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The Tragic Results of Works-Based “Righteousness”

Mark 12:35-44

Jesus’ final public showdown with the teachers of the law is also his final public shutdown of their credibility as spokesmen for God—there are common characteristics of ***false teachers*** everywhere…

1. **Gross misconduct with respect to the handling of the Scriptures** (12:35-37).

“How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the Son of David and David says Messiah is his Lord?!”

“How can He be his Lord and his son?”

False teachers not only treat the Scriptures subjectively and customize the meaning, but quite frankly are unable to make deep dives into the rich heart of theological truth.

The Holy Spirit pegs Messiah as a greater KING. And the best of theologians were intentionally thick.

2. **Hypocrisy—the fruit of religion based on righteousness by “good” works** (12:38-40).

Works-based righteousness/ justification by works – favour with God is earned by good behaviour—regardless of how you dress it up, it is the religion of the natural man. It has no resemblance whatsoever to the religion of Jesus Christ.

* Flowing robes
* Important seats—synagogue, banquet
* Lengthy prayers

3. **The emotional, physical, and financial abuse of the most vulnerable of society** (12:40-44).

Whether out of wealth, or out of want, you cannot buy favour with God; in fact you may use your last two cents to buy you nothing but your death. This is the fruit of bad teaching and religious abuse.

The devourers will be punished most severely—the devoured masses will remain devoured by their unwillingness to flee the self-righteousness of works-based religion.