

# JESUS EATS WITH A PHARISEE

LUKE 11:37-44

SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

## THE HOOK:

Dinner at the Pharisee's house. Why would the Pharisee invite you to dinner? If we dine with the Pharisee, opportunities open up to share the truth of God. Have you ever shared a meal and the Word with a Pharisee? Have you told the truth of God to anyone lately? Are you brave enough to be God's witness? Ga 5:1 ¶ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. If you STAND on the WORD of God you can have dinner with anyone.

## THE WORD STUDY:

**Luke:** the evangelist, was a Gentile. The date and circumstances of his conversion are unknown. According to his own statement Lu 1:2 he was not an "eye-witness and minister of the word from the beginning." It is probable that he was a physician in Troas, and was there converted by Paul, to whom he attached himself. He accompanied him to Philippi, but did not there share his imprisonment, nor did he accompany him further after his release in his missionary journey at this time Ac 17:1 On Paul's third visit to Philippi Ac 20:5-6 we again meet with Luke, who probably had spent all the intervening time in that city, a period of seven or eight years. From this time Luke was Paul's constant companion during his journey to Jerusalem Ac 20:6-21:18 He again disappears from view during Paul's imprisonment at Jerusalem and Caesarea, and only reappears when Paul sets out for Rome Ac 27:1 whither he accompanies him Ac 28:2,12-16 and where he remains with him till the close of his first imprisonment Phm 1:24; Col 4:14 The last notice of the "beloved physician" is in 2Ti 4:11

There are many passages in Paul's epistles, as well as in the writings of Luke, which show the extent and accuracy of his medical knowledge. Theophilus: lover of God, a Christian, probably a Roman, to whom Luke dedicated both his Gospel Lu 1:3 and the Acts of the Apostles Ac 1:1 Nothing beyond this is known of him. From the fact that Luke applies to him the title "most excellent", the same title Paul uses in addressing Felix Ac 23:26; 24:3 and Festus Ac 26:25 it has been concluded that Theophilus was a person of rank, perhaps a Roman officer.

**JESUS CHRIST:** The Son of God, the Messiah and Savior of the World, the first and principal object of the prophecies; who was prefigured and promised in the Old Testament; was expected and desired by the patriarchs; the hope and salvation of the Gentiles; the glory, happiness, and consolation of Christians. The name JESUS, in Hebrew JEHOSHUAH or Joshua, signifies Savior, or Jehovah saves. No one ever bore this name with so much justice, nor so perfectly fulfilled the signification of it, as Jesus Christ, who saves from sin and hell, and has merited heaven for us by the price of his blood. It was given to him by divine appointment, Mt 1:21 as the proper name for the Savior so long desired, and whom all the myriads of the redeemed in heaven will for ever adore as their only and all-glorious Redeemer.

JESUS was the common name of the Savior; while the name CHRIST, meaning the Anointed One, The Messiah, was his official name. Both names are used separately, in the gospels and also in the epistles; but JESUS generally stands by itself in the gospels, which are narratives of his life; while in the epistles, which treat of his divine nature and of his redeeming work, he is called CHRIST, CHRIST JESUS, or THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. See CHRIST.

Here, under the Redeemer's human name, belong the facts relating to his human nature and the history of his life upon earth. His true and complete humanity, having the soul as well as the body of man, is everywhere seen in the gospel history. He who is "God over all, blessed forever," was an Israelite "as concerning the flesh," Ro 9:5 and took upon him our whole nature, in order to be a perfect Savior. As a man, Jesus was the King of men. No words can describe that character in which such firmness and gentleness, such dignity and humility, such enthusiasm and calmness, such wisdom and simplicity, such holiness and charity, such justice and mercy, such sympathy with heaven and with earth, such love to God and love to man blended in perfect harmony. Nothing in it was redundant, and nothing was wanting. The world had never produced, nor even conceived of such a character, and its portraiture in the gospels is a proof of their divine origin, which the infidel cannot gainsay. Could the whole human race, of all ages, kindreds, and tongues, be assembled to see the crucified Redeemer as he is, and compare earth's noblest benefactors with Him, there would be but one voice among them. Every crown of glory and every meed of praise would be given to Him who alone is worthy-for perfection of character, for love to mankind, for sacrifices endured, and for benefits bestowed. His glory will forever be celebrated as the Friend of man; the Lamb sacrificed for us.

The visit of JESUS CHRIST to the earth has made it forever glorious above less favored worlds, and forms the most signal event in its annals. The time of his birth is commemorated by the Christian era, the first year of which corresponds to about the

year 753 from the building of Rome. It is generally conceded, however, that the Savior was born at least four years before A. D. 1, and four thousand years after the creation of Adam. His public ministry commenced when he was thirty years of age; and continued, according to the received opinion, three and a half years. Respecting his ancestors, see GENEALOGY.

The life of the Redeemer must be studied in the four gospels, where it was recorded under the guidance of supreme wisdom. Many efforts have been made, with valuable results, to arrange the narrations of the evangelists in the true order of time. But as neither of the gospels follows the exact course of events, many incidents are very indeterminate, and are variously arranged by different harmonists. No one, however, has been more successful than Dr. Robinson in his valuable "Harmony of the Gospels".

The divine wisdom is conspicuous not only in what is taught us respecting the life of Jesus, but in what is withheld. Curiosity, and the higher motives of warm affection, raise numerous questions to which the gospels give no reply; and in proportion as men resort to dubious traditions, they lose the power of a pure and spiritual gospel. See further, concerning Christ, MESSIAH, REDEEMER, etc.

Jesus was not an uncommon name among the Jews. It was the name of the father of Elymas the sorcerer, Ac 13:6 and of Justus, a fellow-laborer and friend of Paul, Col 4:11 It is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, or Jeshua, borne by the high priest in Ezra's time, and by the well-known leader of the Jews in to the Promised Land. See also 1Sa 6:14; 2Ki 23:8 The Greek form of the word, Jesus, is twice used in the New Testament when Joshua the son of Nun is intended, Ac 7:45; Heb 4:8

**Alms:** Not found in the Old Testament, but repeatedly in the New. The Mosaic legislation Le 25:35; De 15:7 tended to promote a spirit of charity, and to prevent the occurrence of destitution among the people. Such passages as these, Ps 41:1; 112:9; Pr 14:31; Isa 10:2; Am 2:7; Jer 5:28; Eze 22:29 would also naturally foster the same benevolent spirit.

In the time of our Lord begging was common Mr 10:46; Ac 3:2 The Pharisees were very ostentatious in their almsgivings Mt 6:2 The spirit by which the Christian ought to be actuated in this duty is set forth in 1Jo 3:17A regard to the state of the poor and needy is enjoined as a Christian duty Lu 3:11; 6:30; Mt 6:1; Ac 9:36; 10:2,4 a duty which was not neglected by the early Christians Lu 14:13; Ac 20:35; Ga 2:10; Ro 15:25-27; 1Co 16:1-4 They cared not only for the poor among themselves, but contributed also to the necessities of those at a distance Ac 11:29; 24:17; 2Co 9:12 Our Lord and his attendants showed an example also in this Joh 13:29

In modern times the "poor-laws" have introduced an element which modifies considerably the form in which we may discharge this Christian duty.

**WOE:** Is sometimes used in our Bibles where a softer expression would be at least equally proper: "Woe to such a one!" is in our language a threat or imprecation of some calamity, natural or judicial, to befall a person; but this is not always the meaning of the word in Scripture. We find the expression, "Woe is me!" that is, Alas for my sufferings! And, "Woe to the women with child, and those who give suck!" that is, Alas for their redoubled sufferings in times of distress! If in the denunciatory language of Christ, we should read, "Alas for thee, Chorazin! Alas for thee, Bethsaida!" we should do not injustice to the general sentiments of the passage.

Yet in many cases the word woe is used in a fuller and more awful sense, expressing an inspired denunciation and foreshadowing of God's wrath upon sinners; as when we read, "Woe to those who build houses by unrighteousness, and cities by blood;" woe to those who are "rebellious against God," etc., in numerous passages, especially of the Old Testament, Hab 2:6,9,12,15,19; Zep 3:1

**TITHE:** A tenth, the proportion of a man's income devoted to sacred purposes from time immemorial, Ge 14:20; 28:22 This was prescribed in the Mosaic law, Nu 31:31 A twofold tithe was required of each Jewish citizen. The first consisted of one-tenth of the produce of his fields, trees, flocks, and herds, to be given to God as the sovereign Proprietor of all things and as the king of the Jews, Le 27:30-32; 1Sa 8:15,17 The proceeds of this tax were devoted to the maintenance of the Levites in their respective cities, Nu 18:21-24 A person might pay this tax in money, adding one-fifth to its estimated value. The Levites paid a tenth part of what they received to the priests, Nu 18:26-28 The second tithe required of each landholder was one-tenth of the nine parts of his produce remaining after the first tithe, to be expended at the tabernacle or temple in entertaining the Levites, his own family, etc., changing it first into money, if on account of his remoteness he chose to do so, De 12:17-19,22-29; 14:22-27 Every third year a special provision was made for the poor, either out of this second tithe or in addition to it, De 14:28-29 These tithes were not burdensome; but the pious Israelite found himself the richer for their payment, though it does not seem to have been enforced by any legal penalties. The system of tithes was renewed both before and after the captivity, 2Ch 31:5-6,12; Ne 10:37; 12:44; 13:5 but they were not always regularly paid, and hence the divine blessing was withheld, Mal 3:8-12 The Pharisees were scrupulously exemplary in paying their tithes, but neglected the more important duties of love to God and man, Mt 23:23

The principle of the ancient tithes, namely, that ministers of the gospel and objects of benevolence should be provided for by the whole people of God, according to their means, is fully recognized in Scripture as applicable to the followers of Christ. He sent his servants forth, two and two, without provisions or purses, to receive their support from the people, since "the laborer is worthy of his hire," Mt 10:9-14; Lu 10:4-8,16 Paul also reasons in the same way, 1Co 9:13-14; Ga 6:6 For purpose of piety and beneficence, he directed the Corinthians, and virtually all Christians, to lay aside from their income, on the first day of the week, as the Lord had prospered them, 1Co 16:2 There is no reason to doubt that the early Christians gave more freely of their substance than did the ancient Jews, Ac 4:34-36; 2Co 8:1-4

**MINT:** A garden herb, sufficiently known. The Pharisees, desiring to distinguish themselves by a most scrupulous and literal observation of the law, gave tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, Mt 23:23 Our Savior does not censure this exactness, but complains, that while they were so precise in these lesser matters, they neglected the essential commandments of the law - making their punctiliousness about easy and external duties an excuse for disregarding their obligations to love God supremely, to be regenerated in heart, and just and beneficent in life.

**RUE:** A well-known garden herb, having a strong odor and a bitter taste. Our Saviour reproaches the Pharisees with their superstitious affectation of paying the tithe of rue, which was not in reality subject to the law of tithe, while they neglected the more essential parts of the law, Lu 11:42

**FOOL:** Any person who does not act wisely, that is, does not follow the warnings and requirements of God, which are founded in infinite wisdom. Hence "a fool" is put for a wicked man, an enemy or neglecter of God, Ps 14:1; Pr 19:1 So folly is put for wickedness, 2Sa 13:12-13; Ps 38:5 foolish lusts for wicked lusts, etc. Foolish talking, foolish questions, are vain, empty, unprofitable conversation, 2Ti 2:23

**HYPOCRITE:** One who, like a stage-player, feigns to be what he is not. The epithet is generally applied to those who assume the appearance of virtue or piety, without possessing the reality. Our Savior accused the Pharisees of hypocrisy, Lu 12:1

**SCRIBE:** In the earlier Hebrew writings, was one skilled in writing and accounts, Ex 5:6; Jg 5:14; Jer 52:25 the person who communicated to the people the commands of the king, like the modern Secretary of State, 2Sa 8:17; 20:25 In the later times of the Old Testament, especially after the captivity, and in the New Testament, a scribe is a person skilled in the Jewish law, a teacher or interpreter of the law. So Ezra was "a ready scribe in the laws of Moses," Ezr 7:6; 1Ch 27:32 The scribes of the New Testament were a class of men educated for the purpose of preserving and

expounding the sacred books. They had the charge of transcribing them, of interpreting the more difficult passages, and of deciding in cases which grew out of the ceremonial law, Mt 2:4 and were especially skilled in those glosses and traditions by which the Jews made void the law, Mt 15:1-6 Jewish writers speak of them as the schoolmasters of the nation; and one mode in which they exercised their office was by meeting the people from time to time, in every town, for the purpose of holding familiar discussions, and raising questions of the law for debate. Their influence was of course great; many of them were members of the Sanhedrin, and we often find them mentioned in connection with the elders and chief priests, Mt 5:20; 7:29; 12:38; 20:18; 21:15 Like the Pharisees, they were bitterly opposed to Christ, and joined with the priests and counselors in persecuting him and his followers, having little knowledge of Him concerning whom Moses and the prophets did write. The same persons who are termed scribes, are in parallel passages sometimes called lawyers and doctors of the law, Mt 22:35; Mr 12:28 Hence "scribe" is also used for a person distinguished for learning and wisdom, 1Co 1:20.

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ALMS EATS FOOLS GODHEAD GOSPEL HYPOCRITE JESUS  
JUDGMENTS LUKE MINT PHARISEE RUE THEOPHILUS TITHE WOE

## Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible:

Lu 11:37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible:

Ver. 37. thru Ver. 54.

Christ here says many of those things to a Pharisee and his guests, in a private conversation at table, which he afterwards said in a public discourse in the temple (Matthew 23); for what he said in public and private was of a piece. He would not say that in a corner which he durst not repeat and stand to in the great congregation; nor would he give those reproofs to any sort of sinners in general which he durst not apply to them in particular as he met with them; for he was, and is, the faithful Witness. Here is,

I. Christ's going to dine with a Pharisee that very civilly invited him to his house (Lu 11:37); As he spoke, even while he was speaking, a certain Pharisee interrupted him with a request to him to come and dine with him, to come forthwith, for it was dinner-time. We are willing to hope that the Pharisee was so well pleased with his discourse that he was willing to show him respect, and desirous to have more of his company, and therefore gave him this invitation and bade him truly welcome; and yet we have some cause to suspect that it was with an ill design, to break off his discourse to the people, and to have an opportunity of ensnaring him and getting something out of him which might serve for matter of accusation or reproach, Lu 11:53-54. We know not the mind of this Pharisee; but, whatever it was, Christ knew it: if he meant ill, he shall know Christ does not fear him; if well, he shall know Christ is willing to do him good: so he went in, and sat down to meat. Note, Christ's disciples must learn of him to be conversable, and not morose. Though we have need to be cautious what company we keep, yet we need not be rigid, nor must we therefore go out of the world.

II. The offence which the Pharisee took at Christ, as those of that sort had sometimes done at the disciples of Christ, for not washing before dinner, Lu 11:38. He wondered that a man of his sanctity, a prophet, a man of so much devotion, and such a strict conversation, should sit down to meat, and not first wash his hands, especially being newly come out of a mixed company, and there being in the Pharisee's dining-room, no doubt, all accommodations set ready for it, so that he need not fear being troublesome; and the Pharisee himself and all his guests, no



doubt, washing, so that he could not be singular; what, and yet not wash? What harm had it been if he had washed? Was it not strictly commanded by the canons of their church? It was so, and therefore Christ would not do it, because he would witness against their assuming a power to impose that as a matter of religion which God commanded them not. The ceremonial law consisted in divers washings, but this was none of them, and therefore Christ would not practise it, no not in complaisance to the Pharisee who invited him, nor though he knew that offence would be taken at his omitting it.

III. The sharp reproof which Christ, upon this occasion, gave to the Pharisees, without begging pardon even of the Pharisee whose guest he now was; for we must not flatter our best friends in any evil thing.

1. He reproofs them for placing religion so much in those instances of it which are only external, and fall under the eye of man, while those were not only postponed, but quite expunged, which respect the soul, and fall under the eye of God, Lu 11:39-40. Now observe here,

(1.) The absurdity they were guilty of:

"You Pharisees make clean the outside only, you wash your hands with water, but do not wash your hearts from wickedness; these are full of covetousness and malice, covetousness of men's goods, and malice against good men."

Those can never be reckoned cleanly servants that wash only the outside of the cup out of which their master drinks, or the platter out of which he eats, and take no care to make clean the inside, the filth of which immediately affects the meat or drink. The frame or temper of the mind in every religious service is as the inside of the cup and platter; the impurity of this infects the services, and therefore to keep ourselves free from scandalous enormities, and yet to live under the dominion of spiritual wickedness, is as great an affront to God as it would be for a servant to give the cup into his master's hand, clean wiped from all the dust on the outside, but within full of cobwebs and spiders. Ravening and wickedness, that is, reigning worldliness and reigning spitefulness, which men think they can find some cloak and cover for, are the dangerous damning sins of many who have made the outside of the cup clean from the more gross, and scandalous, and inexcusable sins of whoredom and drunkenness.

(2.) A particular instance of the absurdity of it:

"Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? Lu 11:40. Did not that God who in the law of Moses appointed divers ceremonial

washings, with which you justify yourselves in these practices and impositions, appoint also that you should cleanse and purify your hearts? He who made laws for that which is without, did not he even in those laws further intend something within, and by other laws show how little he regarded the purifying of the flesh, and the putting away of the filth of that, if the heart be not made clean?"

Or, it may have regard to God not only as a Lawgiver, but (which the words seem rather to import) as a Creator. Did not God, who made us these bodies (and they are fearfully and wonderfully made), make us these souls also, which are more fearfully and wonderfully made? Now, if he made both, he justly expects we should take care of both; and therefore not only wash the body, which he is the former of, and make the hands clean in honour of his work, but wash the spirit, which he is the Father of, and get the leprosy in the heart cleansed.

To this he subjoins a rule for making our creature comforts clean to us (Lu 11:41):

"Instead of washing your hands before you go to meat, give alms of such things as you have"

(ta enonta--of such things as are set before you, and present with you);

"let the poor have their share out of them, and then all things are clean to you, and you may use them comfortably."

Here is a plain allusion to the law of Moses, by which it was provided that certain portions of the increase of their land should be given to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; and, when that was done, what was reserved for their own use was clean to them, and they could in faith pray for a blessing upon it, De 26:12-15. Then we can with comfort enjoy the gifts of God's bounty ourselves when we send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, Ne 8:10. Job ate not his morsel alone, but the fatherless ate thereof, and so it was clean to him (Job 31:17); clean, that is, permitted and allowed to be used, and then only can it be used comfortably. Note, What we have is not our own, unless God have his dues out of it; and it is by liberality to the poor that we clear up to ourselves our liberty to make use of our creature-comforts.

2. He reproves them for laying stress upon trifles, and neglecting the weighty matters of the law, Lu 11:42.

(1.) Those laws which related only to the means of religion they were very exact in the observance of, as particularly those concerning the maintenance of the priests: Ye pay tithe of mint and rue, pay it in kind and to the full, and will not put off the priests with a modus decimandi or compound for it. By this they would gain reputation

with the people as strict observers of the law, and would make an interest in the priests, in whose power it was many a time to do them a kindness; and no wonder if the priests and the Pharisees contrived how to strengthen one another's hands. Now Christ does not condemn them for being so exact in paying tithes (these things ought ye to have done), but for thinking that this would atone for the neglect of their greater duties; for,

(2.) Those laws which relate to the essentials of religion they made nothing of: You pass over judgment and the love of God, you make no conscience of giving men their dues and God your hearts.

3. He reproveth them for their pride and vanity, and affectations of precedency and praise of men (Lu 11:43):

"Ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues"

(or consistories where the elders met for government);

"if you have not those seats, you are ambitious of them; if you have, you are proud of them; and you love greetings in the markets, to be complimented by the people and to have their cap and knee."

It is not sitting uppermost, or being greeted, that is reproveth, but loving it

4. He reproveth them for their hypocrisy, and their colouring over the wickedness of their hearts and lives with specious pretences (Lu 11:44):

"You are as graves overgrown with grass, which therefore appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them, and so they contract the ceremonial pollution which by the law arose from the touch of a grave."

These Pharisees were within full of abominations, as a grave of putrefaction; full of covetousness, envy, and malice; and yet they concealed it so artfully with a profession of devotion, that it did not appear, so that they who conversed with them, and followed their doctrine, were defiled with sin, infected with their corruptions and ill morals, and yet, they making a show of piety, suspected no danger by them. The contagion insinuated itself, and was insensibly caught, and those that caught it thought themselves never the worse.

IV. The testimony which he bore also against the lawyers or scribes, who made it their business to expound the law according to the tradition of the elders, as the Pharisees did to observe the law according to that tradition.

1. There was one of that profession who resented what he said against the Pharisees (Lu 11:45):

"Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also, for we are scribes; and we are therefore hypocrites?"

Note, It is a common thing for proud sinners to call and count reproofs reproaches. It is the wisdom of those who desire to have their sin mortified to make a good use of reproaches that come from ill will, and to turn them into reproofs. If we can in this way hear of our faults, and amend them, it is well: but it is the folly of those who are wedded to their sins, and resolved not to part with them, to make an ill use of the faithful and friendly admonitions given them, which come from love, and to have their passions provoked by them as if they were intended for reproaches, and therefore fly in the face of their reprovers, and justify themselves in rejecting the reproof. Thus the prophet complained (Jeremiah 6. 10): The word of the Lord is to them a reproach; they have no delight in it. This lawyer espoused the Pharisee's cause, and so made himself partaker of his sins.

2. Our Lord Jesus thereupon took them to task (Lu 11:46): Woe unto you also, ye lawyers; and again (Lu 11:52): Woe unto you lawyers. They blessed themselves in the reputation they had among the people, who thought them happy men, because they studied the law, and were always conversant with that, and had the honour of instructing the people in the knowledge of that; but Christ denounced woes against them, for he sees not as man sees. This was just upon him for taking the Pharisee's part, and quarrelling with Christ because he reprov'd them. Note, Those who quarrel with the reproofs of others, and suspect them to be reproaches to them, do but get woes of their own by so doing.

(1.) The lawyers are reprov'd for making the services of religion more burdensome to others, but more easy to themselves, than God had made them (Lu 11:46):

"You lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, by your traditions, which bind them out from many liberties God has allowed them, and bind them up to many slaveries which God never enjoined them, to show your authority, and to keep people in awe; but you yourselves touch them not with one of your fingers;"

that is, [1.] "You will not burden yourselves with them, nor be yourselves bound by those restraints with which you hamper others."

They would seem, by the hedges they pretended to make about the law, to be very strict for the observance of the law; but, if you could see their practices, you would find that they not only make nothing of those hedges themselves, but make nothing

of the law itself neither: thus the confessors of the Romish church are said to do with their penitents.

[2.]

"You will not lighten them to those you have power over; you will not touch them, that is, either to repeal them or to dispense with them when you find them to be burdensome and grievous to the people."

They would come in with both hands to dispense with a command of God, but not with a finger to mitigate the rigour of any of the traditions of the elders.

(2.) They are reprov'd for pretending a veneration for the memory of the prophets whom their fathers killed, when yet they hated and persecuted those in their own day who were sent to them on the same errand, to call them to repentance, and direct them to Christ, Lu 11:47-49.

[1.] These hypocrites, among other pretences of piety, built the sepulchres of the prophets; that is, they erected monuments over their graves, in honour of them, probably with large inscriptions containing high encomiums of them. They were not so superstitious as to enshrine their relics, or to think their devotions the more acceptable to God for being offered at the tombs of the martyrs; they did not burn incense or pray to them, or plead their merits with God; they did not add that iniquity to their hypocrisy; but, as if they owned themselves the children of the prophets, their heirs and executors, they repaired and beautified the monuments sacred to their pious memory.

[2.] Notwithstanding this, they had an inveterate enmity to those in their own day that came to them in the spirit and power of those prophets; and, though they had not yet had an opportunity of carrying it far, yet they would soon do it, for the Wisdom of God said, that is, Christ himself would so order it, and did now foretel it, that they would slay and persecute the prophets and apostles that should be sent them. The Wisdom of God would thus make trial of them, and discover their odious hypocrisy, by sending them prophets, to reprove them for their sins and warn them of the judgments of God. Those prophets should prove themselves apostles, or messengers sent from heaven, by signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Or,

"I will send them prophets under the style and title of apostles, who yet shall produce as good an authority as any of the old prophets did; and these they shall not only contradict and oppose, but slay and persecute, and put to death."

Christ foresaw this, and yet did not otherwise than as became the Wisdom of God in sending them, for he knew how to bring glory to himself in the issue, by the recompences reserved both for the persecutors and the persecuted in the future state.

[3.] That therefore God will justly put another construction upon their building the tombs of the prophets than what they would be thought to intend, and it shall be interpreted their allowing the deeds of their fathers (Lu 11:45); for, since by their present actions it appeared that they had no true value for their prophets, the building of their sepulchres shall have this sense put upon it, that they resolved to keep them in their graves whom their fathers had hurried thither. Josiah, who had a real value for prophets, thought it enough not to disturb the grave of the man of God at Bethel: Let no man move his bones, 2Ki 23:17-18. If these lawyers will carry the matter further, and will build their sepulchres, it is such a piece of over-doing as gives cause to suspect an ill design in it, and that it is meant as a cover for some design against prophecy itself, like the kiss of a traitor, as he that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him, Pr 27:14.

[4.] That they must expect no other than to be reckoned with, as the fillers up of the measure of persecution, Lu 11:50-51. They keep up the trade as it were in succession, and therefore are responsible for the debts of the company, even those it has been contracting all along from the blood of Abel, when the world began, to that of Zacharias, and so forward to the end of the Jewish state; it shall all be required of this generation, this last generation of the Jews, whose sin in persecuting Christ's apostles would exceed any of the sins of that kind that their fathers were guilty of, and so would bring wrath upon them to the uttermost, 1Th 2:15-16. Their destruction by the Romans was so terrible that it might well be reckoned the completing of God's vengeance upon that persecuting nation.

(3.) They are reprov'd for opposing the gospel of Christ, and doing all they could to obstruct the progress and success of it, Lu 11:52.

[1.] They had not, according to the duty of their place, faithfully expounded to the people those scriptures of the Old Testament which pointed at the Messiah, which if they had been led into the right understanding of by the lawyers, they would readily have embraced him and his doctrine: but, instead of that, they had perverted those texts, and had cast a mist before the eyes of the people, by their corrupt glosses upon them, and this is called taking away the key of knowledge; instead of using that key for the people, and helping them to use it aright, they hid it from them; this is

called, in Matthew, shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, Mt 23:13. Note, Those who take away the key of knowledge shut up the kingdom of heaven.

[2.] They themselves did not embrace the gospel of Christ, though by their acquaintance with the Old Testament they could not but know that the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom of God was at hand; they saw the prophecies accomplished in that kingdom which our Lord Jesus was about to set up, and yet would not themselves enter into it. Nay,

[3.] Them that without any guidance or assistance of theirs were entering in they did all they could to hinder and discourage, by threatening to cast them out of the synagogue, and otherwise terrifying them. It is bad for people to be averse to revelation, but much worse to be adverse to it.

Lastly, In the close of the chapter we are told how spitefully and maliciously the scribes and Pharisees contrived to draw him into a snare, Lu 11:53-54. They could not bear those cutting reproofs which they must own to be just; but what he had said against them in particular would not bear an action, nor could they ground upon it any criminal accusation, and therefore, as if, because his reproofs were warm, they hoped to stir him up to some intemperate heat and passion, so as to put him off his guard, they began to urge him vehemently, to be very fierce upon him, and to provoke him to speak of many things, to propose dangerous questions to him, laying wait for something which might serve the design they had of making him either odious to the people, or obnoxious to the government, or both. Thus did they seek occasion against him, like David's enemies that did every day wrest his words, Ps 56:5. Evil men dig up mischief. Note, Faithful reprovers of sin must expect to have many enemies, and have need to set a watch before the door of their lips, because of their observers that watch for their halting. The prophet complains of those in his time who make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, Isa 29:21. That we may bear trials of this kind with patience, and get through them with prudence, let us consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.

38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. Mr 7:3

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

Mt 23:25; Tit 1:15

40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

Isa 58:7; Da 4:27; Lu 12:33

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Mt 23:23

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

Mt 23:6; Mr 12:38-39

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Ps 5:9; Mt 23:27 (KJV)