

Pharisees as the Target of the Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5—7

Matthew 3—4: John the Baptist (3:1-2), Jesus (4:17), and later Jesus’ disciples (10:7) announce the Messiah’s arrival with these words: “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!” This was an invitation for Israel – if she were to change her way of living, then the Messianic kingdom would come in all its fulness.

Matthew 5—7: Then, in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus throws down the gauntlet – I, your King, am here. Choose me (and accept my definition of kingdom righteousness) or choose the Pharisees (and follow their bankrupt righteousness). I’ve been telling you to “repent in preparation for the kingdom.” Here is what repentance looks like.

For I tell you,
unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
(Matthew 5:20)

<i>Jesus’ favorite title for Pharisees was “hypocrite,” a term used 13 times in Matthew, once in Mark, three times in Luke, and nowhere else in the New Testament</i>	
Sermon on the Mount	Pharisees in Matthew
Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (6:2)	¹ Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus ... ⁷ You hypocrites ! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you ... (15:1, 7)
And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites . For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (6:5)	¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words ... ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites ?” (22:15, 18)
And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites , for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (6:16)	But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. (23:13)
You hypocrite , first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye. (7:5)	Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. (23:15)
	Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law (23:23)
	Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! For you

	clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. (23:25) ²⁷ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (23:27-28) ²⁹ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. (23:29-31) ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know ⁵¹ and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (24:50-51)
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Parallels Between Jesus' Accusations in the SoM and against the Pharisees throughout Matthew

Sermon on the Mount	Pharisees in Matthew
¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (5:11-12)	²⁹ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets ... ³⁴ Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, ³⁵ so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. (23:29-31, 34-35)
You have heard that it was said ... But I say to you... (5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43)	²⁸ And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (7:28-29)

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment (5:21-22) ²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (5:27-28)	²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. ²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (23:25-28)
³¹ “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (5:31-32)	And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” ... ⁷ They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” ... ⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery. (19:3, 7, 9)
³³ “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil. (5:33-37)	¹⁶ “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁷ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? ¹⁸ And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁹ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰ So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹ And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. ²² And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it. (23:16-22)
Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. (6:1)	[The scribes and the Pharisees] do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶ and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues (23:5-6)
Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (6:2)	Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. (23:23)
And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (6:5)	[The scribes and the Pharisees] love ... greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. (23:6, 7)

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (6:24)	“¹³ No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” ¹⁴ The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. (Luke 16:13-14)
Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (7:1-5)	¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹² But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (9:11-13)
¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. (7:15-20)	⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance ... ¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (3:7-8, 10) ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” ... ³³ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. ³⁶ I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, ³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (12:24, 33-37)
¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (7:13-14)	<i>ME OR THE PHARISEES?</i> <i>MAKE YOUR CHOICE!</i>