



THE GOSPEL OF  
**LUKE**

JOURNEY TO  
JERUSALEM

# WOE TO THE PHARISEES AND LAWYERS

— Luke 11:37-54 —



While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner.

— vv 37-38

“The hands are susceptible to uncleanness, and they are rendered clean by the pouring over them of water up to the wrist. Thus if a man had poured the first water up to the wrist and the second water beyond the wrist, and the water flowed back to the hand, the hand becomes clean; but if he poured both the first water and the second beyond the wrist, and the water flowed back to the hand, the hand remains unclean. If he poured the first water over the one hand alone and he bethought himself and poured the second water over the one hand, his one hand alone is clean. If he had poured the water over the one hand and rubbed it on the other, it becomes unclean; but if he rubbed it on his head or on the wall [to dry it] it remains clean.”

— Yadayim 2.3



And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.

— vv 39-41



“You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

— Matthew 15:7-9



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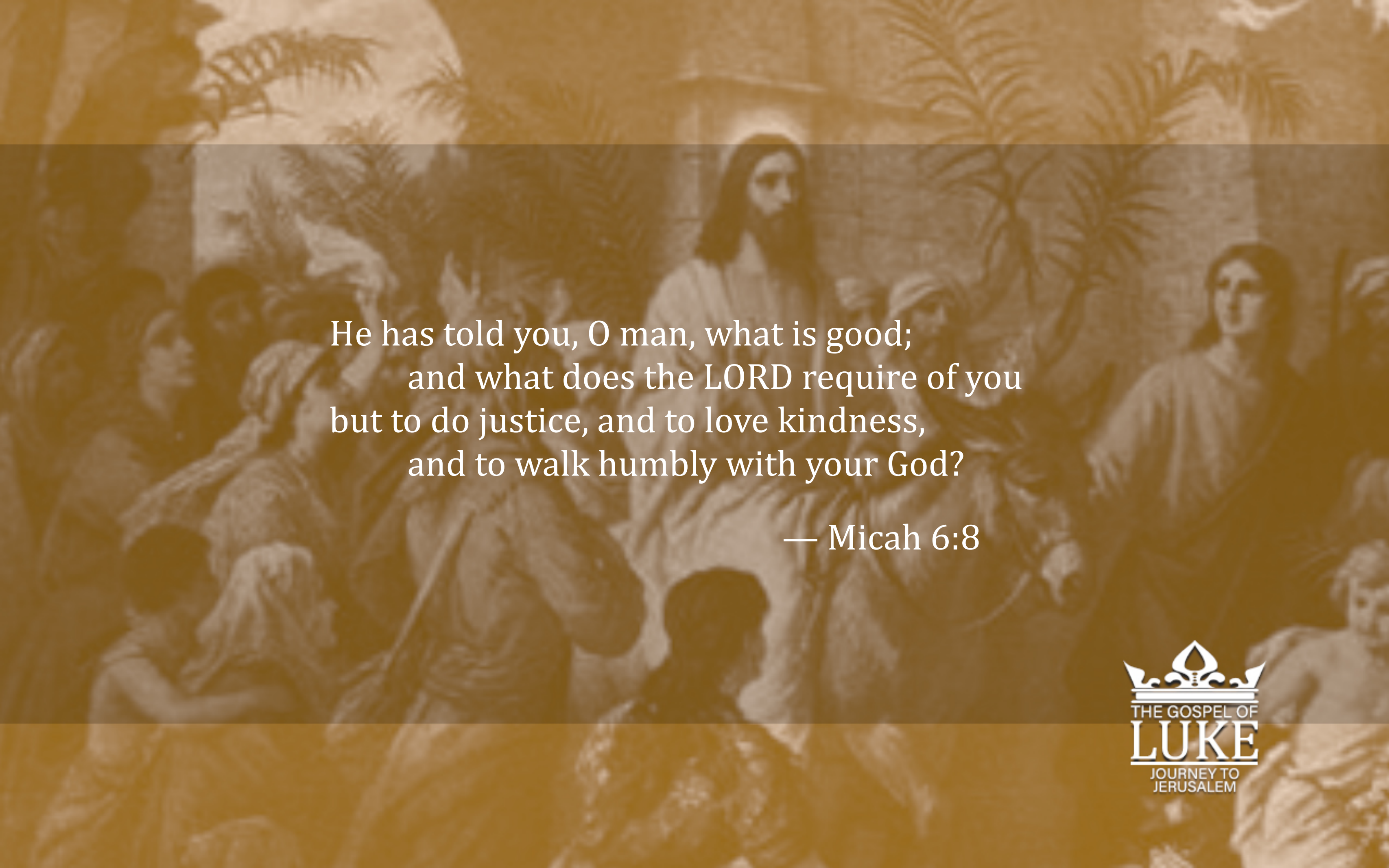


“But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

— vs 42







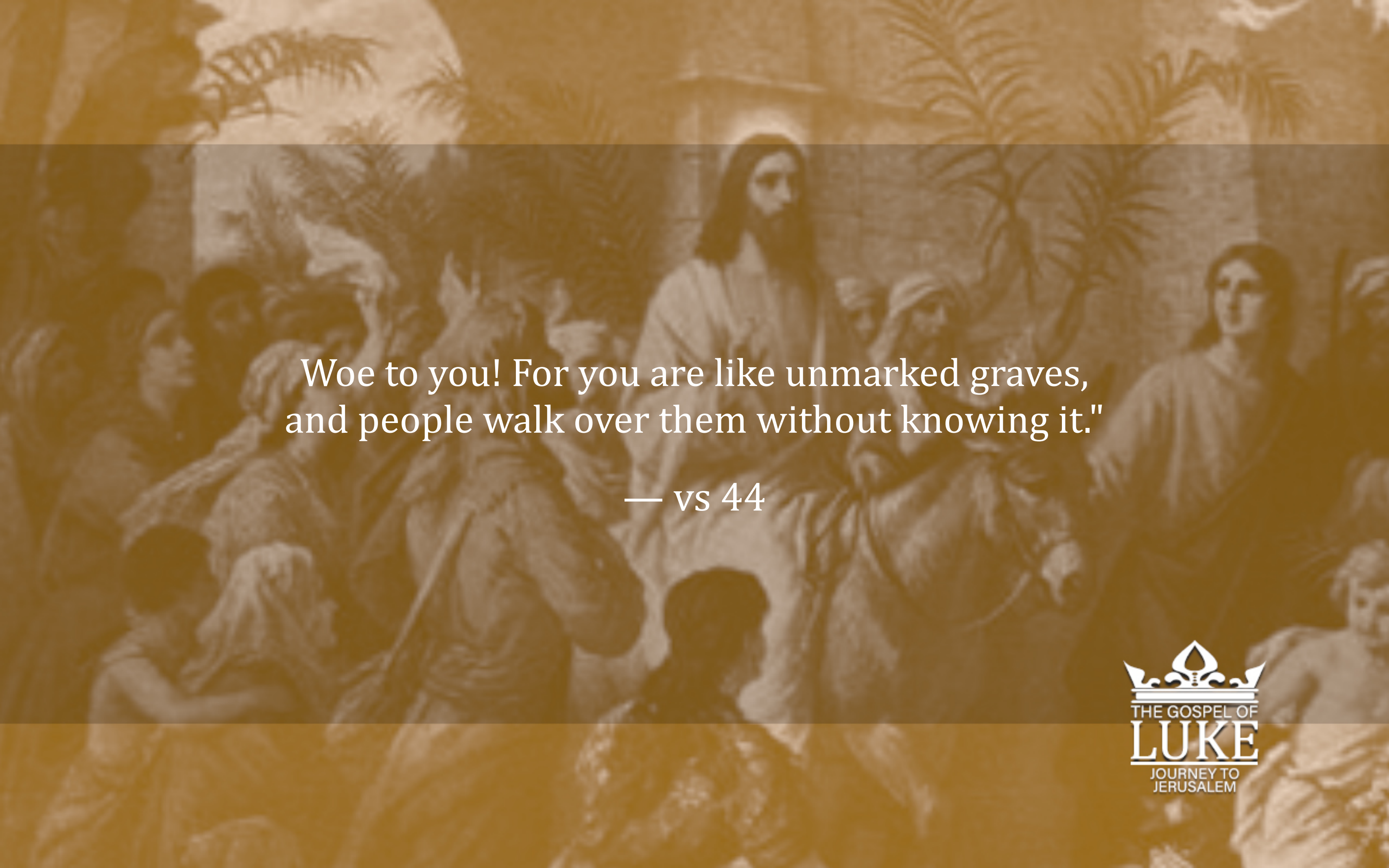
He has told you, O man, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

— Micah 6:8

Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

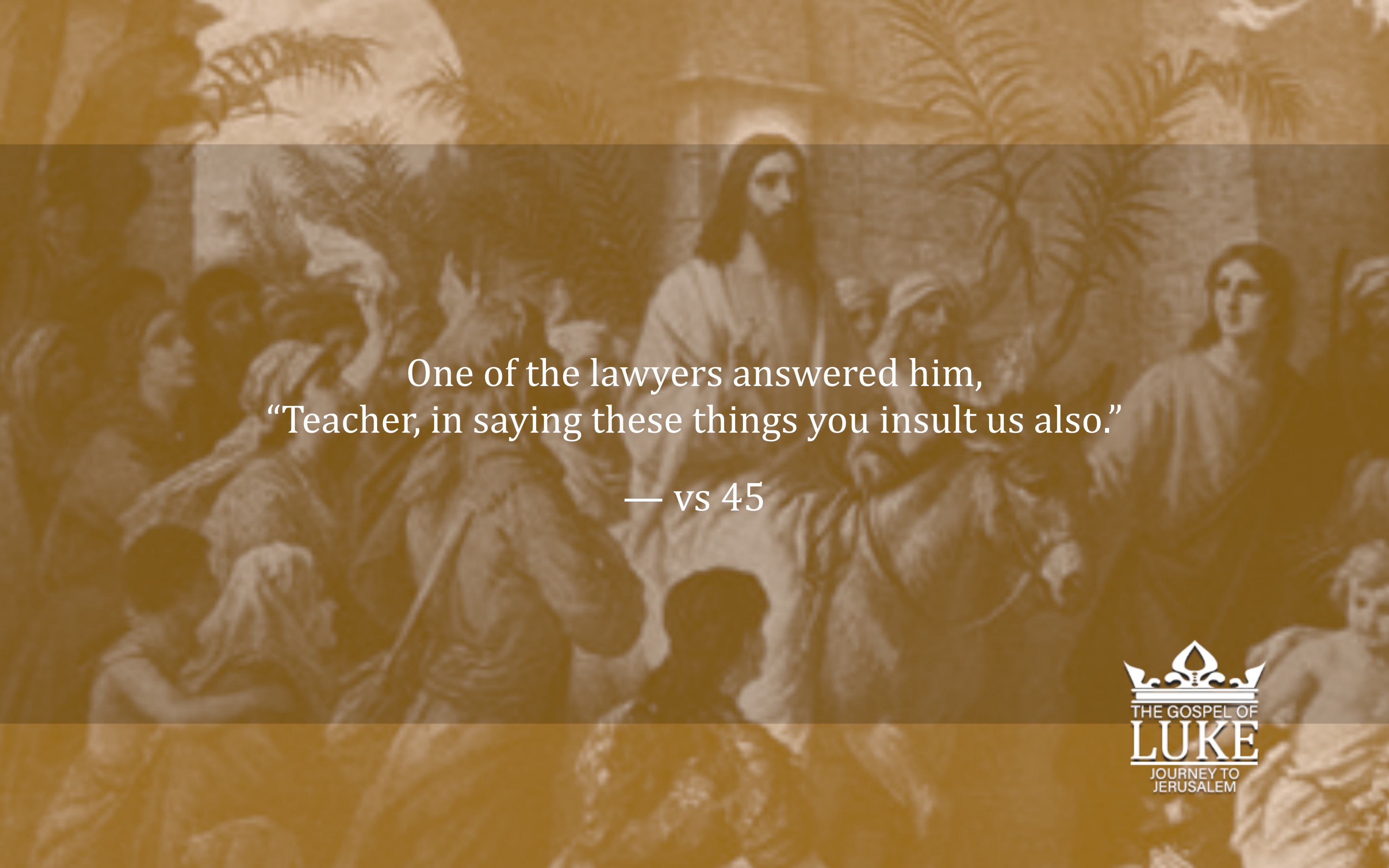
— vs 43





Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves,  
and people walk over them without knowing it."

— vs 44



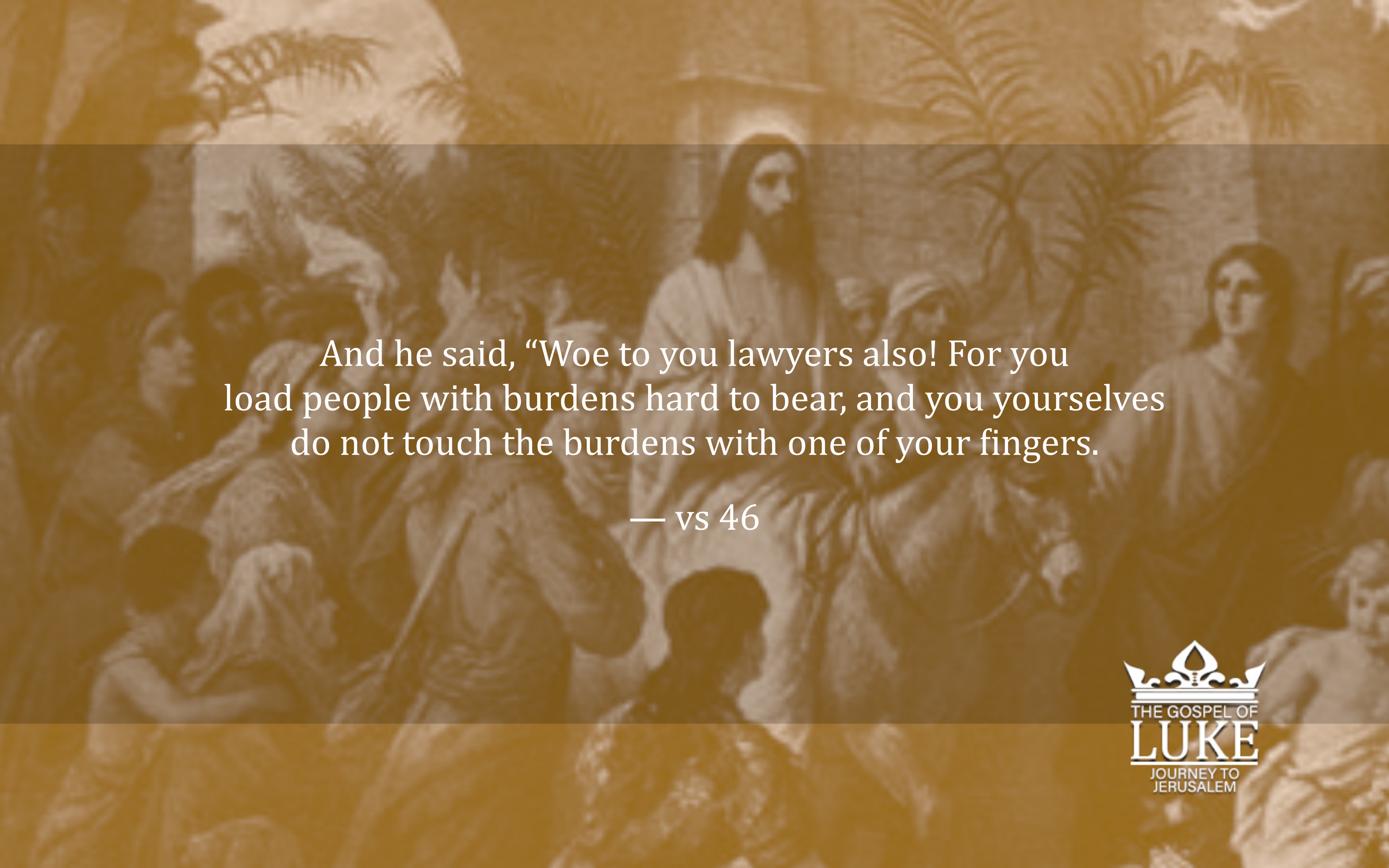
One of the lawyers answered him,  
“Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also.”

— vs 45

“The Pharisees were religionists, members of a religious party that enforced the legal code. The lawyers, scribes, or experts in the Law (the three terms are interchangeable) were the codifiers of the Law, the people who built hedges around it by encrusting it with myriads of extra regulations. Jesus’ woes to the Pharisees were swipes at their hypocritical religious practices, whereas the woes that fell on the lawyers had to do with the way they abused the Torah, God’s Word.”

— vv Kent Hughes





And he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

— vs 46

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

— Matthew 11:28-30



Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs.

— vv 47-48





Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.

— vv 49-51



Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge.  
You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.”

— vs 52



“Preaching is not exposition if it views the text through the lens of a personal agenda... We must free the Word from our scribal accretions, be they ever so evangelical, and let God’s Word say what it says.”

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Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

— 2 Timothy 2:15



As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

— vv 53-54





“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips,  
and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;  
for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

— Isaiah 6:5



“Let us leave this passage with a settled determination to watch and pray against hypocrisy in religion. Whatever we are as Christians, let us be real, thorough, genuine, and sincere. Let us abhor all affectation, and part-acting in the things of God, as that which is utterly loathsome in Christ’s eyes. We may be weak, and erring, and frail, and come far short of our aims and desires. But at any rate, if we profess to believe in Christ, let us be true.”

— J.C. Ryle





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