, others cast out demons too, whether by exorcistic rituals or otherwise.

He's saying if I'm necessarily casting demons out by Beelzebub, that is if casting out demons is proof that someone's acting by Beelzebub, then your sons must be acting by Beelzebub when they cast out demons too. He said that in both places. And then he talks about the strong man and his goods, and this is kind of interesting because it's different, significantly different, in Matthew than it is in Luke.

So much so that if it's the same story, one of the authors, either Luke or Matthew, has significantly altered the contents. Whereas if Jesus gave the same teaching twice, he might have made the kind of variations that we read about here. Because in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said, No one can enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods unless he first binds the strong man, and then he shall spoil his goods.

The idea, and this is of Matthew 12, 29. He talks about going into a strong man's house, binding him, and burglarizing his house, or plundering his goods, taking them from him. Now, we've got a similar but different imagery here because he says in Luke 11, verse 21 and 22, when a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoils. Now, this almost could be the same saying, but Matthew compressing it into less detail. But the trouble is, it's not just less detail, it's different detail.

A different picture. It's a picture, in one case, of binding a man, and in the other case, of taking his armor away so that he's defenseless. Now, either one of these makes an equally good teaching of the point Jesus is trying to make, but it's not likely that if Jesus talked about taking a man's armor away, that Matthew would paraphrase that to be binding him.

It's just a different imagery altogether. Both binding a man and taking away his armor would have the same effect. Namely, if he's a strong man and would ordinarily defend himself and his goods against burglars and invaders, binding him or taking away his armor, either one would make him vulnerable, make him incapable of resistance.

It would give you the free hand to do with his stuff whatever you want to do with it. And the point that Jesus is making, of course, is the strong man's house. It's Satan in the world, I believe.

Now, some would say it's the demon and the victim whose demon possess. That is, the demon is the strong man, and the demon-possessed person is the house. And that's a possible understanding.

But I think Jesus is giving a bigger picture than that. Because he says, if I'm casting out demons by the spirit of God, or here he says by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. And he illustrates it with this imagery of coming to a strong man's house.

I believe Jesus has come into the world, which is a strong man's house. Jesus has brought his kingdom into the devil's domain. And he is plundering the house by casting demons out of people.

These people are Satan's captives. And Jesus is just saying, I'm going to let you go. I'm going to release you.

I'm going to take you out of the possession of Satan and just let you walk. I'm in Satan's house opening all the doors so his captives can go. I'm plundering his house by casting demons out of people.

I think that's what he's saying. And of course, what he's saying is also this. The fact that I'm doing this should tell you something about the unseen realm.

You can see that I'm casting demons out. You can see Satan's house is being plundered. It should tell you, first of all, that I'm stronger than he is.

And secondly, that I have rendered him incapable of resistance. Whether you use the imagery of binding him, which would render him incapable of resistance, or taking away his armor, which renders him incapable of resistance. The idea is Satan's house is visibly being plundered.

The kingdom of God has shown up. I am casting out demons. That should tell you that the invisible reality that you have not noticed is true.

The kingdom of God has come. And the fact that I'm plundering Satan's house should tell you that Satan has been reduced to impotence, more or less, because I'm a stronger one than him. And I'm doing what I want in his house.

He must have been disabled if I'm doing that. He must have somehow been reduced to inability to resist. Now, the Bible does use that kind of language in the New Testament of what Christ accomplished to Satan, although usually the epistles refer to Christ's death as the thing that brought Satan into this vulnerable condition.

Jesus was saying these things before his death, but in all likelihood, we're to understand that his death and his life are all of one piece. It's like the coming of Christ to the world. His life, his ministry, his death, his resurrection, all of that is seen as one event.

It's the invasion. It's the conquest of Satan. And Jesus could, in a sense, no doubt enjoy the fruits of his conquest even before his death was accomplished, just like he could forgive sins before he had died as an atonement for sins.

His presence here had set in motion those things that would culminate in his death, which the whole appearance of Jesus is the conquest of Satan, has reduced Satan. But in the New Testament, for example, in Colossians 2 and verse 15, it says that Christ disarmed, like he says here, taking away the armor of the strongman, it says Christ disarmed principalities and powers and made a show of them, openly triumphing over them in the cross, although some manuscripts say in him, which might not be focused on the cross, but just by Christ's presence, he disarmed them. Colossians 2.15. Also, in Hebrews 2.14, it says that Christ partook of flesh and blood, that is, he became human, so that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Hebrews 2.14. Through death, Jesus destroyed him who had the power of death, which is the devil. Now, destroyed here doesn't mean he's annihilated, because obviously Satan isn't annihilated. But the word destroyed, which is in the Greek *katergeo*, its lexicon meaning is to reduce to inactivity.

It's very similar to the image of binding him. Through death, Jesus reduced Satan to inactivity. Now, is Satan truly inactive? Well, no.

Obviously, there's some particular type of activity, some particular realm in which

Satan's activity has been countered and overcome. Probably the activity of binding and keeping his victims or keeping them under condemnation or something else. Jesus, through his death, overcame Satan's tyranny over mankind and, as this statement would suggest, rendered him incapable of putting up a resistance.

Now, as you know, I'm an amillennialist, and I believe that when Revelation 20 talks about an angel putting a chain on the dragon and throwing him into the pit and putting a lid on it and so forth, that this is just a more picturesque and dramatic way of depicting this same phenomenon, that Jesus, in his life and death, bound the strongman, bound the devil, disarmed him, rendered him powerless. And the casting of the dragon with a chain into a pit with a lid and all that, I think, is just window dressing of the vision. It's basically just being very emphatic and picturesque and saying, this is how Satan has been reduced, in a way, by Christ's life and death and resurrection.

And I believe that Jesus talking this way about the strongman and the binding and so forth is his way of telling us the same thing that Revelation 20 tells us when it describes it more in a picture language. This is picture language, too, just different picture. So Jesus interprets his own mission of casting out demons as demonstrating something spiritual.

Just like when Jesus healed the lame man and said, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I'm going to do this visible thing, because me forgiving sins is not visible to you, but if I can make him stand and walk, that's visible and that will demonstrate that I'm not just making this up, that I really do have an authority that I'm claiming to have. Likewise, as the healings that Jesus performed were visible signs of certain spiritual truths that were otherwise invisible, so he says, my casting demons out, which you can see me doing, is a revelation of a spiritual thing that you can't see, namely, the enemy has been reduced. Just like when the disciples came back from, the 70 came back and they said, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name, well, that's what they could see.

He said, I saw something else. I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I'm seeing something going on in the bigger picture, the bigger spiritual realm.

I'm seeing Satan's collapse. I'm seeing him bound. I'm seeing him reduced to helplessness in the face of my advancing kingdom.

He cannot stop it. It's like a stone that becomes a great mountain to fill the whole earth, and as it does, it crushes all its resistance. It crushes all the kingdoms of Satan to dust, and by the way, Jesus said something a lot like that, actually, in Matthew chapter 21, speaking about his kingdom.

In Matthew 21, 44, Jesus said, whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder. That's Matthew 21, 44. Now, a stone

grinding something to powder under it is the picture that Daniel gives of the kingdom of God, like a stone comes and it grinds up all the kingdoms of the world, all the metals, and they become fine dust, and the wind carries them away like chaff from the threshing floor, Daniel said.

This is the imagery. The kingdom of God has invaded the world. It is advancing.

It is growing. It is crushing its opposition, spiritually speaking. Its opposition is not Rome.

Its opposition is the devil. The devil and his demons are overwhelmed, overpowered, and helpless to successfully inhibit the advance of the kingdom of God, and the casting out of demons was his way of demonstrating that there is something that has happened in this realm, and so Jesus is often pointing to the visible acts he's doing and saying, now, here's what's true spiritually behind it. You see this much, that's visible.

The part that's invisible, I'll tell you what it is, because I see that, okay? Now, verse 24, when an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places seeking rest and finding none. He says, I will return to the house from which I came, and when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Now, on the surface, this looks like it is simply a teaching about the behavior of demons and what happens after he's done an exorcism. Well, this is in the context of him having done an exorcism, and so he says, you know, you saw this demon go out of this man. Well, when a demon goes out, this is where he goes, and sometimes he'll come back and bring a lot of his buddies with him and, you know, bring a worse situation than the one that was remedied.

Now, like I said, Luke doesn't give us any clue that this is talking about anything other than just what demons do. Matthew has this teaching also, probably given on another occasion, in Matthew chapter 12, verses 43 through 45, and Jesus in Matthew says the same thing, but at the end of it, he says, thus shall it be with this wicked generation. In other words, this demon-possessed man, who has a demon go out of him, and then seven worse comes in, and he's worse off at the end than he was at the beginning.

He said that's what's going to happen to this generation. What's the parallel there? That generation in Israel, when Jesus arrived, was largely under the control of the devil. In fact, demon possessions seem to be evident everywhere in Israel.

The devil really had a foothold there. Jesus' ministry uprooted that foothold, casting out many demons and even more than that, bringing light, bringing truth. I mean, the devil's only hope is to keep people blind and in deception and in the darkness.

Well, Jesus was the light of the world. He came and he drove out the darkness, and the

nation of Israel, that generation was like a man delivered of demons, like a man who had been under the control of Satan, but here had come Jesus and basically brought light where there had been darkness, brought truth where there was deception, brought deliverance to the captives. But he's saying it's going to get worse.

This same generation that's been delivered is going to be seven times worse for them. And why? It's not stated explicitly, but it sounds like he's saying that when a man has been delivered of a demon, he needs to follow up on that by closing the doors against reinvasion. And no doubt that is, he closed the doors by becoming a follower of Christ and walking in obedience and faith and not doing the kinds of things that open up the doors for the demons.

But the case that Jesus gives as an example seems to be a man who doesn't take those precautions. A man has been demon possessed, he gets set free, but he's not wise enough to prevent reinvestigation. And so he gets reinvested.

Certainly what Jesus is teaching is there is always the danger of reinvestigation once demons have gone out. In fact, the reinvestigation can be far worse than the original condition. That's his point.

He does not explain exactly how one avoids this, but certainly he's not saying that it is inevitable that a man who's been delivered of demons is going to get seven worse ones with him. He's talking about a case that certainly can happen, but not everybody. I mean, Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene.

There's no reason to believe she ever had demons come back into her, but she was a follower of Christ. The point here seems to be he's doing people a favor unilaterally by casting demons out of them. But they need to have some kind of response on their part, just like he healed a lot of people who maybe never became his disciples, but they should have.

When Christ has done such a thing, they need to act upon that and preserve their gains, and that requires that they become his followers. That means that they stay in the realm where the demons don't come back, that they stay in the realm of obedience and faith and being filled with the Spirit of Christ, I think. And when that happens, the demon-possessed will not be reinvested by demons.

But, he's talking about a case where that does happen to a person, because that's what this generation is like. Now, it's Matthew, not Luke, that tells us that he said that, but that's the application to this that Matthew has Jesus making. So shall it be with this generation.

What? Jesus came to them, he brought light and deliverance. They didn't accept him. They rejoiced, perhaps, in some of the benefits that he brought, but they didn't act on it.

They didn't become his followers. And therefore, they will, he says, become infested far more than they ever were. Now, if there are demons in every village when Jesus came and he drove them out, how would it be if it was seven times worse? Or the word seven might be symbolic for just entirely.

Number seven is the number of completeness. He might say the person becomes completely demon-possessed. Before they were somewhat demon-possessed, but now they're going to be completely so.

I believe he is, in fact, referring to the fact that the apostate Israel, having had the advantage of having had Jesus bring light and having rejected it on their part, are going to be totally demonized, totally given over to the devil and demons. And this did happen. We know it.

There's historical record of it in Josephus, how when the Romans besieged Jerusalem and the Jews were holed up in there, that they just went crazy. It's like the whole place was swarming with demonic possession because everybody was crazy and violent and perverted. And it's like there's no explanation.

When you read Josephus and the behavior of the people under siege, there's just no explanation for it except that they were demon-possessed. In fact, when I first read Josephus about this many years ago, I hadn't thought about this verse. I just remember reading that thing, boy, these guys, there's no way these people would act that way unless they're demon-possessed.

They're just totally insane, acting against their own best interests, killing each other off when there's enemies outside, eating babies and, I mean, just horrible stuff. Josephus says men would dress up like women so that they might not be suspected of being men and they'd hide swords under their clothing and they'd just walk up to strangers and just stab them. Fellow Jews inside the city with them.

Just because they just want to kill somebody. Just weird, horrible, bizarre stuff. And you read Josephus, you say, man, these people just got infested by demons.

And Jesus said, yeah, that's what's going to happen to this generation. I've given you your chance at freedom. And if you don't seize it and exploit it and become followers of me, it's going to get a lot worse for you.

And it did. I believe that when Revelation 9 depicts the bottomless pit being open and these locusts swarming out and tormenting people, I personally think those locusts represent those demons at that time that came and just swarmed and tormented the Jews. Actually, Revelation says they did it for five months.

And as we recall, the siege of Jerusalem was five months. So anyway, Jesus is here making a prediction about that, I believe. Verse 27, and it happened as he spoke these

things that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts which nursed you.

And he said, more than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. So essentially, the woman was saying, I wish I was your mother. Your mom is a lucky lady.

Blessed is she who had the privilege of burying you and nursing you and bringing you into the world. What a blessing that would be to be your mother. And he said, well, there's even a greater blessing than that, and that's hearing the word of God and doing it.

Now, he wasn't necessarily saying that Mary didn't do that, although there were times when she did. There were times like anyone else, she wasn't paying attention, like when she and his brothers sought to come and take him by force and take him out of circulation for a while so he could recover from his craziness that they thought he had. Mary wasn't always on the right page.

Sometimes she was, I think probably usually she was, but it's hard to say. All he's saying is, it's not being my mom that sets you in a class of more blessedness, it's being obedient to the word of God. And in that respect, Jesus seems to be saying that anybody who is obedient to the word of God is more blessed, yea, more, he says, more than that.

The person who is obedient to God is more blessed than someone who has nothing going for them but they were the womb that Jesus came to the world through. Now the Roman Catholics, of course, think Mary's the greatest thing, you know, besides Jesus himself, and no doubt she is to be respected. She was a good lady, a good Christian, I'm sure.

But Jesus indicated that more than that, anyone who obeys his words is blessed. So he does not encourage, certainly, people to think of his mom as special, although certainly she was special in being his mom, but he doesn't act as if that counts for anything particularly unless you're obedient to God's word and anyone who hears God's word and does it is special, more so than just his mom, being his mom. And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, he began to say, this is an evil generation.

It seeks a sign and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah, the prophet. For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. In Matthew's version, in Matthew 12, 40, Jesus actually says, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, or the whale, it says, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

So he actually makes the prediction that Jonah's three days in the belly of the whale parallels his own three days in the tomb, though here he doesn't make that point. He just says that Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites and there will be a sign like Jonah given to them, and by implication, I suppose it is that Jesus would reappear after three days in

the darkness of the tomb as Jonah had reappeared as a sign to the Ninevites. Now it's not clear how his coming out of the whale was a sign to the Ninevites since he didn't come out of the whale in Nineveh.

Nineveh isn't a seaport city and once, what's that? Jesus said whale. The book of Jonah says great fish. Jesus said whale.

If you look at it in Matthew 12, 40. Yeah, it's interesting. Some people think Jesus made a mistake because Jonah, the book of Jonah says a great fish, and of course a whale is not a fish, but Jesus actually did use the word, at least in the Greek New Testament, uses the word for a whale.

And let's see here. New King James says great fish, but the Greek is the word for whale. The King James says whale, does it not? Yeah, yeah.

The New King James made the change in order to remove what looked like a contradiction. Sometimes the New King James does that kind of thing. There's things that people have pointed out historically that seem to be contradictory in the Bible, so the newer translations try to smooth that out by changing things.

You're right. The New King James has Jesus saying great fish, but the Greek word there means a whale. And it has been a problem in explaining why that's not a contradiction with Jonah, because Jonah does say a great fish.

And my explanation is this. You know, you find in the dietary laws of the Jews in Leviticus, lists of fowls or birds, and bats are included in the list. Now, a bat isn't a bird.

A bat is a mammal. And so that is also thought to be a problem, that bats are included with birds in the list in Leviticus, or Jesus calls the great fish a whale, and whales aren't fish. So these kinds of things are thought to be mistakes in the Bible.

However, we have to realize Linnaeus is the one who created our taxonomic norms in the, I guess it was the early 19th century. Linnaeus is the one who classified what we call fish, what we call birds, what we call mammals, and so forth. In other words, we would call something a fish if it has scales and gills and so forth.

We call something a mammal if it bears live young and has hair and warm blood. Therefore, a fish and a whale are not the same thing by our classifying system. But who said that the ancient Jews had to use our classification system? It's a modern system.

It's not mandatory that any other culture follow the classification system of our culture. Suppose an ancient culture said anything that's big and lives underwater and has a fluke or a fish-like tail, we're going to call those things fish. Now that's different than the way we classify them.

But who's to say that we're the ones who have the authority to make the final decision about what's going to be called a fish and what's not? Ancients may very well have included whales among fish, and they're not wrong except in connection with our modern classification system. There's nothing in nature that says a fish is this. That's an artificial classification.

Likewise, the bats and the birds. We say, well, a bat, that has the characteristics of what we call a mammal. Birds have feathers and lay eggs, and mammals have hair and they don't lay eggs.

So a bat and a bird is two different things. Well, to us, but we're so provincial. We're assuming that throughout all history in ancient times, everyone had the Linnaean system of taxonomy, and so everyone had to say that a bat is a mammal, not a bird.

What if someone decided to call something a bird if it had wings and flew in the sky? What's to prevent that? And it would be legitimate for them to do that. It's a different way of classifying, but classification is by definition artificial. It's a convenience to say, okay, we're going to call these, this category, these.

So I have no problem with the fact that when it's talking about the birds that are unclean, that bats are listed among them in Leviticus, or that when Jonah says it was a great fish and Jesus says it was a whale, that's not a problem to me unless I'm going to press upon these ancient cultures the need to classify different groups of animals by the system that Linnaeus came up with a couple centuries ago at the most. So anyway, yeah, it is, I see now that the new King James has changed Matthew 12:40, and they've rendered it great fish in order to remove the appearance of a contradiction with Jonah. I don't think there is a contradiction, even though Jesus did say whale, all right? So I'm glad you brought that up.

That was a bit of a confusion. I wasn't sure what you were bringing up. But it's a classic, it's a classic complaint against the Bible that Jesus said whale and Jonah said great fish.

So the new King James fixes that for us by being less accurate. Okay? Anyway, that statement isn't even found in Luke. That's found in Matthew.

Getting back to Luke then, Jesus said in verse 31 of chapter 11, the queen of the south, Matthew calls her the queen of Sheba and is the same person as Sheba is apparently in the southern region of Arabia, will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them. For she came from the ends of the earth, really just from the next country over, but to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

The men of Nineveh, who were just mentioned, will also rise up in judgment with this generation and condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And indeed a

greater than Jonah is here.

So he mentioned some Gentiles here. The queen of Sheba was Arabian. The people of Nineveh were Assyrian.

These were groups that were not Jewish. And in fact that the Jewish, you know, leaders would look down on as inferior people. However, those people that he mentions were more receptive to God's men and God's spokesmen than the Jews are to him.

And he's greater than those spokesmen that they responded to. Jonah, he wasn't a great servant of God. He was a very reluctant servant of God.

Solomon, he had wisdom from God, but he wasn't the greatest guy in the world for sure. Jesus was. And so if pagans would pay heed and take seriously the messengers of God who are inferior messengers, and Jesus is greater than those and the Jews won't listen to them, it simply shows that the Jews are more stubborn, at least that generation.

He says this generation. It shouldn't be assumed that all Jews are this way, but that generation was more stubborn than the Gentiles. And therefore they would be condemned in the judgment and those Gentiles who were responsive will rise up and accuse them.

That will be embarrassing for Jews who always thought they were the ones who were the righteous ones and the Gentiles were the pagans. Verse 33, no one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, we've already run into this teaching earlier in Luke, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye.

Therefore when your eye is good, your whole body is also full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body is also full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness.

If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light. That's when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light. Now this little teaching here is also found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6. It is placed there in the context of Jesus teaching about attitudes toward material things.

It's in the context of saying don't lay up treasures on earth, lay up treasures in heaven, don't worry about what you're going to eat and drink. This is the general teaching of this portion of Matthew 6. This verse, this section is put in there. It is about, in fact, attitudes toward money, although it's not obvious on the surface.

The reference to a good eye and an evil eye or a bad eye is very typical Hebrew idiom for being charitable or stingy. A generous person in the Hebraisms of the day and even before that day in Proverbs and Psalms and other places and even in the teaching of

Jesus in Matthew 20, but here also, a stingy man has an evil eye. That's just the way they talk.

An evil eye means greediness, uncharitableness, lack of generosity, whereas a good eye is a generous trait. I can't tell you how this idiom came to be used that way, but we find it used that way in the Old and the New Testament among the Jews. That's how his disciples would have understood him, being Jews.

He says a good eye, that means a generous heart. A bad eye is a materialistic, grasping, greedy, stingy heart. He says if this is how it is, then you're in the darkness.

If you're clinging to your stuff and you're just wrapped up in materialism and you're not generous, then you've got a dark soul. You're dark all through. On the other hand, if you're generous, this is a mark of something, of a body that's full of light or the body here is, since the eye is symbolic, the body is symbolic too, symbolic of the soul or your life.

So he's saying that your attitude toward riches really is going to be determinative or maybe at least reveal what the state of your whole life is like. And as he spoke, a certain Pharisee asked him to dine with him. So he went in and sat down to eat.

And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first washed before dinner. Now, washing hands in Israel wasn't for, you know, to avoid disease. In fact, for many centuries after this, washing hands had nothing to do with disease because people didn't know that disease was spread through microorganisms that are on your hands until you wash them off and they get into your body and cause disease.

People had much more superstitious ideas or theories about where disease came from until very modern times, what, two, three hundred years ago or less, days of Louis Pasteur. When Louis Pasteur said that disease is caused by germs, he was out of step with the scientific community, even ridiculed. What these little invisible things are there in the dirt and in your hands and they're going to make you sick? So washing hands before you eat, which we do, they did, but for very different reasons.

They didn't know it had anything to do with sanitation. So then it had to do with ceremonial cleanness. Under the Law of Moses, if you came into contact with something unclean, you became unclean.

And then at the end of your period of uncleanness, you'd wash. That was what the Law of Moses said. You take a bath, you wash your clothes, you're done.

Done with the uncleanness for now until you get it again some way. The Pharisees had defined uncleanness so broadly that if the wind which blew across Samaria blew across your face, you were unclean. If you had particles of dust on your feet that had blown over from Samaria or from Gentile lands, you were defiled.

If you went into a Gentile's house, you were unclean. They had virtually everything, even things you couldn't control, would make you unclean. So the Pharisees had expanded this whole idea of uncleanness to stuff in everyday life that everyone contracted.

No one was clean. And therefore, this washing that takes place at the end of uncleanness had morphed into an obligation to wash many times a day. Because you're always getting unclean.

You have to wash. Now, unclean again doesn't mean germ. It means ceremonially unfit to come before God or whatever.

And so it just kind of developed into a whole system of washings. And then it became elaborate how they had to wash. There was this whole ritual of how you wash when you come in before you eat.

You have to pour the water over your hand with the hand up from the elbow and then do it again from the hand over the forearm with the hand down from the elbow and so forth. All this special ritual they had developed, none of which had anything to do with God's commands, but it was very important to the Pharisees to keep all the rabbinic rituals and Jesus couldn't have cared less. Jesus didn't care about rabbinic rituals and he ignored them.

And that's what the Pharisee marveled at, that Jesus wasn't following the religious rules about washing. And the Lord said to him, now you Pharisees make outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. Foolish ones did not he who made the outside make the inside also, but rather give alms of such things as you have.

Then indeed all things are clean to you. But woe to you Pharisees for you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done without having without leaving the others undone.

Woe to you Pharisees for you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplace. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites for you are like graves which are not seen and the men who walk over them are not aware of them. Then one of the lawyers, let's stop right there for a moment.

This list of woes of the scribes and Pharisees is a somewhat shorter list than Matthew gives. Matthew has a whole chapter devoted to these woes that Jesus pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees. Some of them are the same as these, some are worded a little different.

Matthew has it in Matthew 23, just before having Jesus walk out of the temple for the last time and up onto the Mount of Olives where he gave the Olive Discourse predicting the destruction of the temple. Luke places these in a different setting and it may well be that

Jesus said them more than once in different places. These ones, some of them are the same and some are worded a little differently.

But this business about washing the outside of the cup and not the inside is part of Matthew 23 also. But Jesus said, you need to wash the inside as well as the outside. He says, you guys are like, you've got a cup that's clean on the outside but inside it's full of swill and sewage.

He says it's full of all kinds of defilement. It's like you're drinking garbage, you're drinking sewage from a clean cup. The imagery is meant to be, you know, alarming.

Outwardly, they keep the rules to keep clean and washing is a very good example of it. They're trying to keep clean. So you're cleaning your outside but you're not cleaning your insides.

He says you're full of greed and wickedness. And how should they clean themselves? He says in verse 41, but rather give alms of such things as you have, then indeed all things are clean to you. Notice he's focusing strictly on the matter of generosity and greed, which is the subject of the good eye and the bad eye in the previous pericope.

He has, from verse 33 on, then he's now focused on attitudes toward money. And the Pharisees in this case are full of greed and wickedness and they can cleanse themselves by having a good eye, having, you know, and then their whole body be full of light. All things will be clean to them.

If you just give alms, if you become generous, if you give up that bad eye and have a good eye and you give alms, then all things are clean to you. Just like he said in the previous section, if your eye is good, then your whole life is full of light. You're okay inside.

You need to be okay inside because external cleanness doesn't count for anything because God made the inside and the outside, he says. And he's as concerned about the inside, if not more so, as the outside. Now, he says the Pharisees pay their tithes, but leave undone the necessities of justice and the love of God.

This is also found in Matthew 23, of course, and we won't go into it here because it's been covered before in Matthew. But he says, skipping down to one that isn't exactly the same as in Matthew, in verse 44, he says, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like graves which are not seen, and men who walk over them are not aware of them. Now, a grave, if you came into contact with a grave, whether on purpose or inadvertently, you become unclean.

Now in Matthew, it's slightly different. He says, you're like whitewashed tombs. And this referred to the fact that the Jews would, especially around Jerusalem when it was festival times and many pilgrims from out of the area would be coming into Jerusalem for the

festivals.

There were graveyards which were not known to the people who weren't locals, and lots of non-locals were coming in for the feast. So they would go out to prepare for those pilgrims to come and they'd whitewash these tombs that had dead bodies, because otherwise they might look just like ordinary caves. A person might go into the cave to relieve himself or something else, as frankly they did in those days, as the story about Saul and David points out.

You got to have some privacy sometimes. And caves were a good place for it. However, a cave where bodies were buried was not a good place for it, because if you went in there by accident, not knowing what it was, you'd become defiled and you're coming down to the festival.

You can't keep the festival if you become unclean. So they would prevent that by whitewashing those caves that had dead bodies in them. That being so then, these caves, these tombs were whitewashed.

They looked clean on the outside, but inside they had that which would defile you if you came into contact with it. He said, you Pharisees are like that. People come into contact with you, you look clean, but you're filthy inside.

They get defiled by contact with you, you're like a whitewashed tomb, full of defilement. But here it's a little different. Same idea though.

An unrecognized grave, someone walks over it and they become defiled. And the idea here is they must not have recognized it as a grave. And the Pharisees are people who will defile you by contact, but that's not always obvious.

They seem religious. They seem safe. They don't seem like they're unclean, but all that's on the inside.

They've cleaned the outside of the cup. They've whitewashed the outside of the tomb. Inside is all that stuff that'll destroy you spiritually if you allow them to infect you with their uncleanness.

Then one of the lawyers answered and said to him, teacher, by saying this, you reproach us also. Yeah, if the shoe fits. And he said, woe to you also, you lawyers, for you load men with burdens hard to bear and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

That is, you don't help them lift those burdens. You put them on them. This is the burden of legal obligations.

It's legalism. He's talking about burdening people and he doesn't, you don't help them.

You just burden them with rules.

Woe to you for you build the tombs of the prophets and your fathers killed them. In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers for they indeed killed them and you build their tombs. Therefore the wisdom of God also said, I will send them prophets and apostles and some of them they will kill and persecute.

Now by the way, he said, you're partners with your ancestors who killed the prophets. And in a sense, you bear witness with it because you're, they did the killing. You do the building of the tombs.

It's kind of the same project. Now what they were really doing, of course, is decorating the tombs of the prophets to honor them. And Jesus mentions that in Matthew 23, he says, you, you garnish, you, you decorate the tombs of the prophets and you say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have killed our fathers as they did.

And Jesus said, therefore, you testify that they're your fathers and you're their children. And you're doing the same thing they're doing. You're going to kill me.

They killed the prophets. You're going to do the same thing only to me. He says, go ahead, fill up the measure of your father's guilt.

Meaning as you kill me, you're going to bring that cup of guilt to its fullness that they've been adding to through their history of killing the prophets. He argues it a little differently here, but he says you by building the tombs for the prophets that they killed, you're kind of working with your dad, with your fathers on this. You're among them.

You're, you're of the same mind, actually. Now when he said the wisdom of God also said, I'm not sure what he means by the wisdom of God also said, because he's not quoting anything from the old Testament, but he does say the same thing himself. He says, therefore, I say unto you and says the same thing in Matthew 23.

And it may be that Jesus had said this on more than one occasion. He may be referring to himself as the wisdom of God said this, but frankly, it's a difficult statement, which no one knows exactly what he means by the wisdom of God said this, but it's, this is the word of the Lord. God says, I will send them prophets and apostles.

Some of them, they will kill and persecute that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Now this generation, of course, was those that would be living in some, some of them would still be living in AD 70.

And that was the judgment on the nation for all the blood that they'd shed, including that of Christ from the beginning. He seems to include Abel among the prophets. He says the

blood of all the prophets from Abel to Zechariah.

Now we aren't told in the old Testament that Abel was a prophet, but it would explain some things because Abel obviously knew that God required a certain kind of sacrifice and Cain didn't offer it, but Abel did. How did he know? It may have come to him by revelation. It would suggest that in the very generation after Adam and Eve, God was already communicating his will through inspired men, Abel being one of them.

It seems to me that he is saying that Abel is one of the prophets and from all the prophets from Abel to Zechariah, they were killed. And the guilt of that, the judgment for that is going to come on this generation. Before this generation had run its course, there would be a horrible judgment that would come upon the nation.

Verse 52, woe to you lawyers for you have taken away the key of knowledge and you did not enter in yourselves and those who were entering in you hindered. I'm not really sure what is meant by the key of knowledge. A key is that which opens a door, opens a lot.

And therefore, it may be saying that knowledge itself is a key that opens the doors to the kingdom of God. You have to know the knowledge of God. You know, knowledge of God is a key.

It's the key of knowledge. The key called knowledge and it opens a door and that door is into the kingdom and he says you won't go in there and you won't let anyone else go in there either. Probably knowledge here means the knowledge of God or it might be the key that unlocks knowledge or the key that grants access to knowledge.

See, the key of knowledge can mean the key that opens the door to knowledge or it could be referring to knowledge itself as a key. In either case, they had done so. The key that opens the door to the knowledge of God is the prophets.

And they killed the prophets in that way. They took away the access to the knowledge of God. The key that would have let them have the knowledge of God would have let others have it.

They killed him. They killed the prophets. They take away that key that would have opened the doors of the knowledge of God because they didn't want the knowledge of God.

The other way of seeing it is that the key itself is knowledge. The knowledge of God is something they've removed again probably from killing the prophets which he just referred to and therefore people are not able to come to the knowledge of God and have the knowledge of God and he says you don't want to enter into that yourself and you've hindered those who want to. Paul said that about the Jews too you know in first Thessalonians and we're gonna have to close here in just a minute or something like that but in first Thessalonians chapter 2 Paul is talking about the Jews who were persecuting

him and he's rather angry at them when he writes this some people feel really uncomfortable with this passage because he does speak pretty unkindly about the Jews but he's speaking of course specifically about the Jews who persecute the church not not Jews as a race but the religion of the Jews and their and their leaders the Sanhedrin and so forth he says to the Corinthians or the Thessalonians who were themselves Gentiles he says for you brethren became imitators of the churches of God which were in Judea that's the Jewish churches same thing is happening to you Gentiles as happened to the Jewish Christians for you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen just as they did from the Jews so the unbelieving Jews persecuted the Judean churches the unbelieving Gentiles are persecuted these Gentile Christian but when he mentions those Jews who persecuted the Judean churches he goes off on a rant he says they killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us and they do not please God and are contrary to all men forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved so as always to fill up the measure of their sins but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost now he sounds like he's preaching from Jesus text here they took away the key of knowledge they wouldn't enter in themselves and they wouldn't want let anyone else come in too he says they won't let us even preach to the Gentiles so they can come in it's not that they're they're not even satisfied to reject Christ they won't let anyone else accept Christ they want to stop us from preaching to the Gentiles and he says they fill up the measure of their sins that's what Jesus said to the Scribes Pharisees your fathers were killing the prophets they were filling up now you're gonna fill it up all the way how you're gonna kill me and you're gonna kill the prophets and the apostles I send you there's that's what he says here in Luke 11 you know I'm gonna send you prophets and apostles and so forth and you're gonna kill some of them and so forth so Paul in second Thessalonians or first Thessalonians 2 in those verses is apparently alluding to some of the thoughts here in this passage now finally in Luke 11 53 and as he said these things to them the Scribes and Pharisees began to assail him vehemently we don't read about this in Matthew but you could imagine that it would have happened he's publicly denouncing them saying woe unto them here they are the respected religious leaders in the community and he's pointing out every bit of hypocrisy and and corruption in them publicly you you'd bet this would get a violent reaction out of them Matthew doesn't describe that reaction but Luke does they vehemently assailed him and to cross-examine him about many things lying in wait for him and seeking to catch him in something he might say that he might they might accuse him interesting he was saying some very unflattering things to them but nothing he said was wrong they couldn't catch him in any misstatement it's an interesting thing that it says that because they're looking for him to say something wrong so they can catch him and he said all these things apparently they weren't wrong things they're in a sense they couldn't deny that they were guilty of these things so they they kept cross-examining trying to get him to say something that was wrong that they could accuse him of but apparently we're not able to do so all right well we're done with this chapter and with this session