

Matthew 22: Another Parable and Three Attacks Defended

This chapter continues the exchange between Jesus and several groups of religious leaders in the temple. The previous chapter concluded with two parables about the failures of the religious leaders. This chapter begins with a third parable, that is devastating in nature to them and is perhaps one of the greatest parables Jesus gave. Jesus then fields questions from several religious groups, who fail in their attempts to trap Him. The enemies of Jesus, since they were not able to lay hands on earlier as they hoped, decided to launch this final attack in hopes of proving Him to be a fake. First, it was the Herodians, then the Sadducees, and then once again the Pharisees, but it was His wise and profound answers that silenced them all.

Vss. 1-14: The Wedding Feast

Who is the King Jesus is referring to? Why of course, it is God. Who is the King's son? Jesus, of course. This parable, while different in delivery, parallels the Matthew 13 parables which carry the same context and end with the same result; Jesus the Christ being rejected. Jesus' words here not only speak to Israel's rejection of the Messiah, but they also establish concepts related to salvation by grace. Who were the servants? The lost sheep of the house of Israel. If you recall, the purpose of the OT prophets was to deliver the message of repentance and salvation. The purpose of John the Baptist was to deliver the same message. And here, Jesus, the One prophesied about, is delivering the message to them as well. Their response: **Crucify Him! Crucify Him!** They rejected the message and the Savior. What is the slain servant's representative of? The death of the apostles and of Jesus on the cross. What is the meaning of verse 7? This is most likely a prophetic statement about Titus the Roman's destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.

Next, beginning with verse 8, Jesus switches from the past and present to the future. The rest of this parable is describing what we know as the gospel message. Let's look at it again. What is the significance of the wedding garment? There is a danger in coming to the feast without meeting the King's request. What is the garment? The righteousness of Christ! And it is only made available to those who truly believe. Every person entering the wedding feast must be properly adorned. Jesus provided the garment on the cross and in the tomb. It's up to you to accept it. The man without the garment had no excuse. This is referring to the day of judgment. Those who reject Jesus will not be able to offer a proper defense. I guess you could say they will be "speechless".

Jesus closes by describing the result of denying Him in verses 13-14.

Why did this last of the three parables make the Temple rulers so upset?

Vss. 15-22: The Herodians

After hearing three parables in which they are pictured as rebelling against God, the Pharisees are ready to be done with Jesus. They hatch a plan to force Jesus to say something that might get Him arrested for rebellion against Rome. Some of the Pharisees' disciples, along with Herodians, begin by flattering Jesus, then asking if paying taxes to Caesar—meaning to the Roman empire—is right according to the Old Testament law.

Now, who are the Herodians? They were the leading political party at the time. Perhaps some of them were Pharisees, but their purpose was not religious, only political and they helped push Roman policy. In this instance, the Pharisees used them to attempt the same thing they had been unsuccessful with.

Jesus knows exactly what they are trying to do and calls them hypocrites. He then holds a Roman denarius and asks whose image is on it. He tells the people to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. If Jesus had said yes to their question, then He could not be the true Messiah. If no, then He could be accused of being a traitor to Rome. I love how He used one of their coins with His response. Essentially, Jesus said they did owe something to Rome. Let's start with the economic system, the roads, and in a round about way, some semblance of peace. Owing something to Caesar did not remove their responsibility to God. Did the trap work?