

“HE IS SUCH A PHARISEE!”

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Have you ever heard someone say this about someone else? Maybe someone in the church? Has anyone ever said something like this about you? Have you ever said this? Or even just thought this about a fellow member of the church? And what usually prompts this remark? It is clear that when this is said, it isn't a "good thing". It really amounts to "Christian name-calling". It is said out of frustration resulting in labeling or stigmatizing the recipients with an unfavorable description.

WHAT PROMPTS THIS CHARGE?

Here are some circumstances where such a label has been used to describe others

1. Usually, we hear or speak this remark, "Oh, he's such a Pharisee!", when we're discussing the Scriptures. Usually there are two or more sides in a biblical discussion. One side seems to be using much more Bible in their argument. To which, the other side responds, "Oh, he's such a Pharisee!"
2. Often this remark is made in response to someone who strongly states that we must be "strict followers of the Bible". This is seen when someone might notice an unscriptural practice or doctrine and makes a point to address it. To which, the other side often responds, "Oh, he's such a Pharisee!"
3. Those labeled as "Pharisees" are often, upon closer examination, extremely devoted followers of the Word who have just challenged us to compare our individual lives to the Word of God, the Bible. When someone challenges another's spiritual "comfort zone", the other side responds, "Oh, he's such a Pharisee!"
4. Those who we would describe as having an apparent unbending and unyielding adherence to the Bible are labeled often "Pharisees!" We label a "Pharisee" anyone who actively communicates our need to follow every applicable part of the Bible to our lives.
5. And we label them as "unloving and "unmerciful Pharisees" if they persist in their relentless and annoying efforts to get the church to be more faithful in their obedience to God's Word.

But can this label, "Pharisee", be biblically justified? Is the above view truly "Pharisaism"? What is "Pharisaism"? This study is designed to expose the true sin of Pharisaism. What did Jesus say it meant to be "a Pharisee"? Was it bad to be a Pharisee?

Before we get into the meat of this study, let's establish some very important points.....

- We are saved by grace through faith, and not as a result of our own works, Eph.2:8-9
- Seeking to be justified by keeping laws will result in our falling from grace, Gal.5:4
- No one can be justified by their own works of law, Rom.3:20;Gal.2:16;3:11
- But..... Does this mean that those who believe that they MUST do their absolute best to keep to the whole Word of God and its commands are then "Pharisees"?
- What was the Pharisee's approach to the Scriptures??? That should be our question here?
- Who are the REAL Pharisees of our day? Good question? Let's see!

John

3:20,21

²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Carefully study the following passages in your Bible. Answer each question **from the passages** listed with those respective verses. The answers to the following questions can be **clearly seen** within the passage. As you locate the answers within the verses given, COMPARE the Bible's answers to how YOU might have otherwise answered those same questions. Any differences? REMEMBER! We're **NOT** looking for your OPINIONS or FEELINGS or other subjective reasons why you may think you're exempt here. In our search for Truth, we're looking for **God's answers** in the Bible to these important questions.

False Premise #1

“The Pharisees never spoke or commanded the Truth of God’s Word! Therefore, we’re not obligated to listen to “*Pharisee Types*”. The “*Pharisees Like*” should always be ignored or resisted!”

I. Matt.23:1-7

1. Read this passage carefully. According to verse 2, what is the first thing Jesus pointed out concerning the position the Pharisees were in? _____
2. Who put them in “Moses Chair”? _____ Did God? _____
3. When someone sat in “the chair of Moses” in the synagogue they were only to speak from the Law of Moses, the Word of God, and not their own traditions. What did Jesus say the people are to do in response to the Pharisee when they speak from the Bible? _____ and _____
4. And **how much** of what they spoke were the people to do? _____
5. What were the people not supposed to do? V.3 _____
6. Was Jesus criticizing the Pharisees for always strictly adhering to the Bible? _____
7. From v.4, what was the real criticism that Jesus had for the Pharisees? _____
8. So who would we be like if we were to demand “speaking only where the Bible speaks” from other religious groups, BUT we ourselves won’t do the same? _____
9. According to v.5-6, what did Jesus say was the true Pharisaical motivation for doing their religious deeds? _____
10. From verses 2, 4, 6 & 7, would it be a fair observation that the kind of Pharisees that Jesus had a problem with were.....
 - a. Those who put themselves in religious leadership positions? _____
 - b. Those who put demands to follow the Bible that they themselves are not willing to follow? _____
 - c. Those who did their deeds “to be noticed by others”? _____
 - d. Those who love the place of honor at banquets? _____
 - e. Those who want to be in the “chief seats” or leadership positions in the church? _____
 - f. Those who would like to be recognized and greeted as a religious teacher? _____
11. Do you or someone you know fit this description? _____
12. How does this match your previous view of “Pharisees” and those who use it as a negative label for their brothers in Christ? _____

False Premise #2

“The Pharisees kept the Word of God perfectly..., and they were condemned for it! And they always insisted that the people make every effort to please God by keeping His Word just as it was written.”

II. Matthew 16:6-12

1. What did Jesus make a point to warn us about? _____
2. Clearly, from v.12, what did the disciples understand that Jesus was warning the disciples concerning? _____
3. From this passage then, would it appear that the Pharisees doctrines were coming from the Bible or their own imaginations? _____
4. Therefore, do these Pharisees appear to be ones greatly concerned about the truth? _____
5. But aren’t many of those who powerfully and boldly teach that we must carefully stick by the Word of God often labeled “Pharisees”? _____
6. But what does the Bible say? _____

III. Matthew 22:29

1. What word did Jesus use to describe their understanding of the Scriptures? _____
2. According to this passage, did this group of Sadducees understand the Scriptures? _____

IV. John 5:38-40

1. From this passage, why did Jesus say these Pharisees didn't have God's Word abiding in them? _____
2. Did Jesus indicate that having God's Word abiding in us is a good thing, or "Pharisee-Like"? _____
3. Why did these Pharisees search the Scriptures? _____
4. But what was their reality? _____
5. Does this passage, in any way, show the Pharisees to be those who were calling the people back to the Scriptures? _____ As ones with clear understanding? _____
6. So why would we label those who would call us back to the Scriptures as Pharisees? _____

V. Mark 7:5-13

1. From verse 5, what were the Pharisees concerned about more than keeping God's commandments? _____
2. Did Jesus eventually resort to biblical "name-calling" in verse 6? _____
3. What did Jesus call religious leaders who are not consumed by a desire to keep His commandments? _____
4. What kind of service or honor did Jesus call it when people say they love God, but don't keep His commands? _____
5. From v.7, what does Jesus call the worship of those who teach their own Precepts? _____
6. V.7, were Pharisees teaching God's commands, or their own ideas? _____
7. V.8, Did Jesus say that the Pharisees were keeping the commandment of God? _____
8. What did Jesus say they were doing? _____
9. From v.10-12, Did many of the Pharisees prevent others from faithfully following clear Bible passages in order to hold on to their past erroneous practices? _____
10. What did Jesus say is the result of keeping our own unbiblical traditions? V.13 _____
11. So when someone comes to us and calls us back to the Scriptures and our grave need to keep to them closely, are they acting like the Pharisees? Or like Jesus? _____
12. But aren't those who call us back to God's Book very often labeled, "Pharisees"? _____
13. And what does the Bible say? _____

VI. Matt.23:23

1. Look at this verse carefully. What did Jesus call the Pharisees? _____
2. Were the Pharisees concerned about tithing? _____
3. What else did Jesus say they were supposed to be concerned with? _____ and _____ and _____
4. What was the third thing that Jesus said they were not to neglect? _____
5. Did Jesus teach that they were not supposed to be concerned with tithing the small things? _____
6. Did Jesus specifically teach that they were supposed to neglect the little details in order to be just, merciful and faithful? _____
7. But under what circumstances do some religious people throw around the label, "Pharisee"? _____
8. Have you ever labeled someone a "Pharisee" because they were concerned about true justice, biblical mercy and true faithfulness, and also they were just as concerned over the smaller details so you called them a "Legalist" or "Pharisee"? _____
9. But according to this verse, is that a Biblical understanding of "Pharisaism" and keeping God's Word? _____

False Premise #3

“The Pharisees were a group of people that were always spoken against in the New Testament, and being a Pharisee in the days of the church was definitely not a good thing.”

VII. John 3:1-21; John 7:43-53

1. What was Nicodemus according to the text? _____
2. Was this Pharisee in the practice of coming to Jesus for evening Bible Studies? _____
3. Did Jesus resist spending time with Nicodemus to discuss the Scriptures? _____
4. Who was Jesus meeting with when He told us how to be born again? _____
5. Who did Jesus give the message of how much God loved the world in 3:16? _____
6. From 3:19-21, what did Jesus stress as the most important action or “practice” to enable one to come to the light of God? _____
7. From 7:51, what did Nicodemus appeal to in his debate with fellow-Pharisees? _____
8. In 7:52, what did the other Pharisees resort to in their answer? _____
9. Therefore, was this Pharisee, Nicodemus spoken of by the Holy Spirit negatively, or in a positive light, and as one concerned for the truth? _____
10. How does this match your previous view of all Pharisees and those who use it as a negative label of their brothers in Christ? _____

VIII. Phil.3:4-18

1. What did Paul say his background was? (v.5), What was Paul? _____
2. Concerning Paul’s righteousness in the Law of Moses? V.6 _____
3. From v.9, from where must our righteousness come? _____
4. From v.10, this faith demands our knowing, not only the power of His resurrection, but also _____ and to be _____
5. From v.10-11, What won’t we “*attain to*” if we don’t “conform” by faith? _____
6. Even though Paul no longer depended upon his own past achievements, from v.12-15 what attitude did the apostle Paul have? _____
7. What actions did Paul take? V.13,14 _____
8. From v.12-17, Did Paul appear to be driven towards perfection in Christ? Or... Did he “rest” or relax because of the grace of Jesus”? _____ Or did he reach and strive? _____
7. Is it “Pharisaical” or is it “faithful” to preach that *we must all keep living by the same standard* and join in following Paul’s “striving” example, and follow the “*same pattern*” of Christian living that we have in the Bible? _____

IX. Acts 26:5

1. Do we again have Paul talking about the days when he was a Pharisee? _____
2. Did Paul appear to be ashamed of that fact? _____
3. Did Paul refer to his being a Pharisee as a “negative” in this passage? _____
4. So why would we? _____

X. Acts 23:6

1. From this clear Bible passage, did it appear that Paul was being untruthful or intentionally misleading? _____
2. From this passage, did Paul claim that his father was a Pharisee? _____
3. But **most telling**, what did the apostle Paul claim to be, in the **present tense**? _____
4. Therefore, does it appear that Paul always considered his being a Pharisee as something negative, or as something he still considered himself to be? _____
5. How does this match your previous view of all Pharisees and those who use it as a negative label of their brothers in Christ? _____

IX. Acts 15:5,6

1. Were there members of the sect of Pharisees who were also called “believers”? _____
2. From verses 5-29, were these “Pharisee” disciples part of the entire group of church “leaders” of what has been called here, the “Jerusalem Conference”? _____
3. Did Luke here refer to being a Pharisee as a “negative” in this passage? _____
4. So why would we? _____

False Premise #4

"The Pharisees were the ones who taught that people should keep the whole Bible without deviation or exception." In answer to this false premise, please read the following verses and then answer the questions that follow.....

XI. Matthew 3:15

But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us [Ps 40:7, 8; John 4:34; 8:29] **to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he permitted Him. (His baptism)

1. Why did Jesus say He had to be baptized? _____
2. Was Jesus concerned with fulfilling ALL the Scriptures in His life and teaching? _____

XII. Matthew 4:14; Matthew 5:17; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 12:17; Matthew 13:35; Matthew 21:4; John 12:38; John 13:18; - This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet...

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill..."

1. Did Jesus appear to be determined to keep the whole Bible, perfectly? _____
2. Did Jesus come to abolish the Law? _____ Or to fulfill it? _____

XIII. Luke 24:44

"Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things which are written** about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be **fulfilled.**"

1. How many things did Jesus say He needed to keep in the Bible concerning Him? _____
2. Was Jesus faithful to fulfill all that was written about Him? _____
3. What Bible writings did Jesus say He was obligated to fulfill? _____
and _____ and _____

XIV. Luke 22:36-38

"And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one.

³⁷ "For I tell you that this **which is written must be fulfilled** in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

³⁸ They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

1. Why was it so important to Jesus that His disciples had swords in their possession? _____

2. Even though Jesus will later rebuke Peter for using one of these swords, according to these verses, why was it so important for them to have the swords? _____

XIV. John 15:20; John 17:6

"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; **if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.**" "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and **they have kept Your word.**"

1. According to 15:20, are we supposed to **keep** the words of Jesus and His apostles as well? _____
2. Why did Jesus say that people would **keep** the Word of the Apostles? _____
3. According to 17:6, How did the disciples respond to Jesus? _____
4. How does this cause you to look at people among us who are consumed with keeping the Word of God accurately and completely as they can? _____
5. Are they like the Pharisees? Or like Jesus and His disciples? _____

XV. Revelation 3:8

"I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have **kept My word**, and have **not denied My name.**

1. What did Jesus say he Knew about these Christians? He knew their _____.
2. And what were the most important deeds Jesus said He knew about them? _____
_____ and _____

False Premise #5

“Salvation by grace through faith in Christ delivers us from any spiritual or physical obligation to keep the Laws and Commandments or Word of God!”

XVI. 1 John 2:3-6

”By ***this*** we know that we have come to know Him, ***if we keep His commandments***. The one who ***says***, ” I have come to know Him,” and ***does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him***; but whoever ***keeps His word***, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. ***By this we know that we are in Him***: the one who says he abides in Him ***must himself walk in the same manner as He walked***.

1. By what will we know that we have come to know Jesus? _____
2. The person who says they know Jesus, but isn't a keeper of His commandments, is what? _____
3. Is the truth in those who believe they don't have to keep God's commandments? _____
4. In whom is the love of God truly been perfected? _____
5. How can we know that we are in Jesus? _____
6. If we say that we abide in Jesus, what MUST we do? _____

XVII. John 14:15

”If you love Me, you will ***keep My commandments***.

1. A real simple question, ... Are you a Pharisee or a lover of Jesus when you keep His commandments? _____
2. Do we usually look at those who are consumed with keeping all of Jesus's commandments as Lovers of Christ? Or as Pharisaical legalists”? _____
3. But how does Jesus look at them? _____

XVIII. Romans 3:31

”***Do we then nullify the Law through faith?*** May it never be! ***On the contrary***, we establish the Law.”

1. Even though, clearly, some mistakenly believe that their faith does away with our obligation to keep the Law of God, what does this verse say? _____
2. In fact, through what is the Law established according to this verse? _____
3. **Question**: And why is this? Or How? _____
4. **Answer**: Because “faith without works is dead, being by itself!”, Jam.2:20,26