

Jesus' Shepherd Heart For The Religious Leaders

Matthew 23:1-39

Key Verse: 23:37

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.”

1. Read verses 1-4. What did Jesus tell the crowds and his disciples about the life and teachings of the Pharisees? Read verses 5-12. How and why did the Pharisees show off? In what ways must Jesus' disciples be different?
2. Read verses 13-22. How did the Pharisees' teaching shut the door of the kingdom of God? How can the door be opened? Why did Jesus call them "blind guides"? How did their vow-making show their materialism? (cf. Mt 6:24) How is their dishonesty revealed? (cf. Mt 5:34)
3. Read verses 23-26. How did their petty concerns further reveal their spiritual blindness? What does it mean to strain out a gnat and swallow a camel? What makes the inside dirty? Read verses 27-28. What illustrates their spiritual corruption?
4. Read verses 29-36. How did the Pharisees unwittingly admit that they were enemies of God? How and why did Jesus rebuke them? Why did God send the prophets? Who were the martyrs whom Jesus mentions? What would happen to the prophets, wise men and teachers (gospel workers)?
5. Read verses 37-39. What was God's original purpose for Jerusalem? (See Isa 2:1-3) How had God tried to turn them to himself? How did Jesus express his love and longing for God's people? His sorrow? Why is it such a serious matter to reject God's love? How does Jesus point to his second coming?