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Doctrinal Studies Bible Church
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I Timothy Book Study (#10)

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Date: 8/23/15
Text: Matt.16:5-12
File: D150823

BEWARE THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

The teachers of the Law have infiltrated the Church of Ephesus and were teaching the Leaven of Pharisaical legalism.

(1 Tim.1:7) “Wanting to be **teachers of the Law**, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.”

After befriending some, they began peddling their legalism by attacking the doctrine of God’s righteousness and grace apart from works of the Law.

(Rom.3:21-22) “But **now apart from the Law** the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets, even the faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction.”

Whenever this becomes an issue in the fellowship of a one-mind doctrinal grace church, it has to be addressed.

(Gal.2:19) “For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.”

This brings us to our lesson text of Matt.16:5-12 and the title of today’s lesson, “Leaven of Pharisees.” Jesus used a metaphor of leaven to teach on the danger of Pharisaical legalism.

This lesson will study five aspects of the danger of Leaven of Pharisaical legalism.

1. When we examine our lesson text, we notice that Jesus stated the danger of the Leaven of Pharisaical legalism twice (Matt.16:6, 11) “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Notice that in between these two warnings, Jesus asked His disciples four questions based on their assumption that He used leaven to talk about literal bread (Matt.16:7-11).

- Notice how He addressed them: “You men of little faith” (oligopistoi)
- Notice that all four questions connected bread to spiritual lessons.

(Matt.16:12) “**Then** they understood that He did not say to beware the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

As a pastor-teacher, I was reminded that the goal of instructional doctrinal teaching is get the learner to enter into the faith cycle and truth (John 8:32).

2. One thing we can learn from (1 Tim.1:3-11) and (Matt.16:5-12) is that Satan’s strategy against the grace church is the Leaven of Pharisaical legalism (2 Cor.2:11; Eph.6).

Satan’s primary attack is against the message or mechanics of grace salvation and spirituality (Acts 15:1, 5; Gal.3:1-5; 2 Cor.4:3-4; Matt.16:21-23).

- Grace salvation: (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph2:8-9; **Gal.2:16, 21**)
- Grace spirituality: (1 Cor.6:19-20; Gal.5:16-17; 1 John 1:7-9; **Rom.8:1-8**)

3. After the resurrection-ascension of Jesus and the Pentecost (Acts 2), the leaven of Pharisaical legalism attacked the Church of Jesus Christ from the outside but without much success in shutting it down (Acts 4:1-4, 17-21; 5:17-18, 40-42; 12:2).

However by the time we get to the Jerusalem Church conference, Pharisaical legalism is **inside** the church in the form of Judaizers (Acts 15).

(Acts 15:5) “But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up and said to them, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.’”

Over the course of Church history, they changed their names but it is still the same old Leaven of Pharisaical legalism.

4. Prior to 70 AD and the fall of Jerusalem to Rome, the Leaven of the Pharisees was head-quartered in Jerusalem and in the Christian Church (Acts 15:1-2; Acts 21:17; Gal.2:12-14).

In (Acts 21:20-26), they trapped Paul through national emotionalism.

Old Man Cosmos Diabolicus (OMCD) of (Rom.9:1-5, 30-33; 10:1-2; 11:6, 25 and 2 Tim.2:26).

They even quoted the Apostolic Creed of Acts 15 that Paul had signed.

(Acts 21:25) “But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should **abstain** from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.” (Acts 15:29; Gal.2:10)

They convinced Paul to participate in the Nazirite vow with Jews who were “zealous for the Law.” (Acts 21:20-26 and Acts 21:21)

- Nazirite vow: to separate from or to abstain from (Num.6:1-21; Matt.5:17, 20).

When it was done, the apostate Jews tried several times to kill Paul (Acts 21:30-31; 22:22; 23:12-14, 21; 25:7-8).

5. Jesus pegged them well.

(Matt.23:15) “**Woe to you**, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around the on the sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him **twice as much as a son of hell as yourselves**.” (The missionary work of legalism)

Jesus went on the offensive against the leaven of Pharisaical legalism in Matt.23,

- (Matt.23:4) Weight
- (Matt.23:13-33) Woes
- (Matt.23:34-39) Warning

Spiritually Advancing immature believers are often impressed with the dedication and zeal of mission work of legalists, but fail to remember that it attacks God’s grace (Gal.2:16, 21) and it results in the unsaved becoming religiously lost (Acts 21:20-23; Gal.3:21; Rom.3:19-22).

Notice how Jesus described their converts in Matt.23:15

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.