

LUKE

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Chapter Eleven

We will see that verses 1-13 deal with prayer, verses 13-36 deal with Jesus and Beelzebub and the concepts of light and darkness, and verses 37-54 deal with woes against Pharisees and lawyers.

Luke 11:1-4

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." (2) And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. (3) 'Give us each day our daily bread. (4) 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

Luke has already reported many instances reporting that Jesus prayed such as: 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28. Thus Luke is reporting to us that Jesus was dependent upon God for His help and direction in His mission. Luke indicates that His disciples were impressed with the praying of Jesus and asked Him to teach them to pray just as John had taught his disciples. Luke also reports that Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the mountain to pray at the transfiguration. We will also see that only Luke records three parables relating to prayer. Matthew reports the prayer called the Lord's Prayer as part of the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matt 6:10-13 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. (11) 'Give us this day our daily bread. (12) 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (13) 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'

There are slight variations on the presentations of the prayer but they are easily attributed to variations in oral transmission. Jesus addressed God as Father in 10:21 and He said that nobody knows the Father except Him and those to whom He reveals Him. This approach differed greatly from prayer people offered to idols and false gods. It is a term of respect and intimacy and Jesus models the prayer as a conversation with a person in an intimate relationship. To address God as Father also requires that a person learn from Him how to be in the Father's family.

Jesus said to first petition that His name be hallowed or sanctified. John also revealed that Jesus made God's name known: "*and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*" (John 17:26) Ezekiel records that God will sanctify His own name (Ezek 36:22-23; 38:23). So the prayer is that such will occur. Matthew quotes that we are to ask that His will be done here as in heaven and that would include the sanctification of His name. Such an interpretation fits with an eschatological action of the Spirit fitting with Ezek 36. Of course the petition that God's kingdom come is also an eschatological action echoing: *And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.* (Zech 14:9)

The meaning of giving us each day our daily bread is a request for our essential food, that which is needed for our daily existence. The tense is imperative meaning to keep on giving us that essential food. Many in the world at that time did without such sustenance so this was a very needful request. Some today who have much more than this might be dissatisfied if God literally granted that request! The request is similar to asking for a minimum wage today!

Then Jesus gives us the prayer to forgive us as we forgive those in debt to us. The present tense of the verb means that this forgiveness on our part is a habit and not something that we do occasionally. It does not mean that our forgiving others is a works based system for our earning God's forgiveness. It means that those who have been forgiven by God will have a change heart that demands a forgiving attitude toward others. Matthew adds a verse to this that some might try to interpret as works: *"But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.* (Matt 6:15) However this verse is just stating that the person whom the Father has forgiven will have a forgiving heart. If the person is not willing to forgive someone else then he is revealing a hard heart.

Finally Jesus adds in the prayer that we are requesting not to be led into testing. This refers not to some eschatological testing but to the temptation to sin at any time in life (8:13; 22:40, 46). Of course we know that God cannot lead one into temptation:

James 1:13-14 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. (14) But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Temptations were viewed by some in the day of Jesus as spiritual muscle builders for the faithful and one could place oneself in temptation to overcome it as did David in his prayer: *Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.* (Psa 26:2) However God sent him Bathsheba as the test and he failed miserably! The model of Jesus is the opposite of this approach as this prayer is a humble submission acknowledging that we can easily fall into being carried away and enticed by our lust.

Luke 11:5-10

Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; (6) for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; (7) and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' (8) "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. (9) "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (10) "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

The question has an implied attitude of "Do you think you would have a friend who would refuse a request like the following?" The answer is "no" for it is addressed to a friend and not to a neighbor. In this era, taking care of a visitor is an assumed responsibility and the person is only asking for three loaves that is enough for a meal so he is not asking to feed a banquet. The people

having already shut their doors and gone to bed would be a very flimsy excuse that would not be used between friends. Then we have the problem of interpreting the Greek word that is translated “persistence” above. A better translation is “shamefulness”. It would be very shameful for the friend to refuse the request from his friend and shame was something nobody wanted to feel between friends. The persistence of the asking person is not the reason for the person giving his friend the three loaves requested but it is the desire to not be shamed by refusing such a request.

In a similar manner, Jesus states that God is our Father and He states that we should ask Him to fulfill our basic needs and God will give them to us. The message highlights not the emphasis on asking, seeking, and knocking, but on God’s love and grace toward His children. A small amount of additional study shows that there are restrictions on what we can expect from our Father:

- John 16:24 *"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.*
- John 14:13-14 *"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.*
- John 15:7 *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

The image of the door refers to salvation and Jesus warns us that it is a narrow door:

Luke 13:23-24 And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, (24) "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

If someone is sincerely knocking to enter that door then God the Father has already given that person the faith needed and certainly will be able to enter.

Luke 11:11-13

"Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? (12) "Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? (13) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

This is one of my favorite sayings of Jesus. It certainly amplifies upon the verses above as Jesus makes clear how the Father will answer the needs of His children. Certainly none of them would give a spiteful or dangerous gift for his children and would not try to trick their children. The interpretation to me means that God knows our basic needs and He will give them to His children in line with their real needs. But it also means to me that sometimes it may look like God is giving us a snake instead of a fish or a scorpion instead of an egg. But because I know that God will not give His children such evil things, I must examine the situation thoroughly from His perspective to see the gift for what it truly is. I have on occasion looks at what God gave me in answer to a request and it looked like a snake! Upon closer examination that might take some time, I eventually see the answer as indeed a fish and not a snake.

We see two shifts in the last sentence. First the listeners are identified as those who are evil and second the determination of what is good is made by God and not by the petitioner who could

unwittingly ask for some harmful things outside of the will of God. Of course only God is good and only He can see what we really need from the petitions that we make. As usually we are told to always seek the viewpoint of God in all situations. Prayer is not a spiritual crowbar by which a Christian can pry open God's willingness to give them what they think they want. The attitude is not that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. The child does not have to whine constantly to get bread from a loving Father but all answers depend upon the goodness of God who will give to His child what he really needs: *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* (Rom 8:28)

Luke 11:14-20

And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed. (15) But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." (16) Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. (17) But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. (18) "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. (19) "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges. (20) "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Evidently the demon was making the man a mute so when Jesus made the demon leave the man spoke. We are not told how long the man had been possessed or how Jesus cast out the demon. The people thought that the world belonged to God but that it is occupied by an enemy due to the sins of man so the two kingdoms were at war. The exact origin of the word "Beelzebul" or "Beelzebub" is unknown and the readers of Luke's narrative would probably have only known it as another name for the ruler of demons. Satan has a variety of disguises: *No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.* (2 Cor 11:14) Luke does not identify the people accusing Jesus of being in league with Satan but they do not accuse Jesus of pulling off a hoax. They actually think He has joined forces with the ruler of the demons. Also some in the crowd wanted assign from heaven before committing themselves to some explanation of what Jesus had done. Signs in scripture are public events that confirm some disputed claim. These people were testing Jesus and the tense of the verb "demanding" indicates a continual request so that the event will not be accepted until that sign is given. Evidently the people were separated from Jesus so that He had to know their thoughts rather than physically hear them. However Jesus is not ready to show such a sign for much still needs to be done before such would happen.

So rather than address their need for a sign, Jesus discusses their claim that He was working by the power of Beelzebul. Jesus uses straightforward logic to show how their statement makes no sense. If there are two kingdoms with demons from one kingdom and God from the other and if Jesus uses the power of the evil kingdom to defeat an attack by that kingdom then certainly that kingdom cannot have a chance of success. Why would Satan use Jesus to attack his kingdom? Jesus then asks about the source of power for other exorcisms. He asks how do your sons cast out demons and He is here referring to those Jews He had sent out to perform exorcisms (9:1-9; 10:17-20) and even those not belonging to His disciples who cast out demons in His name (9:49). Jesus then reasons that if He casts out demons by the power of God then God's reign has

come near them. The phrase “finger of God” comes from OT contexts such as God writing on the stone tablets (Exod 31:18; Deut 9:10) and Pharaoh’s magicians conceding that an event happened by God’s finger:

Exod 8:17-19 They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt. (18) The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. (19) Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Jesus is declaring that He is acting with God’s authority and that God’s reign has overtaken them. God’s reign is actively being accomplished through Jesus and yet it will only be fully consummated in the future.

Luke 11:21-23

"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. (22) "But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder. (23) "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

The next stage of the argument of Jesus regarding His authority to act for God is based upon two accounts from Isaiah:

- *Isa 49:24-26 "Can the prey be taken from the mighty man, Or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?" (25) Surely, thus says the LORD, "Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, And the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; For I will contend with the one who contends with you, And I will save your sons. (26) "I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; And all flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."*
- *Isa 53:12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.*

In the first example God promises to take away from the mighty and rescue captives from sin. The second example is where the suffering servant will divide the spoil with the strong. This parable of Jesus is an allegory that refers to Satan whose defensive powers are not sufficient to deal with the power of God. For generations the Jews have followed false prophets who actually serve Satan so they were in bondage to the devil. The final battle is still not yet won but it is a predetermined event. Jesus then draws a line in the sand as He states that those who are not with Him actually are not gathering but scattering. They think that they are gathering power for themselves against evil but they are actually scattering people away from God.

Luke 11:24-26

"When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' (25) "And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. (26) "Then it goes and takes along seven

other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

This is another of my favorite sayings of Jesus as it points out the foolishness of cleaning up one's own house without filling it with the things of God. It is rather like the HUD authority deciding to clean up subdivisions for people to live in so that they would then be better people and take care of their homes. What actually happened to the HUD program was exactly as described here by Jesus. How foolish mankind is to not learn from Jesus! Today we hear the same old story that will surely end in failure. We are told that the problem with people today is their lack of education and jobs so that if we will provide such then the evil problems will go away. Until we learn that the problem with people is their hearts then evil will only continue to rule the world:

Matt 15:18-20 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. (19) "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. (20) "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

Luke 11:27-38

While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed." (28) But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

Unlike those accusing Jesus of acting by the power of the devil or demanding a sign, one unidentified woman praises Jesus by praising His mother. Her praise echoes the prophesy about Mary and what Mary believed:

- Luke 1:42 *And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*
- Luke 1:48 *"For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed."*

Jesus responded to this praise by adding to it because Mary listened to God's word, believed it, and acted upon it. Jesus is saying that blessings come to all who hear and obey the word of God and such is not based upon any kin relationship.

Luke 11:29-32

As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. (30) "For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. (31) "The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (32) "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

The sign of Jonah could refer to his miraculous rescue from death (Jonah 1:17-2:10), his preaching of repentance (Jonah 3:4-10), or his preaching of judgment (Johan 3:4). Jonah did no sign in Nineveh but they believed and repented. Jesus preached to these people but they did not repent. Certainly the miraculous rescue from the fish would have stood out in the minds of the people and the corresponding feature in the ministry of Jesus would be His resurrection. But even this resurrection would not lead everyone to repent: *"But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"* (Luke 16:31) Luke states that Jesus **will be** a similar sign and so it seems that the sign of Jonah would include all three elements since Jesus preached repentance and judgment and then He was resurrected.

The Queen of the South refers to the queen of Sheba:

- 1Kings 10:1 *Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with difficult questions.*
- 2Chron 9:1 *Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with difficult questions. She had a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and a large amount of gold and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was on her heart.*

Note that the queen and the Ninevites were non-Israelites. Jesus is much greater than Solomon or the prophet Jonah because He actually brings in the reign of God but this generation neither recognizes His authority nor repents. Thus they are a very wicked generation and eschatologically the people of Nineveh will condemn it.

Luke 11:33-34

"No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. (34) "The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

In my recent weekly letters I have been discussing light and it having two ramifications. One is the general revelation of light that God gives to all people (Rom 1) and the specific revelation that God gives to His regenerated people. With this understanding, lighting the lamp would relate to the regeneration of a person by God for this person now has the specific revelation of God and, in this era, the person is also now indwelt with the Holy Spirit. The reason for this person then having this specific revelation is for his salvation and to witness to others of the light when they come into your presence. The image of darkness depicts the realm of Satan and death.

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Encountering God is as in the presence of light as related by Paul: *at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. (Acts 26:13) Before regeneration we were darkness and afterwards we are light: for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (Eph 5:8).*

As a lamp radiates light into a room, the eye radiates light into the body that refers to the innermost being, conscience, and personality of the person. The clear eye can also be translated as an eye “without guile” meaning that the person has sincerity and integrity. Some older manuscripts write that in the end times people will abandon guilelessness and the commands of the Lord and desire only Beliar (one of the worse demons of the devil). The person with an “evil eye” cannot receive the light of the Lord.

Luke 11:35-36

"Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness. (36) "If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays."

This exhortation refers to the final judgement. A person who thinks that he has the light of the Lord but actually has been deceived is really one who has darkness. As we have seen before Jesus speaks a grave warning to those who are so deceived:

- Matt 7:21-22 *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. (22) "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'"*
- 1Cor 6:9-10 *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, (10) nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.*
- 2Tim 3:13 *But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*
- Rev 19:20 *And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.*
- Rev 20:10 *And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

If one's whole body is full of light then at the judgment time his entire body will be wholly illumined just as when a lamp illumines one with its rays. This is a wonderful promise from our Lord of our final salvation.

Luke 11:37-38

*Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee *asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. (38) When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.*

This is the second Pharisee to ask Jesus to dine with him (7:36) and the introduction assumes that he had been in the audience Jesus was addressing. Jesus then went with the man and immediately reclined at the table. Only priests are commanded to wash their hands before eating:

Exo 30:19-21 *"Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; (20) when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD. (21) "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations."*

However the Pharisees extended their oral tradition to extend this custom to all persons and not just priests and not just for holy offerings. The Pharisee must have assumed that Jesus would accept this practice for he was amazed that Jesus did not wash before the meal.

Luke 11:39-41

But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness. (40) "You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? (41) "But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisee caustically for this assumed practice and detailed His reasons. This was an even more fiery reply than He gave the previous Pharisee (7:36-50) that was also regarding a breach of dinner etiquette. Jesus told him that he addressed outside matters while ignoring internal uncleanness. He said that instead of being full of light he was full of robbery and wickedness. He then put all the Pharisees into a group of fools that included them with the godless (12:20; Ps 14:1). Jesus then reminds him that the Creator made both the internal and the external. The Pharisees understood that a cup must be cleansed inside and out but they did not understand that they should first cleanse their hearts even though they were deceived into thinking that they were in the process of such cleansing. That which is within refers to the body as discussed above. If their body were clean then their alms would be based upon that cleanness and so they would be declared clean as was Cornelius:

Acts 10:1-2 Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, (2) a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

Luke 11:42-43

"But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. (43) "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.

Jesus then proceeded to lash out with a series of woes on the Pharisees. The woe warns of a catastrophe that is coming if repentance does not come first. The first woe attacks them for religiously tithing based upon a tithing of what was not even included as needing tithing. Their elaborate tithing was an elaboration of:

Deut 14:22-23 "You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. (23) "You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine,

your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.

However elaborate their tithing was, they were ignoring the more important matters involving justice (Mic 6:8) and the love of God (Deut 6:5). He does not condemn their excessive tithing for He says that they should do those things, but only if they pay major attention to the more important matters. A love for justice would include a love of neighbor and we have already seen their problem with identifying a neighbor. God requires generosity beyond tithing for that is easier to do and does not involve their use of God's love toward others.

The second woe involves their love of elevated seats that were separate from the congregation and restricted to those of higher status. This reminds me of the event involving the man with the golden ring:

James 2:2-4 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, (3) and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," (4) have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

The synagogue was supposed to be a place for prayer and the study of God's word but those leaders used it to obtain prestige for them. They also basked in the veneration shown them in the marketplace as others recognized them for their supposedly devotion to God. There is a basic human need for recognition of prominence that exposes that their devotion to God is just a show and without substance.

Luke 11:44-46

*"Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it." (45) One of the lawyers *said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too." (46) But He said, "Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.*

The third woe exposes them as frauds. A contact with a grave made a person unclean for seven days (Num 19:16) so that they were carefully marked so nobody would accidentally come into contact with one. Just as one would be defiled if he accidentally came into contact with a grave, people who associated with these Pharisees were condemned as if coming over an unmarked grave. Since these Pharisees reject the purposes of God (Luke 7:30 *But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.*), those who follow them are also headed for destruction.

Not all Pharisees were experts in the Law so there were lawyers who interpreted the Law for them all. One of these lawyers accused Jesus of including them in His accusation that was an insult for them also. Jesus then made it clear that He was including them in His woe also! He then gives out a fourth woe for the lawyers explicitly. He says that their interpretations of the Law are too stringent so as to put more burdens on people than they can bear: *"Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our*

fathers nor we have been able to bear? (Acts 15:10) They offer no leniency, relief, or forgiveness to the sinner. Not only do they impose such impossible hardships on people they are not willing to pay any attention to those matters they lift up.

Luke 11:47-48

"Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. (48) "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs.

Jesus then gives out a fifth woe that is explicitly for the lawyers. To memorialize the prophets the people would build tombs in their memories as an attempt to disown any person guilty of not obeying them. Here again Jesus lifts up an allusion to His parable of the vineyard (Matt 21:28-40) showing how the people had killed prophets and would even kill the Son. Jesus says that their fathers killed the prophets (7:30), the Messiah, and His apostles. They are the spiritual heirs of these past murderers as seen by their resistance to the will of God. By building tombs of those prophets they are approving the deeds of those who killed them.

Luke 11:49-51

"For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, (50) so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, (51) from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.'

By the wisdom of God, prophets and apostles were sent into the world and some of them were killed and persecuted. God will have the blood of all the prophets sent since the foundation of the world to be charged against this generation. Abel is the first righteous man reported as being murdered in Scripture (Gen 4:1-16) and Zechariah is the son of Jehoiada the priest who denounced the people for transgressing God's commandments:

2Chron 24:20-21 Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'" (21) So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD.

Jesus is then listing Zechariah as the last man reported as being murdered in Scripture. He might have said something like "the righteous blood from A to Z". God is the avenger of blood (Deut 32:43; 1 Kings 2:32, 37; 2 Kings 9:7, 26; 24:4; Jer 26:15; Acts 5:38) so Jesus tells them that this shedding of blood will be charged against them all.

Luke 11:52-54

"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering." (53) When He left there, the

scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, (54) plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.

Jesus then enters a sixth woe that again is explicitly against the lawyers. Perhaps they are wishing at this point that they had not complained about Jesus including them in His attacks on the Pharisees! A key opens a door and this is a reference to those teachers of the Law who give false knowledge rather than the knowledge of God. They did not properly understand the Law themselves and they even kept those who desired to understand from a proper understanding. Similarly today we have preachers and teachers who teach false interpretations of Scripture. Such people actually lead people away from God by giving them worldly knowledge such as telling people God wants them to materially prosper and to be healed of all illnesses. They even tell people God loves everyone and that He is Father to everyone regardless of their sexual preferences.

It is not surprising that when He left them the scribes and Pharisees became very hostile toward Him and to question Him in detail on many subjects so that they could catch Him in violation of some of their interpretations. They would not be satisfied until He bears a cross. Like Paul, they worked hard to be righteous on their own works:

Phil 3:5-6 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; (6) as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

But Paul was led to the light so that he could then say:

Phil 3:7-11 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (8) More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, (9) and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, (10) that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; (11) in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Praise God that all of us have also been led to that light.