

The Givers and the Takers

Matthew 23	Mark 12	Luke 20-21
1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples,		45 In the hearing of all the people, he said to his disciples,
2 saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat.” ¹		
3 “All things therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe and do, but don’t do their works; for they say, and don’t do.”		
4 “For they bind heavy burdens that are grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not lift a finger to help them.”		
5 “But they do all their works to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the fringes of their garments.” ²		
	38{a} In his teaching he said to them, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in long robes,” [...] ³	46{a} “Beware of those scribes who like to walk in long robes,” [...]
6 “and love the place of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,” ⁴	39 “and to get the best seats in the synagogues and the best places at feasts,”	46{c} [...] “the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts;”
7{a} “the salutations in the marketplaces,” [...] ⁵	38{b} [...] “and to get greetings in the marketplaces,”	46{b} [...] “and love greetings in the marketplaces,” [...]
7{b} [...] “and to be called ‘Rabbi, Rabbi’ by men.” ⁶		
8 “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers.”		

¹ The Pharisees pretended to speak with the same level of authority that Moses had.

² Phylacteries were small boxes containing parchments inscribed with OT Scripture and bound to the forehead or arm with leather cords (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). These were symbols of religious devotion, with larger phylacteries presumably portraying the wearer as *more* devout. • The fringes on their garments were intended as reminders of the commandments of God (Numbers 15:38-41), though their size had become a way to broadcast one’s religious devotion as well.

³ Long robes were symbols of power or importance.

⁴ These seats were intended to showcase their importance.

⁵ Ostentatious greetings were yet another recognition of their position.

⁶ The title of Rabbi, a combination of master and teacher, was a mark of authority.

Matthew 23	Mark 12	Luke 20-21
9 “Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven.” ⁷		
10 “Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ.”		
11 “But he who is greatest among you will be your servant.”		
12 “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”		
13{a} “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” [...]		
13{b} [...] “For you devour widows’ houses, and as a pretense you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.”	40 “those who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”	47 “who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”
	<i>7 more “woes” to the Pharisees (Mt 23:14-39)</i>	
	41{a} Jesus sat down opposite the treasury [...]	
	41{b} [...] and saw how the multitude cast money into the treasury. Many who were rich cast in much.	1 He looked up and saw the rich people who were putting their gifts into the treasury.
	42{a} A poor widow came and she cast in two small brass coins, [...] ⁸	2 He saw a certain poor widow casting in two small brass coins.
	42{b} [...] which equal a quadrans coin. ⁹	
	43{a} He called his disciples to himself [...]	
	43{b} [...] and said to them, “Most certainly I tell you, this poor widow gave more than all those who are giving into the treasury,”	3 He said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all of them,”
	44 “for they all gave out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on.”	4 “for all these put in gifts for God from their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had to live on.”

⁷ Terms like *abba* and *pater* were honorifics applied to great rabbis of previous generations.

⁸ These coins are called *lepta* (singular=*lepton*).

⁹ A *quadrans* was approximately 1/64 of a *denarius*, where the *denarius* was an average day’s wages for an agricultural laborer. Each *lepton* she placed in the treasury was 1/128 of an agricultural laborer’s wages.