

The Pharisees



What They Represented

- Of the three major religious societies of Judaism at the time of the New Testament (the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes), the Pharisees were often the most vocal and influential. The origin of the Pharisees is uncertain, but their movement is believed to have grown from the Assideans (i.e. the "pious"), who began in the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Greek/Syrian ruler [Antiochus IV](#), or "Antiochus Epiphanes," around 165 B.C. It was during that roughly 4 centuries between the end of the Old Testament record and the birth of [Jesus Christ](#), prior to the rise of the Roman empire, that the idolatrous Greek influence was at its peak in [Jerusalem](#). The first direct mention of the Pharisees was by the Jewish/Roman historian [Flavius Josephus](#) in describing the three sects, or schools, into which the Jews were divided in 145 B.C.

The Name Pharisee

- The name *Pharisee* in its Hebrew form means *separatists, or the separated ones*. They were also known as *chasidim*, which means *loyal to God, or loved of God* - extremely ironic in view of the fact that by His time, they made themselves the most bitter, and deadly, opponents of Jesus Christ and His message.
- The Pharisees perhaps meant to obey God, but eventually they became so devoted and extremist in *very limited* parts of The Law (plus all that they themselves added to it), that they became blind to The Messiah when He was in their very midst. They saw His miracles, they heard His Words, but instead of receiving it with joy, they did all that they could to stop Him - eventually to the point of getting Him killed because He truthfully claimed to be the Son of God.

The Main Problem

- The lesson from the Pharisees' example is that *self*-righteousness is not righteousness, and that God's true people are to live according to *all* of God's Word, not just certain parts that are most convenient or to one's own liking.

Jesus Invited to Dinner

- This story begins with a Pharisee inviting Jesus to dinner with some of his peers present. No doubt, they felt Jesus' spiritual understanding was inferior to their own. However, God in His providence arranged that Jesus would actually expose their situation and ultimately do the instructing.

Luke 7:36-50

- 36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.
- 37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,
- 38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.
- 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."



Parable of Two Debtors

Luke 7: 40-43

- 40 And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." 41 "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.
- 42 "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?"
- 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly."

The Woman and Simon

Luke 7:44-47

- 44 Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.
- 45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet.
- 46 "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.
- 47 "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

Grace for the Sinner

Luke 7:48-50

- 48 Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."
- 49 Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"
- 50 And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Only God Can Forgive Sins

