

## **Broad Phylacteries**

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Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, Saying the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments . . ." (Mt. 23:1-5).

### **The Phylactery**

The word "phylactery" occurs only once in the New Testament (Mt. 23:5). "The phylactery was a leathern box, cube shaped, closed with an attached flap and bound to the person by a leather band" (*I.S.B.E.*, p. 2393). In the box would be one or more verses of Scripture. The phylactery was worn either on the forearm or the forehead or both. In Jesus' day the scribes and Pharisees wore the phylacteries to make a show of their religion, "to be seen of men." "Making broad their phylacteries" seems to indicate that they wore unusually large boxes or phylacteries. Today it would likely be said of them that they had a "holier than thou" attitude. Jesus denounced this form of religion.

### **"Holier Than Thou" Attitude**

Some Christians are so careful to avoid the "holier than thou" attitude that they actually avoid a good measure of "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father." A certain amount of holiness *is* required, "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44; I Pet. 1:16). Some people deceive themselves into believing Christians who never miss a service, have a good Bible knowledge, and convert others are doing works to be seen of men, or are trying to be "know it all's," or even that they have selfish motivation. Church attendance (Heb. 10:25), Bible study (II Tim. 2:15), and winning souls for Christ (I Cor. 1:18, 21) are not broad phylacteries.

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### **Sharpened Vision**

The "holier than thou" attitude of those who make broad their phylacteries is clearly denounced by the author of the Christian religion. May followers of Christ sharpen their vision enough to see the pitfalls of the other extreme.

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