

Warnings to Hypocrites!

Hypocrisy was once considered a negative characteristic for a man or woman, but for many that is no longer true. Merriam Webster's dictionary defines hypocrisy as "feigning to be what one is not." The Greek word for hypocrisy has the idea of someone plays a role on stage. The role they play is not who they really are. Some movie actors and actresses have learned to play many different roles. Errol Flynn played the role of Robin Hood, a western cowboy, a soldier, the captain in "Captain Blood" and General Custer in "They Died with Their Boots On". He pretended to be individuals that he was not. We applaud his acting capability because we understand that he was role playing. But the word hypocrisy usually has a negative meaning because someone does not tell us they are pretending to be someone that they are not. It would appear that many politicians are professional hypocrites. They have learned the art of deception in order to get elected. This study comes from Luke 12:1-12. It is a warning to hypocrites - a role many have played at some point in life.

PHARISEES ARE HYPOCRITES. In our last study Jesus was invited to a meal with some Pharisees and scribes (Luke 11:53). During the meal Jesus rebuked both groups of people with six woes. It must have been a very dramatic and emotional meeting. We discovered in the last verses of Luke 11 that after the meal the Pharisees and scribes started a campaign in which they tried to trap Jesus into making a wrong statement that they could use against Him. In the opening verse of Luke 12, we are told that in spite of this confrontational situation thousands of people had gathered to see and listen to Jesus.

Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Luke 12:1 (NASB)



stepping on one another's feet. The Greek word that is translated as "stepping on" is *katapateo*. The Greek word has the sense of intentionally stepping on another person. That is, this mob of a crowd desperately wanted to see, hear and maybe touch Jesus. If they had to push and step on others in order to accomplish their goal, then they would do it and they did.

We are also told that in the midst of this difficult situation, Jesus made another emotional and shocking statement to His disciples - the Pharisees were hypocrites! This

is truly amazing! If Jesus was alive today and called the religious leaders of our day hypocrites, many Christians would be offended and accuse Him of being unloving and lacking mercy. There are Christians who believe that the

Most of the religious leaders hated Him, and yet thousands of people were attracted to Him. There were so many people, and they were so eager to see and hear Jesus that they were

practice of church discipline that Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-17 should be ignored. What they miss is that Jesus was giving this massive crowd a warning. The Pharisees were false teachers and what they taught would send people to hell.

They were not spiritual leaders after all, and the disciples

should be on guard against them. The Greek word that is translated as hypocrites is a compound word (hypo+krisis) literally meaning “under-judgment.” That is, Jesus said the Pharisees were under judgment by God because they pretended to be spiritual.

Unfortunately, this problem exists in Christian churches today also. It is not uncommon for a man or woman to desire to be a leader in a church. They pretend to be spiritual but they are not. I knew a man who wanted to be a leader in a church, yet he wanted to attend church when it was convenient for him and fit his schedule. He was unfaithful in just about every responsibility that he accepted in the church. Yet when confronted, he accused the leaders of not liking him. He had excuses for every absence and failure to perform his duties while thinking that somehow he was a spiritual man qualified for church leadership. He missed the message of 1 Timothy 3:10 that even deacons are to be tested before they are asked to serve as a leader in the church.

If they are unfaithful, then they are not to be given the title of deacon. The man was a hypocrite. He pretended to be something that he was not, and he also wondered why he was struggling in his Christian life. The Pharisees pretended to be something that they weren't.

The gospel of Matthew paints the Pharisees as hypocrites. For example, in Matthew 3:7-9 John the Baptist rebuked them and the Sadducees saying,

[You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Matthew 3:7 \(NASB\)](#)

Clearly John the Baptist revealed that they were not spiritual leaders since they were headed for wrath or the Lake of Fire. In Matthew 6:1-4, Jesus called them hypocrites because they wanted everyone to know when they gave to the poor. Matthew 6:16-18 reveals that they made their faces look gloomy while they were fasting so that people would know they were fasting. Their tithing and teaching made them appear more holy. The chief seats made them look like spiritual examples for others to follow. They wanted people to know! Maybe they even dropped verbal hints. They were not spiritual men but pretenders, and the sad truth is they apparently did not realize that they were hypocrites. In Luke 11 when Jesus pro-

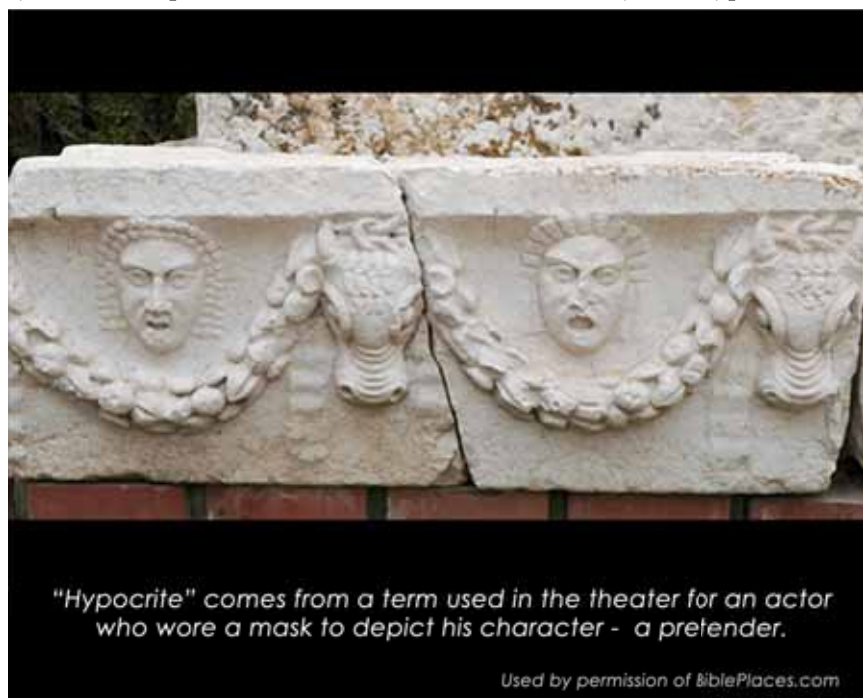
nounced six “Woes” upon the Pharisees and lawyers, He was not venting anger and calling them names. He was warning them!

[Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Luke 12:1 \(NASB\)](#)

When Jesus said to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Jesus was pointing

out that they were sinful. They appeared to be holy, but they were not holy. Leaven is yeast and it multiplies and spreads. What a fitting word He used. One hypocrite will produce another hypocrite.

THE JUDGMENT OF HYPOCRITES. In the next eleven verses (Luke 12:2-12), Jesus announces that condemnation was awaiting the Pharisees. This condemnation is not just for the religious leaders; it is also for everyone else as you soon discover. But Jesus' point in this section is that the Pharisees will be judged. Every one of their secrets will be known - act or word. This section is divided into four parts: 1) a description of the coming judgment (v. 2-3), 2) why they



should fear the Father (v.4-7), 3) why they should fear Christ at the judgment (v. 8-9) and 4) why they should fear the Holy Spirit at the judgment (v. 10-12).

But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the rooftops. Luke 12:2-3 (NASB)

In verse 2 Jesus tells the disciples that there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed. Now this raises two questions: 1) what is the meaning of covered up, and 2) how are these hidden things to be revealed? The Greek word that is translated as “covered up” is *synkalupto*. The word means much more than just “covered up.” It also has the sense of “to cause something to be unknown by intentionally concealing it.” It is the idea that you or I are intentionally hiding something from others and maybe, you think, God.

Imagine a young child in kindergarten stealing some money from another student. Now that child might decide to keep his or her theft a secret and not tell anyone what he or she did. The teacher may never know. The child’s parents may never know. The victim of the theft may never know. The child might even forget about the theft in the years to come, but God will never forget. Revelation 20:12-13 tells us that some day, every sinful and evil action we did will be revealed. Our every act is recorded in books.

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. Revelation 20:12-14 (NASB)

Even if you tried to hide your evil deed, God says He will expose it on the day of judgment. Notice that Jesus says

even those deeds that they intentionally tried to hide will be revealed. The Greek word that is translated as “revealed” is *apokalypso*. It means to “uncover.” God will uncover the secrets of every man and woman.

Then Jesus repeats the concept in four different ways just to make sure that we understand. What you have hidden will be known. Then He states if you said something in the dark, it will be heard in the light. Jesus connects darkness with statements of hatred or desire to hurt someone. He also connects light with the truth that everyone will know what you said. Then He contrasts the whispers in an inner room being proclaimed on the roof top of a house. That is, everything a person has done and said throughout their life will be revealed. Earlier in Jesus’ ministry, He said this,

But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Matthew 12:36-37 (NASB)

Earlier Jesus had said that your every word will reveal your heart.

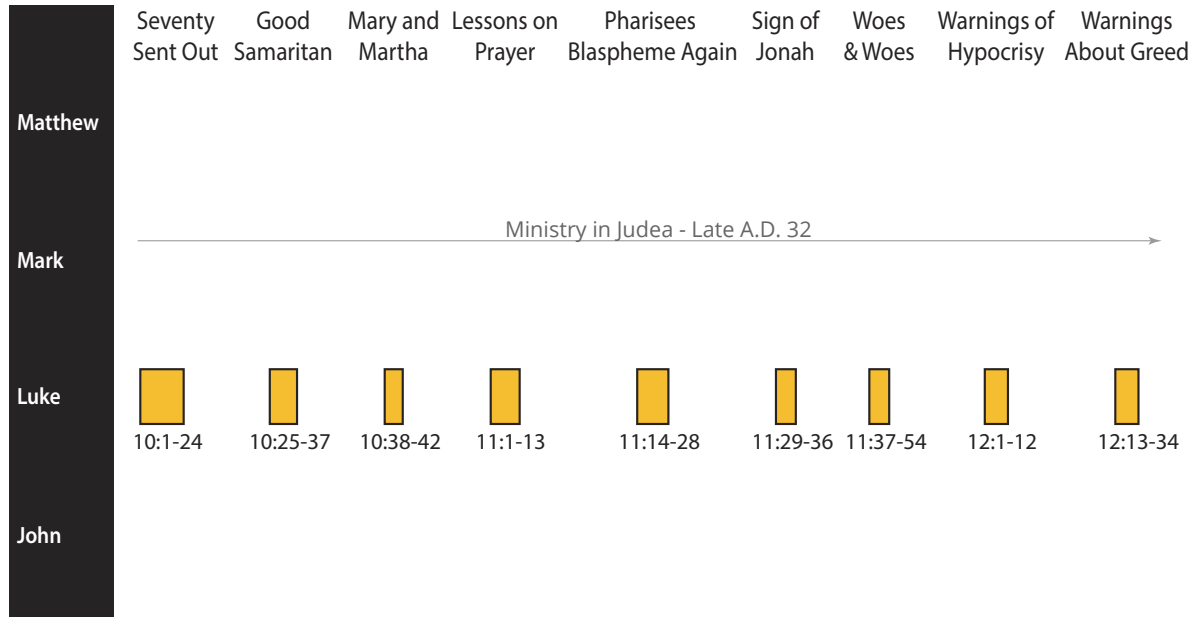
Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man. Matthew 15:17-20 (NASB)

No one will be able to say, “I did not mean what I said.” Why? Because God will reveal all of your little slips of the tongue and together they will reveal your heart - the real you!

DEFENDING YOURSELF ON JUDGMENT DAY. What a horrifying thought. Imagine every little word you have ever spoken being revealed. Every person will be reminded of even the smallest nasty, spiteful or insulting “slip of the tongue.” This will be God’s proof that the person deserves to go to hell and eventually the Lake of Fire. In Romans 2:5-6

Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Judea - Late A.D. 32



we are told that our actions will be judged too!

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds . . . Romans 2:5-6 (NASB)

That is, everyone will be judged by his/her this words and deeds. Remember that Jesus said that every little secret action and word will become known. At the judgment it will be as if someone shouted from the house top everything that you did and said. Everyone will know every little dirty secret about you, including the things you tried so hard to hide in this life.

There is a story told about a noted monsignor to be guest of honor at a Washington banquet. A prominent politician was to serve as chairman but had been unavoidably detained. The toastmaster proceeded without him. Honor after honor was heaped upon the deserving churchman, and then he arose to accept their tributes.

“The seal of the confessional,” he said, “can never be broken, and therefore I can only hint of my impressions when I came to Washington some twenty-five years ago. Oh, I thought I had wandered into a terrible place. The first man who entered the confessional told me a hair-raising tale of graft and corruption, but as the days went on I knew I’d entered a fine community of lovely people and it has indeed been an honor to have been among you for all these fine years.”

As he spoke, the chairman arrived and rushed to the front. The politician spoke next: “I’ll never forget the first day our honored guest arrived at this parish. In fact, I have the honor of being the first to go to his confessional.”¹

Imagine everyone hearing at the great White Throne judgment every secret evil deed or word you committed or spoke. Earlier in Luke 11:31-32, Jesus gave us insight as to what people will experience at the future great White Throne judgment. The judgment is called the great White

1. Micahel Hidgin. 1001 Humorous Illustrations For Public Speaking. Zondervan Publishing Co. 1994. pp. 188-189.

Throne Judgment because in Revelation 20:11-15 the throne is described with the color white. Now imagine God is sitting on the throne and He is surrounded with everyone who has ever been born. Then one-by-one each person stands before God and their evil deeds and words are announced or played back on some divine video for everyone to see and hear. If you recall, in Luke 11:31-32 we were told that the Queen of Sheba will rise up and condemn the Jews of Jesus' day because they had rejected Him. That implies the Queen of Sheba will hear the accusations brought against them. It would appear that the people of Jesus' day might protest and then the Queen of Sheba speaks and supports God's condemnation. Then Jesus added that the men of Nineveh would stand up and condemn them also. This reveals that everyone who was ever born into this world will be present at the time of judgment and hear what everyone has done. Even worse, some may stand up to proclaim that you are guilty and deserve to go to the Lake of Fire. Why? If you have rejected Jesus Christ.

In summary, everything that each person has done and said will be revealed, will be known, will be announced as if a spotlight had illuminated what was done and as if all is shouted from a house top. What an embarrassing and horrifying experience. Then God, the judge, will announce the verdict - you are guilty, go to hell. However, hell also has another name, the Lake of Fire! Jesus' point is that this is the destiny of the Pharisees and scribes. He has described what will happen to them and simultaneously has given everyone else a warning.

HOW TO ESCAPE THE WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT. How can a person escape the great White Throne Judgment? The answer is to stop trying to earn your way into heaven and to believe or trust Christ that He did everything that is required for you to go to heaven. You must believe that He is God (John 8:24) and that He died so that your sins can be forgiven and the proof is that His body returned to life (1 Corinthians 15:1-4); Romans 1:3-4; 4:25). The question is do you believe that Christ did everything for you and are you willing to trust Him? Acts 4:12 says,

[And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name](#)

[under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12 \(NASB\)](#)

FEAR GOD THE FATHER. Next, Jesus tells the crowd who they should fear.

[I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. Luke 12:4 \(NASB\)](#)

Anyone who has been in ministry for Christ understands the special meaning of this statement. Pastors, leaders and lay workers understand the fear of people since they are threatened and intimidated regularly by others. Personally, I have had men try to influence me to change my beliefs in favor of what they believe. I have had a man walk down the aisle of the church and right up to the pulpit while I was preaching. I did not know what he was planning to do to me. I trusted God and the men of the church to take the appropriate action. But Jesus was not referring to verbal and potential threats. He was referring to someone who wants to kill you and you know it. He says that we should not fear those who kill the body and then He adds, "have no more that they can do." The Greek word that is translated as "more" is *perissoteros*. It has the sense of "that which is considerably in excess." That is, they can only kill the body and nothing more. Jesus implies that there is something more. What is the "more"? He tells us in the next verse.

[But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! Luke 12:5 \(NASB\)](#)

Who is the One we should fear? While Jesus does not tell us directly, the answer is God the Father. Jesus reveals that God, not the devil, has the authority to take our lives and cast a person's soul into hell. The devil can blind someone, and he made hell a reality when he motivated Eve and then Adam to sin in the garden of Eden (Hebrews 2:14). But he does not have the authority or power to assign anyone to hell. Nor does he rule hell. In fact, some day he will be

thrown into hell and suffer along with everyone else (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10). So then how should a Christian respond to Satan? Ephesians 6:10-13 tells us to stand firm against him and James 4:7 promises us that then the devil will flee! Draw near to God and the devil will flee.

Therefore, we should fear God the Father since He alone can throw us into hell. The Greek word for hell is *gehenna*. Gehenna is,

... transliteration of the Hebrew word for the Valley of Hinnon where the children were thrown on to the red-hot arms of Molech. Josiah (2 Kings 23:10) abolished these abominations and then it was a place for all kinds of refuse which burned ceaselessly and became a symbol of punishment in the other world.²

This explanation helps us understand the concept of Gehenna. In the New Testament, hell is described as a dark place, a place of smoldering brimstone, (Revelation 21:8), fiery (Matthew 5:22; 18:9), eternal (Matthew 25:41), where the worm never dies (Mark 9:43-44) and a place of pain and torment (Matthew 25:30). That is, people never die in this dark, hot, fiery, painful and eternal place. That is why we should fear God the Father. No one else can do that to anyone.

The next two verses may seem out of place or appear to

introduce a new topic.

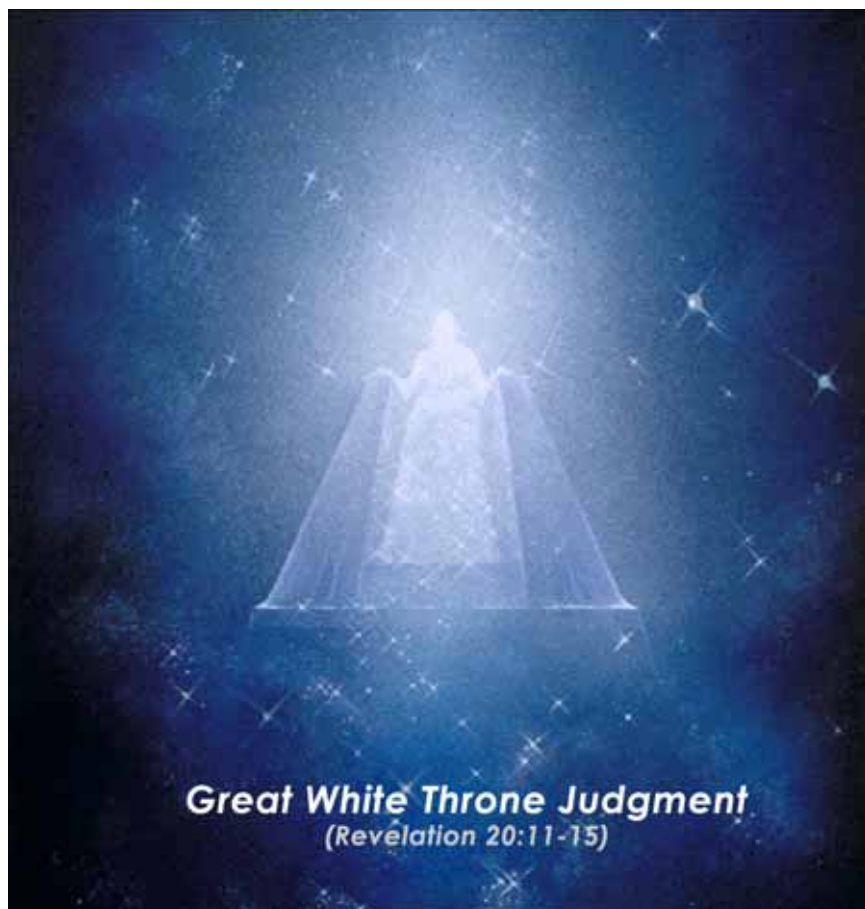
Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. Luke 12:6-7 (NASB)

But that is not the case. Jesus' point is that God the Father cares so much about us that He knows even how many hairs

you have on your head. Admittedly, some of us have less as we grow older. William Barclay makes this comment about Jesus' illustration,

God's care is the most detailed of all. To God we are never lost in the crowd. Matthew says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?" (Matthew 10:29). Here Luke says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?" If you were prepared to pay the extra penny you got not four, but five sparrows. One was

flung into the bargain as having no real value at all. Not even the sparrow thrown into the bargain without real value is forgotten before God. The very hairs of our head are numbered. It has been computed that a blond person has about 145,000 hairs; a dark-haired person, 120,000; and a person with red hair, 90,000! The Jews were so impressed with the individual care of God that they said that every blade of grass had its guardian angel. None of us needs to fear for each can say, "God cares for me!"³



2. A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament. Baker Book House. 1930, pp. 172-173.

3. William Barclay. The Gospel of Luke. The New Daily Study Bible. Westminster.

The message of Jesus' illustration is that since you are so highly valued by God, there is no reason to worry about the time of the judgment if you are a righteous person. There is also a secondary message. Since God cares about you so much, we can be confident that He is not eager to send us to hell. But if you are a hypocrite, then you need to worry because God knows everything about you, even how many hairs you have on your head.

FEAR JESUS CHRIST. Then Jesus told the crowd that there was someone else they should fear. They needed to fear Him.

And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. Luke 12:8-9 (NASB)

Every person needs to also fear the Son of Man. The Greek word that is used for "confesses" is *homologeō*. John 1:20 gives us insight into the meaning of this important word.

And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." John 1:20 (NASB)

The person speaking in this verse is John the Baptist. It is clear here that the word "confesses" has the idea of speaking the truth. That is, we are to say the same thing about Jesus that He says about Himself. But a closer examination of His statement reveals that Jesus contrasts "confesses" with "denies." That is, "confesses" is the opposite of "denies." That is, one who confesses Jesus Christ is one who speaks the Truth about Him.

CHRIST SAID HE WAS GOD. During Jesus' ministry, He declared that He was God. It is clear in John 5:18; 8:57-59 and 10:30-31 that the religious leaders knew He claimed to be God.

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 5:18 (NASB)

So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and You have seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. John 8:57-59 (NASB)

"I and the Father are one." The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. John 10:30-31 (NASB)

Jesus claimed to be God in John 5:26 when He claimed to "have life in Himself." That is, He was self-existing. Only God is self-existing. Only God has aseity.

CHRIST IS THE ONLY SAVIOR. Jesus also revealed that He was and is the Savior of the world. In John 8:24 He said,

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. John 8:24 (NASB)

Jesus makes three important points. First, every person sins and is destined for eternal punishment. Second, only by believing in Jesus Christ can a person escape eternal punishment. Third, once again Jesus claims to be God. He is the savior of the world. The apostle John makes this statement about Christ in 1 John,

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 1 John 4:14 (NASB)

Those who believe that Jesus is God and the Savior of the world are true Christians. They will confess these truths about Christ and not deny them. Christians are those who do not deny Him but accept Him and submit their lives to Him.

Romans 10:9 tells us that anyone who confesses Jesus as Lord and Savior will have eternal life.

... that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you

ster John Knox Press. 2001. p. 191.

will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. Romans 10:9-10 (NASB)

That is, if someone denies Jesus Christ, then he or she will not be saved from his or her sins. That person will go to hell. Later the Holy Spirit wrote these words through the apostle Paul,

If we endure, we will also reign with Him;
If we deny Him, He also will deny us . . .
2 Timothy 2:12 (NASB)

Here the Holy Spirit says that true Christians continue believing in Jesus Christ. A true Christian endures. Those who deny Him or end their life denying Him will go to hell. Jesus' point is that the hypocritical Pharisees were headed to hell because they were denying Him. Their hypocrisy revealed that they were not Christians and they denied Jesus Christ. They were and are in serious trouble.

FEAR THE HOLY SPIRIT. Jesus has told the crowd that judgment awaits everyone and as a result, they should fear God the Father who knows everything that they have ever said or done! He will know if they have rejected Christ. Christ will deny those who deny Him. The Father will know who those individuals are. Now Jesus adds another warning. Anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him. Luke 12:10 (NASB)

This is the unpardonable sin. Notice that the sin is blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus made the same statement earlier in His ministry and that statement is recorded in Matthew 12:30-32. The context of the passage (Matthew 12:25-29) helps us understand what Jesus means. That is, if anyone after seeing and hearing all that Christ did and taught concludes that the miracles and signs that Jesus performed was the work of Satan, or was not the work of God, can never be

forgiven. Why? Because that is their final conclusion. How can someone who denies that Jesus did real miracles and performed true signs and wonders ever think He was God and the Savior of the World?

CONCLUSION. Now in stark contrast, Jesus tells us that Christians should not fear because the Holy Spirit will actually help them.

When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. Luke 12:11-12 (NASB)

Those whom God will send to hell are those whose words and actions demonstrate that is where they deserve to go. Their deeds will be evil. They will have rejected Jesus Christ as God and Savior. They will claim that Jesus was not God and what He did was not the work of God. These individuals will be sent to hell. The hypocritical Pharisees are among those who were sentenced to hell. That was one of Jesus' points in this passage.

But those who confess Christ and believe that He did perform miracles, signs and wonders will go to heaven. These individuals will be helped by the Holy Spirit in times of persecution. They do not need to worry about how to respond for the Holy Spirit will give them the correct words.

Now the most important question that you must answer is, "What do you confess about Jesus Christ?" Did He do divine miracles, signs and wonders? Was and is Jesus Christ our God and the Savior of the world from sin? Do you want Him to forgive your sins and do you submit yourself to Him? How you respond determines your destiny!