

Matthew 23:1-39 Godly Actors

Acting is the art or practice of representing a character on a stage or before cameras. The role of the actor is to convince the audience or on-looker that they are the actual character they are representing.

Merriam Webster's definition of actor is:

- 1: one that acts: DOER – one that takes an active part
- 2a: one who acts in a play, movie, television show, etc.
- b: one who behaves as if acting a part

One who acts professionally (as in a play, movie, or television show)

Synonyms for actor: impersonator, player,

Words Related to actor: entertainer, performer actress, mime, etc.

The Bible definition of an actor is hypocrite - an actor, stage player.

After Yeshua responds to those leaders who had joined forces to trap Him, He answered their questions with questions of His own that finally shut them down and ended any further questions from them.

Yeshua proceeded to call out the Scribes and Pharisees exposing them as actors in the service of God. Instead of leading people to God, they prevented people from entering the Kingdom of God and lead the people away from Him.

In this portion of Matthew, Yeshua exposed the religious leaders for what they were and issued strong warnings and rebukes to them for their role of hypocrisy.

Mt 23:1 Then spake Yeshua to the **multitude**, and **to his disciples**,

Mt 23:2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

What is Moses' seat? The seat of Moses is in reference to Exodus 18:13-16. It is where Moses sat to judge between the people to give them the statutes of YeHoVaH and His Laws.

Ex 18:13 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.

Ex 18:14 And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What *is* this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?

Ex 18:15 And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God:

Ex 18:16 When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make *them* know the statutes of God, and his laws.

What Moses said to them came from YeHoVaH, and His Laws.

The Scribes and the Pharisees were supposed to give the people what came from God, but instead they put heavy burdens on the people that they themselves would not carry. They taught the commandments of men not the Commandments of YeHoVaH.

Mt 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

Yeshua is telling the people and his disciples to listen to the Scribes and the Pharisees when they speak what YeHoVaH gives them, like Moses did. Yeshua is saying don't follow their examples, commandments and traditions, follow the Commandments of YeHoVaH.

Mt 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. Mt 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

The Scribes and the Pharisees did what they did to be seen of men. They put on a show with their Jewish garbs, long tzitzits, and tefillin.

Mt 23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Mt 23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

Mt 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Messiah; and all ye are brethren. Unfortunately, there are those who claim to follow Yeshua but reject His teachings and call themselves rabbi when He said not to.

Mt 23:9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Mt 23:10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Messiah.

Mt 23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Yeshua taught, consistently, the greatest among you will be a servant.

Mt 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

YeHoVaH resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Jas 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

1Pe 5:3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being examples to the flock.

1Pe 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1Pe 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Yeshua turns His focus to the Scribes and Pharisees and begins to call them what they were.

Mt 23:13 But woe unto you, **scribes and Pharisees**, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Hypocrite – 5273 ὑποκριτής hypokrites {hoop-ok-ree-tace'}

Meaning: 1) one who answers, an interpreter 2) an actor, stage player 3) a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite

Usage: AV - hypocrite 20; 20

The teachers of the law (**Scribes**) and **the Pharisees were actors**. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees put on a show to be seen of men. They dressed the part, they played the role, and they did not practice what they preached concerning the Commandments of God but practiced and desired the accolades and benefits that came along with their roles and titles.

Many so-called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, like the Pharisees of old, shut up the Kingdom from the people by teaching against the Law of God.

Mt 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Pretence – **4392 πρόφασις** prophasis {prof'-as-is}

Meaning: 1) a pretext (alleged reason, pretended cause) 2) show 2a) under colour as though they would do something 2b) in pretence, ostensibly

Usage: AV - pretence 3, cloke 2, show 1, colour 1; 7

Mt 23:15 Woe unto you, **scribes and Pharisees**, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Denominational world mission, evangelism, and crusades use their brand of the gospel to establish their denominations, not to make disciples but to make converts to become like them.

Mt 23:16 Woe unto you, ye **blind guides**, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

In Matthew 23:16-23, the Scribes and Pharisees were more concerned about the gold, the gifts, and the tithe and omitted the weightier Law, judgment, mercy, and faith. Yeshua taught that all of those things were to be done and none of them were to be left undone.

Mt 23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

Mt 23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

Mt 23:19 Ye fools and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

Mt 23:20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

Mt 23:21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

Mt 23:22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

Mt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done**, and **not to leave the other undone**.

Mt 23:24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Mt 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

Mt 23:26 *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Clean the outside and the inside. The WORD and SPIRIT are the cleansing agents.

Mt 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

Mt 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Righteous – **1342 δίκαιος** dikaios {dik'-ah-yos}

Meaning: 1) righteous, observing divine laws 1a) in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God

Usage: AV - righteous 41, just 33, right 5, meet 2; 81

Hypocrisy – **5272 ὑπόκρισις** hupokrisis {hoop-ok'-ree-sis}

Meaning: 1) an answering 2) an answer 3) the acting of a stage player 4) dissimulation, hypocrisy **Usage:** AV - hypocrisy 5, dissimulation 1, condemnation 1; 7

Iniquity – **458 ἀνομία** anomia {an-om-ee'-ah}

Meaning: 1) the condition of without law 1a) because ignorant of it 1b) because of violating it 2) contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness

Usage: AV - iniquity 12, unrighteousness 1, transgress the law + 4060 1, transgression of the law 1; 15

Mt 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

They built the tombs of the prophets and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous that their fathers murdered, had killed, and destroyed.

Mt 23:30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

Mt 23:31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Mt 23:32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

Mt 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Yeshua went all in on them in verse 33 calling them serpents and vipers who were on their way to hell.

Yeshua told them what they would do to those He would send. This happened to Him, Stephen, (Paul chased the disciples from city to city with the blessings of the high priest) to the apostles and is still happening to this day.

Mt 23:34 Wherefore, behold, **I send** unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them **ye shall kill and crucify**; and *some* of them **shall ye scourge in your synagogues**, and **persecute them from city to city**:

Mt 23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Mt 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Mt 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

Mt 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Mt 23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Ps 118:26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

Paul, a former Pharisee, would have understood completely as he warned Timothy about such men.

2Ti 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2Ti 3:3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

2Ti 3:4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

2Ti 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

2Ti 3:6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

2Ti 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.