

Whitewashed Tombs

Matthew 23

by Don Falkos

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Jesus said to the crowd, "You must obey the experts in the Law, but don't follow their example. They don't practice what they preach. Everything they do is for show. Don't put them on a pedestal. You are all equals, children of the same heavenly Father. Don't try to honor yourself; you will be humbled. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored."

Then to the experts in the Law and the Pharisees Jesus said, "Woe to you, you hypocrites! Your system of rules obscures the true purpose of the Law and hinders anyone from entering into a relationship with God. You swear by the gold in the Temple or by the sacrifice on the altar. But the Temple, the altar, even heaven itself are only made sacred by the holy presence of God. You blind guides! You're careful to give to God a tenth of every little bit you earn. But you completely ignore people in need. You are like whitewashed tombs. You look righteous on the outside, but inside you are filled with rot and corruption, greed and self-indulgence."

Jesus turned away and cried out, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you have always killed the prophets and stoned the messengers of God. How I have longed to gather your children together around me as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you've never let me. Now it's too late. Because of your continual rejection of God, God has abandoned the Temple. You won't see me again until the day you welcome me saying, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' "