

A black and white photograph of a city skyline, including skyscrapers and a bridge, is shown upside down at the top of the page. The name 'MATTHEW' is written in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the page.

# MATTHEW

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Matthew 23

Jesus' heart breaks over those who don't believe



## **Matthew 23:1-12**

**Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

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## **Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

- These are His final words (recorded in this Gospel) to His disciples before His Crucifixion, death, and Resurrection.
- First, He warned them about the hypocrisy of some of their religious leaders – the scribes and Pharisees – who claimed to speak for God (chapter 23). Then He described the signs of the end of the age and His second coming (chapters 24–25).





## **Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

- Even though Jesus was pronouncing woe to the scribes and Pharisees, the audience was “the crowds and the disciples.”
- It wasn't about cursing the leaders. He was warning His followers to beware of them.
- His concern was His flock, who were being led astray and abused by these hypocritical leaders.





## **Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

- These leaders “sit in Moses’ seat,” the seat in the synagogue reserved for the preacher/teacher.
- Jesus said, they didn’t practice what they preach (verse 3). So Jesus says, “Observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do.”
- These leaders were hypocrites – they taught one thing and did another.





## **Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

- The Greek word for hypocrite literally means “actor,” so figuratively it meant someone who was playing a part – acting like something they weren't.
- In ancient Greek theater, actors wore masks so they could play several different characters and so men could play women since only men were actors.





## *Hypokrites* - Hypocrisy



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## **Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

- Hypokrites - "one who answers" - came to mean an actor who would answer back to the audience.
- Demosthenes in the 4th century BC ridiculed his rival Aeschines for being an actor.
- The word developed a negative connotation after that.





## **Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

- The problem with the Pharisees was not their teaching, but their hypocritical behavior.
- All of the religious things they did weren't for God at all, but "to be seen by others," for their own honor, the very system Jesus condemned in all of His actions and teaching.





## **Hypocrites don't practice what they preach**

- Jesus emptied Himself of honor by becoming human.
- Jesus chose ordinary fishermen and even despised sinners (Matthew the tax collector) to be His disciples.
- Jesus ate meals with tax collectors and sinners, let lepers and other sinful people touch Him, spoke with Samaritan and Canaanite women, let women sit at His feet to learn as if they were disciples.



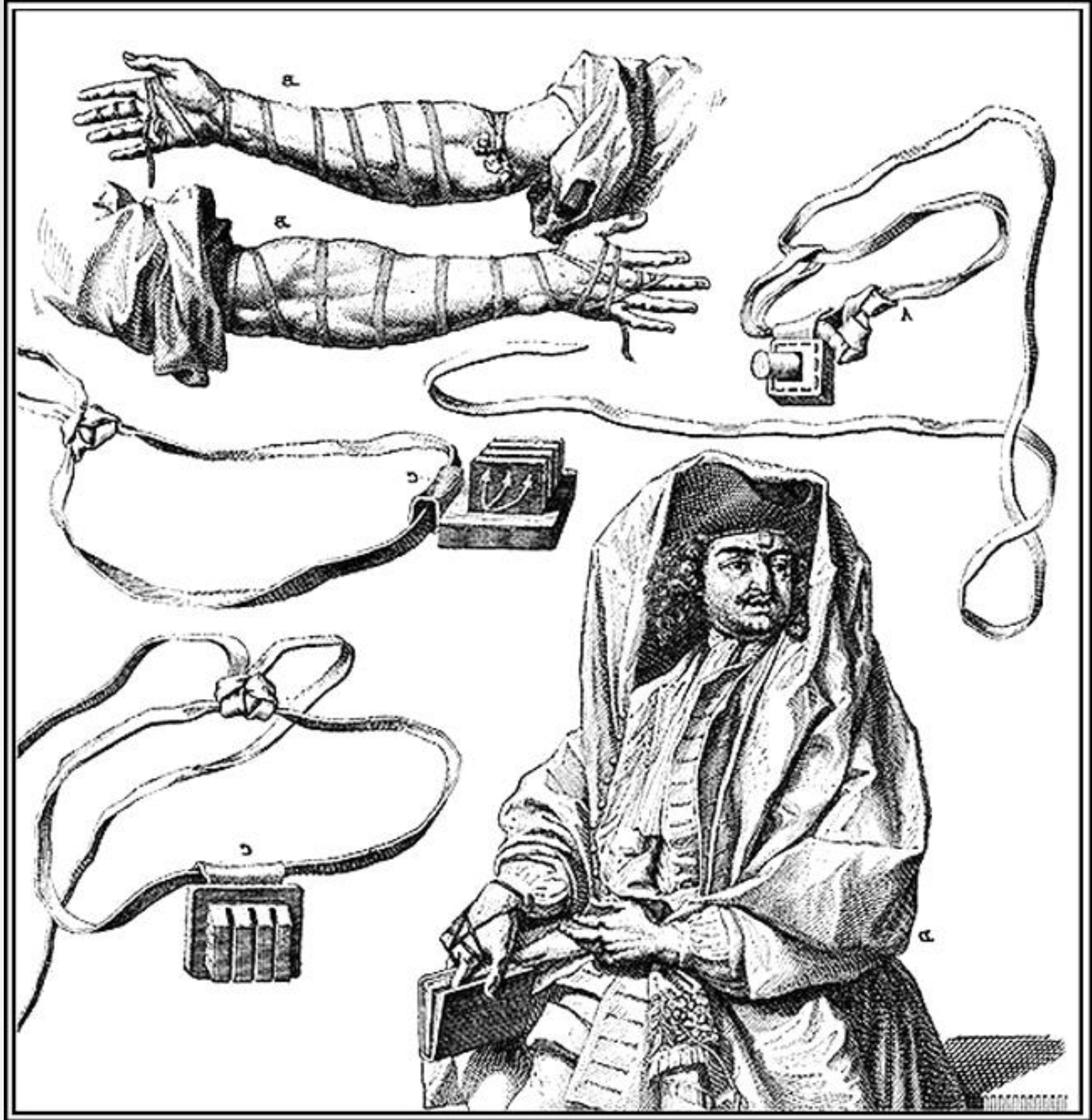


## Hypocrites don't practice what they preach

- Phylacteries - are boxes with Scripture inside that Jewish men wear on their foreheads and hands during specific times of prayer.
- They wore them to literally fulfill the command from the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:8)
- The Pharisees made the straps longer than they needed to be to call attention to them to be seen as super-pious by others.



# Phylacteries



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## Hypocrites don't practice what they preach

- Fringes - the tassels attached to the four corners of the outer cloak or prayer shawls of Jewish men.
- There were 613 tassels on the prayer shawl, one for each of the 613 commandments of the Law.
- They Pharisees made theirs longer than they needed to be.





## Hypocrites don't practice what they preach

- Seating - arranged by honor at meals – the most honorable was to the right of the host and it descended from there.
- The Sanhedrin sat ranked by honor.
- In the synagogues, the wisest rabbis were given seats of honor, young men were expected to give elders their seats, and many of the synagogues seated congregants by honor rank.





## Hypocrites don't practice what they preach

- Greetings - were also given according to honor; social superiors were greeted first. Greeting rabbis or leaders in the proper way was essential
- Jesus tells His disciples they were not to be called rabbi, because even though they would one day make more disciples, the disciples they made would belong to Jesus, not them.





## **Matthew 23:13-34**

**Hypocritical leaders can lead whole flocks of people astray**





## **Hypocritical leaders can lead whole flocks of people astray**

- This section is a long list of woes against the scribes and the Pharisees, as Jesus described their hypocrisy over and over.
- He wasn't warning them but warning the people about them.
- The pronouncement of woe against someone was certainly a pronouncement of judgment, but it was more of a sense of lamentation rather than a threat.





## **Hypocritical leaders can lead whole flocks of people astray**

- Those who follow them won't enter the kingdom (verses 13-15).
- They are "blind guides" leading people nowhere (verses 16-24).
- Gnat and camel - refers to one of the Pharisaic rules about straining out a fly that fell in your drink. Any bug smaller than a lentil (like a gnat) did not need to be strained out.





## **Hypocritical leaders can lead whole flocks of people astray**

- They look great on the outside but are evil inside (verses 25-28).
- They persecute the true prophets (verses 29-34).
- It is as if Jesus was ripping off their masks and exposing them as prideful hypocrites.





## Hypocritical leaders can lead whole flocks of people astray

- Whitewashed tombs - above-ground graves in the cemetery on the hillside of the Mount of Olives, whitewashed before Passover.







## **Matthew 23:35-39**

**Though Jesus pronounced woe, He was heartbroken**

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## **Though Jesus pronounced woe, He was heartbroken**

- Jesus now pronounced judgment on Jerusalem.
- He used the language of the corporate personality.
- This generation would bear the punishment for all of the righteous blood that had been shed through every generation – from Abel to Zechariah, the first martyr in the Old Testament to the last.





## **Though Jesus pronounced woe, He was heartbroken**

- This Zechariah is not the one who wrote the prophetic book.
- This is a different Zechariah, who confronted the religious leaders of his day for forsaking the covenant. They stoned him to death in the court of the temple (2 Chronicles 24:20–22).
- In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is the last book, so he is the last martyr of the Old Testament.





## **Though Jesus pronounced woe, He was heartbroken**

- Jesus did not blast Jerusalem with lightning bolts of anger.
- He poured out lament and showed compassion on her people.
- He had compassion for the crowds earlier in Matthew, “because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:35–37).





## **Though Jesus pronounced woe, He was heartbroken**

- God is not sitting up in the clouds waiting to rain down fire on you.
- He is waiting on high to have compassion on you.
- He longs to be gracious to you (Isaiah 30:18).
- The question is only whether you are willing. He is waiting.





# Hypocrites and Christians

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## Jesus and hypocrites

- Jesus used the word hypocrite seven times in Matthew 23 when he addressed the scribes and Pharisees.
- When someone says they don't like hypocrites in the church, remind them that Jesus abhorred hypocrisy.
- They looked pious (observed 613 commandments) but they were living hypocritical lives.





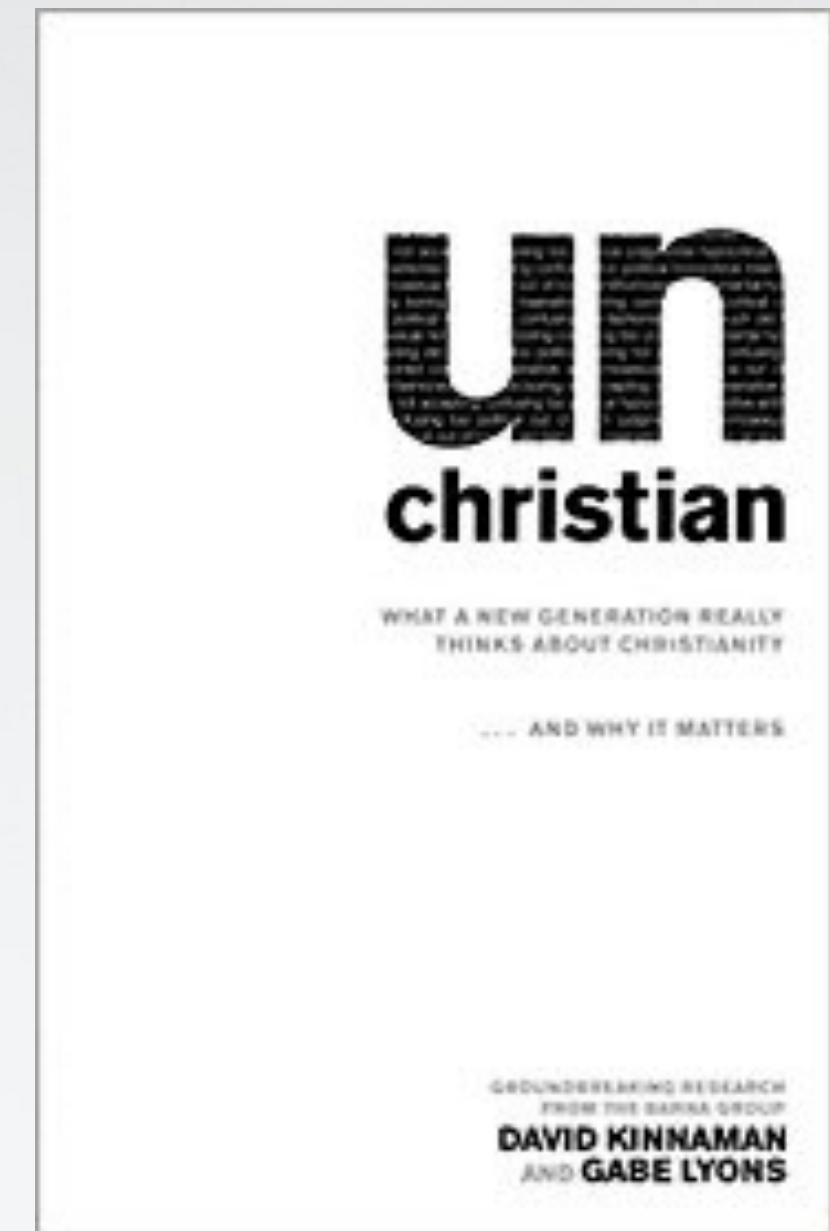
## **Modern day hypocrites**

- A politician who condemns sexual sin caught in a sexual sin.
- A televangelist who says he poor and living in a mansion.
- An environmentalist flying all over the world in a private jet.
- A person claiming to be a Christian but not living a moral, biblical lifestyle.



## Modern day hypocrites

- This is the biggest problem for the young generation.
- The book *Unchristian* found it is a major stumbling block.
- They believe that Christians say one thing and do another.
- The authors found that 84 percent knew a Christian who they described as a hypocrite.



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## Three examples of hypocrisy - Matthew 6

- Don't practice your righteousness before men
  - Giving - Matthew 6:2
  - Praying - Matthew 6:5
  - Fasting - Matthew 6:16





## Almsgiving - Matthew 6:2

- Don't sound a trumpet
- Don't expect a brass plate on a building if you give
- Don't give to be seen as a giver
- Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing





## Praying - Matthew 6:15

- Prayer had become a ritualistic exercise at prescribed time
- Prayer were long and filled with verbiage
- Prayers used repetitious words
- Prayer became a cause for pride rather than a humble expression





## **Fasting - Matthew 6:16-18**

- Don't put on a gloomy face when you fast
- Hypocrites in the day of Jesus would neglect their appearance to be seen as fasting by men
- They deliberately walked to the streets showing they were fasting





## Conclusion

- Make sure your life is authentic
- Don't be a phony
- Say it straight
- Live a life that matches your faith.
- Make sure your life squares with Scripture