

Who Do You Say That I Am?
Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**
38- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 18
Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy

Church November 27, 2022

Matthew 6:1-8

1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Back in 1998, DM Thomas wrote a book entitled, "*Alexander Solzhenitsyn: A Century of his Life*" And in that book- Thomas quotes Solzhenitsyn about an Event that the Russian political Activist *personally* witnessed during the "*Bolshevik Revolution*" about the Treatment of Jews when the Communists took over the Country:

“There were bands of Ukrainian bandits. The most fearsome was under the command of an anarchist and anti-Semite called Makhno. Makhno’s men delighted in ‘drying the herrings,’ as they called the process of hanging Jews. They would suspend several between posts on a loose rope; as the rope tightened the victims tried to cling on to each other in their death-agonies, the Makhnovtsi sitting around laughing, drinking, and betting on who would survive the longest.”¹

“Anti-Semitism”- the Hatred and Violence directed toward Jews for no other reason than their “*Jewishness*”- has been a great Sin in the world, acted out by those claiming to be Christians and non-Christians alike throughout the Centuries. The Jews have been the most hated; the most attacked; the most enslaved; exterminated; abused; and maligned group of people in the History of the world. No other Race or Ethnicity even comes close to the outright Persecution that has been waged against the Jewish people. It is truly nothing short of a Miracle that there are any Jews left alive in the world.

For example, in supposed “*Christian England*”, the Jews were *forcefully* expelled from the Island in 1290 AD; and not allowed to enter England again for 365 years; until Oliver Cromwell gave “*Freedom of Religion*” to the “*Puritans*” and other “*Non-Conformists*” in 1655 AD. The story of Anti-Semitism is a *terrible* Story and I mention it today as a Warning to all of us.

Around 1450 years before Jesus was born God, spoke infallibly through Moses, and described the “hatred” that the other Nations of the world would have against the Jews- if they did not obey Him when He said this from **Leviticus 26:14-39:**

**14 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments,
15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances
so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant,
16 I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror,
consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to
pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it
up.**

**17 'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your
enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no
one is pursuing you.**

**18 'If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven
times more for your sins.**

¹ DM Thomas: *Alexander Solzhenitsyn: A Century in His Life*; 1998; p.31

19 'I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze.

20 'Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit.

21 'If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins.

22 'I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.

23 'And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me,

24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins.

25 'I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands.

26 'When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.

27 'Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, 28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins.

29 'Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat.

30 'I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you.

31 'I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas.

32 'I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it.

33 'You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.

34 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths.

35 'All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it.

36 'As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall.

37 'They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies.

38 'But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you.

39 'So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.

Now I don't know of another People, in the History of Mankind, who had God talk to them like this- other than the Jews. And that should strike Fear into our hearts, lest God speak this way to *us*- because the Apostle Paul taught in **Romans 11:21:**

... if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either

Now every Christian I have ever met lays claim to be a "child of God"- and I agree with that. But if you are a "child of God" then when we read about God's Judgment against His Own people in the Old Testament- we need to fear- because if we do what the "Old Testament people of God did"- then God will do to us what He did with them.

So, what did they do? What did the Jew do- to incur the Wrath of God against them? God told them in **Jeremiah 2:13:**

My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.

... and in **Isaiah 29:13:**

Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

... and in "*Alabama English*"- this means that they were simply going through the motions in their Worship of God- but they did NOT love God. So, they were "checking off the boxes" in what God expected of them- but their heart wasn't in it- so, the Prophet said they went through their religious Traditions, "by rote"- meaning they had memorized what they were supposed to say; and sing; and do in

their Worship of the one, true, and living God- but their Worship wasn't real; it wasn't genuine; it wasn't what God desires.

And what Isaiah and Jeremiah are describing is the "Horror of religious Hypocrisy". The terrible Curse of God's people- "**forsaking God- Who is the Fountain of all living Waters**" and simply "going through the motions" in their Worship of God. So, *outwardly*, they look great- they look like "God's people"- but, *inwardly*- they do NOT love God; and thus- they are entirely *unable* to bring God any Honor and Glory.

And this is *why* God *hates* "*religious Hypocrisy*". God *despises* when His Own people, that He has gathered and redeemed by His Own hand- no longer *enjoy* Him. God is dishonored when His people no longer find Pleasure in Him. When they no longer delight themselves in Him- but their Hearts and Minds and Imaginations have been captured by someone else or something else- and they are now "*unfaithful*" to God and have become- "*spiritual Adulterers*."

Now Hypocrisy is *normally* defined as: "*Acting contrary to what you say you Believe*"; or it is "*Saying one thing- but doing another*". But in the Bible, God defined "religious Hypocrisy" as:

"Attempting to worship God out of Tradition; Obligation; or Fear; while NOT loving and finding your Delight in Him."

... so, "going through the motions of Worship- while your heart is far from Him"- qualifies you as being a religious Hypocrite and a Target of God's Wrath. And that means we must take care of ourselves.

And two times in the Passage that Brother Vern just read to us- Jesus called the Scribes and Pharisees, "Hypocrites".

Matthew 6:2b

... when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men...

Matthew 6:5

When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men...

... and then in verses 7&8- Jesus called these religious Hypocrites, "*Gentiles*" (Unbelievers)- when He said:

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them...

... so, here Jesus is talking about “*Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy.*” And the two Subjects that Jesus is addressing in this Passage- is “Giving” and “Prayer”.

Now that is hard to swallow- because anytime anyone actually gives- we consider that to be a good thing; a noble thing; and an admirable thing. I mean, better that they gave than that they didn’t give- so who cares HOW they gave, right? Well, God cares HOW we give. And so, if we do not give correctly; properly; and biblically- then Jesus said that our Giving can qualify us as being a religious Hypocrite.

And the same thing goes for Prayer. Anytime anyone prays- we consider that to be a good thing; a noble thing; and an admirable thing- even a spiritual thing, right? So, how could anyone condemn Prayer? Well, Jesus did, right here. And the Lord Christ said that if we do not pray the right way- our Prayers cause us to qualify as being a Hypocrite and an Unbeliever!

Now we need to keep in mind that when Jesus made these Statements, He wasn’t talking about some abstract Sin that *some* people *might* Commit at some point in their Lives. No, Jesus was giving a real-life Example of what the *worst* religious Hypocrites on earth at that time were actually doing. The Scribes and Pharisees were “*practicing their righteousness*” publicly for one Reason: So, that people would see them and say, “*Wow! Those guys are really spiritual and godly people!*” In other words, the Scribes and Pharisees were *purposefully* robbing God of His Glory by “practicing”; or by carrying out- the various tenets of their false Religion in front of people- “**to be noticed by them**”. And Jesus promised these religious Hypocrites that,

you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus so despised these Fakers that He *guaranteed* that they would NOT get ANY Reward from God. Now, yes, it is true that this Teaching by Jesus applies to ALL religious Hypocrites- whether they are Jews or Gentiles; whether they live in the 1st Century or the 21st; and whether they are in a Synagogue or in Church. ALL religious Hypocrites are damned by Jesus. None of them are in right standing with God; and NONE of them will enter into the everlasting Pleasures of Heaven.

But in Context- Jesus was teaching those Jews; on that Mountain; on that day- about what they saw every day demonstrated by the worst religious Frauds on earth at that time- the Scribes and Pharisees. Those men would wait until people were watching them before they would give to the poor. They would wait until

they had an Audience before they would pray. And they would wait until people noticed them- before they would give Offerings to God.

So, they weren't giving to help the Poor- they couldn't care less about the Poor. In fact, the Scribes and Pharisees were actually fleecing the Poor by *demanding* that they give what little they had. For example, in **Luke 21:1-4**- Jesus saw a Widow giving two small copper coins into the "Temple Treasury"- and He was so incensed about this blatant Hypocrisy that He used that Example as the "jumping off point" in His frightening Condemnation against 1st Century Judaism in general; and the absolute destruction of the Temple itself, in particular.

Those "religious Gentiles" were engaged in advertising how godly they supposedly were. They were involved in a Publicity Campaign to make themselves look better in the eyes of the people. They were using Madison Avenue marketing Techniques to appear to be Righteous- when in fact, they were *worse* than Prostitutes and Thieves.

Now keep in mind that Jesus was giving this "Sermon on the Mount" (**Matthew 5, 6, & 7**) out in the open- right in front of the Scribes and Pharisees. So, they heard what Jesus was saying. And, instead of falling down on their faces and crying out to God for Forgiveness- they hated Jesus all the more- which only served to prove that God had NOT chosen them- even though they were Jews- who could link their Birth- directly to Father Abraham. So, in **Matthew 6:2a**, when Jesus said,

... when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men...

... He was addressing what everybody on that Mountainside knew full well was the most *admired*; the most *trusted*; the most *exalted*; and the most *feared* group in all of 1st Century Palestine: the Scribes and Pharisees. And in this verse- Jesus calls them what they are: "Hypocrites". And He exposed *why* they were doing what they were doing,

so that they may be honored by men...

... NOT so that God would be glorified. But then Jesus gave them this frightening Promise:

... they have their reward in full

Now this phrase loses some of its impact when translated into

English. But in the original Greek- this sounds a whole lot more serious and a whole lot more- scary. What Jesus is saying here is that God will NOT bless that Effort. God will NOT credit that Activity as bringing Him Glory; and God will NOT reward that hypocritical Act with Heaven. The *entirety* of the Reward for that Act of Hypocrisy will be the “Praise of Men”. That’s it! The ONLY Reward will be that other sinful people will heap praises on the Scribes and Pharisees for doing this. But God will categorically reject ALL of their Hypocrisy; and He will reject them as well!

So, *however* we give; *however* we pray; *however* we “**practice our Righteousness**”- we better NOT practice it like these religious Hypocrites did- or we will get the same Reward they got- the Praise of other lost people- which is actually Damnation!

Now back in the Church’s Infancy, the most troubling theological Issue of that day was:

“If the Jews are (and always have been) God’s people- why didn’t they accept Jesus as Messiah?”

... and some were teaching that “*Sovereign Election wasn’t permanent*”. Others said that God had “*changed His Mind*” about the Jews. And still others taught that the Jews had sinned their “*Day of Visitation*” away- by rejecting Jesus. Some 1st Century Jews even taught that God was dead. And sadly, many took those Teachings as excuses to persecute and even kill the Jews.

But all of this was being debated and discussed and analyzed- as the Church was becoming established in the earth- because there were two seemingly *contradictory* Issues that were *both* true:

1. The Jews were chosen by God as His *beloved* people
2. The Jews had (for the most part) *categorically* rejected Jesus

So, what were the people supposed to think? It was all so very confusing. And that is why God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Paul to write **Romans 9, 10, and 11**.

You see, **Romans 8** ends with a very powerful Exultation from the Apostle about the Glory of Salvation in Jesus Christ. But that glorious Theme is NOT picked back up until we get to **Romans 12**.

Because in **Romans 9, 10, & 11**- the Apostle wrote *infallibly* about how BOTH Statements could be true. The Jews WERE the “chosen people of God”. And, *repeatedly*, God said that He chose the Jew- TO THE EXCLUSION- of every

other People. So, God's Hand on the Jews under the Old Covenant is absolutely undeniable. But the Jews' rejection of Jesus is also undeniable.

So, when asking why God loved the Jews- there is ONLYH one Answer: "God loved them- for no other reason than He loved them!" And this is called, "Unconditional Election"; or "Sovereign Election". God chose His people (the Jews) for no other Reason than He WANTED to. So, the Choosing of the Jews was NOT based on ANYTHING they said; or did; or possessed. The Choosing of the Jews under the Old Covenant (to the Exclusion of every other People) was based on one thing: *God's Prerogative*.

Okay, that answers the first Question- but then *why* didn't those "chosen people" accept, love, and embrace Jesus- Who was the God they said they loved- in human Flesh? The Apostle gives us the Answer in **Romans 9:6b-8:**

6 ... it is not as though the word of God has failed; For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

... here Paul teaches one of the most amazing and startling Doctrines found anywhere in the Bible:

Not all the Jews were counted as being "God's people"

And many people (*especially* Jews) *condemned* Paul back then for teaching this. Some said that Paul just made up this Doctrine out of his hatred for his own people- and that is *why* he converted to Christianity. So, is that true? Let's see. We have two Questions or two Accusations against the Apostle:

1. Paul *hated* the Jews
2. Paul *invented* this Teaching

... so, let's examine what Paul himself taught and see if these Accusations are true.

1. Paul *Hated* the Jews and That is Why He Converted

Some of the Jews of the 1st Century began to spread rumors about

Paul- trying their best to *discredit* him. So, the false Rumor was started that Saul of Tarsus had grown *increasingly* disillusioned with 1st Century Pharisaical Judaism; and after he consented to Stephen's Martyrdom- Saul responded by converting to this new Religion (called, "*the Way*") out of that profound Disillusionment- even going so far to take on a Roman name (Paul).

Yet, when we read what Paul actually wrote- we see the very opposite:

Romans 9:1-3

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

Here, Paul actually desired that he would lose his own Salvation- if that would bring the Jews to Christ! Now that is a Love that is much *deeper* than any normal Love. And then, to begin Chapter 10- Paul emphasized how he prayed for the Jews,

Romans 10:1&2

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

... so, Paul did NOT hate the Jews at all. He dearly *loved* them; *admired* them; and earnestly *prayed* for their Salvation!

Now as a side note- the reason that Paul prayed for the Jews' Salvation was because he knew and understood that in, by, and through ALL that they believed based on the Old Covenant- the Jews were NOT already saved. So, by saying he was praying for their Salvation- proves that the Teaching (that many believed then as well as now) that the Jews were *automatically* saved by virtue of being "*children of Abraham*" and NOT by repenting of Sin; and trusting in Jesus and in His finished Work- was a Myth.

And what his critics were calling Paul's "great Disillusionment"- was actually the Grace of God in opening Paul's eyes- so he could see that the Jew's Religion of the 1st Century was entirely false; and unable to forgive a single Sin or save a single Soul. So, the critics were wrong. Paul did NOT hate the Jews.

2. Paul *Invented* this Teaching

Many Jewish theologians try to discredit Paul- even to this day- because it was a great Scandal that a man, as well versed in Old Testament Truth would convert to that new Religion; and completely *abandon* both the Ceremonial and Dietary aspects of the Law. So, they taught (and still teach) that Paul simply *invented* the Teaching of “*Sovereign Election*” to try to bring “*Divine Credibility*” to a Teaching that is still *universally* despised- not only by the Jews- but also by the overwhelming majority of Christian Leaders- even in the 21st Century. But when we carefully examine **Romans 9, 10, and 11**- we see that it is filled with Quotes that come directly from the first Book of Moses, called **Genesis**.

And that is very important- because it *proves* that what Paul is teaching in **Romans** about “*Sovereign Election*” is NOT new at all- but is the Way that God has ALWAYS worked with Mankind. So, if you believe that the Jews were God’s chosen people under the Old Covenant- then you HAVE to believe in Sovereign Election. And instead of thinking that Paul *invented* this Teaching- what is true is that **Romans 9, 10, &11** is the correct Exposition (Explanation) of what **Genesis** teaches about the Sovereign Election of the Jews.

So, when **Romans 9, 10, &11** are correctly and fully understood and then we add Section of both **Galatians** and **Hebrews** in with it- it gives us the correct and full Truth as to *why* most of the Jews *rejected* Jesus and still reject Him to this day- even though they were the “chosen people of God”.

And the Truth is that while God DID set His Love on the Jews- He did NOT set His Love on ALL of the Jews. *Some* Jews were chosen by God for Salvation- but *some* were not. And that is what Paul was talking about when he wrote,

it is not as though the word of God has failed

Paul was teaching that the Word of God has NOT failed; and it CANNOT fail- when the Old Testament undeniably and repeatedly says that the Jews were God’s chosen people. They were chosen- BUT NOT ALL OF THEM! And that is what Paul meant when he said,

... For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

... in other words, God DID choose the Jews. But the *Way* that God chose them is NOT based on their Bloodline through Abraham. How do we know that? Because Abraham had *two* sons- yet only one of them was chosen- Isaac. Ishmael was every bit a “son of Abraham” and yet he was NOT chosen for Salvation and was NOT saved. But Isaac was chosen. And that is *why* he was saved- even though he committed horrible Sins. But this brings up another Question:

“Which Jews were chosen; and which ones weren’t?”

... and the Answer is surprisingly simple:

The Jews who *believed* were chosen; and the ones who didn’t believe were NOT chosen

And that is true with every single Jew, who ever lived or who will ever live. But it is also true with every Gentile, too. All who are saved- are saved the VERY SAME WAY! Salvation is NOT acquired. It isn’t attained. Salvation is given. So, you can’t leave Salvation to your Children as an Inheritance. Children of saved people are NOT *automatically* saved. Each person- Jew or Gentile- MUST be *individually* born again and they all must *individually* believe. Each person- *regardless* of Bloodline or Ethnicity or Nationality or political, economic, or social Background MUST experience the Miracle of the New Birth themselves- or they are NOT saved. And that is *why* we are told to preach the Gospel to “**all creation**” (Mark 16:15).

But we can’t see “Belief”. Faith or Belief is *invisible* to the Human eye. We hear people say they have been born again- but we can’t see that with our eyes. But while we can’t *see* Belief- we CAN see the RESULTS of Believing in God- which is a humble and joyful Obedience- based in Love. And ALL who have been born again have that kind of Obedience.

So, the Bible teaches that ONLY those who have been sovereignly chosen by God- will be saved. And that “Choosing” has NOTHING to do with ANYTHING that the individual has; or does; or possesses. God’s Choosing is always “UNCONDITIONAL”- meaning there are NO Conditions that an individual must meet in order to earn God’s Choosing. NONE! There isn’t *anything* that *anyone* can do; or say; or believe; or own; that will *cause* God to choose them. God chooses those whom He will save- BEFORE those people are born; and BEFORE they have had the Opportunity to do ANYTHING- “Good” or “Bad”. So, to always assure that God’s Choosing of individuals to be saved- is always “Unconditional”- our great God engages in ALL of His Choosing-

BEFORE He created the Universe!

Now we have no idea who is chosen and who isn't. So, we have to work with; and pray with; and love- EVERYBODY. But, eventually, ALL of those God has chosen for Salvation will be saved. So, until that individual dies- there is Hope. And so, we *cannot* rule anyone out; we can't ignore anyone; and we cannot label anyone as being "*unsavable*". As long as there is Life- there is Hope.

But 100% of ALL who are chosen- will be saved. And 100% of those who are saved- will love Jesus. And 100% of those who love Jesus- will strive to obey Him. And 100% of those who strive to obey Jesus will be kept by God and they WILL go to Heaven. So, in Salvation, the old Saying is especially true: "*The Proof of the Pudding is in the Eating*". So, with Salvation- talk is cheap. Anyone can *say* they are saved. But if they are saved- they WILL bear godly Fruit. And that Fruit will INCREASE. And that Fruit WILL remain (**John 15:16**).

There is no such thing as anyone being chosen by God who isn't saved. And there isn't anyone who is saved- who doesn't love Jesus. And there isn't anyone who loves Jesus- that doesn't strive to obey Him. And that is why Jesus said this in **Matthew 7:16a, 17b-20**,

You will know them by their fruits... every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.

... and that is true- even if that individual is a Jew.

So, if there is no godly Fruit- there is no Salvation- *regardless* of whether he can trace his genealogy straight back to Abraham (which no one can).

So, no one is saved because of who his Parents are. No one is saved because of his Ethnicity or his Nationality. So, Jews are NOT *automatically* saved by virtue of being a Jew. And people today are NOT automatically saved because of who their Parents are; or because they were raised in the Church; or because they were baptized; or because they were "confirmed"; or because they sing in the choir; or because they "went down front"; or because they raised their hand; or because they shook the Preacher's hand; or because they signed the card; or because they were anointed with oil from the Garden of Gethsemane; or because they were baptized in the River Jordan; or because they only use the King James Version; or because they speak in tongues; or because they were dedicated as a baby; or because they have a 25 year perfect Attendance pin that they wear.

People are saved today- the very SAME Way that people have ALWAYS been saved: Because, *before the Foundation of the world*- God chose to "set His Love" on them; and chose them to be saved. And every single one of the people

that God chose to set His Love on- already have or they will (at some point in the future) experience the Miracle of the New Birth. And in that new Birth- God has given them eyes to see; ears to hear; and God has given them the Gift of “Saving Faith”- a heart that is soft and one that is both willing and able to believe.

So, yes, Justification is by Faith ALONE. But the Faith that it takes to be justified is a Gift from God in the New Birth. So, we still have to say that God chooses us- we do NOT choose God. And if God has chosen you- you WILL believe. And if you believe- you WILL love Jesus. And if you love Jesus- you WILL strive to please Him- by joyfully and humbly struggling to obey Him. So, if there is no Obedience (honest- NOT perfect)- there is NO Love. And if there is NO Love- there is NO New Birth. And if there is NO New Birth- there has been NO sovereign Choosing; and if there is NO sovereign Choosing- they will NEVER be saved. And that is true- whether you are a Jew or a Gentile.

Okay- so, those who have been chosen will be saved; and those who are saved- will love; and those who love- will strive to obey. But what is the Disposition of those- who are NOT chosen? Hypocrisy. They are ALL right now- or they will ALL become- “religious Hypocrites”. And that is also true- whether they are Jews or Gentiles. 100% of those, who are NOT chosen by God for Salvation- are right now- or will become at some later date- a religious Hypocrite.

And a religious Hypocrite has the outward *trappings* of “Religiosity”- yet they themselves are distant from God. They are unwashed; unsaved; and not redeemed- yet they are all around those who are.

And, under the Old Covenant- the religious Hypocrites had been circumcised and they lived among the Jews- as Jews. And under the New Covenant- the Hypocrites have been baptized; and they live among genuine Believers- as though they are Believers. But they aren't.

So, even though- to some extent- religious Hypocrites look and sound and act like a genuinely saved person- they are NOT saved; their Sins have NOT been forgiven; and they will NOT enter into eternal Joy in Heaven!

And this is what the Apostle Paul taught about the Jews of the 1st Century- who had rejected Jesus. They had the outward trappings of Salvation; they had the correct Pedigree; they knew all the right Answers; and could sing the right Songs. Yet they were as far from God as the East is from the West. And that is why Paul wrote this in **Romans 9:4&5:**

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

... in other words, the Jews had EVERYTHING going for them- except the ONLY thing that mattered- the Election; or the Choosing of God. In other words, if anybody SHOULD HAVE been saved; if anyone SHOULD HAVE embraced Jesus as Lord and Messiah- the 1st Century Jew should have. Yet they didn't. And sadly, many have taken that Truth as an excuse to persecute the Jews- even to this day.

But why didn't they believe? Did Jesus fail to prove His Own Messiahship? Was Jesus' Genealogy faulty? Did Jesus fail to prove that He was God Almighty in human Flesh? Did Jesus not perform enough Miracles? Did Jesus stumble into Sin- a single time? Did Jesus fail to answer all their Questions correctly? Did Jesus not do enough?

Did He fail to teach enough? Did He fail to be enough? No!

Jesus did NOT fail- at all. So, what was wrong? Why didn't the Jews embrace Him? Well, *some* did. And, at first- *many* did. Zacharias and Elizabeth; the Shepherds; Anna and Simeon; Gamaliel; Zacchaeus; many of the Disciples; ALL of the Apostles; John Mark; 3,000 in Jerusalem; and 5,000 in Judea. And then there was Saul of Tarsus- the beloved Apostle Paul. A Jew of the Jews; a Pharisee of the Pharisees; and the Learned of the learned. All of these people were Jews; and they were ALL raised underneath the Old Covenant. Yet when Jesus appeared- they ALL believed; and they were ALL Lovers and Followers of Jesus. Why? They were chosen by God to believe and to be saved.

Yet the overwhelming majority of the Jews in Israel in the 1st Century; and the Jews around the known world during the subsequent years when the Gospel was being propagated; and the majority of Jews around the entire world today- do NOT believe; they do NOT love Jesus; and they do NOT strive to obey Him. So, what about them? God either has NOT chosen them; or they will be saved at some point before they die.

But if God has not chosen them- what are they? Religious Hypocrites. All of them are religious Hypocrites- who know how to look and act and sound "religious"- yet who are NOT born again and who are NOT saved.

But not just the Jews. There are people within the modern Church- who are NOT saved and who do NOT love Jesus. And they are religious Hypocrites, too. But not just people in the Church- ALL Muslims; ALL Buddhists; ALL Hindus; ALL Taoists; ALL Gnostics; ALL of the followers of ALL of the Man-made and false Religions of the world- who work so hard to obey the various tenets of their Religions- are ALL Religious Hypocrites. There is NO Salvation in any of those

false Religions. None. Those Man-made Religions CANNOT forgive a single Sin or save a single Soul. But they ALL try real hard to:

... clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. (Matthew 23:25)

But why do I call them, “*Religious Hypocrites*”? Why not simply say that they are “deceived”? Well, they ARE deceived. But we can’t stop there- because these people also claim to be on their Way to Heaven. They all claim to have and to practice the Truth. And they also claim that by going through all their Efforts- that THAT is what qualifies them for Heaven. So, if the definition of the word, “*Hypocrite*” is to act contrary to what you believe- then the followers of false Religions are all the very *worst* of Hypocrites- because they are *religious* Hypocrites. They believe that they are going to Heaven by what they do for themselves- yet Heaven CANNOT be earned by anything that we do for ourselves.

Now it is okay for you to disagree with me- but we should believe what Jesus said. And Jesus Himself called the followers and the practitioners of the Religion of the Scribes and Pharisees, “*Hypocrites*”. And in **Matthew 23**- Jesus called them that- 7 different times!

Because, in spite of what they were doing- ALL of the Efforts of the 1st Century Jews combined DIDN’T qualify them for Heaven. Why? Because Heaven CAN’T be earned. Heaven CAN’T be deserved. And Heaven CAN’T be bought. Heaven is *given*. Heaven is graciously and mercifully *granted* to unworthy people- or it isn’t attained at all. But because they believed they could; and because they were working hard *inside* that wrong Belief- the followers of ALL of those false Religions are all Religious Hypocrites.

You see, guilty rebels entering into Heaven by what God alone has graciously and sovereignly done for them- and NOT by ANYTHING that they have done for themselves- gives God MORE Glory than creating a Universe. NOTHING gives more Glory to God than Him saving wicked Sinners by and through the Power of Grace and the Means of Faith! NOTHING! When the Importance and the Beauty and the Value and the Worth of God’s Glory shines on Sinners to save them- for no other Reason than God chose to “set His Love” on them- God is exalted higher and better than when He does anything else! And that is why God *loves* to redeem fallen Man.

But NOTHING *dishonors* God more than a religious Hypocrite. A religious Hypocrite offends God MORE than a child molester; MORE than a drug dealer; and MORE than a mass murderer. Religious Hypocrites trample down the majestic Glory of God worse than any and all Sin combined. And that is why God *hates* religious Hypocrites.

So, when Jesus began Chapter 6 by saying,

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven

... He was addressing the religious Hypocrites of His day. But those words ring true with the religious Hypocrites of our day as well.

Now with all I have said- please do NOT get the idea that Jews had or have the corner on Hypocrisy. They don't. Hypocrisy runs deep and wide within the fallen human heart of ALL people from ALL walks of Life. Religious Hypocrisy can be found in the wealthiest zip codes as well as within the poorest of people. Both Jews and Gentiles are affected by this Sin. And Poverty doesn't exempt people from being Hypocrites any more than Prosperity does. You can't educate yourself out of Hypocrisy; and neither can you medicate yourself to prevent it. Technology won't help you and neither can Government.

There is no Vaccine or Antibiotic than will relieve you of the "Curse of Hypocrisy". There is one fix and one fix only: You MUST be born again! Because left to ourselves- Hypocrisy- *especially* the *religious* Kind- is the "default setting" of ALL of fallen Humanity.

But even after we have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth- we must guard our Hearts about the Problem of religious Hypocrisy. Because who doesn't want people to like them? Who doesn't enjoy Compliments; and who doesn't want people to think Well of them? So, the Temptation is to "practice our Righteousness" so that people will see us in action- so they will make MUCH of us. But when we do that- we dishonor Jesus; we rob God of His Glory; and we are more like the Scribes and Pharisees than we are like Jesus.

So, what can we do to help us escape the Curse of Hypocrisy? Jesus told us what to do in **Matthew 6:3, 4&6:**

3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

... we must learn how to give and how to pray "in secret".

But as we do that- we must first realize that Jesus was NOT condemning ALL public Displays of our Faith. What He condemned was doing things for no

other reason than, “**to be noticed by them**”. Sometimes, giving or praying or “**practicing Righteousness**” in Public is a great Testimony to the Grace of God. What we must guard against is engaging in *purposefully* promoting ourselves at God’s Expense. So, we must always take into account that the ONLY reason we have ANY Righteousness to practice in the first place- is because of God and His amazing Grace. So, *anything* we say; or do; or give; or any way we act that is godly to any degree- MUST be nothing more than a humble and joyful *Response* to what God has already done *in* us; and *for* us; and *to* us. So, it should be done- *in* His Name; *through* His enabling; and *to* His Glory.

But we should NEVER seek Publicity. But we shouldn’t *avoid* it- if God has *providentially* brought it to us. So, we should never seek Publicity for Publicity’s sake. What we should seek for- is “Secret Giving” and “Secret Praying”- and Jesus has promised that God will reward us.

But there are times- in God’s Providence- when we should carry out or practice our Righteousness- in full view of the lost world. Why? So that God will be magnified; and those individuals,

**... may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
(Matthew 5:16)**

But even when we give *privately or secretly*- we are still not immune to that Act building up our own ugly Pride; Arrogance; and Self-righteousness. We need to keep in mind that the Scribes and Pharisees WERE giving! They were actually giving something to someone. And yet the Way in which they gave- the kind of heart they had as they gave- eliminated ALL Reward from God. And this is what Jesus had in mind when He said,

... do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret...

Now in Reality- it doesn’t matter if you give to the Poor with your right or your left Hand. Your Mind will still know that you gave it. And because your Mind knows you gave it- there is the chance you can fall into the Temptation of “*practicing your Righteousness so that they will notice and glorify you*”. So, this Statement is NOT about human Anatomy. And Jesus was NOT teaching that there is something about the left Hand that the right Hand doesn’t have. He is simply teaching that we should NOT give in a Way that promotes *ourselves*. And that when we give- (and this verse assumes that we WILL give)- we should do it- as “*matter of factly*” as we can- without making a big deal about it- thus raising the opportunity to receive praise for it and rob God of His Glory. Because, ultimately,

God had to first bless us with what we gave- or we wouldn't have been able to give anything at all.

So, give- yes! And give to the Poor- yes! And we should pray! And if God has so providentially arranged Circumstances that your Righteousness is Public; or is *made* Public- then run away from any praise and give all Glory to God. And the Promise from a God, Who CANNOT lie is- that God Himself will reward you!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone