

# Leaven of Pharisees and Sadducees

1/17/2010 - Pastor Dr. Ronnie Wolfe  
Matt. 16:1-12; Mark 8:14-21; Luke 12:1

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## I. DEFINITION OF LEAVEN

- A. The Greek word in our text is ZUME, and it means “to boil or bubble.”
- B. “The word "yeast" comes from Old English gist, gyst, and from the Indo-European root yes-, meaning boil, foam, or bubble.”
- C. Yeast is airborne and is used in baking and in fermentation of beer and wine. A baker’s yeast is used at home when we bake our biscuits, and brewer’s yeast is used in fermentation of beer and wine.
- D. Before 1876 there were no commercial yeasts made, so a woman who wanted to bake bread would make dough; then she would set it in a cool place until the dough began to rise. The yeast was caught from the air and went into the dough, went throughout the dough and made for a very good bread.
- E. There is good yeast and bad yeast. If the dough caught a bad yeast, it could make people sick; but that was a chance the cook had to take.
- F. By the way, did you know that the yeast that is used to ferment beer has a byproduct yeast that is used to make our Vitamin B pills? I didn’t either until now. The next time you take your Vitamin B pill, just remember it may have come from the brewery.
- G. Grapes contain what is called “wild yeast,” which is yeast that the grapes receive from its environment. If grapes are picked and left alone, they will eventually ferment; but the fermentation is unpredictable, because different strains of yeast may be collected from the grape’s environment. Therefore, yeast is added to the grapes for wine to control the fermentation of the wine and to bring out a certain flavor and aroma.
- H. One of the basic characteristics of leaven is that it will penetrate completely through dough in an even and balanced way until it has affected every particle of the dough from outside to the middle of the dough.

## II. METAPHORICAL APPLICATION OF LEAVEN

- A. It is not a stretch of the imagination, then, to apply leaven in the Bible to both good and bad, since there is both and bad and good leaven; although, I would admit that most applications are for the bad.
- B. In our present text we find that the metaphorical use of leaven (or the meaning of leaven) is bad.
- C. Instead of speaking about bread, the disciples had to learn that Jesus was speaking about doctrine (see verse 7 & 12).
- D. Doctrine is like leaven in that it can penetrate a whole society – Jeroboam of Israel.
- E. If it is bad leaven, then it will sicken and perhaps kill a whole society.
- F. The whole concept of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees was to penetrate the entire society with their traditions and to eliminate the doctrine of God and his word.

### III. THE DOCTRINE OF THE PHARISEES/SADDUCEES

- A. Turn to Matthew 23
- B. First, they are in Moses' seat (vs 2)
  - 1. That is, they were to speak the law of Moses as they preached their sermons and to give its meaning to the people, because that is what they claimed was their job.
  - 2. They stood to read the law of Moses (Luke 4:16), but they sat to preach from the texts.
  - 3. There is nothing wrong with this in itself.
- C. Second, they say and do not (vs. 3-4)
  - 1. This is the hypocrisy that was charged to them, and rightly so.
  - 2. Because of this hypocrisy, the disciples were not to follow their works.
- D. Third, they wore extravagant clothing (vs. 5)
- E. Fourth, they love the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues (vs 6)
- F. Fifth, they love for people to greet them affectionately in the markets and to be called Rabbi (Master) (vs. 7-11)
- G. Sixth, they keep people out of the kingdom of heaven (vs. 13)
- H. Seventh, they devour widows' houses, their meager substance, their livelihoods, their property, all in the pretense that the Pharisees are taking their goods in exchange for their long prayers for them (vs. 14).
- I. Eighth, they compass land and sea to make one proselyte (vs. 15).
  - 1. There were two types of Jewish proselytes.
  - 2. One was a proselyte of the gate, which had to agree to what are called "the seven precepts of Noah."
    - a. No idolatry, no blasphemy, no murder, no uncleanness, no theft, judgment and punishment required on malefactors, eating the member of any creature alive.
  - 3. The second proselyte was the proselyte of righteousness, who had to be circumcised besides doing all the ceremonies of the law.
  - 4. Some say that proselytes were dipped in water, others say this was not so. I do not believe it is so.
- J. Ninth, no swearing on the gold of the temple (vs. 16-22)
- K. Tenth, tithes over spiritual matters (vs. 23-24)
- L. Eleventh, they clean the outside (flesh) but leave filthy the inside (spirit) (vs. 25-28)
- M. Twelfth, they kill the prophets (vs. 29-39)
- N. Therefore, their house is left desolate (vs. 38)
- O. In Matt. 24:2 we find the prediction that one stone shall not be left upon another of the temple and Jerusalem. This was fulfilled in 70 AD.

### IV. WHAT IS OUR LESSON?

- A. Our lesson is one word in our text.
- B. Our text is Matt. 16:1-12.
- C. The one word of instruction to the disciples is BEWARE.

- D. The word “beware” in Greek is PROSECHO and means literally “to bring close.” This would mean to study and know what others believe and compare to the scriptures. We might say today, “take a good look at.”
- E. The Lord speaks this word three times:
1. Vs. 6 “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.
  2. Vs. 11 “that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.
  3. Vs 12 “not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.
- F. Now do you understand how important doctrine is?
- G. Listen, as you grow as a Christian, you will divide yourself from many people. Do not be afraid to be different from the majority of people. God’s people not called a “remnant” for nothing.
- H. Those of false doctrine separate themselves from us, so why should we not separate ourselves from them?
1. Jude 1:19 *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*
  2. 2 Cor. 6:17 *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you,*
  3. Acts 19:9 *But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.*