

WORK AT WORK

VOLUME XVII NUMBER VI
Judgment To Victory III

SATURDAY, September 1

Scripture: Matthew 12:14-21, I John 2:8-10

Matthew 12 and First John 2 provide the foundational context for conflict necessitating God's intervention in bringing judgment to victory. This conflict is not in the world but in the Church. The Pharisees had a very difficult time with Jesus. As He learned to move with the Holy Spirit and yield to divine prompting the supernatural from on high guaranteed face to face confrontation over what the Heavenly Father taught Him to say and do. For us to possess the divine promises, God must judge and bring to victory the pockets of pharisaism resident in our lives. To this end God orders our circumstances!

SUNDAY, September 2

Scripture: Matthew 12:1-8

In Matthew 12:1-8 the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees reveals the very essence of why God has to take judgment to victory in order to trust us with great revival. The Pharisees are totally law based in their relationship with God. The fruit is judgment on the flesh bringing condemnation when God would have given mercy and blessing. The spirit of pharisaism speaks as God from a foundation of law, bringing judgment and condemnation which destroy rather than heal. When the spirit of pharisaism rules, judgment triumphs over mercy. When judgment is taken to victory, a person who formerly moved from a foundation of law now moves from a foundation of mercy and grace. Instead of widening the breach, they, in fact, heal it! Are you there?

MONDAY, September 3

Scripture: John 8:12-14

One of the first fruits of phariseesim is its very solid impact on the prophetic. Law based people are unable to discern spiritual origin. And because of that neither can they project or discern prophetic direction and destiny. The Pharisees could not discern the origin and ministry of John the Baptist, or the future direction he was going. Neither could they discern the ministry of Jesus or the purpose of His works. And so it has been throughout the ages that when God pours out His Spirit those who are law based and have a pharisaical spirit misjudge and fail to discern God at work among His people, nor can they project the prophetic direction which determines destiny. When God takes judgment to victory in our individual and corporate lives, all the hindrances are transformed into strengths and that which has been lost to pharisaism in discernment is restored.

TUESDAY, September 4

Scripture: Matthew 16:13

The chief issue for us in discerning God at work especially in seasons of restoration is Matthew 16:13. We must answer this very same question which reveals our ability to properly discern and then answer. Jesus asked His chief trainees 2000 years ago a question that is still valid: “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” It is just as relevant today as it was when Jesus asked it 2000 years ago. Because the question demands an answer based on relationship. It is a question about where we can find God moving in the earth today. What is God and what is not God? Anyone who has developed relationship with Father will be empowered to bring forth an answer. While those who are law based, and not relationship based, will find an answer very very difficult. God wants us whole. He wants us to participate in His great end-time revivals. He is therefore committed to bringing judgment to victory over issues of pharisaism hindering our walk.

WEDNESDAY, September 5

Scripture: Exodus 32:15-25

Exodus 32:15-25 describes an aspect of God that we must be careful to preserve as we march through the issues of Matthew 12 to fulfillment in taking judgment to victory. We are not in this series saying that God is not a judge. Nor are we saying that spiritual laws are no longer applicable. God is both a judge and He has laws that govern life on this planet. The transformation of judgment to victory is the transformation of the human heart as the deceptive spirit which opposes God, is revealed, and removed. When the Father takes judgment to victory in our lives we become able ministers of the New Covenant.

THURSDAY, September 6

Scripture: Exodus 32:26-29

Verse 26 is very revealing over issues of purity, commitment, and obedience. This is the acid test of one's relationship above all others; the relationship with God as opposed to relationship with each family member. Moses, as it were, draws a line in the sand and says “If you're on God's side step over here.” The only respondents were those of the same tribe of Moses - the Levites. Because of their **relationship** they were empowered to execute judgment. The problem of pharisaism is not that it just blatantly executes judgment, but it executes judgment not based on relationship. In Exodus 32 the ones who chose to execute judgment are the ones who have solid relationship - the tribe of Levi. No other tribe joined them. When we pass through God's preparational “judgment to victory” process we extend mercy based on relationship, but we also extend judgment based on the same relationship.

FRIDAY, September 7

Scripture: Matthew 16:14-17

Here we see the same principle of Exodus 32 again in the New Testament. Jesus even comments on it. Personal relationship produces revelation and therefore recognition enabling a person to make an accurate judgment. Peter can discern the origin and ministry based on relationship and make an accurate judgment as a result. Can we? Are our judgments based on law or personal heavenly relationship?

SATURDAY, September 8

Scripture: Isaiah 45:15

One may question why the necessity of walking through a preparational season where God takes judgment to victory. The answer is in the ways of God. In Isaiah 45 we read about God's nature when He visits the earth in a move of the Spirit. Verse 15 says, “Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the

Savior!” When God comes to the Church in a move of salvation He always comes hidden. Our heavenly Father hides Himself in order to prove our hearts. He comes in a way that forces us to choose, usually humiliation - like visiting a stable. Embracing God demands a great level of discomfort almost always based on circumstances, ultimately forcing us to press into new dimensions in the realm of the Spirit.

SUNDAY, September 9

Scripture: Proverbs 25:1-2

Proverbs 25:1-2 says, “These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied: It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.” The Hebrew word for “conceal” or “hidden” in Isaiah 45:15 is the same. **Saw-thar** means to hide by covering. These two passages together show us God always comes hidden. God brings His glorious visitations in a package that is guaranteed to be unrecognizable by the majority in the Body of Christ. God hides it for a purpose. That purpose becomes a relationship test for us when we encounter what God is doing. Our judgment to participate or reject determines a great measure of our future in God.

MONDAY, September 10

Scripture: Proverbs 25:1-2

In addition to hiding or concealing His presence so discovery only comes through relationship, God also brings His glory in the same manner. And most of us are familiar with the New Testament concept of moving from glory to glory, but when we look at it through the eyes of the Old Covenant, we realize God’s glory comes packaged and the packages are definitely hidden. The issue of moving from glory to glory then is dependent on our choices of judging and discerning what God pours out. Are we receiving God’s glory when it comes, or are we judging and sending it on down the road calling it a counterfeit when, in fact, it was just the opposite.

TUESDAY, September 11

Scripture: Matthew 10:37-42

Matthew 10:37-42 is a good example of God’s administration of His presence among His people. In losing our life we find it and the receiving of what God sends in the package sent definitely brings a reward. Verse 41 is very clear about that. It says, “He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.” Verse 41 assures us through our personal relationship with Jesus we can recognize and discern what He sends and in that process claim, qualify, and move in the reward promised. God sends His glory to us in hidden packages so that it may be a great reward to those who discern through relationship.

WEDNESDAY, September 12

Scripture: Matthew 16:17-18

Jesus made a very strong statement to Peter after he voiced the fruit of his relationship with God. So the question that arises for us is, “What is the rock upon which He will build His Church that the gates of hell cannot prevail?” Is the rock revelation or recognition? Is it discovery or is it the Catholic church? Revelation born out of relationship can take us into the full measure of God’s appointed purpose for our lives. Where else can we find it but God? How else can we mine the gold and participate in the glory unless we discern what God always sends hidden? Perhaps another question that arises out of this passage is “What are the gates of hell?”

Are the gates used figuratively or are they, in fact, actual gates in a place where angels ascend and descend? Many have postulated about the gates of hell. Some say it speaks of Satan and his demons. Others believe there is actually a physical place in the earth where the demonic spirits move to and fro from their appointed place. Some have even postulated the Bermuda Triangle with all its historically unexplainable happenings as such a “gate” into the earth. Are the gates physical or are they spiritual?

TURSDAY, September 13

Scripture: Matthew 15:1

Exegetical questions such as “What are the gates and how are they used in this passage?” have to be determined by historical exegetical rules the Church has subscribed to for centuries. Chief among these is “context determines meaning.” In order to accurately make an assessment of purpose we have to go all the way back to the beginning of the flow which culminates in Matthew 16. Matthew 15:1 is where it all begins. Verse 1 says, “Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,....” These were not just ordinary Pharisees Jesus encountered in Matthew 15. They were, in fact, the leaders of the whole movement from the foundation of the Church in Jerusalem. What we find in Matthew 15 is the chief embodiment of the spirit governing the Church of 2000 years ago. Jesus found Himself in conflict with the highest leaders of the land. The conflict was all about what God does or doesn’t do and how He does it or doesn’t do it. How can it be that the very same issues are still “front burner” for us 2000 years later? Perhaps the real question is, “Have we learned anything in 2000 years?”

FRIDAY, September 14

Scripture: Matthew 15:2

Notice the heart attitude of the Pharisees. Listen to the words of their mouths, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” Immediately they are calling Jesus to task over the issue of His violation of law. He has come to heal, but they demand He only do it at the right time and perfectly prescribed place. Once again we see the power of law, law, law - no revelation, no recognition! Where are we in the spectrum just revealed?

SATURDAY, September 15

Scripture: Matthew 15:3-9

Verse 2 reveals law, law, law with no revelation and no recognition. Verses 3-9 reveal it is all because there is no relationship. When there is no relationship, deception fills the void. Jesus’ words were strong, direct and to the point. “Because you have no relationship, you make the Word of God of no effect because of tradition.” How would it be to face God and give an account for spending a life in ministry and making people worse off than they were before they met you. Such is the power of pharisaism and such is the necessity of God judging it and taking it to victory in our lives. Then and only then do we qualify to participate in what God pours out.

SUNDAY, September 16

Scripture: I Corinthians 3:10-15

Matthew 15:8-9 provide a staggering platform for First Corinthians 3:10-15, ““These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”” First Corinthians 3 is a warning to take heed how we build and on what foundation. It goes on to say that everyone’s work will be revealed by fire and if the work endures there is a reward. If it is burned up in the fire, there is great loss. First Corinthians 3 reveals the possibility of spending a lifetime working for God and watching it all go up in smoke. The price of pharisaism is high, and unfortunately it can be transferred easily by radio, TV, or print. What you watch, listen to, or read can be a source of great blessing and freedom or a one way ticket to spiritual prison. Which door are you walking through?

MONDAY, September 17

Scripture: Matthew 15:10-11

In Matthew 15:10-11 we learn the power of the spirit of phariseeism to pervert. The spirit of phariseism when it captures a person causes them to judge things just the opposite of how they really are. It twists the truth a complete 180 degrees so that a person judges good evil and evil good. How long can anyone move in the grace of God calling good evil before judgment comes. God is graciously trying to bless the Church and whole sections of it are judging the blessing as from another spirit. Spiritual principles have not changed for 2000 years.

TUESDAY, September 18

Scripture: Matthew 15:12-14

The spirit of phariseism when it captures an individual turns them into a plant which the heavenly Father has not planted, therefore, guaranteeing the necessity of their uprooting. They become blind leaders of the blind and the judgment is they have to live in a ditch. It is amazing how many people in the Church are so use to their ditch they can't accept anything outside of it. We have some friends who just returned from Toronto and we asked them how it was? They were tremendously blessed, encouraged, and in many ways revived. Choose to live above the ditches that have been created in Christianity to keep people in the system. Learn to fly with God and find the measure of His purpose that you can build with eternal reward in view. We should resist being reduced to blind leaders of the blind.

WEDNESDAY, September 19

Scripture: Matthew 15:15-19

Verses 15-19 reveal the center of war in the realm of the spirit. That center of war is over our heart. What comes out of our heart can produce blessing or judgment, justification or condemnation. How is it that phariseism is always more concerned with the outward appearance than what is transpiring inside? This principle reminds me of a number of conversations I've had over the past two years over the issue of the revival centered in Toronto. Almost every objection has been aimed at an outward manifestation with a steadfast refusal to look at the fruit based on changed and transformed hearts. That observation alone should speak volumes about the origin of this move of the Spirit. We need to ask God to give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and an understanding heart.

THURSDAY, September 20

Scripture: Matthew 15:15-19

We actually need to look at the list of what Jesus said defiles a man when it comes out of the heart. The first category is evil thoughts from the word **pon-ay-ros** meaning a hurtful, calamitous, diseased, derelict, vicious, lewd or malicious imagination or thought. The spirit of phariseism allows, formulates and makes room for the expression of **pon-ay-ros** words to be channeled at God's people and Father's purposes. The spirit of phariseism becomes the chief enemy of revival and renewal in every age.

FRIDAY, September 21

Scripture: Matthew 15:19, 5:20-22

Next on the list in verse 19 is murders. The Greek word is **pho-nos**. We see an interesting application of this word in Matthew 5:20-22. In Matthew 5 Jesus makes it clear those who are possessed by a pharisaical spirit will not be seen in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus brings the issue of murder progressively back from the actual commission of the act to the formulation in the thoughts in the midst of unresolved anger and hostility. When we take a hostile stance toward ministers or leaders based on some perceived transgression, we open the door for the judgment of God if the foundation of our hostility comes from a religious spirit.

SATURDAY, September 22

Scripture: Matthew 15:19, 12:19

The next word on our list is adulteries or the Greek word **moy-khi-ah** which is very close to what follows the word translated fornications which is **por-ni-ah**. **Moy-khi-ah** and **por-ni-ah** describe the whole dimension of sexuality and God's intent for us to maintain a solid purity in that realm whether it be thought, word, or deed. We get the word pornography from **por-ni-ah** which describes the visual stimulation and vicarious experience coming from viewing such illicit material. Perversion sexually almost always leads to perversion spiritually. It is interesting that in the midst of dealing with pharisaism Jesus would solidly address the entire sexual spectrum of perversion.

SUNDAY, September 23

Scripture: Matthew 15:19-28

The final three on our list are thefts, false witness, and blasphemies which the spirit of pharisaism apparently fosters. Can you imagine the heartache of eternity when it reveals a lifetime of claiming to represent God but, in fact, fighting Him and turning people away from the very things He sent. Such defilement may be common in the land. There is a very interesting transition from verses 21-28. In dealing with the woman of Canaan it almost seems as if their initial encounter reveals a pharisaical spirit. The disciples were clearly annoyed and really wanted Jesus to send her away. She was obviously a great embarrassment to them. Jesus kept pushing the woman away probably to see what kind of response she would give. She certainly followed the proper path. She ended up worshipping Him and He commended her faith. Are we willing to accept the corrections that come our way and fall upon the Rock and worship Him even in the midst of great trial and travail? Such responses produce an outpouring of His presence and bring deliverance.

MONDAY, September 24

Scripture: Matthew 15:29-39

The end of dealing with the pharisaical spirits and the inevitable confrontations result in a real outpouring of blessing. Verses 29-39 reveal the healing and deliverance of people, as well as the divine provision for their need. It seems as we take a panoramic view of Matthew 15 that once the spirit of pharisaism is dealt with, God is free to meet the entire range of human need - spiritual, physical, financial, with much left over. Is this the picture God is portraying for us as we begin to move into chapter 16. Is this the foundation on which the truth of Matthew 16 stands? Are these two chapters consistent in their presentation of the same truth?

TUESDAY, September 25

Scripture: Matthew 15:1; 16:1-12

It is obvious the theme of Matthew 15 consistently moves on to 16. Once again Jesus is dealing nose-to-nose and face-to-face with the spirit of pharisaism and their inability to discern spiritually. In verses 5-12 of chapter 16 He warns the disciples about the spirit of pharisaism and says in verse 6 they distribute a leaven which will bring destruction. Jesus tells us the spirit of pharisaism affects the way we think just like leaven affects bread. Leaven causes bread to rise as the spirit of pharisaism causes people to puff up and stand against the very thing God sends. In the book, Quenching the Spirit, we have a historical expose of the history of revival in America for the last 250 years. The spirit of pharisaism universally incarcerated individuals and leavened them to fight what God was doing and thereby kill the revivals. Quenching the Spirit is a **must read** for anyone who is serious about discerning the times and seasons.

WEDNESDAY, September 26

Scripture: Matthew 16:13; 12:22-24

In verse 13 Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” That question would determine the magnitude of Pharisaical leavening among the twelve. Matthew 12:22-24 shows us precisely what the Pharisees were leavening people about Jesus. In verse 23 the multitudes recognized Jesus by the anointing on His life while the Pharisees, true to form, had it exactly 180 degrees reversed. They said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” It is quite obvious the Pharisees were leavening people concerning the ministry of Jesus. They judged Him as not from God! How are we judging?

THURSDAY, September 27

Scripture: Matthew 12:25-27

Jesus had a response to what the Pharisees were leavening in Matthew 12, and His response was very interesting. He said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?” Verse 27 is the kicker! Jesus said, “And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.” It is obvious from what the Pharisees were leavening people that any new believers in the crowd would have been instructed toward ruination. So Jesus postulates a generational principal. If when one generation rejects God, He visits their kids and if the kids accept then they become the judges of their parents generation. I wonder how many of our children will wind up accepting what we didn’t recognize as being God and running with it, therefore becoming our judges.

FRIDAY, September 28

Scripture: Matthew 12:28-30

The danger of the spirit of pharisaism becomes crystal clear in Matthew 12:28-30. Verse 30 says, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.” The danger of pharisaism is it makes people unknowingly and unwittingly fight God. Verse 29 actually points to an issue which is prevalent in our nation today that speaks to that very issue. Verse 29 says, “Or else how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.” Verse 29 points us to the very same word used in First Thessalonians 4:17 for the catching away of the Church in what is commonly called the rapture. The Greek word there is **har-paz-o**. It means to take forcefully in the open where all can see as opposed to **klep-to** which is slip out of the back pocket to steal craftily or to take in the darkness. In Greek when a word is to be intensified, instead of adding adjectives and modifiers like English, they add prefixes to the beginning of the word. The last part of verse 29 is a much stronger statement than First Thessalonians 4:17 because **dia-har-paz-o** is used. It points us to the fact Jesus will demonstrate through the Church more power taking spoil from the enemy than will be released when He catches the Church

up in the rapture. The fruit of pharisaism is in people who would much rather take the easy way out and are looking forward to the rapture rather than participating in the warfare of the harvest and taking cities and nations which God has ordained. God's heart is on spoiling the enemy not taking the Church out in the rapture.

SATURDAY, September 29

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-18

Jesus obviously wanted to know how much leaven was present in His own disciples therefore He asked the question, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Peter got it right. Peter got the answer based on relationship with God not on the words of the Pharisees. The Pharisees said he was the son of Satan. Peter said, "No, He is the Son of God." And the gates of hell cannot prevail against the revelation of origin. The context of chapter 15 and the previous verses in 16 make it real clear what the gates of hell are. They are leavening places. They are places where the saints can be leavened either for or against what God does. We drive by them almost daily. They are massive, marvelous, masterpieces, of masonry, mortar, and marble with a big sign on the front that says "church." Our churches are either going to be places of the Spirit or places of pharisaism. The gates of hell are religious spirits that attempt to control lives and leaven people against God by pulpit, radio, TV, and print and it speaks to the warfare over the leadership of the Church that rages continually. What kind of leaven are you receiving? What kind are you giving?

SUNDAY, September 30

Scripture: Matthew 16:19-23; 23:13-15

If we don't think churches can be the gates of hell why did Jesus say in Matthew 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of **hell** as yourselves." Now it would be nice if we could just point to a whole denomination of churches and just say, "They are all in the same place," but that is never true. We're talking about an issue that has to be discerned on an individual basis. Really the warning is for us in the remainder of Matthew 16. To the very one who got the revelation of origin, just five verses later became the "gates" himself. Jesus began to tell them about what was coming. He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes and be killed, then resurrection was coming. But look at Peter's response in Matthew 16:22 "Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to you!'" Peter himself became the gates by resisting the plan and purpose of God. What does this say to all of us? It can happen to any of us. It is something we have to continually fight and be aware of. Watch out for the spirit of pharisaism - it will transform a great ministry into the gates of hell.

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ITINERARY

Al Houghton

PASSION FOR YOU

**Vibrant, vital passion,
A heart set firm on Thee,
Steadfast with nothing wavering,
Not moved by what I see.**

**I'll press on toward You, Lord,
My heart fully aflame,
With love toward You and others,
In all to name Christ's name!**

**Set to be obedient,
Your servant above all,
To move when I'm directed,
To answer when You call.**

**Bless my heart of passion,
Daily it's flame renew!
Make my life a story,
That fully pleases You.**

Jayne Houghton

EYES TO SEE

**His visits are more unpredictable
but notice the way that He moves
in a wineskin that seem unconventional,
but formed in the way He approves.**

**He adjusts and He sharpens discernment,
so you can perceive, accurately.
Scales on your eyes are a hindrance,
they cloud and distort what you see.**

**Ask Him to strengthen your eyesight,
and clarify vision because
your spectacles, shaded and colored,
won't see things the way that He does.**

There are facets of Him, yet uncovered,
that are foreign to you, but somehow,
He will show things to you to instruct you.
You're not able to bear them right now.

His techniques are beyond understanding;
not what you think He should do.
But walking in humble subjection
by faith, He reveals things to you.

He comes as a Shepherd and Counselor;
yet, He is tender and kind.
But sometimes He comes in a whirlwind,
bypassing your limited mind.

Behold both His goodness and severity;
He will chasten and scourge every son.
Though He would bruise, He will heal you.
He is God of the rest-o-ra-shun.

Watch Him as Lord of His household,
interceding and risen, He lives.
He is stern in His dealings, but merciful.
Behold Him as One Who forgives.

His visits are quite unexpected,
He changes the shape He assumes.
When He comes in His next visitation,
it will be different than what you presume.

He is hidden from view from the experts,
who prophesy what He must do;
but revealed to the simple, the childlike,
who know that He always comes through.

You cannot discern the Lord's movement
unless He has cleansed you inside;
until you are purged of hypocrisy,
and remove any beam from your eye.

Don't stare at the speck in your brother,
but search your own heart, carefully.
Reach for the salve and just ask Him,
for eyes that are able to see.

Terry Hill