

212 **Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees** **Mt. 23:1-36, Mk. 12:37b-40, Lk. 20:45-47**

To His disciples and the crowds, Christ said,
"By scribes and Pharisees have you been lead

And this is fine. You must do as they say,
But from their words their deeds are far away.

From Moses do they have the right to teach,
But rarely do they practice what they preach.

They bind up heavy burdens, hard to bear,
And lay them on men's shoulders without care,

And for it they would not a finger lift.
They only to gain honor give a gift.

They make their headbands broad and tassels long¹⁹³
And seek places of honor to belong,

The highest places when at synagogue or feast,
And being known as 'rabbi', so their pride's increased.

By this name you should not each other call:
You have one teacher, you are brothers all.

Call no man 'father': you are each God's son.
And call none 'master': you are owned by one.

No titles that show honor should you seek:
A man is only great when he is meek.

The greatest of you, he shall serve the rest.
By men of high rank God is not impressed.

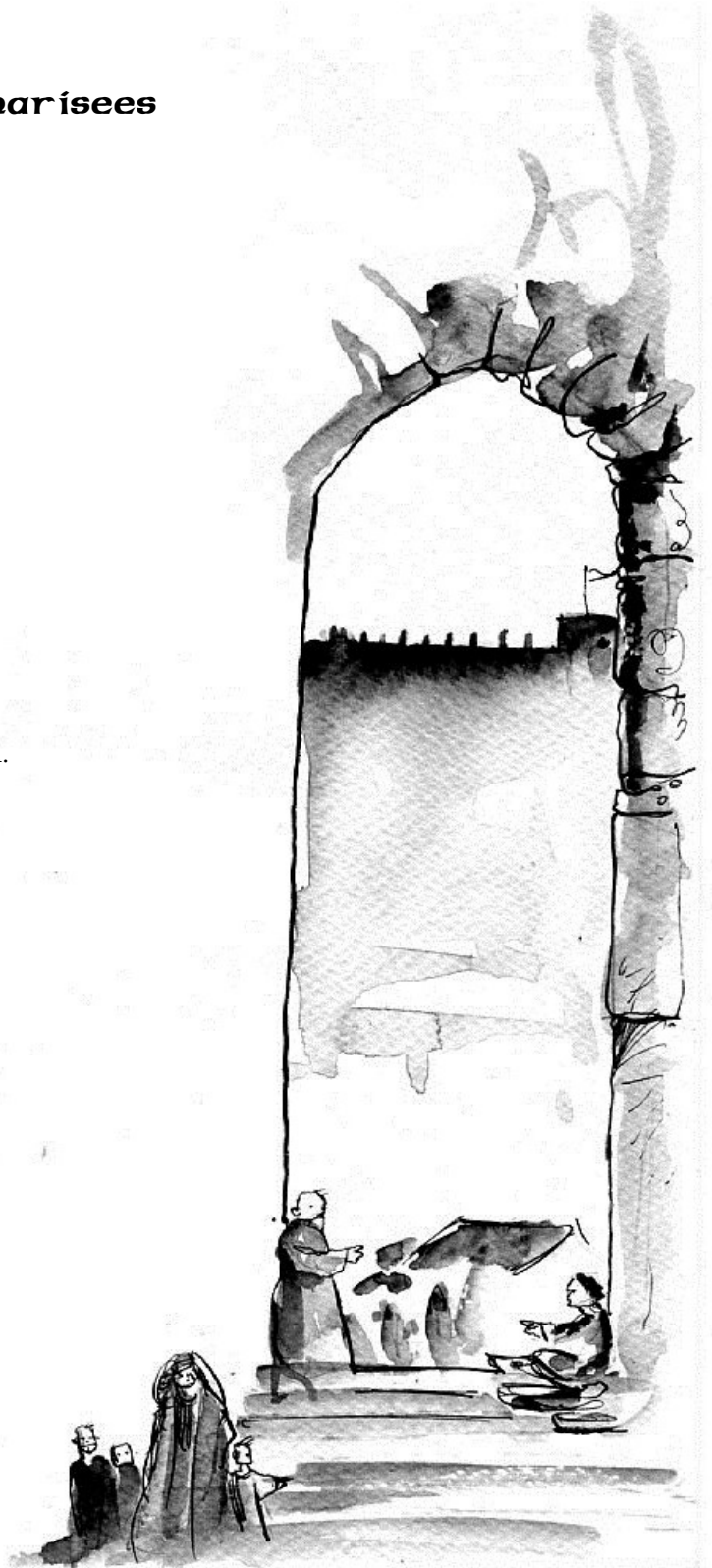
He who exalts himself will be brought down,
Whereas the humble man will gain renown.

Woe to you hypocrites, both scribes and Pharisees,
Who turn God's children into heaven's enemies!

You won't see heaven, so great is your sin
And you stop others from entering in.

Woe to you hypocrites, you scribes and Pharisees!
To make a proselyte, you travel many seas.

Your effort's wasted, though you travel far.
You make them twice the demon that you are.



Woe to the scribe and Pharisee, the hypocrite!
You swallow widow's houses for your benefit,
And for a pretense will you make long prayer,
So you'll receive the worst damnation there.

Woe to you, guides who have not sight, who say,
'If one swears on the Temple, then he may
His promise break, but who swears on its gold
Must do it all, exactly as he told.'

You sightless fools! Which is more sacred of the twain?
That gold or Yahweh's place, which makes it not mundane?

You say swears by the altar do not mean a thing,
Unlike swears by the altar's gift that people bring.

You men most blind! Which one is greater of the two?
The gift or what sets gifts apart, I ask of you?

To swear by one's to swear by all that's on it.
For either, do not falsely swear upon it.

To swear by heaven swears upon the throne
And on the one who does the kingdom own.

Woe to you, for you tithe mint, dill, and cumin,
Neglecting love of God and fellow human.

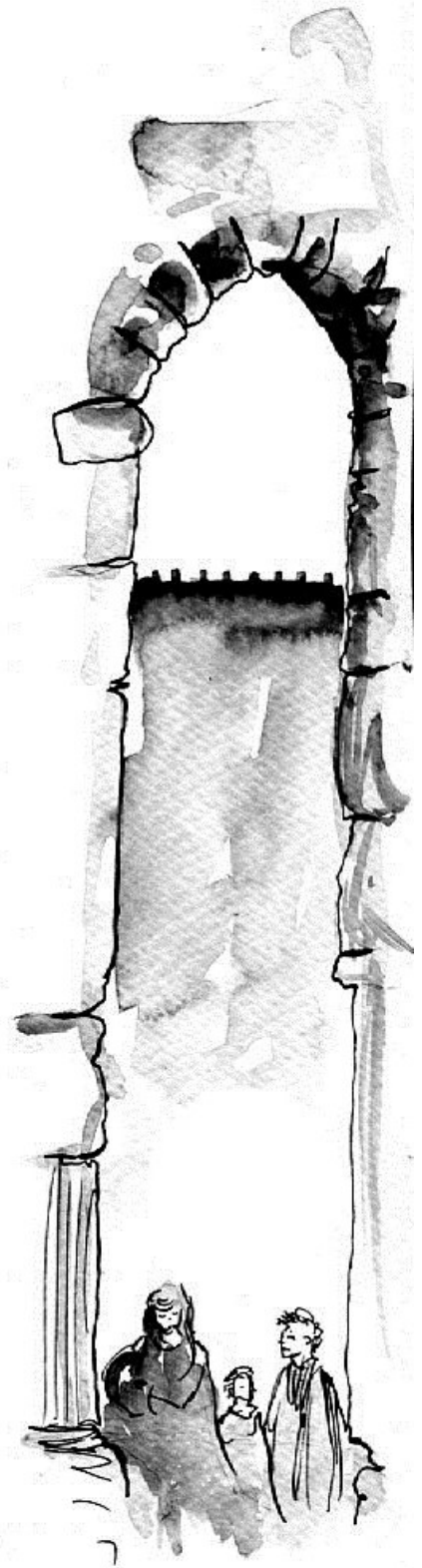
You heed the least and break the greater one:
The laws of mercy must the first be done.

You blind guides, who men never ought to follow!
You strain a gnat out but a camel swallow!

Woe to you, hypocrite, both scribe and Pharisee!
The outside of the cup and dish, what people see,
Is cleaned, but inside, filled to its capacity,
With wickedness, extortion, and rapacity!

Did not who made the outside make what lies within?
Give alms till cups are bare and you'll be cleansed of sin!

Woe to you, scribe and Pharisee, both hypocrite!
For, as a whitewashed tomb, you outwardly look fit,
But inside they are full of dead man's bones.
You're equally unclean behind your stones!



So much you strive that righteous you appear.
You're hypocritical and insincere!

Great woe to you, adorning tombs of righteous men
And prophets, while you claim, 'If we had lived back then,
Back in our fathers' time, when prophets' blood was shed,
It would not be by our hands that the prophets bled.

You testify that you are truly sons
Of those who killed the Lord's anointed ones.

So claim what from your fathers you inherit.
You brood of vipers, hell is all you merit!

Therefore, I send you prophets, scribes, wise men
You'll kill, scourge, or throw in a lion's den.

Some you will scourge in synagogues to knock them down,
While others you will persecute from town to town.

All righteous blood e'er shed will then your own hands stain,
From Abel, who was innocent, but killed by Cain,

And all those through the blood of Zechariah,
The fearless, righteous son of Barachiah,

Who perished by the altar, at his station.¹⁹⁴
All this will come upon this generation."