

***Lesson 33 – continuing during the Period between 10/26/29 AD,  
the First Sabbath after the Great Assembly  
and 12/19/29 AD, the Feast of Dedication (Fifty-Three days)***

The following encounter took place while Jesus was among the villages of Judea following His appearance at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Jewish leadership in Jerusalem had already tried to arrest Him. Failing that, they had tried to kill Him by an impromptu non-judicial stoning. The encounter here probably took place while He was visiting the 35 villages of Judea to which He had sent the 70 disciples which we saw in the last lesson.

**Luke 11:14-15 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. But some of them said, “By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.”**

The previous year in Galilee, Jesus had also cast out a demon and prevented the possessing demon from speaking. We studied that in Lesson 20. At that time similar accusations, about where Jesus’ power came from, were made by the Pharisees. No doubt this happened all during Jesus’ long ministry of casting out demons. Jesus was familiar with their response and with their thinking.

**Luke 11:16 Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.**

This was also a familiar demand by the Pharisees. We saw that demand recorded about six months earlier. We studied it in Lesson 26. Jesus probably faced these demands by the Pharisees nearly every time he cast out demons. This demand was also recorded in Matthew 16:1 and Mark 8:11 as happening during his ministry in the Decapolis (the largely Gentile area east of the Sea of Galilee).

**Luke 11:17-20 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers sons<sup>1</sup> drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.<sup>2</sup> But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.**

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<sup>1</sup> *The Greek word used here is υἱός {hwē-o’s} which means “sons,” not “followers.” Various arguments have been made as to whom this refers. It refers either to exorcists of the established order, or the disciples of Jesus who were “sons of Israel.” The bulk of opinion seems to lie in favor of this last choice. The NIV, by their translation here and in Matthew 12:27 seems to want to take the interpretive choice out of our hands.*

<sup>2</sup> *Taking the interpretation that this refers to the disciples of Jesus, this matches up with the statement in 1 Corinthians 6:2a “Do you not know that the saints (disciples of Jesus) will judge the world?”*

We discussed this response of Jesus in Lesson 20 in connection to all the other times Jesus responded to this accusation of the Jewish leaders. An accusation about how Jesus cast out demons probably occurred almost every time He cast out a demon. The Jewish leadership always had someone following Him to challenge Him and to record His “errors.” They were collecting evidence for the trial they had planned for Him. When they finally presented their evidence six months later, it didn’t stand up.

Luke 11:21-22 **“When the ~~strong man~~ *strong one*,<sup>3</sup> fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which ~~the man~~ *he*<sup>4</sup> trusted and divides up the spoils.**

Jesus was able to cast out demons because He was more powerful than Satan. Eventually He will take back from Satan the whole world that Adam lost:

Isaiah 53:12 **“Therefore I will divide Him (*Jesus*) among the many, and he will divide the spoils with the multitude, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”**

This also tells us that, amazingly, there is “an armor” in which Satan trusts that he thinks will protect his “kingdom.”

Luke 11:23 **“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.**

There is no neutral ground in the Gospel of Salvation. If you aren’t saved through faith and thus gathered to the LORD, you will be scattered (driven away) from His presence forever.

Luke 11:24-26 **“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places<sup>5</sup> seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”**

This admonition of Christ was also recorded in Matthew 12:43-45 as also being made over a year earlier in Galilee. We discussed it in Lesson 20.

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<sup>3</sup> *This is the literal translation. Satan is the powerful or “strong one.” There is no “man” in the text. See Isaiah 1:31. “The **strong one** will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire.” Literal translation.*

<sup>4</sup> *There is no “man” in the original because it doesn’t refer to a “man.”*

<sup>5</sup> *This is one of the numerous passages that seem to refer to an aversion to water by demonic spirits. It may just be referring to their aversion to God’s truth. Or both could be in view.*

**Luke 11:27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.”**

We know that by the end of Jesus’ ministry, Mary had become part of the group of women who followed Jesus around to take care of the needs of Him and His disciples. I believe it is likely that she had become a part of that group at this time. I believe it was her presence that likely caused this outburst by some woman.

**Luke 11:28 He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”**

Mary wasn’t blessed because she was the virgin chosen to be the human mother of Jesus Christ. She was blessed because she was obedient. Each of us has the opportunity to be called “blessed of God” because of our obedience. This passage seems to be Jesus’ concise refutation of the false worship of Mary that didn’t arise until about three centuries later.

### **The Sign of Jonah**

**Luke 11:29-30 As the crowds increased, Jesus said, “This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.**

Actually, there could be said to be two parts to the “sign of Jonah.” There was the first sign of Jonah which related to him being swallowed by a great fish:

Jonah 1:17 “But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.”

Jesus had explained over a year earlier how this sign would be fulfilled in him:

Matthew 12:38-40 “Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, ‘Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.’ He answered, ‘A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’”

The phrase “three days and three nights” is an unequivocal definition of the time of Jesus’ resurrection. However, there is a problem. In Matthew 20:18b there is the phrase “On the third day he will be raised to life.” We have a similar phrase in Luke 18:33 “On the third day he will rise again.” And Luke 24:21b “And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.”

This phrase about rising the third day often causes some confusion in the chronology of the last week. Mark reports in Mark 8:31 that Jesus said He would rise “after three days.”

The Gospel of Matthew has three different statements about when Jesus said He would rise. In Matthew 12:40, Jesus made it clear that He would spend “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” In Matthew 20:19 He said He would rise “the third day.” In Matthew 27:63 the Pharisees remembered that Jesus said “After three days I will rise again.” This was a statement made the day after Jesus had been crucified.

Clearly “after three days” and “three days and three nights” mean the same thing. However, Matthew also used the statement “the third day” to speak of Jesus’ resurrection. Clearly, he understood that all three phrases which he had used meant the same thing. This Greek idiom is evidently equivalent to “the third day will have come and gone and then he will be raised to life.”

Evidently, the phrase, “the third day” can be understood somewhat like the English sentence, “It is three days, and he hasn’t come.” We would understand that to mean that all three days had passed.

In all the passages of Scripture that speak about the “third day,” in the Greek there is no preposition “on” as in “on the third day,” although the NIV supplies an “on” for every “third day” passage. The “on” was omitted from the King James translation, which can be depended on to be literal. However, in the passages which speak about “after three days” (Matthew 27:63, Mark 9:31, Mark 8:31, Mark 10:34) there is always the preposition μετά {meta} which means “after.”

We will deal with this issue a little more fully in a later lesson.

Having dealt with the primary meaning of the sign of Jonah we can look at the second part of the sign of Jonah. It was related to Jonah’s message to Nineveh and its subsequent warning:

Jonah 3:1-4 “Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.’ Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city--a visit required three days. On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: ‘Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.’”

Jonah preached for three days and then Nineveh was given 40 days before destruction, but they repented. The Jews heard the preaching of Jesus for three years, and when after 40 years they hadn’t repented they were destroyed by the Romans. This had been prophesied about six hundred years before in Ezekiel.

### **The Prophecy of the Forty Years in Ezekiel**

In Ezekiel 4 there is a passage which has one of the most exact and significant prophecies in the Bible. However, it does not come into complete focus if you don’t understand the error into

which David led the Israelites. He did this by falsely assuring them that his son Solomon was, in fact, the Prince of Peace and King whom God had promised would build His Temple. The name “Solomon” means “Peace.” Before we get into that, let’s look at Ezekiel’s prophecy. The LORD was speaking to Ezekiel:

**Ezekiel 4:1-8** “Now, son of man, take a clay tablet, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel. “Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. “After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.”<sup>6</sup>

The Ezekiel passage was written shortly before the first siege of Jerusalem in 586 BC. God was speaking to Ezekiel. Ezekiel was addressed as the “Son of Man.” This identified to us who Ezekiel represented in the vision. Who was the “Son of Man” who would bear the sins of the Israel and Judah? It wasn’t the prophet Ezekiel. Aside from Ezekiel, only two other characters in the Bible are called the “Son of Man.” Ezekiel is called “Son of Man” 93 times in the book of Ezekiel. Daniel is called “Son of Man” once. The only other person called the “Son of Man” was Jesus Christ who was called “Son of Man” 5 times in the Old Testament and 82 times in the New Testament. In this vision, Ezekiel, the Son of Man, represented Jesus Christ, “the Son of Man.” In the vision, Ezekiel lay down two different times because there were two different sins, the sins of Israel and the sins of Judah.

The first time Ezekiel, representing the “Son of Man”, lay down on his left side he faced a clay tablet with a drawing of Jerusalem under siege. Then he bore the sins of Israel. There was an iron pan between the eyes of “the Son of Man” and the besieged city. In the vision he lay there for 390 days, one day for each year of their sin. He took that sin upon himself but didn’t interfere with what happened to the city (the iron pan between his face and the city). So, what was the sin of Israel?<sup>7</sup> The sin involved Greater Israel, which included all the tribes of Israel. It

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<sup>6</sup> *Comparing Ezekiel 1:1 and Ezekiel 8:1 allows one year and one month for the action in chapters 1-7. This would amount to either 390 days or 410 days if it was a 13-month year. Comparing Ezekiel 3:16 with Ezekiel 4:5-6 indicates 430 days plus seven would be needed to complete this action. The answer is that the 410 days spoken of in Ezekiel’s vision about the siege occurred only in the vision, not in reality.*

<sup>7</sup> *Some commentators have speculated that this is referring to the sins of the Northern Kingdom which was created after the reign of Solomon. This Kingdom is often referred to as Israel in the*

was only during the kingdom of Greater Israel that Jerusalem had been the capital of all the tribes.

You can only resolve the question of this first sin if you are aware of the rarely taught error and sin of David. What was that sin? It is this. David told the people of Israel that the kingship of Solomon was the completion of God's promise that He would raise up a "son of David" who would build His Temple, and reign over His house and kingdom forever. If you are aware of that error, everything falls into place neatly. Solomon became King in approximately 971 BC, Jerusalem fell in approximately 586 BC which is 385 regular years. However, David had declared Solomon was to fulfill the Davidic Covenant 5 years before. That adds up to 390 years. Thus, for 390 years Israel, both Northern and Southern Kingdoms had subscribed to the lie that Solomon was supposed to have fulfilled God's promise of a Messiah. The true Son of Man later paid for that sin on the Cross, but still Jerusalem had to be destroyed in the siege that ended in 586 BC. After that destruction, they never again had a King from the House of David, and only had a King from the Hasmonean line (house of Levi) from 142 BC to 63 BC (79 years).<sup>8</sup>

The second time Ezekiel, in the role of "Son of Man" lay down on his right side. This time he bore the sins of Judah (not Israel). Still, there was the clay tablet with a drawing of Jerusalem under siege before his face. This time he was tied with rope so that he couldn't help. This time He lay there for 40 days, one day for each year of Judah's sin. He took that sin upon himself but didn't interfere with what happened to the city. However, this time he was to turn his face toward Jerusalem and prophecy against her with a bared arm!

What is the meaning of this Prophecy? I remember when I first understood it, I was thunderstruck. I had just read a passage in Edersheim's The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah. Edersheim was a converted Jew and he had remarked that, to the Jews, there were two great sieges still memorialized in their religion, the one by the Babylonians in 586 BC, and the one by the Romans in 70 AD. In 70 AD Jerusalem and its Temple was destroyed by the besieging Romans under Titus, the son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian. This happened to the

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*scriptures of this period to differentiate it from Judah. This passage cannot be related to the Northern Kingdom of Israel because it was formed in 931 BC and ended in 721 BC and lasted only 210 years. Thus, how could it have sinned for 390 years? Also, if this was related to the sin of the Northern Kingdom why was Jerusalem involved? Jerusalem was the capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Each one pays for his own sin (Deuteronomy 24:15, Jeremiah 31:30, Ezekiel 18:18). Samaria had already been destroyed at the time of Ezekiel's prophecy!*

<sup>8</sup> *The Jews in Jesus' time erroneously speculated that the great sin of Israel was Solomon's marrying of the Pharaoh's daughter. The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, by Alfred Edersheim, THE CROSS AND THE CROWN CHAPTER VI – "But the very origin of the wicked world-Empire had been caused by Israel's sin. It had been (ideally) founded when Solomon contracted alliance with the daughter of Pharaoh, while Romulus and Remus rose when Jeroboam set up the worship of the two calves. Thus, what would have become the universal Davidic Rule had, through Israel's sin, been changed into subjection to the Gentiles."*

remnant of Judah that had come back to the land (remember, this part of the prophecy was directed at Judah, not Israel). Before the second siege the Lord told Ezekiel to “turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her.” Consider the following passages from Isaiah prophesying the coming of Jesus Christ:

Isaiah 52:10 “The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.”

Isaiah 53:1 “Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

The “arm of the LORD” is Jesus Christ. The “bared arm” in Ezekiel 4 meant that He had been revealed by the time of that forty years of the sin of Judah. Also consider these other passages about the “arm of the LORD” which support my point that, prophetically speaking, the “arm of the LORD” was Jesus Christ. See also the passages below:

Isaiah 51:5 “My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm.”

Psalms 98:1 “Sing to the LORD a new song,<sup>9</sup> for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.”

Isaiah 40:10-11 “See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.”

Isaiah 59:15-16 “Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained<sup>10</sup> him.”<sup>11</sup>

So, when did the second siege of Jerusalem occur. Many historical texts of Roman history confirm that the year was 70 AD. This was 40 years after Jesus Christ had first entered Jerusalem and was hailed as King and ruler just as Daniel 9:25 had prophesied.<sup>12</sup> However, we

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<sup>9</sup> See Revelation 5:8-9 and Revelation 14:2-3 for the new song accompanied by harps (verse 5).

<sup>10</sup> The Hebrew word in the Qal is סָמַךְ {sä-mak'} which means “supported” or “upheld.”

<sup>11</sup> This clause is speaking of the two parts of the Lord’s gift to us, the salvation from our sins, and His righteousness that kept Him from falling. In communion the two gifts are represented by the wine (atonement for sin) and the bread (the gift of Christ’s righteousness).

have to go to the Jewish historian Josephus to be more exact. This siege was raised on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan (Passover) according to Josephus who was an eyewitness. (Wars of the Jews, Flavius Josephus, Book V, Chapter 13, Verse 7. “And, indeed, why do I relate these particular calamities? while Manneus, the son of Lazarus, came running to Titus at this very time, and told him that there had been carried out through that one gate, which was entrusted to his care, no fewer than a hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies, **in the interval between the fourteenth day of the month Xanthieus, [Nisan,] when the Romans pitched their camp by the city, and the first day of the month Panemus [Tamuz]”**)

That means it was 40 years to the day since the crucifixion of Christ on Passover in 30 AD!<sup>13</sup>

So, the two parts of the prophecy are two sides of the same coin of rejection. First, in 975 BC, Israel accepted the wrong Messiah, Solomon. Second, in 30 AD, they rejected the real Messiah, Jesus Christ. We continue with Jesus’ rebuke of His generation in Luke 11.

**Luke 11:31-32 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.**

Jonah preached for three days in Nineveh, and then if they had not repented, God gave them a forty-day grace period before judgment. Jesus preached three years to Jerusalem (starting with the Passover of 27 AD), and then gave them a forty-year grace period to repent before they were destroyed.

**Luke 11:33 “No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.**

Remember, in the passage Jesus had just told them that they would be given “the sign of Jonah.” Jesus was just saying that the Jews would be given signs that couldn’t be missed if they were looking.

**Luke 11:34-35 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness.**

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<sup>12</sup> Daniel 9:25 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’”

<sup>13</sup> See my paper on the Chronology of the Life of Christ, also Lesson 1 of this series.

Jesus warned them that some of them were intentionally blind because they had hardened their hearts.

**Luke 11:36 Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.”**

For those that genuinely wanted to see the will of God, it would be made clear. As He had said earlier:

John 7:16-17 “Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.’”

### **The Dinner with the Pharisee**

In the following scenes it is always important to remember that Jesus was talking to a mixed audience. Some were implacable enemies. Some were neutral listeners waiting to be convinced one way or another, and some were Jesus’ disciples and followers.

**Luke 11:37 When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table.**

We can’t tell from the context what the attitude of this man was. He may have been willing to discuss Jesus’ teachings with an open mind, but his thinking was clearly poisoned by the legalism which was characteristic of the Pharisees. There were probably also other Pharisees at the dinner.

**Luke 11:38 But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised.**

By this we are to understand that Jesus did not go through the elaborate ceremony of hand washing. It wasn’t part of the Mosaic Law. It was merely one of the many traditions which the Jews had invented. Actually, since the hand washing ceremony implied purifying your hands from sin (hands stood for your works), Jesus couldn’t honestly participate in it. He was pure from sin already.

**Luke 11:39 Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.**

Jesus made the connection to all the outward purifying ceremonies that the Pharisees went through without regard to purifying their hearts. Their greed and wickedness were evident in that they had rejected the LORD’s Messiah. The evil of their hearts was evident in that they were on the side of Satan.

Luke 11:40 **You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?**

Did they think that God would be impressed with the washing ceremonies affecting their outward bodies while their inside heart was still wicked. Didn't they think that God could see their hearts.

~~Luke 11:41 **But give what is inside [the dish] to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.**~~  
~~NIV~~

Luke 11:41 **But submit what is inside [the heart] to given mercy, and everything will be clean for you. RST – Corrected Translation**

The word which appears in the Greek is ἐλεημοσύνη {e-le-ā-mo-sü'-nā} which is in many versions translated “alms” and here “to the poor.” It can also be translated as simply “given mercy.” It is from the root word ἔλεος {e'-le-os} which means mercy. In our study, we haven't yet reached the familiar story (Luke 18:9-14) of the tax collector and the Pharisee. There the tax collector asked for mercy and was justified, and the Pharisee didn't ask for mercy and wasn't justified. Jesus was making the same point here. This Pharisees needed to ask for God's mercy to clean the inside of the cup. Matthew 12:7 made the same point: “If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’<sup>14</sup> you would not have condemned the innocent.”

Luke 11:42 **“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect *bypass* justice and the love of God. ~~You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone~~ *This you ought to have done, without leaving the other aside.*”<sup>15</sup>**

Strictly speaking, the original Law of the Tithe was meant to apply to the crops of wheat, barley, and rye. The wealthy Pharisees who had their own private gardens went beyond the letter of the Law to give a tenth of the produce of their gardens. They thought this impressed the LORD. In the meantime, they had ignored the foundation of understanding God, His justice and love.

Luke 11:43 **“Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.**

The Pharisees liked to flatter themselves and believed that they were motivated by the love of the Law of God. In fact, they were motivated by place, fame, and popularity. They spent much of their time obscuring the true Law of God with tradition and false wisdom.

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<sup>14</sup> Hosea 6:6.

<sup>15</sup> I have substituted the literal translation.

Luke 11:44 **“Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it.”**

Under the Law of Moses (Numbers 19:15) someone who had come into contact with a grave was considered unclean for social health reasons. Jesus was saying that the Pharisees were dangerous to those who followed their teachings for spiritual health reasons. People who thought they were pursuing wisdom and light by following the Pharisees were being plunged into darkness unawares.

Luke 11:45a **One of the experts in the law answered him,**

The term “experts in the Law” here was just another name for the Pharisees. According to Josephus this characteristic was what distinguished the Pharisees from others:

Flavius Josephus, Wars of the Jews,<sup>16</sup> Book 1 Chapter 5, Paragraph 2. “And now the Pharisees joined themselves to her, to assist her in the government. These are a certain sect of the Jews that appear more religious than others and seem to interpret the laws more accurately.”

Flavius Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 8, Paragraph 14. “But then as to the two other orders at first mentioned, the Pharisees are those who are esteemed most skillful in the exact explication of their laws.”

Luke 11:45b **“Teacher, when you say these things, you *also* insult us ~~also~~.”**

I have corrected the translation. The word “also” is not used in the sense of “you also insult us as well as someone else” but in the sense “you are also insulting us in what you just said.”

Luke 11:46a **But he said, “Even so, to you experts in the law be woe, RST**

I have corrected the translation from the original Greek which is ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς νομικοῖς οὐαί. I have given it the literal translation. In effect Jesus was saying, “I meant to insult you. Woe to you.”

Luke 11:46b **because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.**

How could they have helped them? They could have helped by pointing the way to God’s merciful solution. That solution was only found in the LORD’s Messiah who was standing in front of them, who they continued to reject.

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<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that when Josephus wrote Wars of the Jews he still considered himself a Pharisee. It was written before his conversion to Christianity.

Luke 11:47 **“Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them.**

The men who murdered the prophets were the forefathers of the Pharisees in spirit. They built memorials to the martyred prophets but would have killed the prophets themselves if they had lived in those days. They would shortly prove it by murdering Jesus.

Luke 11:48 **So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs.<sup>17</sup>**

Because they rejected God’s mercy, they testified that they would have killed the prophets of grace even though they hypocritically built the martyred prophets monuments.

Luke 11:49a **Because of this,**

The “this” here refers to the rejection of grace by the generations of false shepherds of Israel.

Luke 11:49b **God in his wisdom said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.’**

God’s merciful response to the rejection of His Word by many generations was to keep sending them true prophets for them to kill and persecute.

Luke 11:50 **so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, NAS**

The LORD’s merciful tolerance of the Jews’ rejection of His Word would come to an end with that generation. That generation would be the eyewitnesses of all that had been foretold about the Messiah by the prophets. They had rejected Him. After forty years they would be charged, found guilty, and destroyed as a nation.

Luke 11:51a **from the blood of Abel**

Abel was the brother of Cain. Cain had tried to buy atonement with works. Abel had offered an animal sacrifice which spoke of the coming “Seed of the Woman.” It was the first example of the irreconcilable conflict between man’s works and God’s grace as a means of acceptance by God.

Luke 11:51b **to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary.**

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<sup>17</sup> *That is, they built the tombs of the prophets instead of teaching what the prophets taught about the Messiah.*

This was Zechariah the son of Berekiah, according to Matthew 23:35. This Zechariah was the descendant of Asaph, the Psalmist. He was killed during the reign of Solomon (1 Chronicles 26:14) for protesting the apostasy under Solomon.<sup>18</sup>

Luke 11:51c **Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.**

This prediction would be repeated in Matthew 23:35, during Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem.

Luke 11:52 **“Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”**

The key to knowledge is the understanding of who God is. He had revealed who He was when Moses asked to see His Glory in Exodus 34:6-7. He was “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”

Because they tried to justify themselves before the LORD by their own works, they could never know Him.

Luke 11:53-54 **When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say.**

The Pharisees had already decided to kill him. However, ideally, they had to have Roman approval and cooperation. After these remarks they redoubled their efforts to find something by which they might convince the Romans that Jesus was a danger to them. They never did. They had to resort to threatening to send a charge to the Roman Emperor Tiberius that Pontius Pilate was sheltering revolutionaries in Judea.

### **Jesus' Warning to the Multitude**

Luke 12:1a **Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another,**

Jesus had just spoken bluntly about the sins of the Pharisees at the private gathering at the Pharisee's house. Here Jesus also warned a large public gathering of many thousands about the sins of the Pharisees. This gathering must have taken place in one of the thirty-five villages in Judea that Jesus had sent the seventy disciples to prepare. This was probably the largest crowd

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<sup>18</sup> *There is another Zechariah who was a son of a Berekiah. He was the post-exilic prophet who wrote the Book of Zechariah. However, there is no evidence that he was murdered.*

Jesus had ever spoken to in Judea outside of His address in the Temple at the Feast a few weeks before.

**Luke 12:1b Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.**

At first Jesus was just speaking to His own disciples rather than the larger crowd. He warned of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees which was the “yeast” that defiled them. The question is, “What hypocrisy was Jesus warning the crowd about?” I think it was the hypocrisy of not being honest about their motives, which was pride and arrogance. Without a realization of their arrogance, they would never turn to God’s merciful grace. Even the disciples of Jesus (believers) must beware of closing their eyes to the sin in their own life. That would put a barrier of pride between themselves and the grace of God.

**Luke 12:2 There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.**

What would be “made known” was also taught earlier in Galilee as recorded in Matthew. It made a little clearer what Jesus was talking about here:

Matthew 10:26-27 “So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.”

What would be made known was the truth that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of David, and the Son of God.

**Luke 12:3 What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.**

Jesus had already confessed to His disciples that He was the Messiah. However, they hadn’t yet proclaimed it openly. The day would soon come when they would proclaim the truth boldly on Pentecost.

**Luke 12:4 “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.**

At that time, they were not to be afraid of the same Jewish leaders that would have Jesus crucified. For one thing, the worst they could do was send them on to Jesus in Heaven. As it turned out the LORD protected His Church from prison and death for six years until they could prepare enough strong believers to evangelize the world.

Luke 12:5 **But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.**

We know that Jesus will be the judge who has that power as John saw in his vision on the island of Patmos:

Revelation 19:11-13 “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.<sup>19</sup> With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.”

This warning would have been intended mostly for the crowd of unbelievers that was gathered, but it also was intended for the ears of Judas Iscariot.

Luke 12:6-7 **Yet are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet Not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.**

Jesus was reminding the believers who would be entrusted with His Gospel that God was omniscient and was aware of even the smallest details in the lives of the least of His creatures. They were never out of His care.

This should be read in context with verse 5 about fearing the judgment of God. God was a God of ultimate power. He had been the Holy God of Mount Sinai. He had made the mountain smoke with Holy fire. Approaching Him on any terms but His own was on pain of death (Exodus 20). However, He was also the same God of Moses who was “the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.” (Exodus 34:6-7)

Luke 12:8 **“I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.**

Since the topic of Jesus' lesson was the protection of His witnesses, this seems to be speaking of the additional protection from the elect angels mentioned in Psalms 91:

Psalms 91:9-12 “If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For **he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways**; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

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<sup>19</sup> See Revelation 3:14. “Faithful and True” is a title for Jesus Christ.

So, this verse seems to say that besides the protection of God, the elect angels would also be on call for the protection of those who are persecuted for the testimony of the Gospel of Jesus.

**Luke 12:9 But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.**

However, those Christians who disowned Christ under pressure would relinquish God's protection as well as that of His angels.

**Luke 12:10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.**

Here Jesus turned to those who would persecute the testimony of the Gospel. We must here answer the question: What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? The Greek word translated "blasphemy" is βλασφημέω {blä-sfā-me'-ō}. The phrase literally means "to defame the report of the Holy Spirit." Since true knowledge of God could only come through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, those who rejected the Holy Spirit's leading could never come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Here Jesus was speaking of that near future when the disciples would be ministering the testimony of Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

**Luke 12:11-12 "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."**

Jesus returned to the subject of His disciples and their fears in that future day. They could not only be assured that their physical safety was in God's hands, but they could also be assured that they could rely on the Holy Spirit to speak powerfully through them.

**Luke 12:13-14 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"**

It was clear that the man who asked Jesus the question had his priorities gravely misplaced. Confronted by the Messiah, the savior of the world, He could only think of how he could get Jesus to use His authority for his short-term material benefit.

**Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."**

Jesus correctly pointed to the man's problem. His problem was that he thought that the value of a man's life was wrapped up in his possessions. Jesus told him to beware of his greed. He expanded this by telling a parable of a greedy man. We will study that in the next lesson.