

## WEEK 22: WOE TO THE SCRIBES & PHARISEES

### HIGH SCHOOL

#### GOALS

To develop an understanding of the meaning and dangers of hypocrisy

#### LESSON

**Materials Needed:** Bible

**Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:**

*The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church* by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pgs 299-311

*The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew* by Blessed Theophylact, pgs 195-203

Jewish Encyclopedia: <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/>

*The Return: Repentance and Confession - The Return to God and His Church*

by Metropolitan Nektarios of Argolida

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## WOE TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

#### VOCABULARY:

- Synagogue: a place where Jews gather to worship and receive instruction
- Woe: grievous distress, misery
- Scribes: writers, teachers of the rules from the Torah (first 5 books of the Old Testament)
- Pharisees: Strictly followed the rules set forth by the scribes
- Hypocrite: Someone who says one thing and does another
- Moses' Seat: people who inherited the law and taught the people about the law
- Proselyte: a convert to the Jewish religion

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*“If we read the Gospels, however, we see that Christ did not condemn the sinner, but sin. He spoke with forbearance, compassion and tenderness to all the sinners who approached him despite the fact that they often did not obviously manifest repentance (Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, the harlot, etc). He rebuked only one type of sinner, and, what is more, he did so very severely: the hypocrite - and hypocrisy is a sin so very widespread among ‘good’ people, young and old.”*  
- Metropolitan Nektarios of Argolida, “The Return” page 27

Read Matthew 23

### **Verses 1-5**

The scribes and Pharisees did not follow the teachings and rules that they gave to other people. Jesus tells the people that they should observe (do) what the scribes and Pharisees teach about the Old Testament, but do not copy how they act - because they are much more interested in telling people what to do rather than doing it themselves.

Have you ever heard someone tell another person that they should eat healthier, but then they eat junk food themselves? They know what to do, but they don't want to do it themselves because it's hard.

### **Verses 6-12**

The scribes and Pharisees wanted to be recognized by the people as the greatest among them. They wanted the places of honor everywhere they went and wanted people to recognize their wisdom and status by calling them a teacher.

St. Theophylact explains to us that we should not pursue the **longed for desire** of people looking up to us as a great teacher. It's ok to call someone a teacher. We just shouldn't seek the title of teacher as a way for people to honor us.

St. Theophylact goes on to explain that we should honor our dads and spiritual father, but Christ is urging us to acknowledge the true Father in our lives, God the Father.

We should also strive to serve, not be served - just as Jesus did.

### **Verses 13-36**

Jesus is patient and compassionate with all the sinners who come to Him, but severely

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reprimands one - the hypocrite. Just as a parent tries to get across to their child the importance of right and wrong, Jesus stresses just how wrong it is for a person to say (and teach!) one thing, and then do something completely different. Jesus doesn't say, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees" just one time. He does so many, many times. He wants to drive the point home that you should not be a hypocrite and you should not expect people to do something that you cannot or will not do yourself!

The Pharisees were far more interested in looking like they were important and had a close relationship with God than actually being humble and having a close relationship with God. They were completely preoccupied with their outward appearance to everyone around them, instead of striving for an inner change of heart themselves by being merciful and loving.

How should we act as Christians? (Ask for examples)

- Serve, not be served
- Be kind, forgiving, merciful, and loving
- Pray, give alms (help others), and fast
- Read the Bible

What are some ways we say one thing and then act a different way? Keep in mind, we say we are Christians. Do we act like Christians? (Ask for examples)

- With friends: Are we kind and respectful to all of our classmates?
- On social media: Do we try to give people a different impression about ourselves than how we act in our daily lives just to win approval from others?

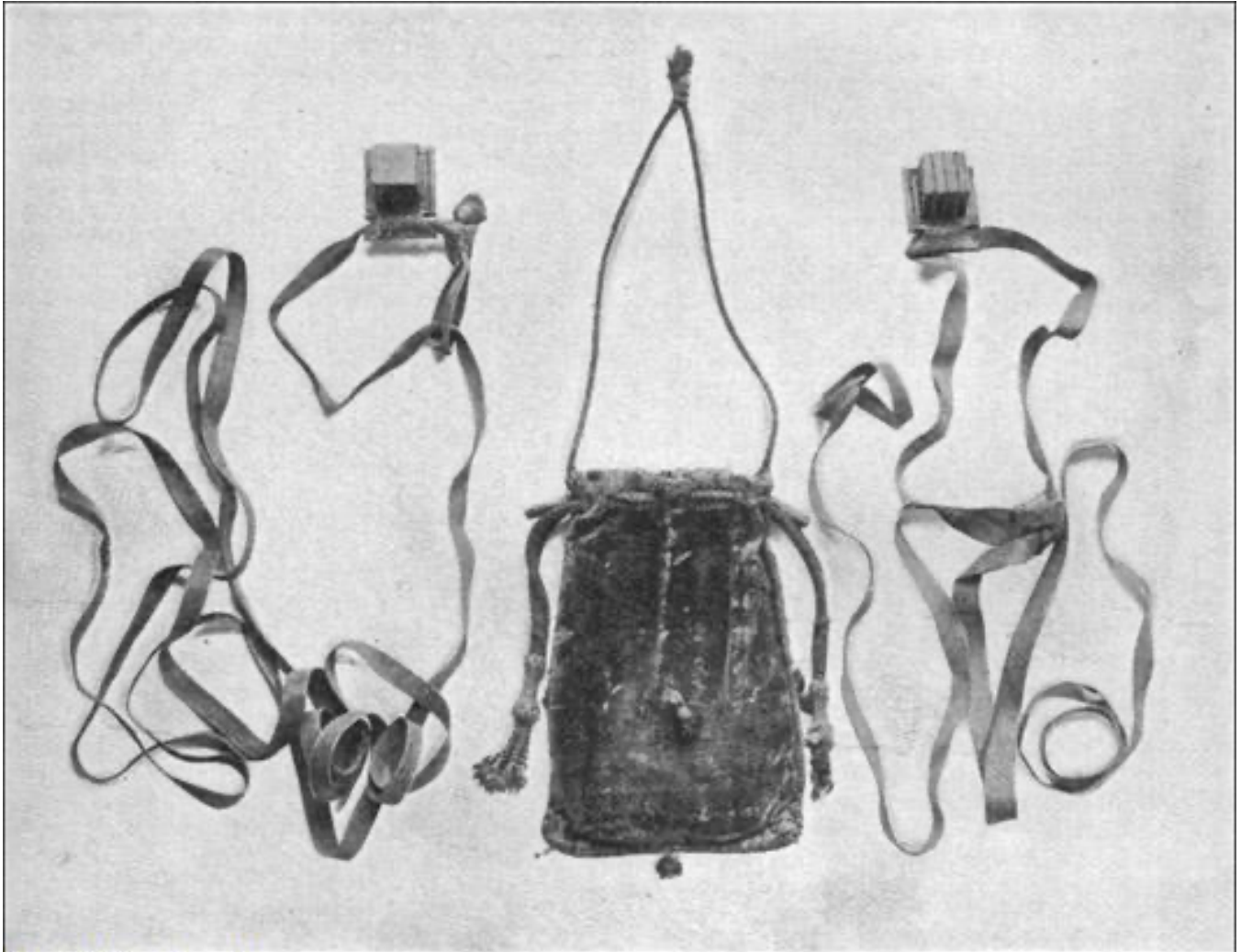
It is very easy for people to present themselves one way on social media and act completely different in their daily life. You can show people what you want them to see, which influences how they perceive you. What are some examples of this?

The Pharisees wanted people to honor them with the best seats in the synagogues and hear the people call out greetings to them in the marketplace. How is this similar to people seeking followers and 'likes' on social media? Why is it not healthy for us to seek out being social media influencers?

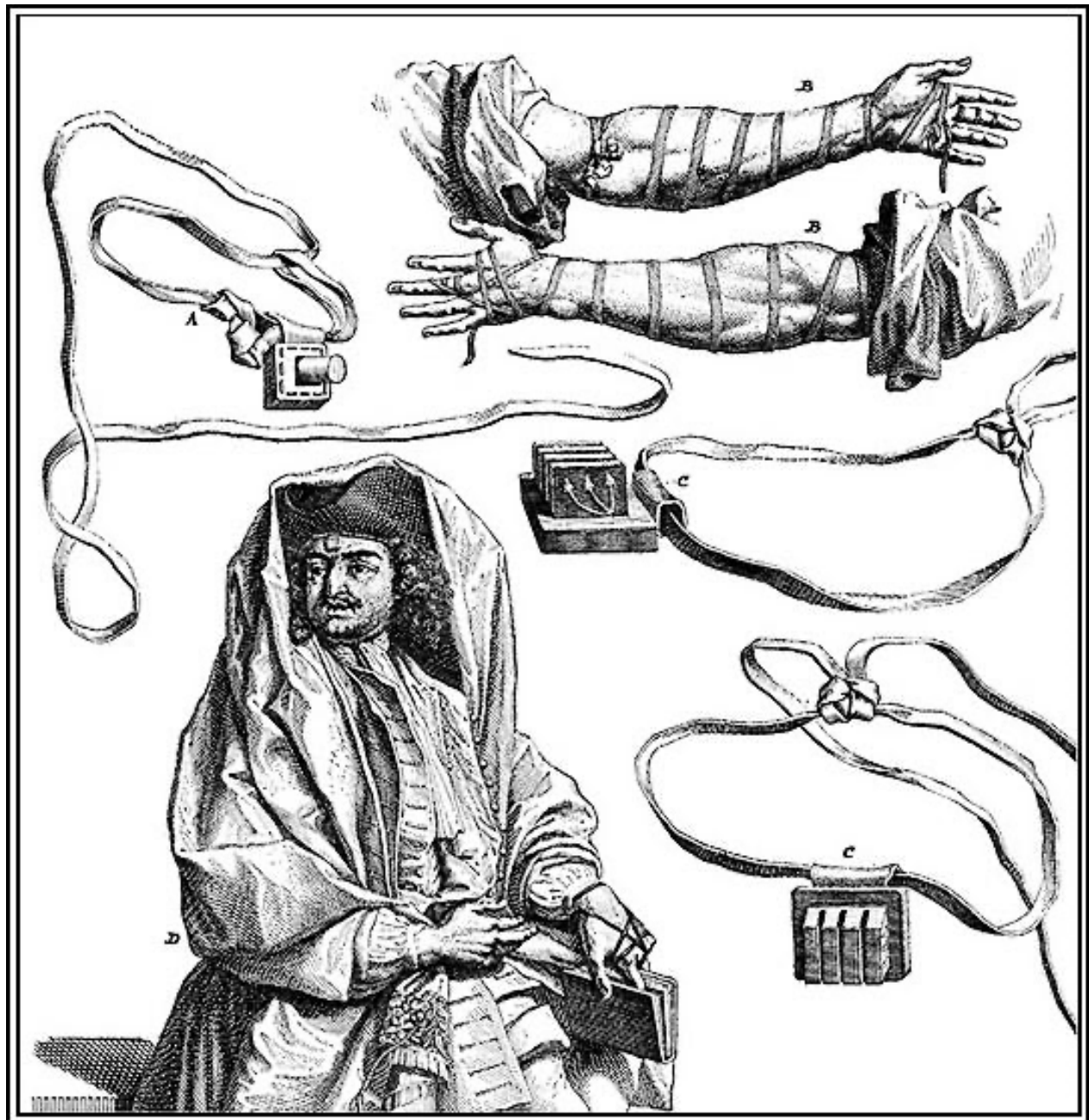
## WHAT ARE PHYLACTERIES?

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They are two leather boxes worn by Jews while they pray. One is worn on the head and the other on the arm. Both phylacteries contain verses from the Old Testament.



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## WEEK 22: WOE TO THE SCRIBES & PHARISEES

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### GOALS

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## Read Matthew 23

When a parent wants to make a strong point to their child, they might provide multiple examples in order to reinforce the point to their child. In this case, Jesus reprimands the scribes and Pharisees multiple times for them telling people to do one thing, but then not doing it themselves. This is called being a hypocrite and Jesus says it is very, very wrong.

We learn in this chapter that the Pharisees were far more interested in people thinking they were great, than actually doing anything they told everyone else to do. Have you ever heard someone tell another person that they should eat healthier, but then they eat junk food themselves? They know what to do, but they don't want to do it themselves because it's hard.

How should we act as Christians? (Ask for examples)

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What are some ways we say one thing and then act a different way? Keep in mind, we say we are Christians. Do we act like Christians? (Ask for examples)

- With friends: Do we tell our friends to play a game fairly and then try to find a way to make sure we win the game?
- With our family: Do we tell our brother or sister to not yell at us when they are frustrated, but then yell at them when we're frustrated?
- On social media: Do we try to give people a different impression about ourselves than how we act in our daily lives just to win approval from others?

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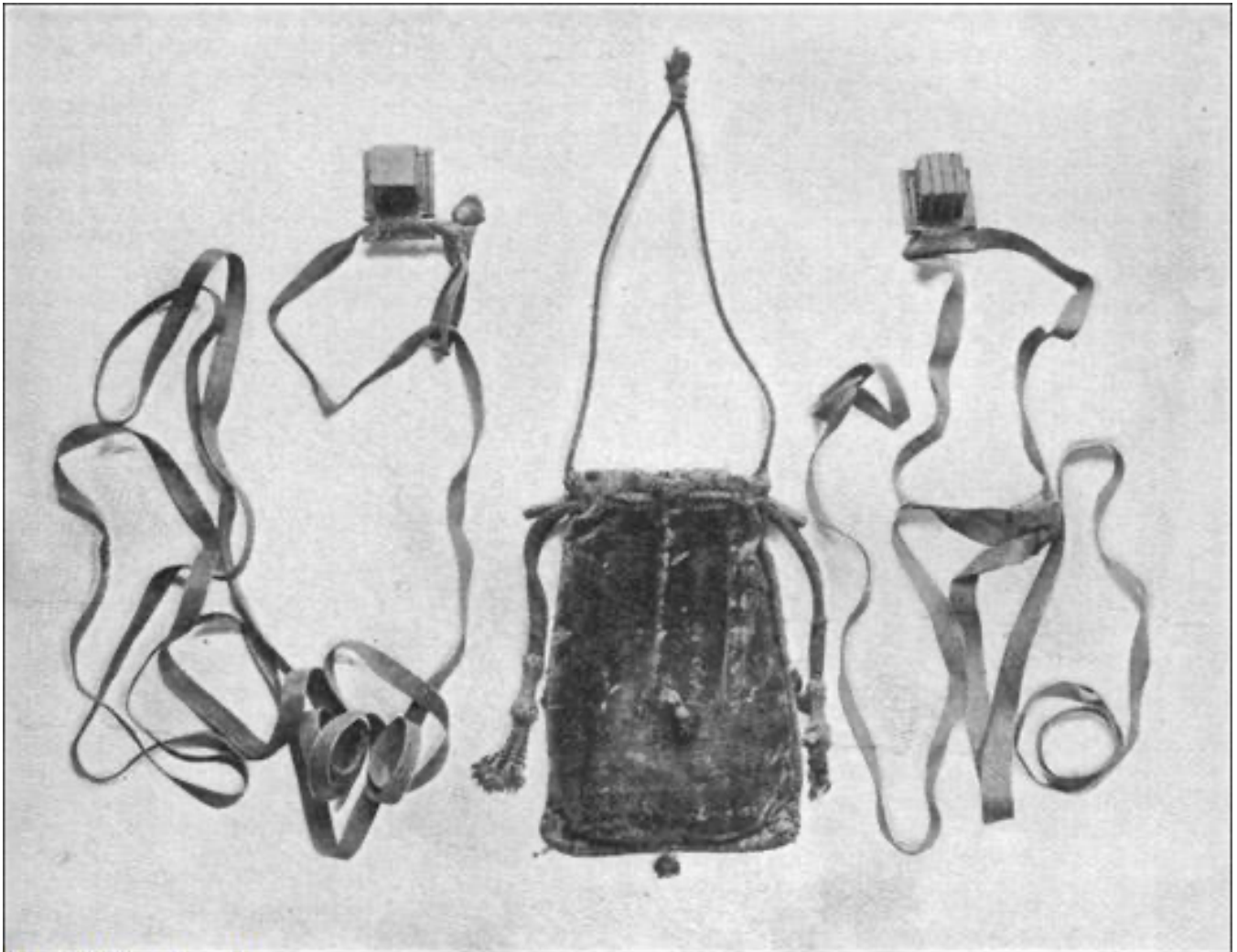
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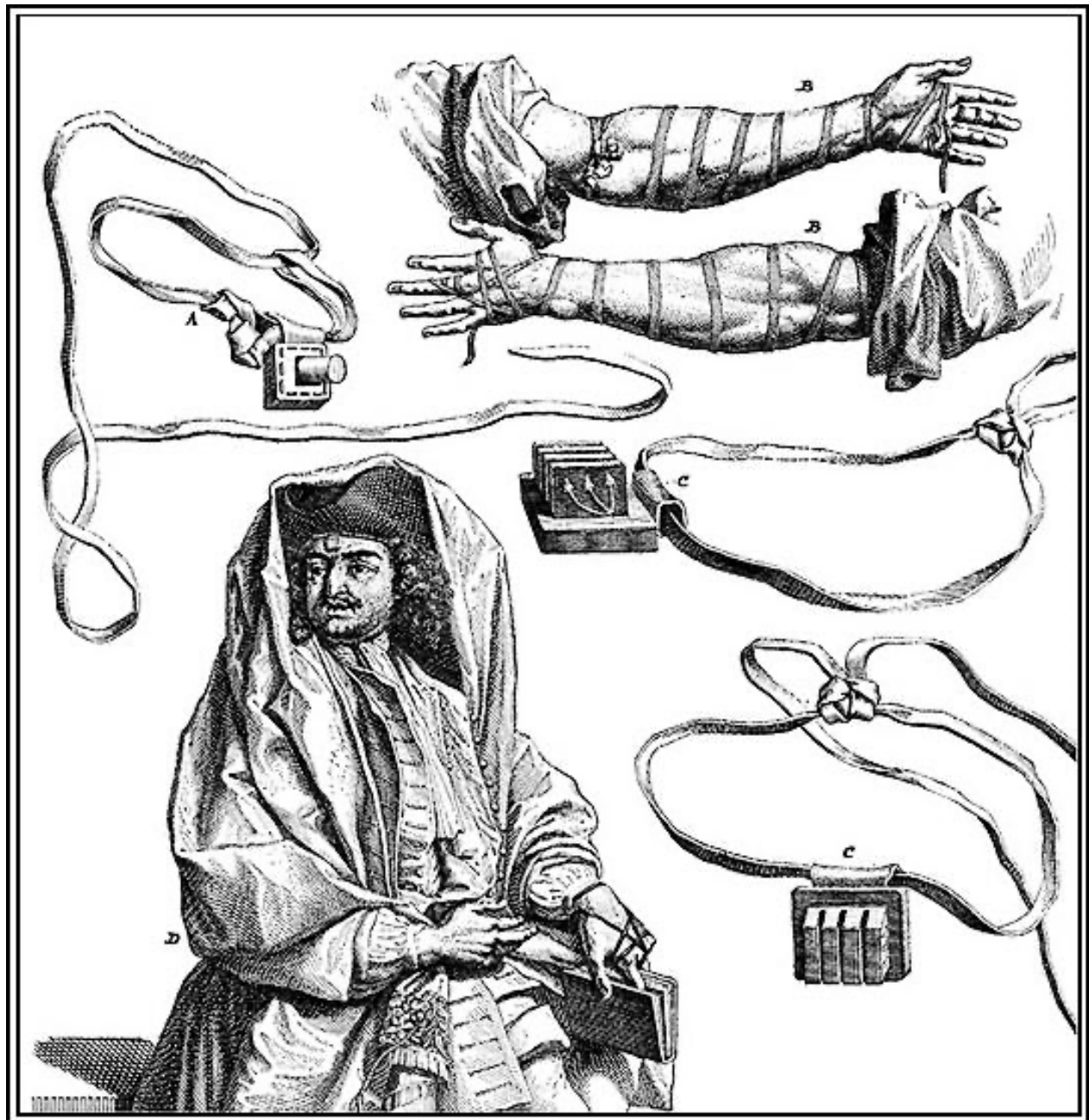
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3RD & 4TH GRADE

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## VOCABULARY FOR MATTHEW 23

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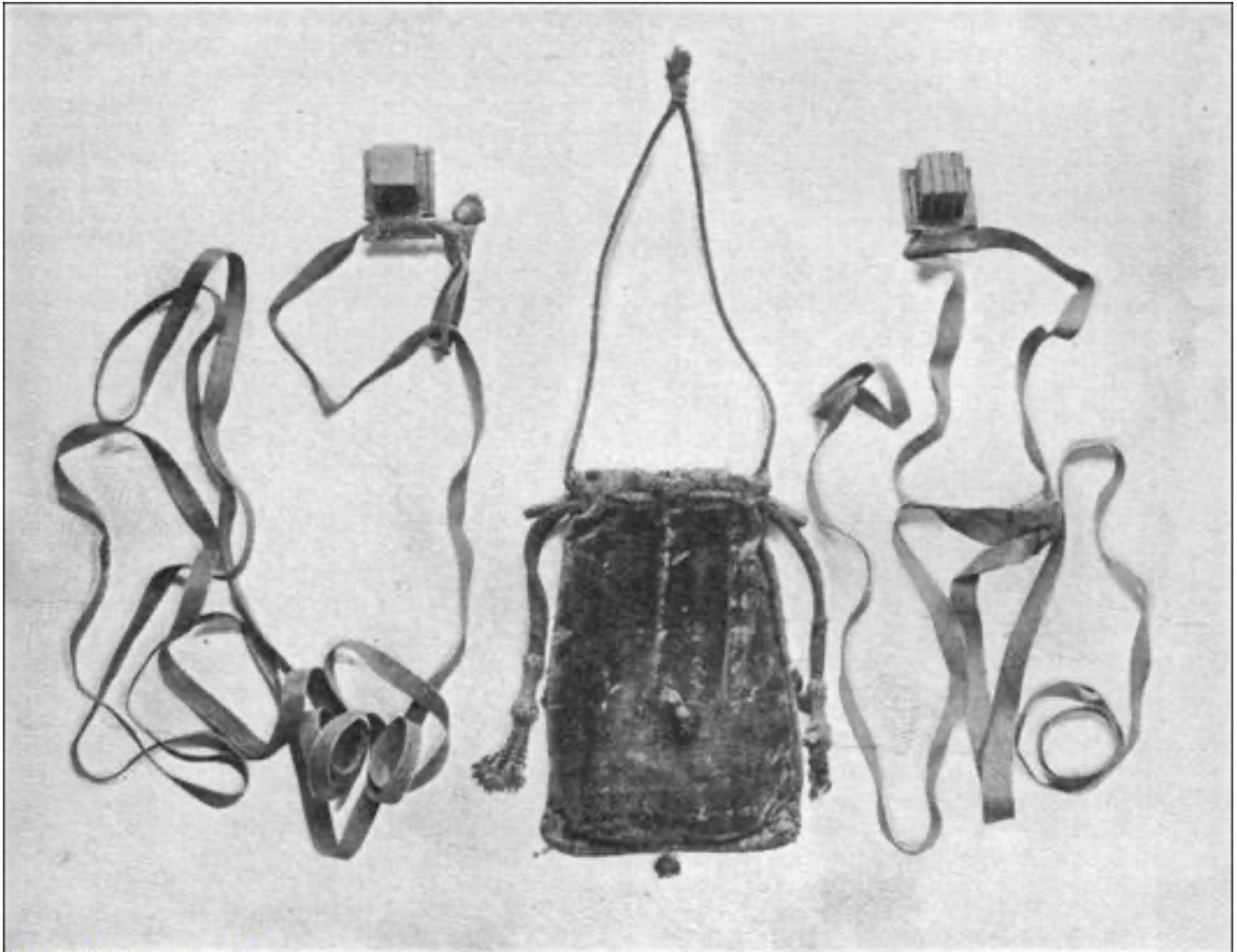
Directions: Draw a line from each vocabulary word to the correct definition.

multitudes	two leather boxes, one worn on the head and the other on the arm, containing verses from the Old Testament
synagogue	carried with difficulty, physically or mentally
woe	large group
scribes	someone who says one thing and does something different
Pharisees	a place where Jews gather to worship and receive instruction
hypocrite	writers; teachers of the rules from the Torah (first 5 books of the Old Testament)
Moses' seat	strictly followed the rules set forth by the scribes
burden	inherited the law and taught the people about the law
proselyte	grievous distress, misery
phylacteries	a convert to the Jewish religion

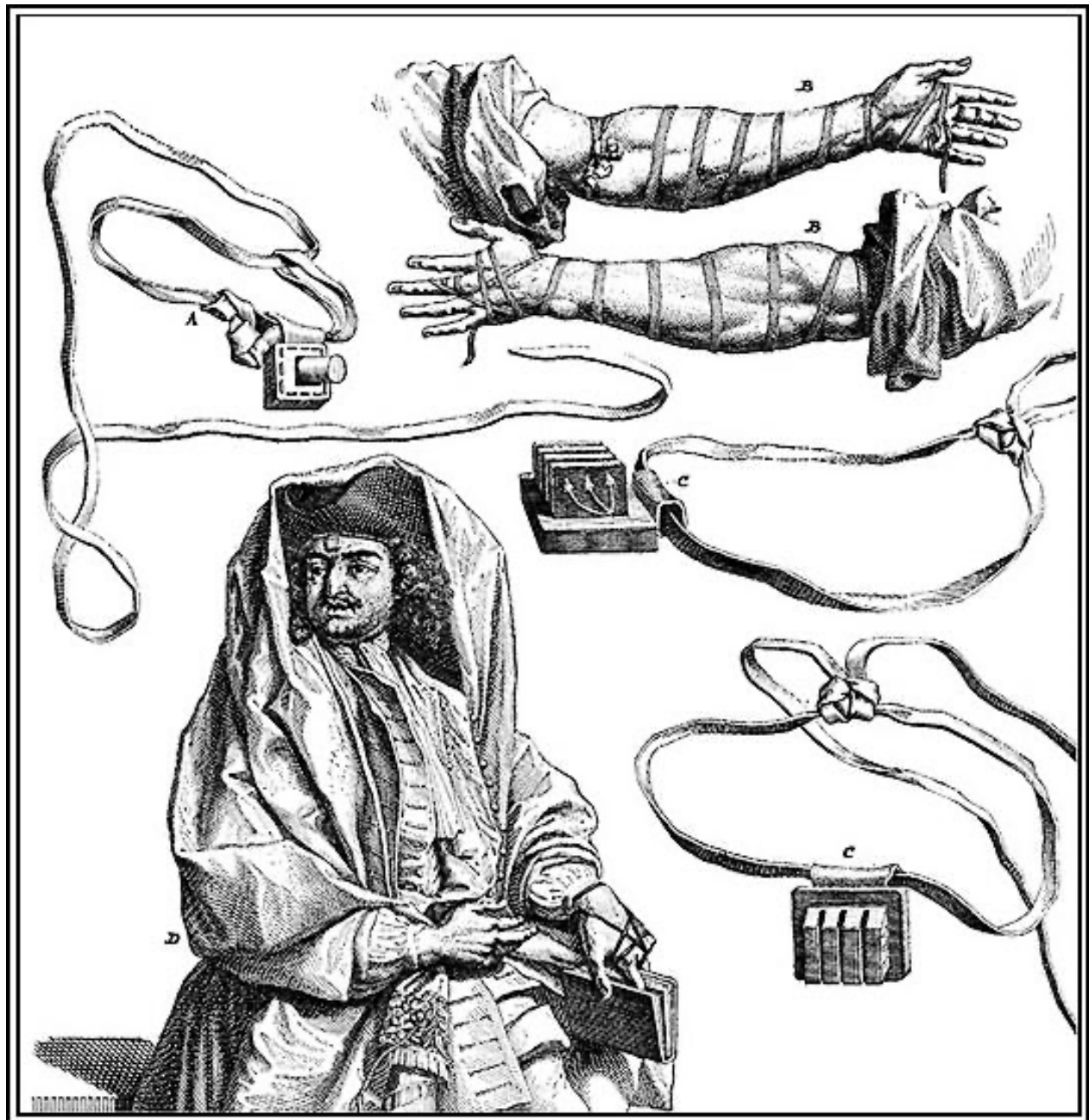
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## WEEK 22: WOE TO THE SCRIBES & PHARISEES

1ST & 2ND GRADE

### GOALS

Learn responses to “Christ is Risen” in different languages

Learn to sing “Christ is Risen!”

Learn: Where do we put our palm crosses and blessed flowers when we bring them home?

### LESSON

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### CLASS ROUTINE

Continue routine - move photo, light candle, venerate icon, prayer

### WOE TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

(OPTIONAL) Read or summarize Matthew 23 to the students.

An understanding of hypocrisy can be difficult for children at this age, therefore we are going to focus on some Orthodox life skills this week with the youngest two classes.

### CHRIST IS RISEN!

When we hear our priest proclaim: *Christ is Risen!*

How do we respond? *Truly He is Risen!*

For additional languages: <https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/paschal-greetings>

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Let's practice singing, "Christ is Risen!"

## PALM CROSSES AND BLESSED FLOWERS

What do we do with our palm crosses and blessed flowers when we bring them home? We can tuck them behind our icons, put them on our family altar, or give them to mom / dad. We never, ever put them on our bedroom floor or throw them away. We treat them with reverence because they have been blessed.

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## WEEK 22: WOE TO THE SCRIBES & PHARISEES

PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN

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