

## **Lesson #23- Matthew Chapter 22 Questions for Discussion (With Help for Teachers):**

1. The first 14 verses of this chapter are a parable told by Jesus of a wedding that a king made for his son. The parable is compared to the kingdom of heaven. The parable ends with Jesus expressing the point, "For many are called, but few are chosen". What do you think the details of this parable represent?

### **Help for Teachers:**

- V2- Coming into the kingdom of heaven is the subject. A "**certain king**" is God the Father, who made a marriage for "**his son**", Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. God has arranged a "**marriage**" for His Son (Rev 19:9, 21:2, 21:9). Some commentators say that, based on word studies, this was not a marriage of a man and a woman, but rather a feast of inauguration where the king's son was put in possession of the government. As such, the son and his new subjects were "married" together (you can see such a feast as this in 1 Kings 1, where Adonijah attempted to usurp the throne of David). The **marriage** seems to be His incarnation, His coming in the flesh, as He often referred to Himself, Son of man.
- V3- The **wedding**, or marriage feast, would be the blessings of the gospel, purchased by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ for those that are chosen, that respond in faith to the invitation to the feast. God has "sent forth servants" to "call them that were bidden". **Them that were bidden** are the Jews, by natural descent from Abraham. To them was pointed out by Moses and the prophets through multitudes of pictorial sacrifices, ceremonies, oral and written declarations, the coming of a Savior in whom they were invited to believe. The **servants** sent forth were those prophets, probably to include John the Baptist and the 12 that Jesus sent out to preach, only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:1-5, 23:37).
- V4- **Other servants** are perhaps the early church and the apostles, sent first to Jerusalem and Judea.
- V5- **they made light of it** is to say that they went on with business and life as usual, placing greater importance on the things of this world than the invitation to salvation.
- V6- **entreated them spitefully, and slew them**- those of Israel that didn't ignore the gospel persecuted and killed those Jews who did believe and followed Jesus.
- V7- This certainly would be in keeping with other end-time prophesies of final judgement and the Day of the Lord, but many believe it also finds fulfilment a mere 41 years later in the total destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and his Roman troops.

- V8- **they which were bidden were not worthy**- John wrote in John 1:11-13, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Speaking of the Jews Luke records in Acts 13:46 “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves *unworthy* of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”
- V8-9- From “Jerusalem, and in all Judea”, the gospel began spreading quickly to “Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This was at the command of Jesus to the church and was largely facilitated by persecution from the Jewish leaders who **entreated them spitefully, and slew them**. Because of this “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4). The door is now opened to the Gentiles. Remember that in John 10, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd. In verse 16 He says “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” Paul calls this a mystery, “that hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:” (Col:1:26-28).
- V10- So, remembering the parable of the sower (Matt 13:3-23) and the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt 13:24-30), we can connect that we are to preach and share the message of the gospel indiscriminately to the peoples of the world. The message will be heard by people with mixed responses, but God has promised that where He has prepared a heart, belief and salvation will result. As part of the mixed response, some will profess but not actually have faith. This is what is meant by “**both good and bad**” guests furnishing the wedding. They will participate in church, and unfortunately, often cause issues and be detrimental to the work. They are the much-acclaimed hypocrites. An enemy has planted these in the church. Only God can see the truth of what is in the heart, and in His great wisdom, He has determined best to “Let both grow together until the harvest”, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them”.
- V11-13- Our King Jesus is coming back! When He returns, He will judge and separate those tares from the wheat. It’s interesting that He calls the guest without a wedding garment “friend”. It seems a reminder that Jesus has reached out in love and peace to those that have rejected His grace, even to the pretender that has played church. Nevertheless, God is not fooled and those that have tried to enter the wedding another way, they don’t have on the wedding

garment, will have nothing to say. The consequence of refusing to believe the gospel (put on the wedding garment, Christ [Gal 3:26-27]) is eternal damnation away from God in outer darkness and utter despair.

- V14- A reminder again of the sovereignty of God. We are all legitimately called to salvation and make the decision we freely choose, and with consequences. The sinful nature of man will always be in contradiction to the things of God and choose against Him. In grace and of God's free choosing (because He is God, and has every right to do what He wants, and who can argue the point anyway), He has chosen some to salvation. In them He has placed a receptive heart and in response to the gospel call, they will believe. The Bible refers to this as predestination and the recipients of God's grace (undeserved favor) as the elect or chosen.

2. In verses 15-22, we see the Pharisees enter a league with some folks they have historically disliked... a lot. Now though, the Pharisees and the Herodians equally find Jesus threatening to their powerbase (the old saying. "Nothing unifies like a common enemy"). They jointly approach Jesus with a scheme to trap Him by His words. They think they can get Him to show disloyalty to Rome by asking His view on paying taxes. They will use even a hint of resistance to Caesar's demand for tribute money as evidence of revolt. How perfect they think, He already is talking about a kingdom. If He answers as they hope and expect, they will take that and His kingdom talk to the Roman magistrate, persuade him that Jesus is an insurrection threat. Rome will kill Jesus. Problem solved. Problem not solved! They are matching wits with God; His answer baffles them and they can do nothing but walk away in dismay. How does Jesus answer their question and what should they, and we, learn from His answer?

### **Help for Teachers:**

Jesus begins by calling out their hypocrisy, openly. As crowds of people watch, many of which are of those that just identified with Jesus as Messiah, the Pharisees and Herodians pretend to be genuinely interested in hearing what was right in the matter of paying tribute by force to an idolatrous government. It was a hot topic and it seemed that there could be no answer that aligned with the Law of Moses and yet didn't provoke the wrath of Rome. The very first words of Jesus points out to the watching crowd the wicked intentions of these religious and civil leaders, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Then, in wisdom that could only come from God, Jesus brings a very quick and decisive end to the question. Give Caesar what belongs to him; the penny has his name and picture on it. But give unto God what belongs to Him. The implications would have been monumental to the listening multitude of Jews as they recalled the words of David (and many other Scriptures) in 1 Chronicles 29: 11-14, "Thine, O LORD, is the

greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.” The point for them and for us requires no more explanation.

3. Now the Sadducees are up to bat. They come to Jesus with a question they are sure will discredit Him. They tell this story of a woman that is married and still childless when her husband dies. In accordance with the Mosaic law, she is married by his brother, who also dies without her ever bearing a child. This happens repeatedly until a total of seven brothers marry her and die, yet she never has a child. The question proposed is, “Whose wife will she be in heaven?” Discuss Jesus’ response to the Sadducees.

#### **Help for Teachers:**

We know from secular history and, more importantly, from Acts 23:8 that the Sadducees rejected life after death (the resurrection) and angels. Their focus was the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, written by Moses. With major attention given to the law (contained in the writings of Moses but not constituting the whole of the five books), they found no teaching concerning life beyond this mortal existence and therefore concluded that God rewarded those that were obedient to the law in this life... period. Because they rejected the idea of an afterlife, their sole interest in debating Jesus was to discredit Him before the people so that their status would not be diminished by His contrary doctrine.

The Sadducees fare no better than did the Pharisees. Jesus destroys their case (what they were really pushing was this agenda of no afterlife) on two accounts of ignorance. First, that while professing to be doctors of the law, they failed to understand the books of Moses containing the law, and second, they were ignorant of the power of God.

While seeing the books of Moses as “the law” and interchanging those terms, they focused so much on the law contained within the Pentateuch that they failed to see the clear teachings of mercy, and grace, and hope beyond this life. Their hope was limited to physical material blessings based on strict adherence to the law. But the books of Moses are filled with grace and the message of salvation, from the shedding of innocent blood in the garden to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness, to the stories of Abraham and the sacrifice of his son and God’s rescue, to the life of Joseph as a type of Jesus, to the prophesy of Moses of a better prophet to come. They knew that even the sacrifices instituted by the law were merely a picture of something better.

But as only Jesus could do, He presented them with facts that only the One who descended from heaven would know; resurrected saints will be no one's spouse in heaven, they are wholly devoted to God as His bride. Jesus simultaneously refutes their rejection of spiritual beings by comparing the resurrected saints with the angels. There could be no argument, because Jesus quotes from the books of Moses what God Himself says to Moses in Exodus 3:6, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob". No one could argue that God is the God of the living and not of the dead. The Sadducee's trap collapses. Their error sprang from ignorance of the Scriptures, particularly the one Jesus quoted to them, and from ignorance concerning Jesus' power over death.

4. Both religious groups having been shut down in their efforts to discredit Jesus, come together. From among them an expert in the law of Moses decides to try it one more time. He asks Jesus, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Which of the ten commandments did Jesus identify as the greatest?

#### Help for Teachers:

None. Jesus' answer is not found in the ten commandments (Ex 20:2-17, Deut. 5:6-21). Instead, Jesus refers them to commandments repeated by Moses to the people as he prepares them to enter the land of promise. First, "**And *thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.***", found in Deuteronomy 6:5, and then, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but ***thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself***: I am the LORD.", from Leviticus 19:18.

Both are summaries of the law and deal with the attitude of the heart, and not just the resulting physical actions. If you love God supremely you will naturally obey the first four. If you love others as self you will naturally obey the remaining six.

Jesus stated this plainly in Matthew 12:34, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And in Luke 6:45, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

The point Jesus made to the law expert was the point of the sermon on the mount, the issue of man (sin) begins in the heart (The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jer. 17:9) and manifests as actions. God sees the heart and that is where change must happen. That change can only happen by God's grace and intervention.

5. The chapter concludes with Jesus asking the Pharisees a two-part question of His own...

First Jesus asks, *“What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?”*, to which they answer partially right. *“They say unto him, The Son of David.”*

The next question Jesus asks builds on the first, *“How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?”* The Pharisees have no answer.

What is the answer to Jesus’ questions?

### **Help for Teachers:**

The Pharisees were half right in their first answer that Christ would be the Son of David. The term “Christ” is not found in the English translation of the Old Testament. It comes from the term “messiah”, which means “one who is anointed”. The Pharisees obviously connected “Christ” with being anointed as king in the lineage of David and according to promise, but they did not see “Christ” as more than a fleshly ruler, genetically from David. It seems they did not see the Deity of Christ, because the part they didn’t say is that Christ is the Son of God.

The second question of Jesus, that left the Pharisees speechless, can only be understood by recognizing that Christ is the Son of God and the Son of Man (David). David, knowing by revelation of God and prophesying accordingly, saw that Jesus was the eternal Son of God, Lord of heaven and earth, that was before Him and would always reign. By revelation David knew that the fulfilment of the promise to him of an unfailing throne (1 Kings 9:5) would be accomplished when Messiah, the true and eternal King of Israel, came and ascended the throne. “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool”; David could call Christ, the Son of David according to the flesh, Lord because he understood and believed the promises of a coming Savior that would be the incarnate God. Maybe not as clearly as Paul expressed it, but David saw that The Father (The Lord) would exalt the Son (my Lord), and put down all enemies. Paul put it like this in Philippians 2:8-11, “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”