

The Gospel of Matthew 22

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Jesus had just presented the parable of the wicked vine-dressers in chapter 21. Now he presents other parables.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A FEAST

(22:1) Jesus also told them other parables. He said, (2) "The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son.

- Within the story, this was not an ordinary meal, but a great **feast**. It was important to the **king**. His chefs were totally focused on the festival's perfection.

(3) When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come!

- **Invitations** had already been sent to a select few and now the time for them to come has arrived. But they all **refused** and made excuses.

(4) "So he sent other servants to tell them, "The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!"

- Just in case the first **servants** were not clear or persuasive, the somewhat-patient king sent other **servants** to request the presence of the invited guests.

(5) But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business.

(6) Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them.

- The **invited guests** ignored the second round of **invitations!** Some of those invited **insulted the messengers** and some **messengers** were even **killed**.

(7) "The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town.

- Those who actually killed the messengers faced death from the **furious king's** army. Beyond their death, **their** whole **town** was **burned**.

(8) And he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren't worthy of the honor. (9) Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.'

- The angry king sent his remaining **servants** to **invite everyone they saw**. The original **guests** were not **worthy** of the **honor** he has given them by having them of his **invitation** list.

(10) So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests.

- This invitation reaped results. The **banquet hall was filled with guests**. Now the king will come in to meet them.

(11) "But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding.

- The **king** entered the banquet hall to **meet** with **the guests** and he encountered one who wasn't dressed like the rest. Because the others were all from the street and might not have the expected attire, it appears that the king had provided **proper clothing** and the other **guests** put it on. But it wasn't important to this **man** and he **wasn't wearing** it. The **king** was insulted by his self-centeredness.

(12) 'Friend,' he asked, 'how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' But the man had no reply.

- **McGarvey** observes that the **man** was speechless and without excuse is evidence that he could have worn a wedding garment but chose not to.

(13) Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

- This breach of protocol was not left unpunished by the **king** who was providing a banquet and wedding garments for all.
- The goof-ball was **bound hand and foot** and put out of the well lighted banquet hall into



the **darkness** where others were crying and grinding their **teeth**.

(14) "For many are called, but few are chosen."

- There were those who had *spurned* the first invitation in verse 22.
- There were those who were *too busy* in verse 25.
- There was this man who didn't bother to put on the provided wedding garment in verse 12.
- The ones **chosen** were those who were invited and got ready.

TRYING TO TRAP THE UNTRAPPABLE JESUS

(15) Then the Pharisees met together to plot how to trap Jesus into saying something for which He could be arrested.

- Trying to **trap Jesus** guarantees failure. It can't be done. Their goal was to get Him to say something for which **He could be arrested**.

(16) They sent some of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with Him. "Teacher," they said, "we know how honest You are. You teach the way of God truthfully. You are impartial and don't play favorites.

- The players in this first round are the young **disciples** of the Pharisees along with the **supporters of King Herod**. They had embarked on a fool's errand.
- Pretended friends may be more dangerous than avowed enemies. Here, the right words were spoken in order to trap Jesus.

(17) Now tell us what You think about this: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

- They pose a question to Jesus and His answer should get Him in trouble with some of the groups. Is it **right to pay taxes** to the Roman government?
- This could have been a sincere question asked by sincere people, but it wasn't.

(18) But Jesus knew their evil motives. "You hypocrites!" He said. "Why are you trying to trap Me?"

- Jesus well knew **their evil motives**. He calls them **hypocrites** -- actors. The Lord had a response that involved His listeners. He asked them to show a coin used for taxes.

THE COIN STRATEGY

(19) Here, show Me the coin used for the tax." When they handed Him a Roman coin, (20) He asked, "Whose picture and title are stamped on it?" (21) "Caesar's," they replied. "Well, then," He said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."



The coin may have looked like this

- The ancient coin business ranks high in deception and so one is never sure that a coin is authentic.

(22) His reply amazed them, and they went away.

- Taxation is a requirement of all governments. They require money to pay the government officials and their military forces. Since the coinage even pictured Caesar, Caesar had a right to a portion of its value.
- A very fine 465 page book about the church and the civil government was written by **Paul T. Butler** and entitled *What The Bible says about Civil Government*.

THE MULTIPLE MARRIAGE STRATEGY

(23) That same day Jesus was approached by some Sadducees -- religious leaders who say there is no resurrection from the dead. They posed this question:

- The second effort at entrapment came from the **Sadducees**. While the first challenge was anchored in the real world, this second question was entirely hypothetical. It is best to avoid hypothetical questions, but they asked it anyway. It is based on the practice of Levirate (brother-in-law) marriages. It's design was to allow property in Israel to remain in the family name.

(24) "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies without children, his brother should marry the widow and have a child who will carry on the brother's name.' (25) Well, suppose there were seven brothers. The oldest one married and then died without children, so his brother married the widow. (26) But the second brother also died, and the third brother married her. This continued with all seven of them. (27) Last of all, the woman also

died. (28) So tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her."



A modern photo that illustrates the challenge of the Sadducees.

The 28th verse is particularly hypocritical because these Sadducees didn't believe in life after death (verse 23).

(29) Jesus replied, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God.

- Here are trappers that don't know their Old Testament nor the **power of God**. **Jesus** educates them quickly.

(30) For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven.

- **The angels in heaven** (which the Sadducees don't believe in) do not **marry**. A primary purpose of marriage is having children. This is a feature of this world alone.

(31) "But now, as to whether there will be a resurrection of the dead -- haven't you ever read about this in the Scriptures? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said, (32) 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' So He is the God of the living, not the dead."

- Jesus again chides these religious experts for not knowing their Scriptures. So many leaders know *about* the Bible, but *fail to read* it regularly for themselves.
- Jesus quotes from the encounter Moses had with the Lord.

I am the God of your father -- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God. Exodus 3:6 NLT

Jesus makes the point that God Himself spoke in the present tense with the claim to be (presently) the God of Abraham. He did not say that He *was* the God of Abraham "*back in the day*."

The argument was powerful and convincing to those who could accept the truth.

(33) When the crowds heard Him, they were astounded at His teaching.

- The large-scale response was from the **crowds**. **They were astounded at His teaching.**

(34) But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees with His reply, they met together to question Him again.

- The **Pharisees** liked the answer because it was a wonderful response to the **Sadducees** who did not believe in life after death. Their rivals had been **silenced**. Now they would plan another way to make Jesus look bad.

(35) One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap Him with this question:

THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT STRATEGY

(36) "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

- Perhaps he expected Jesus to pick one of the ten commandments. That could lead to a time-consuming debate. But the most **important commandment** was not even in the Decalogue.

(37) Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' (38) This is the first and greatest commandment.

- Jesus raised the inquirer's question to the issues that rank highest with **God**.

And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:5 NLT

(39) A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

- This was not from the 10 Commandments either:

"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:18 NLT

(40) The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

- Keeping the other parts of the Law of Moses are without purpose if they aren't anchored in love for God and mankind.

JESUS CONFOUNDS HIS CRITICS

(41) Then, surrounded by the Pharisees, Jesus asked them a question:

- The Sadducees may not have been present. They had been capably put down by **Jesus**. Now He has a question for the remaining Pharisees.

(42) "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is He?" They replied, "He is the son of David."

- They answered correctly. Jeremiah taught this;

"For the time is coming," says the LORD, "when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. Jeremiah 23:5

(43) Jesus responded, "Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, call the Messiah 'my Lord'? For David said, (44) 'The LORD said to my Lord, Sit in the place of honor at My right hand until I humble Your enemies beneath Your feet.'

- **Jesus** affirms the **inspiration** of King **David** as a reminder that these words were very precise.
- Jesus uses the Greek word *kurios* (*Strong's Concordance* word G2962) and the translators have correctly translated it **Lord**. It could also be translated as "Master" and the *Message* paraphrase has done this. This may help in understanding the unanswerable question Jesus is preparing to ask.

(45) Since David called the Messiah 'my Lord,' how can the Messiah be his son?"

- How can **David call** the **Messiah "Master"** when the **Messiah** is **David son**?
- The questioning Pharisees did not want to admit that the **Messiah** was also deity. The Messiah they looked for was a military leader who would enable them to get rid of the Romans soldiers and Caesar's taxes.

(46) No one could answer Him. And after that, no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

- An honest answer would show that the Messiah was greater than David and not just his son. This silenced the lawyers.
- **David Guzik** observes:

Logic and rhetoric have proved to be of no help in destroying Jesus. Now His enemies will resort to treachery and violence.