

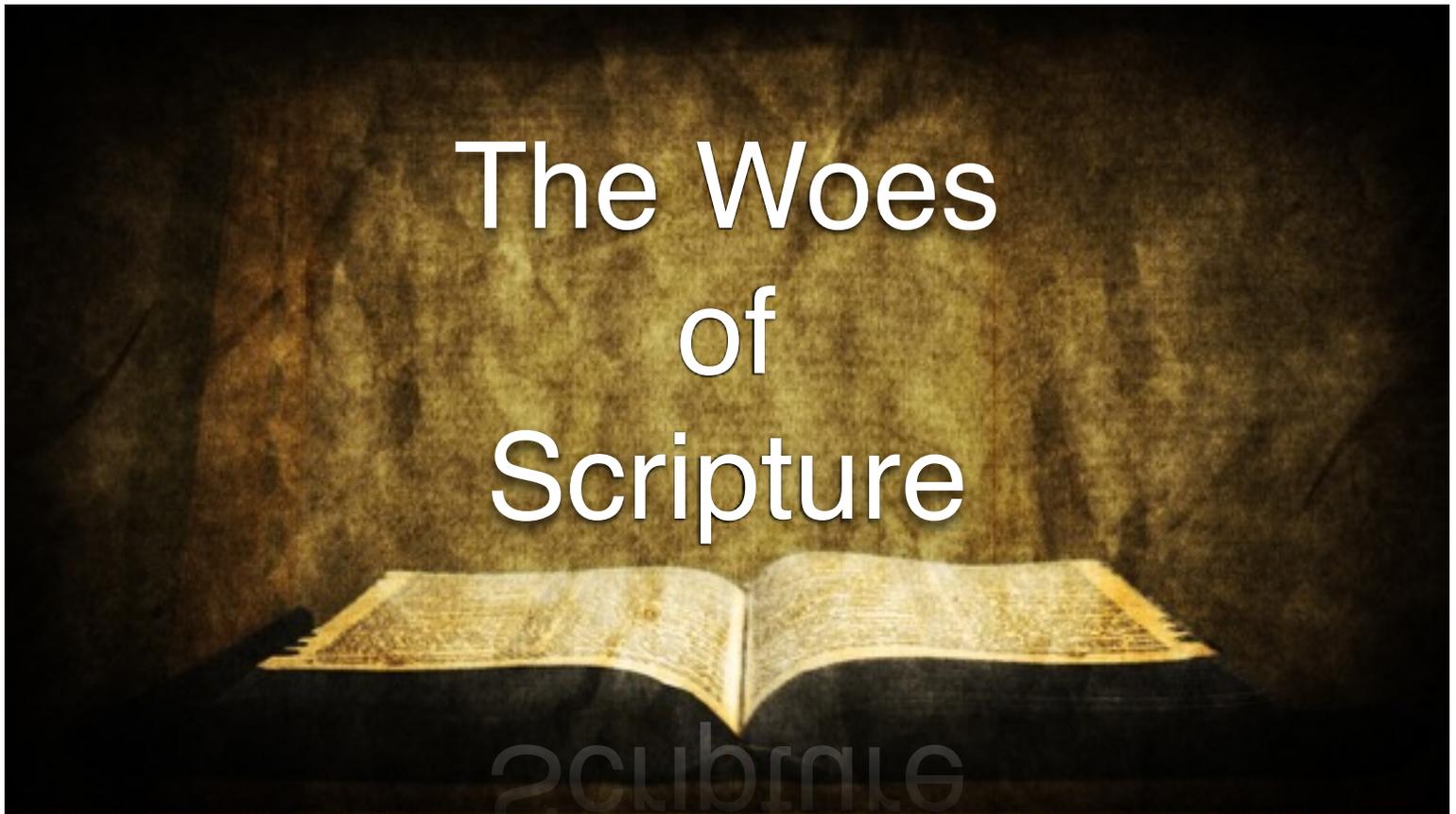
# The Woes of Scripture

Luke 11:37–41 (NIV)

## Woes on the Pharisees and the Experts in the Law

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## Synopsis

An exclamation of judgment upon God’s enemies, or of misfortune on oneself, or, in the ministry of Jesus Christ, of sadness over those who fail to recognize the true misery of their condition.

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## I. Woe as an exclamation of judgment on others

### A. Woe to God’s enemies

Probably referring to Assyria.

**Isaiah 33:1 (NIV)** — 1 Woe to you, destroyer, you who have not been destroyed! Woe to you, betrayer, you who have not been betrayed! When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed; when you stop betraying, you will be betrayed.

### B. Woe to God’s faithless people

**Hosea 7:13–16 (NIV)** — 13 Woe to them, because they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me! I long to redeem them but they speak about me falsely. 14 They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail on their beds. They slash themselves, appealing to their gods for grain and new wine, but they turn away from me. 15 I trained them and strengthened their arms, but they plot evil against me. 16 They do not turn to the Most High; they are like a faulty bow. Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent words. For this they will be ridiculed in the land of Egypt.

### C. Woe to careless leaders of God’s people

**Jeremiah 23:1–2 (NIV)** — 1 “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the Lord. 2 Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the Lord.

### D. Woe to those who are complacent in their prosperity or religion

**Amos 6:1–7 (NIV)** — 1 Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come! 2 Go to Kalneh and look at it; go from there to great Hamath, and then go down to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours? 3 You put off the day of disaster and bring near a reign of terror. 4 You lie on beds adorned with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and

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fattened calves. **5** You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. **6** You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. **7** Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

### E. Woe to those who neglect social justice

**Isaiah 10:1–4 (NIV)** — **1** Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, **2** to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. **3** What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches? **4** Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.

### F. Woe to a godless world

**Revelation 8:13 (NIV)** — **13** As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!”

## II. Woe as an exclamation of misfortune on oneself

### A. Woe as a consequence of circumstances or events

Jeremiah is describing the pain he feels at the impending destruction of his nation.

**Jeremiah 10:19 (NIV)** — **19** Woe to me because of my injury! My wound is incurable! Yet I said to myself, “This is my sickness, and I must endure it.”

### B. Woe as a consequence of one’s own sin

**Lamentations 5:16 (NIV)** — **16** The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned!

### C. Woe as a consequence of God’s call on one’s life

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**1 Corinthians 9:16 (NIV) — 16** For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

## III. Woe as an exclamation of sadness over others

### A. Woe to those who do not recognize their own needs

**Luke 6:24–26 (NIV) — 24** “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. **25** Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. **26** Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

### B. Woe to those whose religion blinds themselves and misleads others

**Luke 11:52 (NIV) — 52** “Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”

### C. Woe to those who cause others to sin

**Matthew 18:7 (NIV) — 7** Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!

### D. Woe to those on whom judgment is coming

**Luke 10:13–14 (NIV) — 13** “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. **14** But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

### E. Woe to the one who betrays the Son of Man

**Matthew 26:24 (NIV) — 24** The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

### F. Woe to those who experience the signs of the end of the age

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Mt 24:19–21 The word translated “how dreadful” is the same word that elsewhere is translated “woe”.

**Matthew 24:19–21 (NIV) — 19** How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! **20** Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. **21** For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.