

## The Hypocrisy of Religion, Part Five

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In Matthew 23:25-28, Jesus describes the Hypocrite as whitewashed walls or whited sepulchers. They did so to try to appear to others as beautiful both outwardly and spiritually.

Mt 23:25-28, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." NKJV

But Jesus said like a whitewashed sepulcher, they may appear attractive on the outside but within they are full of dead men's bones and decaying flesh. In other words when God looks upon them he sees these hypocrites as full of uncleanness and wickedness.

When I think of this text my mind recalls when I was a child in Pennsylvania, that every year people in our neighborhood whitewashed the trees from about 6 foot high to the ground. They said it kept the bugs and insects from destroying the tree. I never did know and do not know today if that really worked, but I will tell you it made the neighborhood really pretty to look at all summer into the fall.

Jesus himself pointed His rebuke at the Jewish High Priest and religious leaders of His day. He called them, "You whitewashed walls." Jesus told these devout religious leaders, "you appear to be spiritual and devoutly religious before God, but you are just like your ancestors who stoned and persecuted the Prophets of old." "You murdered them in the name of your religiousness."

Mt 23:30-36, "And say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." NKJV

In verse 33 of our text, Jesus called them a generation of VIPERS and then declares, "How can you escape the damnation of hell?" Continuing on, Jesus said "you are as guilty and lost before God as though it was you personally who murdered Abel in the Garden of Eden. In verse 38, He said "Behold your house is left to you desolate." We see, in the theme of Halloween, children and some adults put on false faces, pretending to be someone they are not. However, we have also considered all who wear false faces on a regular basis as a necessary part of their daily lives. Those that the Lord Jesus Christ called Hypocrites because of their pretense that was so far from the truth.

Dear friend, let us be careful that we are following truly godly men who lead from the Bible and its

teachings, and not from denominational standards. Keep your eyes upon the Lord Jesus alone and follow him and his Words for that is the only way that pleases the Lord God who created all that is and with Whom we one day will give a personal account of what we have done with the Lord Jesus Christ.