

Jesus and the Pharisees: (part nine of a twelve part series)

The confrontations initiated by the Pharisees with Christ were for the purpose of accusing Him of wrongdoing, or some inconsistency, by which they could undermine His credibility with the Jewish people. Their priority would have been to seize Him; arrest and imprison Him, on some fabricated charge. Yet they were hesitant in doing that due to their fear of the people, who considered Jesus to be a prophet (Matthew 21:46; Mark 12:12). Even their initial attempt at arresting Him ended in failure, due to the officers appointed for that task being overwhelmed by the power of His teaching (John 7:32, 44-46).

So in the aftermath of that failed attempt, we see the Pharisees resuming their attack on the Messiah's credibility, as recorded in John 8:1-11. In spite of the textual issues surrounding this passage, I believe it was an actual historical event, recorded accurately for our benefit. One common thread linking it to the Gospel accounts as a whole, is revealed in John 8:6a, where we read the following –

“They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him . . .”

In Matthew 12:10, their desire is to accuse Him. At the end of His life, before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59-61), Herod (Luke 23:8-12) and Pilate (John 18:28-32); they continue to falsely incriminate Him. Shortly after this interaction between Jesus, the Pharisees and the adulterous woman, our Savior rightly condemns these Jewish religious leaders of having the devil as their father (John 8:44); of being liars and accusers, just like their father (Revelation 12:10). It should come as no surprise that their subterfuge with the woman caught in adultery, also ends in failure, with Christ convicting them of their own sin, in John 8:7 –

“But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.’”

So I will end this segment with a question: “Is your Christian life marked by the hypocrisy and duplicity of a Pharisee, or the integrity and compassion of your Savior?” If it is the former, then I have two simple and straightforward admonitions for you: First, stop being that guy! Second, start having Jesus Christ as the one and only role model and example for your life. Anything less or anyone else will inevitably disappoint you and lead you astray.