

Luke 11:52

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

Analysis

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (ὅτι ἔρατε τὴν κλεῖδα τῆς γνώσεως· αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰσήλθατε καὶ τοὺς εἰσερχομένους ἔκωλύσατε)—the sixth woe condemns removing the kleida tēs gnōseōs (key of knowledge). The 'key' represents correct biblical interpretation that unlocks salvific knowledge. The lawyers' distorted hermeneutic both prevented their own entry and ekōlusate (hindered, prevented) others eiserchomai (entering) God's kingdom.

They possessed Scripture yet missed its message—the Law and Prophets testified to Christ (Luke 24:44), but their interpretive tradition obscured this testimony. They 'searched the scriptures' yet refused to 'come to Christ' for life (John 5:39-40). This represents ultimate intellectual bankruptcy: custodians of God's Word who use it to prevent salvation. Their traditions made God's Word 'of none effect' (Mark 7:13).

Historical Context

The lawyers' role was biblical interpretation and teaching—they held 'the key' to understanding Scripture. Yet their interpretive framework (Pharisaic tradition, scribal glosses, oral law) obscured rather than illuminated biblical meaning. They

approached Scripture seeking validation for their system rather than submission to God's revelation, becoming gatekeepers preventing access to truth.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How might wrong interpretive frameworks ('keys') unlock wrong meanings and lock people out of genuine biblical understanding?
2. In what ways do Christian traditions sometimes obscure rather than illuminate Scripture's testimony to Christ?
3. What is your responsibility as a Bible reader to ensure you're not hindering others' access to scriptural knowledge and salvation?

Interlinear Text

οὐαὶ	ὑμῖν	τοῖς	νομικοῖς	ὅτι	ἥρατε	τὴν	κλεῖδα
Woe	unto you	G3588	lawyers	! for	ye have taken away	G3588	the key
G3759	G5213		G3544	G3754	G142		G2807
τῆς	γνώσεως·	αὐτοὶ	οὐκ	εἰσερχομένους	καὶ	τοὺς	
G3588	of knowledge	yourselves	not	in	and	G3588	
G1108	G846	G3756		G1525	G2532		
εἰσερχομένους	ἐκωλύσατε						
in	ye hindered						
G1525	G2967						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 23:13 (Parallel theme): But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Malachi 2:7 (Word): For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

Acts 5:40 (Parallel theme): And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

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