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Confrontation Continues (Part 2)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this discussion, Steve Gregg highlights the importance of the distinction between being born of the seed of David according to the flesh and being declared as the Son of God according to the Spirit. He also emphasizes the need for humility and service, warning against seeking positions of honor and encouraging people to love their neighbors as themselves. Gregg critiques the hypocritical behavior of the scribes and Pharisees, suggesting that being a teacher is an essential aspect of the mission of Christ, but it should not convey a sense of spiritual superiority or status.

Transcript

...and the Son of God. There are two different ways of speaking about a similar concept, obviously. A person is a seed of their father and a son of their father, if they're male.

But I bring this up because in Paul's statement in Romans that we just read, Romans 1, verses 3 and 4, he uses the same terminology and makes that distinction. Who is born of the seed of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. Paul may have had this very passage in mind, as well as Psalm 2, where the Messiah is the seed of David according to the flesh, but he's declared also to be God's son by God himself.

Alright, well, by the way, that promise that we just looked at in 2 Samuel pretty much disproves premillennialism. Don't expect me to miss a chance to point this out. Because according to premillennialism, David is one of the righteous who will rise in the resurrection of the just.

That resurrection, according to premillennialism, is before the millennium. So during the millennium, if there is to be one, David will be alive because he will have been resurrected. However, the prophecy says that the reign of the Messiah will be while David is resting with his father.

No, it's while he's dead. The kingdom of the Messiah will be established not when David is resurrected, but when David is still dead, before he's resurrected. If the kingdom of the Messiah is associated with the millennium, then that doesn't fit.

Because David would be resurrected and not sleeping with his fathers anymore. If it's talking about the millennial kingdom after Jesus comes back. But if the kingdom of Christ is established at his first coming and has been present ever since, then that agrees well with the prophecy of 2 Samuel.

It says it will happen, the Messiah's reign will be established while David is still asleep with his father, before the resurrection. So again, once again, we have another instance where the scripture and premillennialism do not agree. Now, the dispensationalists, I think, would answer, as seems to me very desperately, that David will not be resurrected when the church is resurrected.

That before the millennium, only the Christians will be resurrected, who have been part of the church. And the rest of the dead won't be resurrected until after the millennium. And that would include believing Israel as well as the unbelieving wicked.

So that they would have David really still be dead during the millennium too. Because he's one of the Old Testament saints rather than part of the church. Now, the reason that I don't even give that serious consideration, first of all, not all dispensationalists would give that argument, but some do.

Historic premillennialism would never make that argument. Basically, the passages that talk about the resurrection of the Bible all speak of everyone coming out of the graves at once. And the righteous come to the resurrection of life and the wicked to the resurrection of damnation.

That seems, without some other scripture to qualify it to say otherwise, that seems to say that all the righteous who have ever died will be resurrected at one time and all the wicked that have ever died all at one time. So that if Christian righteous die, and if Jewish righteous people die who are justified by faith like we are, like Abraham and David, then they too, like us, would be resurrected when all the righteous are resurrected. There is simply no defense that will hold water against this.

But there are certain presuppositions. Like one of the main dispensational presuppositions that they'll bank on in a case like this is that the saved of Israel are not the same thing as the saved of the Church. You see, they believe that Israel is one dispensation, the Church is another dispensation, and never the twain shall meet.

That David and Moses and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the good guys, the prophets of the Old Testament, they don't have a destiny with us. We're not going to live with them forever. They're going to live on a new earth.

We're going to live in a new heaven. And, you know, there's a distinction made between the righteous Jews of the Old Testament and what they would usually call the Gentile Church. The problem is the Gentile Church is a misnomer.

The Church didn't start out with Gentiles at all. It was all Jews for the first perhaps several hundred thousand converts were all Jews. And still the Church has a great number of Jews, and it never has been, never will be a Gentile Church.

That is a false label that they give to try to draw a clear distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Of course, we know that the Church was comprised of the believing Jews of the first century. Later on Gentiles were added, but the Jewish Church was a church too.

It wasn't part of believing Israel separate from the Church. And Paul was a Jew. He certainly isn't going to have a destiny with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and away from us.

You know, all the same, of all time, God has broken down the middle wall of partition between them. The dispensations try to build it up again, but Paul says that God broke it down in the flesh of Christ. And therefore, if we are going to rise prior to a millennial kingdom, then David is going to rise then too.

And to be consistent with the Scripture's teaching on the resurrection, one would have to say that any resurrection that involves Christians is also going to involve godly Jews of previous times. And okay, that is an answer they give though, and I don't mind that you brought it up because it gave me a chance to clarify that. Okay, so Jesus puts this to them and says, Why did David call the Messiah Lord if he is his son? Now it sounds like Jesus is denying that the Messiah would be the son of David.

However, the New Testament writers go to pains to tell us that Jesus was a son of David. Both Matthew and Luke give genealogies that trace the Messiah's lineage back to David. Furthermore, in his lifetime, Jesus was spoken to as son of David.

The blind Bartimaeus and his companions called out to him, Son of David, have mercy on us, and they were never corrected about this. It's clear that Jesus was descended from David. And therefore, he could not object to the doctrine that the Messiah would be descended from David.

So that's not what he's saying this for. He's not trying to overturn that doctrine. He is simply trying to add the missing part.

Yes, according to the flesh, the Messiah is the seed of David, but more importantly, infinitely more importantly, he is the son of God, and that's the part that the Jews were overlooking. And it's the reason why they wanted to take up stones to stone him whenever he said he was the son of God. They didn't realize that that's just the kind of claim the Messiah should be expected to make, because the prophets made that claim for him.

And when Jesus was finally condemned by the Sanhedrin, it was just because of that very claim. If you look at Matthew chapter 26, Matthew chapter 26, verse 63, Jesus had been silent at his trial up to this point. It says, Jesus kept silent, and the high priest

answered and said to him, I adjure you by the living God that you tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God.

Jesus said to him, It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his clothes and he has spoken blasphemy.

What further need do you have of witnesses? Look now, you have heard his blasphemy. And so they condemned him for blasphemy. What had he said? He said, Yes.

They said, Are you the Christ? Yes. But that's not enough to accuse him of blasphemy, because actually other people claimed to be Christ, and there was no precedent for a claim to being the Messiah being called blasphemy. It's the other part more likely, that he said, Are you the son of God? Yes, I am.

That was the blasphemy. And it was that very statement, that he was the son of God on earlier occasions, that caused them to take up stones and nearly to stone him on previous occasions, because they considered that blasphemy. So, Jesus is essentially by this challenge he gives them, saying, How could it be blasphemy for the Messiah to claim to be the son of God, when in fact it is implied, as well as stated outright.

It's stated outright in 2 Samuel chapter 7. It's stated outright in Psalm 2. And it's implied in Psalm 110. And Jesus asked them the question. They can't answer it.

There's no room in their theology to accommodate it. And therefore, it says, they couldn't answer him a word. And from that day on, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

It always turned out to their worst. The son of man is obviously a title that even conveys some other information, more than son of David or son of God. And it's the title that Jesus preferred.

Nobody refers to Jesus as the son of man, other than Jesus himself. And Stephen, when he was being stoned, he saw heaven open. And he said, I see the son of man standing at the right hand of God.

Apart from Stephen using that term, no writer of the New Testament, no apostle, no one called Jesus the son of man, except Jesus himself. And he called himself that about 70 times in the gospel. And that's far more than he called himself by any other title.

So son of man obviously is a significant title that Jesus accepted, but it is not an established messianic title from the Old Testament. Many people feel, many scholars will say, that when Jesus called himself the son of man, he was referring back to Daniel 7.13, where Daniel says, I saw one like a son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven and coming to the ancient of days. The prophecy is clearly a reference to Christ.

No one denies that. But what I would dispute with the scholars on this point, how does that statement establish the expression, the son of man, as a messianic title, when in fact, that passage doesn't even use the expression, the son of man. It says, a son of man.

And that's a term that's used generically throughout the Old Testament, of humans generally. And I would encourage you, I mean, don't just take my word for it, and don't just look it up to see if I'm right or wrong, but just look it up because it's an interesting study. It repays study to get out of concordance and look up all the places in the Old Testament where the term son of man is used, and it'll be quite obvious.

Virtually every time it occurs, it means nothing other than man. It means a mere man, a human, a son of Adam. And Ezekiel is called son of man about 70 or 90 times in the book of Ezekiel.

And Daniel is himself called son of man at least once in the book of Daniel. So that it just means human, mere human. Why did Jesus call himself that? I think he wanted to emphasize his humanness.

And not only his humanness, but his relationship to the whole race of man as opposed to just Israel. When Nathanael met him in John chapter 1, and Jesus said, I saw you under the fig tree before Philip told you. Nathanael fell down and said, oh, Master, you are the Messiah, you are the King of Israel.

He even said, I think he said, you're the Son of God. But he said, you're the King of Israel. And Jesus says, you believe me because I said that? You will see greater things.

You'll see the heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Now, he was the Son of God, and he was the King of Israel. By the way, King of Israel and Son of David were essentially synonymous terms too because David was the King and his descendants had been the Kings of Israel throughout history.

So Nathanael is saying, you're the Son of God, you're the Son of David. And Jesus says, but you've got to get this, I'm the Son of Man also. You're going to see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

And I believe that Jesus probably emphasized Son of Man there to point out that Nathanael was still thinking of the Messiah in terms of being merely the King of Israel, one related to the nation of Israel. And, of course, he was initially, but he didn't come with a mission only to Israel. His mission was to all man, Gentiles included, to all humans.

And he was the Son of Adam's race. I think there's other implications in the term Son of Man. And I think there's a sense in which he could say what he was was the ideal man, what God intended man to be, what Adam would have been, in a sense, if he had never

fallen.

Now, that doesn't mean that Jesus was not distinct from Adam in very important ways. Obviously, Jesus was the incarnation of God. Adam was not that.

But that Jesus lived out his life as the model of perfect manhood, of the perfect descendant of Adam. He lived as all men ought to live. He was the model man.

And I think that might be implied, too, in his frequent use of the term Son of Man. A lot of the things that Jesus says about the Son of Man, speaking about himself, I looked at these passages years ago and made a list of them. I don't have them with me.

But what he says about the Son of Man in his teaching often are things that should apply to all men. He said the Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give his life, a ransom for many. Well, all men ought to be serving.

He's the Son of Man. He's the ultimate man. He's the ultimate example of what men ought to be.

He said the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. The Son of Man this, the Son of Man that. If you read what he said about himself on those occasions, the things he says, I think without exception, are things that are models of what manhood, godly manhood should be like.

And what the sons of men ought to do in general. But he is the Son of Man par excellence. He's the ultimate human.

But he's also God. And that's where Christian theology mixes unlike things. God and man are not like each other very much, but somehow the two natures are combined in Christ.

And that's the mystery of the incarnation. But I think that Jesus wished on occasions to emphasize his deity and other times to emphasize his humanity. Both were important points.

And so Son of Man and Son of God are both terms that he used for himself. And he certainly didn't deny, but he was also the Son of David. Now, chapter 23, I just want to take the first few verses of this in this session.

Namely, the first 12 verses, if I can take that many. I don't know if we'll get through that many. That'll give us more time to take the rest of the chapter next session.

I think originally our schedule, I've scheduled to take the entirety of chapter 23 in one session, but we'll do ourselves a favor to get some of it out of the way this session. Because some of the things later in the chapter will be important for us to look at closely. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do. But do not do according to their works, for they say and they do not do. For they bind heavy burdens hard to bear and lay them on men's shoulders.

But they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

They love the best places at the feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the market places. And to be called by men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But you do not be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

Do not call anyone on earth your father, for one is your father, he who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers, for one is your teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Now, some of the material in this we've encountered elsewhere, like in Luke chapter 14. Jesus talked about how the Jewish leaders would like to seek the best places at the feasts.

He mentions that here also. He actually mentions in verse 6 that they like the best seats in the synagogues. But that exhibited the same character trait as wanting the best seats at the feasts.

They wanted the seats of honor. And it was on that occasion in Luke chapter 14 that we found him saying this statement. That's found here also in verses 11 and 12.

You've got to be a servant if you're going to be great. Whoever exalts himself is going to be humbled by God. Whoever humbles himself will be exalted by God.

That teaching we've encountered before. But I want to make some points about this teaching about the scribes and Pharisees. I also want to point out that in the next session we'll take the rest of the chapter, which, beginning at verse 13, is mostly a series of woes pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees.

You'll notice verse 13, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Verse 14, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Verse 15 and 16 have the same beginning. And further on down, verse 25, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees! And verse 27 also. And 29.

And I guess that might be the end of them. But the point is that there's a series of woes pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees. It's the same subject that's being talked about in the first 12 verses, but the difference is he turns to speak to the scribes and Pharisees about his objections to their behavior at verse 13.

Prior to that, in verses 1 through 12, he's speaking to the multitudes about the scribes and Pharisees, who happen to be standing right there. He's not talking behind their backs. They happen to be there.

And they must have been profoundly uncomfortable in having Jesus, who clearly had shown them all to be not too smart in the preceding conflicts and debates, that he now has the popular support of the crowds, and he turns and speaks about his opponents who are right there in the crowd, right there around him, and he says, this is what these people do. And the fact that they are still there in the crowd is seen by the fact that he actually turns his remarks to them in verse 13. So he talks about them to the multitudes in verses 1 through 12 and to them at verse 13, which is the only reason I made verse 12 the cutoff point for what I want to include in this session, because there is that turn.

However, I want to make some observations about the way this compares with Mark and Luke's versions. In Mark's gospel, in the 12th chapter, we find that Jesus' remarks about the scribes and Pharisees are affixed at this very point in the story. In Mark chapter 12, verses 35 through 37, we have Jesus giving his challenge about why did David call him his son.

We just saw that at the end of Matthew 22. And then next we read in Mark 12, 38 through 40, Then he said to them in his teaching, Beware of the scribes who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.

Now notice that he goes on to something else after this. In Mark's version, although Jesus does talk about the scribes, he doesn't mention the Pharisees, but the scribes are mentioned here, he talks about them, but he doesn't address them. He doesn't say, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees.

Not in Mark's version. However, these woes to the scribes and Pharisees are found in Luke, but in a different context. In Luke chapter 11, beginning at verse 37, we have quite a different context, but much of the same material.

Luke 11, 37 says, And as he spoke, a certain Pharisee asked him to dine with him. And he went in and sat down to eat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first washed before dinner.

But the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees make the 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 ruin all manner of herbs and pass by justice and the love of God.

These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Woe to you, Pharisees, for you love the best seats in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplaces and so forth. So we find these woes to the Pharisees.

Then at verse 45, Luke 11, 45 says, Then one of the lawyers, that would be the same as the scribes, answered and said to him, Teacher, by saying these things you reproach us also. And he turned on him 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. Woe to you, for you build the tombs of the prophets and your fathers killed them.

In fact, you bear witness that you approve of the deeds of your fathers, for indeed they killed them and you build their tombs. Therefore the wisdom of God, etc., etc. And it goes on as does the rest of Matthew 23.

What I'm going to suggest to you is that Matthew 23, of course, combines some material. Mark agrees with Matthew that after Jesus gave this unanswerable challenge to the scribes and Pharisees at the end of Matthew 22, he then began to talk to the crowds and warn them about the scribes. Mark tells us that in a few verses, not as many as Matthew gives, but a few verses he has essentially the same stuff.

So, no doubt, that's the actual order of events. Jesus confronted them with this question, they couldn't answer it, then he turns to the crowds and talks to them about the scribes and Pharisees. However, the woes that are attached at verse 13 and following, Matthew may have brought in from another occasion, that which is recorded in Luke chapter 11.

Now, I want to remind you, it's not impossible that Jesus may have said the same kinds of things twice. And I'm not ruling that out as a possibility. Jesus may have uttered these woes recorded in Matthew at the same time as the rest of the context would suggest.

But Mark doesn't indicate it. And Luke puts these woes in another context, which evidence is not conclusive, but may suggest that Matthew has taken these woes against the scribes and Pharisees from another situation and tagged them on here because of their topical relevance. Jesus, on this occasion, is speaking against the scribes and Pharisees and Matthew, remembering what Jesus said on one occasion to the scribes and Pharisees, attaches those woes there.

So, we could see it either way. All I can say is that neither Mark nor Luke includes all this material in this context. But virtually all the material is found in other contexts or in part in Mark or in Luke.

Another thing I want to observe is that throughout Matthew 23, it is the scribes and Pharisees combined that are taking the heat. Whereas in Mark's parallel, it is just the scribes that are spoken about. The parallel has Jesus saying, Beware the scribes.

They do this, they do that, and the other thing. Now, in Luke's version, that we just read in Luke chapter 11, the woes are first pronounced upon the Pharisees alone. Woe to you Pharisees! Woe to you Pharisees! Woe to you Pharisees! You Pharisees do this, you Pharisees do that.

And then one of the scribes, the lawyer, comes up to him and says, Lord, you're reproaching us also with these words. He says, Fair enough. Woe to you lawyers! Woe to you scribes! The lawyer and scribes are interchangeable terms.

And so, we find in Luke denunciations of Pharisees and of scribes separately, separate denunciations. However, the scribes themselves admitted that what he said about the Pharisees applied to themselves. That's why that scribe said to Jesus, complained and said, Wait a minute, what you're saying to them, that reproaches us also.

That's a way of saying, what you're saying about them is true of us too. And he says, that's right. So, Matthew kind of compresses it and just makes all of it a criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Whereas Mark only mentions the scribes, and Luke mentions the Pharisees and the scribes as separate categories. But virtually all the things that Jesus said here are found in the parallels there. But Matthew just kind of simplifies it and addresses the whole thing to the scribes and Pharisees.

Tim, do you have a question? It's possible that the Sadducees didn't exercise a lot of popular influence. I think the Pharisees were the ones that the people generally admired as being godly. The Sadducees were corroborated with the Romans.

They weren't very nice. They ran the Sanhedrin. I think they were seen as sort of not good guys.

I really have a suspicion that the average peasant Jew did not see the Sadducees as people to imitate or as people to admire. But they did see the Pharisees in that way. And Jesus is pointing out that it's not justified.

The Pharisees don't deserve their admiration either. They need to beware of these guys. These guys, if anything, are wolves in sheep's clothing.

The Sadducees were wolves in wolves' clothing. They look like wolves to observers. But the Pharisees were wolves too, but they were in sheep's clothing.

Jesus didn't use that term here. Although in the Sermon on the Mount he did tell his disciples to beware of false prophets who looked like sheep, but they were ravening wolves inwardly. And no doubt he felt the same way about the scribes and Pharisees here.

But that may be why he didn't mention the Sadducees in this case. As far as we know, the Sadducees only had one confrontation with Jesus prior to his trial before the Sanhedrin. In all the ministry of Jesus, we don't read of Sadducees approaching Jesus or confronting him or opposing him even once.

Except on the occasion we read about not too long ago where they asked him about the resurrection question and he put them in silence. But that's the only case we read of, of an actual confrontation between the Sadducees and Jesus in his entire ministry. Except, of course, for when he was stood trial before the Sanhedrin who were mostly Sadducees.

Some of them were Pharisees like Nicodemus and others, but mostly it was the Sadducees who were running the Sanhedrin. So that was another time. Interesting, in the Book of Acts, we read of many Pharisees being converted.

It seems as if the Pharisees, much more than the Sadducees, tended to get converted in the Book of Acts. And the opposition from the Church, let me just say it, it flip-flops from the Gospels in Acts. In the Gospels, the Sadducees have very little to do with Jesus and pay him little attention, but the Pharisees are avidly against him.

In the Book of Acts, there's no opposition from the Pharisees recorded, but there's opposition from the priesthood, from the Sanhedrin, which was largely Sadducees. So, for some reason, after Jesus' ascension, it was the Sadducees who were more vehement against him, and very possibly because the Christian message, after that point, after Jesus rose from the dead, centered on the subject of the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees found less to object in that message than the Sadducees would find.

Whereas, before Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples didn't ever talk about the resurrection of the dead. They didn't even understand the concept. They didn't even know he was going to rise from the dead.

And the Pharisees apparently didn't grasp that either. But once Jesus had risen from the dead, and the core of the Christian message was that Jesus had resurrection from the dead, the Pharisees found something to agree with in that. At least in the concept of the resurrection, they were not offended by it like the Sadducees were.

So we find a turnaround there in their attitudes. Now, we probably won't finish our comments on this section in the time we have, but let me start here. Matthew 23.1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

Therefore, whatever they tell you to do, or to observe, that observe and do. But do not do according to their works, for they say and they do not do. Now, essentially what he's saying is there was a seat in the synagogue referred to as Moses' seat.

It was the seat where the rabbi would sit to expound on the law. Now, even though the

rabbis gave their own opinions a great deal about the law, and not everything they said from Moses' seat was inspired, still it was basically something that had Scripture at its core. It was something that was based on something God had said.

And Jesus was saying, You won't go wrong by doing what they tell you to do. When they speak *ex cathedra*, from the seat of Moses, as it were, from the throne, you can pretty much follow what they say and that'll be okay. Because they're speaking from the Scripture.

They're not likely to get too far off the subject of ethics and so forth. They're probably not going to miss it by too far. But don't follow their example.

Listen to what they say, because usually they'll be speaking from the Scripture, but they don't live according to the Scripture. You can do what they teach from Moses' seat, but you can't follow their example because they don't observe it themselves. They say better things than they do.

They talk a great ball game, but they don't walk the walk. So you can, for the most part, trust what they have to say when they're speaking in the synagogues from Moses' seat, because they'll be expounding essentially on Scripture. But in terms of their example, do not follow it.

They don't practice the very things they say. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders, that they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. You may remember that in Luke 11, 46, which we read a moment ago, this essential charge was laid to the door of the lawyers, or the scribes.

He said the same kind of thing. They bind heavy burdens on the shoulders of men, on the backs of men. What are these burdens? It's obviously figurative.

It's talking about all the regulations that they put on men. Now, Jesus isn't so much complaining about their putting these regulations on people. In fact, he has just said, whatever they tell you to do, do it.

That essentially is how the scribes and Pharisees did bind these burdens, by telling people to do this, do that, and the other things. And Jesus essentially said, go ahead and accept the burden. Let them put this burden of responsibility on you if they wish, but don't follow their example because they don't carry that burden themselves.

Now, that's one way of understanding his statement, they will not so much as move a finger. They won't move them with one of their fingers. It may mean that they expect you to bear such burdens on your shoulders, but they won't exert so much as a finger's worth of strength to carry them themselves.

Now, another possibility in his meaning of the second part of that verse, is that they

won't do so much as lift a finger to relieve you of the burdens that they put on your back. Whereas, we read in Galatians, chapter 6, I believe it's Galatians 6, let's find it quickly. Yeah, it is, of course.

Galatians 6, 2. It says, Bear one another's burdens, and so, or in this way, fulfill the law of Christ. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. It would appear that the law of love, which is the law of Christ, would compel a person not to try to burden other people, but to, if anything, help them with their burdens that they already have.

To try to bear some of their burden yourself. To try to relieve people of hardship so that you might, even if it increases your own hardship, you might give them some relief. That's a loving thing to do.

That's a fulfillment of the law of Christ, which is that you love your neighbors yourself, and that you love one another as I have loved you, he says. So, that's just the opposite of what the scribes and Pharisees did. They loved to put burdens on people, but they wouldn't relieve others of their burdens, and they didn't even carry them themselves.

Both of those thoughts could be implied. Probably one or the other is really implied, but we don't know which. In that statement, they will not move them with one of their fingers.

It either means that they won't try to bear those burdens, they won't put out any effort to do so, or it may mean they won't so much as relieve the burdens from the backs of people upon whom they place them. In any case, Jesus differs from them, because in Matthew chapter 11, he said, Come unto me, all you who labor, and are heavy laden, or heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest to your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. That's Matthew 11, verses 28 through 30. He calls to those who have these heavy burdens that the scribes and Pharisees have put upon them, these heavy legalistic requirements.

He says, If you come to me, you won't have that kind of a burden. You'll have a burden, but my burden is light. You'll have a responsibility.

You'll have a task. That's what the yoke suggests. An animal with a yoke around its neck is pressed into service.

It has a task to perform. But he says, My yoke at least is easy, and my burden is light. You do well to exchange the legalistic burden of regulations and so forth that the scribes and Pharisees put upon you for the burden that I put upon you, which is simply that you love your neighbors as yourself.

When you do that, it's easy to do everything God requires because all the other things

hang on that. Alright, so Jesus, the law of Jesus is very different than the law practiced and taught by the scribes and Pharisees, although the ethical teaching they gave from Moses were generally speaking reliable and not dangerous. So the disciples were not told to revolt against the synagogue teaching, but just don't imitate the lives of those who were doing the teaching.

Obviously, the impression Jesus is giving is that teachers should model what they teach. It should be possible for the teacher to say, Do as I say, as well as what I do. But, of course, the Pharisees, if they would be honest, would have to say, Do as I say, not as I do.

Now, verse 5 echoes something that we've encountered in the Sermon on the Mount already. It says, in verse 5, But all their works they do to be seen by men. Now, in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus said, When you do your alms, don't be like the hypocrites.

When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites. When you fast, don't be like the hypocrites. Because it says, Don't do it to be seen by men.

Now, in that chapter, Matthew 6, the opening verses up through about verse, I forget, 18, I think, He doesn't identify who the hypocrites are. He doesn't say, Don't be like the Pharisees. He just says, Don't be like hypocrites.

But the thing that the hypocrites do, He says, is that they do all their good deeds to be seen by men. Now, He tells us directly, that's what the scribes and Pharisees do. They do everything they do to be seen by men.

And He calls them hypocrites throughout this chapter. So, it's obvious from that fact that Jesus was talking about the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew chapter 6, though He didn't name them there. He does here.

They do all their works, their religious works, to be seen by men. Not to please God, but to please men and to get respect from men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

Now, the phylactery, of course, was a box, usually a leather box, that was strapped either to the hand, forearm, or the forehead. And it contained little pieces of parchment that had scripture verses written on them. The reason they did this is because in Deuteronomy 6, it said, this command, this law that I give you today, bind it between your eyes and bind it on your hand.

Now, they took that literally and actually bound scripture portions of the law to their forehead, between their eyes and on their hands. Now, it's a shame that they took that part of Deuteronomy 6 rather than taking the more important part that says you should love the Lord your God with all your soul, all your mind, and strength, and so forth,

because that's just a verse earlier in the same passage. But they were very literal and ritualistic.

Rather than taking the spirit of what God said, instead of obeying the law, they just strapped written portions of it to their forehead. And Jesus kind of makes fun of that. He says, they seem to be in competition to see who can wear the biggest phylactery.

A phylactery is this box. Obviously, a bigger phylactery could contain more scripture portions. And that would show a man to be more spiritual if he had more shreds of parchment worn on his forehead than another guy had on his forehead.

I mean, Jesus, I think, is mocking this. And the borders of the garments, you might recall that back in the Old Testament, I think it was in Exodus, that God told the Jews that they should wear a blue border around the bottom of their garments to show that they were Jews. And I guess Scribes and Pharisees were also in competition among themselves to see who had the biggest blue border around the bottom of his garment.

As if these things mattered to God. It was more like they were in competition to excel in the outward, meaningless religious forms and rituals. And they loved the best places, it says, at the feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called Rabbi, Rabbi.

They liked to be honored with titles. They liked to be honored with seats of honor. We saw that Jesus addressed this earlier on another occasion.

But he says in verse 8, But you do not be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father, for one is your father, and it is he who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers, for one is your teacher, the Christ.

Now, verse 8, Don't be called Rabbi. The word Rabbi means teacher. It literally means my great one, but it was used synonymous with the word teacher.

In verse 8 he says, Don't be called teacher. And in verse 10 he says, Don't call anyone else teacher. And in between he says, Don't call anyone else father.

Now, this raises questions about the legitimacy of calling certain people father or teacher. And yet, I would say this. In the epistles, the Apostle Paul and the others refer to teachers in the body of Christ.

And they refer to fathers in the natural sense of that word. And to God the Father as well, of course. But Paul says, Fathers, don't provoke your children to rap.

Children, honor your fathers and your mothers. The word father is used even after Jesus gave these commands. The Apostles used the word father in the sense of speaking of an

actual father.

Nothing wrong with that. Also, teacher is not really a term that in itself is a wrong thing to call someone or to be called. Sometimes it's described merely of what someone does for a vocation.

A school teacher or a teacher in the church. Paul himself said that God gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. There must be nothing wrong in the Apostles' sight with using these terms and applying them to people despite what Jesus said.

That must mean the Apostles would have understood Jesus' words here in the spirit of what he was saying. Essentially, if the term father or rabbi or teacher is used to convey some sense of spiritual superiority, it should be not used. People should not accept such titles.

I remember, there's a fairly well-known apologist who's written many books. He's got about seven earned graduate degrees. But he's a very arrogant man.

He's been fired from more than one seminary post because of his abrasiveness. He used to have a Bible answering program. I'm not talking about Walter Martin.

Someone else. But this fellow, I don't want to give you his last name to give him away. Let's call him Dr. Smith.

People would sometimes call his program and say, Brother Smith, I have a question. And he'd say, That's Dr. Smith. I spent many years earning those degrees.

I have the right to be acknowledged as doctor. But I'll tell you, that grated on me so much. What more could go against the whole spirit of what Jesus is saying here? Requiring or appreciating or wanting people to call you by titles that give you special reverence and special status.

That's the spirit of what Jesus is forbidding here. He's not saying it's wrong to call your real father, father. And he's not saying it's wrong to call somebody a teacher if that's what they are and what they do.

But to use such titles of honor as the Pharisees desired them to be used, you know, Rabbi, Rabbi, it's like saying Reverend or Doctor or something like that. Now, in my opinion, even the word Doctor isn't a bad title to use if it's not... It's the whole spirit of the thing. If you say this person is Dr. So and So, he's done his homework.

He knows this subject. He's got a doctorate degree in it. Therefore, that's his credentials to speak.

That's a different thing than for someone to insist on being revered because he has this

title. And I think that that's all that Jesus is concerned with here. One thing I would point out, and I know we've got to quit here, is that Jesus points out something here.

He uses the term the Christ, obviously speaking of himself, in verse 8 and in verse 10. In verse 8 it's not found in the Alexandrian text, but it's found in verse 10 in all the major texts. But in both cases, he speaks of the Christ as your teacher.

In verse 8 he says, One is your teacher, the Christ. And in verse 10, for one is your teacher, the Christ. Now, I find this importance in Jesus somewhat modifying the Jewish idea of what the Christ would do.

The Christ, in their thinking, was not a teacher. He was a military man. He was one who would come and lead the armies.

And then he'd be a political leader. He'd be a king and so forth. But Jesus indicates that the Christ would be a teacher.

I know of nothing in the Old Testament that points to this particular aspect of the Messiah being a teacher, except perhaps in those metaphors that talk about him as a shepherd feeding the sheep. Of course, the feeding of sheep spiritually is teaching them. But the Jews did not think of the Christ principally as a teacher, but in other terms.

And yet Jesus indicates that's principally how the Christ would rule. The Christ, in fact, would be king. He is king.

He is a military leader, but his kingship and his warfare is spiritual. And it's a warfare of truth against error. It's the reign of truth against error.

And it is his teaching of truth that is the manner in which he conducts his warfare. He is principally a teacher. You know, somehow the Samaritans got this right better than the Jews did, because the woman at the well said to Jesus, I know that when the Christ comes, he will teach us all these things.

So she somewhere got the impression that the Messiah would be a teacher. But we don't find any of that necessarily in the way the Pharisees were thinking about things here. Jesus points out here that the Messiah's mission would be more in the area of affecting people's thinking, teaching them things, rather than coming with a sword and a white horse and lopping the heads off of enemies and things like that.

He'd overcome the enemy, which is error, because his disciples would know the truth and the truth would make them free. So this is just a side point I wanted to make, because he mentions both these times that the Messiah is your teacher. And of course, the disciples had come to understand that, because he'd been teaching them for these three-something years, and they knew him to be the Messiah.

But that wasn't the leading notion about the Messiah's mission, that he'd be a teacher. But it certainly dignifies teaching as a profession and a ministry. That's the principle of ministry that Jesus himself, the Messiah, defined as his own, as well as being a savior.

Okay, well, we'll continue with this chapter and finish it up in our next session.