



IRRECONCILABLE!

Lesson 2

“For truly I [Jesus] tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” (Matthew 5:18).

Setting the Stage

Twin Profiles: Jesus vs. the Pharisees

How surprisingly similar, yet eternally different

Your Task: For each trait or belief listed below, write:

- ✓ **“J”** if it describes Jesus
- ✓ **“P”** if it describes the Pharisees
- ✓ **“B”** if it describes Both

Trait or Belief	J / P / B
Believed in the resurrection of the dead	
Quoted the Torah regularly	
Criticized hypocrisy and outward religion	
Taught in synagogues	
Emphasized tithing	
Dined with tax collectors and sinners	
Practiced fasting	
Used oral tradition alongside Scripture	
Wore traditional Jewish garments (e.g., tassels)	
Warned people about false teaching	
Claimed to represent the true understanding of the Law	
Demanded ritual handwashing	
Taught about the coming kingdom of God	
Refused to tolerate sin	
Taught salvation by grace through faith apart from works	
Aimed to reform Judaism from within	
Claimed Moses' authority	
Accepted Roman rule as divinely ordained	
Warned of God's judgment	
Called for love of neighbor	

Group Discussion Questions

- ✓ Which similarities between Jesus and the Pharisees surprised you the most? What does this reveal about their shared religious context?

- ✓ How can someone be doctrinally robust and yet spiritually blind? What warning does this give us today?

- ✓ What ultimately set Jesus apart from the Pharisees? Think about grace, authority, and the heart of God's Law.

Jesus, a Pharisee?

Compare and Contrast: Exploring Parallels (Small Group Activity)

Match Jesus' actions or teachings to comparable Pharisaic actions, sayings, or values. Work in groups. Afterward, review as a class.

Jesus' Action/Teaching	Similar Pharisaic Practice/Teaching	Matching? (Y/N)	What's Different?
Spoke the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12)	Hillel taught a version of the Golden Rule		
Preached about tithing (Matt 23:23)	Pharisees were meticulous about tithing		
Ate with Pharisees	Pharisees invited Jesus to their homes (Luke 7:36...)		
Argued with Pharisees in public	Pharisees debated among themselves		
Warned about hypocrisy	Pharisees emphasized outward piety		
Fulfilled the Law (Matt 5:17)	Pharisees tried to "build a fence" around the law		

How would you summarize the insights you gained from this section? _____

✔ Scripture Spotlight (Small Group Activity)

Explore Luke 5:17–32 in pairs or small groups. Use the questions below.

1. Who is present? What surprises you about the Pharisees' presence? _____

2. What do they question? _____

3. How does Jesus respond to their questioning? _____

4. What does this section show about Jesus' approach vs. theirs? _____

✔ Pharisees in the Gospel (Whole Group Activity)

As a group, come to a consensus on the following questions.

1. What was good about the Pharisees' intentions in creating oral traditions? _____

2. Where did their logic go wrong? _____

3. Was Jesus trying to "reform" the Pharisees or replace their system entirely? Why? _____

4. Why might some Pharisees (like Nicodemus or Paul) have eventually come to faith in Christ?

✔ Points to Ponder

1. Compare and contrast the quote from Matthew 5:18, which introduces this chapter, with the Pharisees' intent to build a fence around the law.

2. Read Luke 7:36-50; 15:1,2. Take note that Jesus ate with known sinners on occasion and Pharisees on other occasions. What parallels or differences can you decipher from these accounts?

3. Page through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and point out more places that Jesus emphasized the finer points of God's law. Pay attention to 5:17. What is especially important about that verse?

4. The Pharisees who believed in Jesus but insisted on strict adherence to the Old Testament law are called Judaizers. Today many Christians believe that the essence of the Christian message is that we become more Christlike. In what ways are the two groups similar?

✔ Wrap-up (Whole Group Activity)

Complete the following sentence:

**Today I learned that Jesus and the Pharisees were similar in _____,
but different in _____.**