



Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers

When some see certain rebukes and/or strong words Jesus used, they wonder if truly He was gracious and good as many believe He was and is. To understand this, I have put scriptures together to explain and help you understand that. Note who He was speaking to and why as one of the keys to understand all of His rebukes.

Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Matthew 23:3-5 *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,*

Mat 23:23-33 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. 25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. 29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the

sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

One thing is certain in all things. Jesus knew the hearts of men. he knew them well enough as their creator. For Him to use these strong words was to convey a crucial point that could not be made another way. These men were already hardened and listened to no one and thought they were better than all the rest. These statements from the Lord brought them back to their senses.

Verses before Matthew 23:1-32, Jesus laid out and revealed who these men were. They were not all we thought they were. They were religious, bad, and worse than unbelievers. They were misleaders. They were self-righteous and full of themselves to the max that there was no room for God.

- They say and do not—All talk, no action.
- They put heavy burdens so grievous on people that they could not hold or move
- What they do is done to be seen of men.
- They hypocrites who focused on the less important to impress people but ignored the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith:
- They were blind guides. Leaders who are blind are very dangerous.
- Hypocrites who cleaned the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within were of full extortion and excess.
- Blind in that they were cleaning the outside of the cup, yet the focus should have been on the inside of the cup.
- Hypocrites in that they were full of uncleanness on the inside as white graves full of dead men's bones although looked beautiful on the outside.
- Appeared righteous unto men, but they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
- Children of the devil—John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Those who refused to believe in Jesus are not children of God. They are the children of the devil. he is their father, and they belong to his kingdom. It is only after we believe in/on Jesus that we change families and get a new family. These Pharisees and Scribes were not children of God if they believed not/in Jesus.

It is important to note that these strong words and rebuke was towards the religious leaders who were self-righteous and all the above. Jesus was not saying this to anyone and everyone. Jesus would have been censored and His twitter account closed, or His words censored and buried because they did not like them. They were stinging to the ruling class.

In conclusion, given all that background about these Pharisees and scribes as the Word points out — these men were behaving hypocritically, and they were not living by the truth. Jesus was RIGHT to call them serpents, brood of vipers. What else would He have called them? This was what they were. Therefore, Jesus calling them "serpents" and "brood of vipers" was justified, given their behavior and the truths he wished to bring to the surface. Despite the severity of his words, it's important to note that Jesus was operating in love and goodness towards these men, and it was a way to rebuke them without suffering sin upon them, in accordance with Leviticus 19:17. Rebuking a person and not suffering sin upon them does not mean you do not love them. Jesus was operating in love and goodness towards these would-be lost men.

Leviticus 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.