



## **Chapter 22**

# ***Parable of Marriage Feast for the Kings Son***

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**Theme:** Jesus gives the parable of the marriage feast for the king's son; Jesus answers and silences the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees

Chapter 21 closed with the religious rulers determined that Jesus would die. "They sought to lay hands on him" (Matt. 21:46), but they were afraid of the multitude at that time. The chapter before us continues the verbal clash our Lord is having with the religious rulers. He gives them first the parable of the king who made a marriage feast. This is His continuing answer to the chief priests and elders which He began in the previous chapter.

### **Matthew 22:1**

**And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,**

**McGee:** This is one of the greatest parables Jesus gave for the period in which you and I live.<sup>1</sup>

Note the word *again*. The word indicates that Jesus is still addressing the chief priests and elders mentioned in Matthew 21:23.

**[again by parables]** This is the third parable or illustration to the Jews in the temple, the first two being of two sons (Matthew 21:28-32) and the vineyard (Matthew 21:33-46). This one illustrates that many are called but few will be chosen (Matthew 22:14).

**Verses 1-14** In this culture, two invitations were expected when banquets were given. The first asked the guests to attend; the second announced that all was ready. In this story the king invited his guests three times—and each time they rejected his invitation. God wants us to join him at his banquet, which will last for eternity. That's why he sends us invitations again and again. Have you accepted his invitation?<sup>2</sup>

**Yashanet.com: And Jesus answered** Chapter divisions were obviously not present in the original documents. Yeshua's comments are a continuation from the discussion of chapter 21.

**Spurgeon:** And Jesus answered, and spake unto them again. This was his reply to the hatred of the chief priests and Pharisees. He answered them by going on with his ministry. For them, and for the people also, he spoke again by parables. They came to him with quibbles; he replied by parables. In the previous chapter, we noticed that "they perceived that he spake of them." This perception did not, however, lead them to

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<sup>1</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:115). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup>Life Application Notes

repentance; but only increased their hatred against the Savior. Their partly concealed anger was all the greater because, through fear of the multitude, they could not yet lay hands on Jesus, and put him to death. They had willfully closed their eyes to the light, set it continued to shine upon them. If they would not receive it, perhaps some of the people, whom they had been misleading, might accept it; therefore once more the King would give them a parable concerning his kingdom, and concerning himself. This parable must be distinguished from the one recorded in (Lu 14:16-24,) which was spoken on another occasion, and with a different object. It would be worth while to compare the two parables, and to note their resemblances and their differences.

### **Matthew 22:2**

**The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,**

**The kingdom of heaven**—In Bereshith Rabba, sect. 62. fol. 60, there is a parable very similar to this, and another still more so in Sohar. Levit. fol. 40. But these rabbinical parables are vastly ennobled by passing through the hands of our Lord. It appears from Luke, Luke 14:15; etc., that it was at an entertainment that this parable was originally spoken. It was a constant practice of our Lord to take the subjects of his discourses from the persons present, or from the circumstances of times, persons, and places. See Matthew 16:6; John 4:7-10; John 6:26, 27; 7:37. A preacher that can do so can never be at a loss for text or sermon.<sup>3</sup>

**[kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king ...]** The 43rd parable in Matthew (Matthew 22:1-14).

**[certain king]** Who the king was is not stated.

**[marriage for his son]** Not the marriage supper of the Lamb of Rev. 19:7-10, but a marriage feast for a certain king's son who got married when these events took place.

**McGee:** Obviously, “a certain king” is God the Father, and “his son” is the Lord Jesus. Notice that He resorts to the expression “kingdom of heaven” instead of kingdom of God which He used in the previous two parables. This parable parallels the Matthew 13 parables. But the emphasis here is upon how and why this age began rather than upon the conclusion of the age, which we saw in Matthew 13.<sup>4</sup>

In parables rabbis often compared God to a king, whose son represented Israel; the setting was also often a wedding feast for the son. Wedding feasts were frequently large gatherings; a very wealthy person could invite an entire city to one. Coming to a wedding feast required some commitment of valuable time on the part of guests (Jewish hearers would assume a feast lasting seven days, and a king would expect his guests to remain

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<sup>3</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>4</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:115). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

throughout the feast); this commitment would be difficult for peasants working the land. But the honor of being invited by a king—and the terror of displeasing him—would have motivated intelligent invitees to attend. The invited guests may have been aristocratic landowners anyway (22:5), who had the leisure for such activities.<sup>5</sup>

**ESV: wedding feast.** In this case, a countrywide celebration that would have continued for several days. This “feast” represents enjoying fellowship with God in his kingdom, and coming to the feast thus represents entering the kingdom.

### **Matthew 22:3**

**And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.**

**[to them that were bidden]** (John 1:11). John is talking about Israel, Jesus came to them. The Jews rejected Him. (Yet, remember v. 13 notes that those who received Him.)

The whole idea is that Jesus came first unto Israel.

**And sent forth his servants.** These represent the messengers that God has sent to invite men to his kingdom.

**To call them that were bidden.** That is, to give notice to those who had before been invited, that the feast was ready. It appears that there were two invitations, one considerably previous to the time, that they might have opportunity to prepare for it, and the other to give notice of the precise time when they were expected.

**The wedding.** The marriage feast. The same word in the original as in Matthew 22:2.

**They would not come.** They *might* have come if they chose, but they would not. So all the difficulty that sinners ever labour under, in regard to salvation, is in the *will*. It is a fixed determination not to come and be saved.

(\* ) "And sent forth his servants" Psalms 68:11, Jeremiah 25:4, 35:15, Revelation 22:17

**McGee:** He “sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding.” Who were bidden? The lost sheep of the house of Israel—our Lord had sent His apostles to them, you recall. And the prophets had been the messengers back in the Old Testament.<sup>6</sup>

Following the custom, a preliminary invitation had already been sent (hence “those who had been invited”); the potential guests thus had no excuse.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 22:1). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>6</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:115). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**Spurgeon:** The set time had arrived, and the Jews, who, as a nation, were bidden to the wedding, were invited to come and partake of the royal bounty. They had been "bidden" long before by the prophets whom the King had continued to send to them; and now that the festive day had dawned, the King sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding. This was in accordance with the Oriental custom of sending a second invitation to those who had favorably received the first. John the Baptist and our Lord's apostles and disciples plainly told the people that the long looked-for event was drawing near; indeed, the appointed hour had already struck, the set time to favor Zion had come, all that was needed was that the guests should come to the wedding.

The Jews were highly honored in being chosen out of all the nations of the earth to attend the wedding of the King's Son; but alas! they did not prize their privileges: they would not come. They were instructed, entreated, and warned, but all to no purpose: "they would not come." Our Lord was very near the end of his sojourn on earth, and he summed up all that he had seen of Israel's conduct towards himself in this short sentence, "they would not come." It is not said, "They could not come," but, "They would not come." Some for one reason, and some for another, and perhaps some without any reason at all; but, without exception, "they would not come." They thus manifested their disloyalty to the King, their disobedience to his command, their dislike to his Son, their distaste for the royal banquet, and their disregard for the messengers sent to them by the King.

Note, it was the King who made this wedding feast; therefore, to refuse to be present, when the invitation implied great honor to those who received it, was as distinct an insult as could well be perpetrated against both the King and his Son. If an ordinary person had invited them, they might have pleased themselves about accepting the invitation; but a royal invitation is a command that will be disobeyed at the refuser's peril. Let this be remembered by those who are now refusing the invitation of the gospel.

### **Matthew 22:4**

**Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.**

[**Again, he sent forth other servants**] It was customary for two invitations to be given, one in advance and one when all things were ready. Compare Esther 5:8 and Esther 6:14; Luke 14:16-17.

**Fatlings**— Properly, fatted rams, or wethers. 2 Samuel 6:13; 1 Chronicles 15:26.

**Other servants.** Who might *press* it on their attention. So God repeats his message to sinners, when they reject it.

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<sup>7</sup>Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 22:3). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

**My dinner.** This word literally denotes the meal taken about noon. It is also taken for a meal in general. As marriages were, among eastern nations, in the evening, it refers here to a meal taken at that time.

**But they made light of it.** Treated it with contempt, as a thing of no consequence: an exact representation of the conduct of sinners in regard to the gospel.

**One to his farm,** So men are engaged so much in their worldly employment, that they pretend they have no time to attend to religion. The world is, in their view, of more value than God.

(\*) "light" Psalms 106:24,25, Proverbs 1:24,25, Acts 24:25, Romans 2:4

**Spurgeon:** The King was patient, and gave the disloyal people a further opportunity of coming to the wedding feast: Again, he sent forth other servants. He wished to make every allowance for those who had refused his invitation so that they might be left without excuse if they persisted in their refusal. Possibly there may have been something in the servants that repelled instead of attracting them; or they may not have put the King's message a the best possible form; perhaps the intimation was not given clearly enough; or, perchance, on thinking over the matter, those who "would not come" might regret their hasty decision, and long for another invitation to the feast.

So the King sent forth other servants; and, lest there should be any mistake about the message they were to deliver, he said to them, "Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." Jesus here seemed to glance into the near future, and to foretell what would happen after his death. The apostles and the immediate disciples of our Lord went throughout the land, declaring the gospel in all its fullness, freeness, and readiness. At first they kept to the Jews, according to the King's word: "Tell them which are bidden." At Antioch, in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews who contradicted and blasphemed, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you." (Ac 13:46.)

The apostles at first seem to have regarded their mission as restricted to the Jews; but they certainly did preach the gospel to them. They told them that, by the death of Jesus, the preparation of salvation for men was fully made, according to the King's words: "Behold, I have prepared my dinner." They preached a present salvation, and one which displayed the riches of divine grace: "My oxen and my fatlings are killed." Indeed, they proclaimed grace all-sufficient, meeting every want of the soul: "All things are ready." And then they uttered the King's proclamation: "Come unto the marriage." In his name they invited, urged, and even commanded the "bidden" ones to come. They began at Jerusalem, and called to the feast the favored seed of Abraham, whose honor it was to be the first invited to the royal banquet.

## **Matthew 22:5**

**But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:**

Ignoring the king would be scandalously rude, would probably suggest treasonous feelings and would certainly invite a king's wrath; this parable's original hearers would thus feel incensed at these subjects' unbelievable stupidity.<sup>8</sup>

**Spurgeon:** The bulk of the Jewish race gave small heed to apostolic preaching: they made light of it, counted it of less importance than the worldly affairs in which their hearts were engrossed. In making light of the gospel, they really were making light of the great King himself, treading under foot the Son of God, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace. The doctrine of the cross was a stumbling-block to them; the spiritual kingdom of the crucified Nazarene was despicable in their eyes: "they made light of it." And went their ways. They did not go in the way the King would have had them go; they despised his way, and went their own ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. "His farm" and "his merchandise" are set up against the King's dinner: "my oxen and my fatlings." The rebel seemed to say, "Let the King do as he likes with his oxen and his fatlings; I am going to look after my farm, or to attend to my merchandise." Carnal men love carnal things, and "make light of" spiritual blessings. Alas, that the seed of Abraham, the friend of God, should thus have become as earth-bound as those whom the Jews contemptuously called "sinners of the Gentiles"!

## **Matthew 22:6**

**And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.**

Remnant slew his servants. This can be seen many ways, one is the slaughtering of the prophets. Others note the parallel with Peter in Acts 3:19-21 with the stoning of Stephen. Clearly, Israel is guilty of not only having rejected the Messiah, but also of the blood of the prophets, etc.

**And the remnant,** That is, *a part* made light of it, and treated it with silent contempt, and coolly went about their business. The others were not satisfied with that, but showed positive malignity. Some sinners seem to be well satisfied by merely neglecting religion; while others proceed against it with open violence and bitter malice.

**Entreated *them* spitefully.** Used harsh and opprobrious words, reviled and abused them. This was done because they hated and despised the king. So sinners often abuse and calumniate ministers of religion because they hate God, and can in no way else show it so well.

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<sup>8</sup>Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 22:5). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

[**slew them**] Israel did to God's prophets what these men did to the king's servants (Luke 11:47-51; Luke 13:34; Acts 7:51). Israel was also dealt with like enemies of this king (Matthew 22:7; Luke 21:20-24).

This was Israel's rejection of God's invitation. They killed His messengers, including the Lord Jesus Himself.

This behavior would obviously have been illegal even had the servants not belonged to the king; but servants of a king had higher status than most free persons, and as a king's messengers they represented his person. Ancient peoples universally despised the mistreatment of heralds, or emissaries. In addition, the mistreatment of royal representatives was outright treason, constituting a declaration of revolt. Yet this was the treatment God's servant-messengers, the prophets, were known to have received.<sup>9</sup>

**Spurgeon:** The religious remnant among the Jews, who clung to external forms with a ferocious bigotry, rose against the first preachers of the gospel, and subjected them to cruel prosecutions. They cared nothing for the incarnation of Emmanuel, that mysterious marriage of Godhead and manhood; they cared nothing for the Lord God himself, but took his servants, and by scourging, stoning, slander, and imprisonment, entreated them spitefully. Their cruel conduct to the Lord's servants proved that they were full of spite, malice, and anger. Saul of Tarsus, before his conversion, was a type of the fanatical Pharisees and religious rulers who were, as he confessed to King Agrippa, "exceedingly mad" against Christ's followers. In many cases, they not only spitefully entreated the King's servants, but they even slew them. Stephen was the first martyr of the truth after his Lord's crucifixion; but he was by no means the last. If "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church", the Holy Land was plentifully sown with it in the early days of Christianity. This was Israel's answer to the King, who bade the long-favored nation unite in doing honor to his well-beloved Son. The Jews said, in erect, "We defy the King; we will not have his Son to reign over us; and in proof of our rebellion against him we have slain his servants."

### **Matthew 22:7**

**But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.**

This may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by Titus the Roman.

Kings did not always live in the same place as most of their subjects; the burning of the city probably alludes specifically to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was burned in A.D. 70 (see 24:15). Burning a city was the final step in its complete destruction.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 22:6). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>10</sup>Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 22:7). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.



Armies! Ex 15:3; Nu 21:14!

**Spurgeon:** In these terrible words, the siege of Jerusalem, the massacre of the people, and the destruction of their capital are all described. "When the king heard thereof, he was wroth. The King had reached the utmost limit of his forbearance and long-suffering patience. "The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" overflowed when he heard how his servants had been maltreated and slain; and: he sent forth his armies. The Roman emperor thought that he was sending his armies against the Jews; but he was, unconsciously, working out the eternal purposes of the most High God, even as the kings of Assyria and Babylon had been, in the olden time, the instruments by which the Lord had punished his rebellious people (see Isa 10:5; Jer 25:9).

The cruel executioners did their terrible work in the most thorough manner. Read Josephus, and see how the Romans destroyed: those murderers, and burned up their city. The words are remarkable in their awful force and accuracy. Only Omniscience could foresee and foretell so fully and faithfully the woes that were to befall the murderers and their city. The divine retribution that fell upon Jerusalem ought to convey a solemn warning to us, in these days when so many are making light of the gospel in our highly - favored land. No nation ever yet refused the gospel without having some overwhelming judgment as the consequence of its daring criminality. France is to this day suffering the effects of the massacres of St. Bartholomew. If England should reject the truth of God, its light, as a nation, will be quenched in seas of blood. May God prevent such an awful calamity by His almighty grace!

### **Matthew 22:8**

**Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.**

**[they which were bidden were not worthy]** Referring to the murderers of Matthew 22:5-7. The Jewish leaders were like this king's invited guests who were called but were not worthy to be chosen (Acts 13:46).

**Were not worthy**—Because they made light of it, and would not come; preferring earthly things to heavenly blessings. Among the Mohammedans, refusal to come to a marriage feast, when invited, is considered a breach of the law of God. HEDAYAH, vol. iv. p. 91. Any one that shall be invited to a dinner, and does not accept the invitation, disobeys God, and his messenger: and any one who comes uninvited, you may say is a thief, and returns a plunderer.—Mischat ul Mesabih. It was probably considered in this light among all the oriental nations. This observation is necessary, in order to point out more forcibly the iniquity of the refusal mentioned in the text. A man may be said to be worthy of, or fit for, this marriage feast, when, feeling his wretchedness and misery, he comes to God in the way appointed, to get an entrance into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

## **Matthew 22:9**

**Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.**

Now we will see a definite change in the method and manner of the invitation, and it refers to the present age in which we live.

**[Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage]** The king had to turn to other guests, so he gathered good and bad wherever they were found, which illustrates God turning to all men, good and bad (Matthew 13:38,48), and not to Jews only (John 1:11; Matthew 10:6; Matthew 15:24). The rejection of Jesus by Israel freed God from all responsibility to them in fulfilling His covenants with them, so His program became a worldwide one for all men (John 3:16; Romans 1:16; 2 Cor. 12:13).<sup>12</sup>

**Go ye therefore into the highways**—Διεξόδους των οδών, cross or by-paths; the places where two or more roads met in one, leading into the city, where people were coming together from various quarters of the country. St. Luke adds hedges, to point out the people to whom the apostles were sent, as either miserable vagabonds, or the most indigent poor, who were wandering about the country, or sitting by the sides of the ways and hedges, imploring relief. This verse points out the final rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. It was a custom among the Jews, when a rich man made a feast, to go out and invite in all destitute travelers. See in Rab. Beracoth, fol. 43.<sup>13</sup>

**As many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage**—God sends his salvation to every soul, that all may believe and be saved.

**Spurgeon:** Then: when the King was angry, even then he was gracious. In wrath he remembered mercy. Judgment is his strange work; but "he delighteth in mercy." Then saith he to his servants: the King still had servants left, though his enemies were destroyed. Christian preachers remained when chief priests and Pharisees were extinct, and Jerusalem was in ruins. The royal Host gathered his servants together, and put before them the exact position of affairs: "The wedding is ready." Gospel provision was made in abundance; there was no lack on the King's part. His Son's wedding must be celebrated by a feast; and a feast requires guests: "but they which were bidden were not worthy." This is the last we hear of those who were bidden. Seeing that they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, others must be called. Salvation is not a matter of worthiness, or none would be saved. These men were too proud, too self-sufficient, too high-minded to be worthy recipients of the King's favor. They preferred their farms and their merchandise to doing honor to the King and his Son, for at heart they were traitors.

What was to be done? Should the wedding be canceled, and the provision for the feast be destroyed? Not so. The King said to his servants: "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." Glorious was the outburst of grace which bade the apostles turn to the Gentiles. Hitherto they had not been bidden; but when the Jews finally rejected the Messiah, he gave to his disciples their wider commission:

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<sup>12</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>13</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." In the parable, highwaymen, hedge-birds, travelers, tramps, and all sorts of people are mentioned; and thus is Jesus to be preached to men in every condition, but especially to those who are "out of the way." It is not after the manner of men to invite to a wedding banquet those who stray in the highways; but Jesus was setting forth the glorious freeness of the gospel invitation: "as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." This indicates no limited call, no preaching to gracious character. Restrictions there rightly were at the first; but after the death of Christ they were all removed. Even our Lord said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and when he first sent forth his twelve apostles, his command to them was, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." But the time had come for the universal proclamation of the gospel. After his resurrection, Jesus said to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

### **Matthew 22:10**

**So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.**

**[both bad and good]** This was an unusual happening for all people, good or bad, in the highways—to be invited to such a wonderful banquet. Kings usually gave the most magnificent feasts, which, under ordinary circumstances, would attract every person invited. The reasons for so many not accepting the invitation here are not given, but one thing stands out very clearly: the king was not popular with his subjects and they dreaded to face him.

The king, not to be outdone, was determined to fill the feast-chamber with guests, and sent for anyone his servants could find, regardless of social position or condition as to clothes. The poorer classes would not have festive apparel, and they were therefore provided for by the king from his own extensive wardrobe. This is one of the most interesting details of the parable. It was a special mark of honor to receive a garment which had been used by royalty, and kings sometimes showed their liberality by giving freely to others whom they sought to honor.<sup>14</sup>

**Gathered together all—both bad and good—**By the preaching of the Gospel, multitudes of souls are gathered into what is generally termed the visible Church of Christ.

- This Church is the FLOOR, where the wheat and the chaff are often mingled, Matthew 3:12.
- The FIELD, where the bastard wheat and the true grain grow together, Matthew 13:26, 27.
- The NET, which collects of all kinds, both good and bad, Matthew 13:48.
- The HOUSE in which the wise and foolish are found, Matthew 25:1, etc.
- And the FOLD, in which there are both sheep and goats, Matthew 25:33; etc.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>15</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

**Spurgeon:** So those went out into the highways: they did as they were told. This was the disciples' warrant for doing what must at first have seemed very strange to them. They themselves belonged to the favored race which had been first bidden; but God's grace overcame their prejudices, and they "went out" among the heathen, proclaiming the marriage of the Son of God, and pressing men to come to the wedding feast. The servants went in different directions into the highways; — the word is in the plural, "the partings of the highways", the Revised Version renders it; — the cross-roads where most people might be expected to be gathered together. Wherever the people are, there should the preachers of the gospel go with their God-given message.

The King's servants were so earnest and diligent, and their Master's grace wrought so effectually through them, that their efforts were eminently successful. They gathered together all as many as they found. The message that had been despised by the Jews was welcomed by the Gentiles; and from the great heathen highways of the world, — Rome, Athens, Ephesus, etc., — many were gathered to the gospel feast. All ranks, classes, and conditions of men came to the banquet of love. These people were manifestly willing to come, for the King's servants "gathered together all as man: as they found." Characters outwardly very different united in obeying the summons: both bad and, good, were collected at the table. The best gathering into the visible church will be sure to be a mixture in the present imperfect state of humanity; there will be some admitted who ought not to be there. Tares will grow among the wheat; corn and chaff will lie on the same floor; dross will be mingled with precious gold; goats will get in among the sheep; the gospel net will enclose fish of every kind, "both bad and good."

And the wedding was furnished with guests: happy, willing, wondering, enthusiastic guests found themselves lifted from the highways into royal company; the beggar was taken from the dunghill to sit with princes in the presence of the King. Hallelujah! Thus the King was happy, the Prince was honored, the festal hall was filled; and all went merry as a marriage bell. What shouts of joy would go up from these outcasts as they sat at the royal table! Everything was ready for the feast before, nothing was wanting but guests to partake of the King's bounty; now that they had come, surely all would go well. We shall see.

### **Matthew 22:11**

**And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:**

Eastern custom is for the host to provide the garments for the guests. The guests were expected to be wearing the robes provided by the King.

**[king came in to see the guests]** The king, not God. It was customary for hosts to come in and see their guests after they were assembled (Luke 14:10).

What is that wedding garment? The King's invitation is for everyone, but there is a danger of coming without meeting the demands of the King. That wedding garment is the righteousness of Christ which is absolutely essential for salvation, and it is supplied to all who believe. The apostle Paul speaks of this imputed righteousness: "But now the

righteousness of God without the law [that is, apart from the law] is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of [from] God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all [it comes down upon all] them that believe: for there is no difference” (Rom. 3:21–22). *All* have to have a wedding garment.<sup>16</sup>

**did not have on a wedding garment:** Like the others, this visitor had been invited to the wedding, but he failed to prepare himself for it (see Rev. 3:18). In Revelation, the garment of fine linen worn by the bride of the Lamb is said to be the righteous deeds of the saints (Rev. 19:8). The **man** had ignored a basic obligation placed on him when he accepted the king’s gracious invitation to the feast—he was supposed to wear clean clothes. To come to a wedding banquet unprepared or in soiled clothing would have been insulting. In this parable, the garment may refer to the righteousness of Christ graciously provided for us through His death. To refuse to put it on would mean a refusal of Christ’s sacrifice or arrogance in believing that the “garment” was somehow not needed. If we want to enter Christ’s banquet, we must “put on” the righteousness He gives us (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Because this man was unprepared, the king declared him unworthy. His refusal resulted in the man being sent out of the banquet hall.<sup>17</sup>

**ESV: a man who had no wedding garment.** Everyone was invited, but proper wedding attire was still expected. There are two possibilities for what this means: (1) There is some evidence in the ancient world for a king supplying garments for his guests (cf. Gen. 45:22; Est. 6:8–9), and, more broadly, there is the story of God clothing his unworthy people in beautiful garments (Ezek. 16:10–13). Jesus could thus be alluding to imputed righteousness, which Paul elaborates later (e.g., Rom. 3:21–31; 4:22–25). Thus by not wearing the garments provided, this guest has highly insulted the host. (2) The wedding garment may refer to a clean garment, symbolizing evidence of righteous works (see note on Matt. 5:20). In either case, the man lacks something that is essential for being accepted at the wedding feast.

**Spurgeon:** The success of the servants in filling the banqueting-hall was not altogether so great as it appeared to be at first sight; at least, it was not so perfect as to be without admixture. The guests continued to pour into the palace, putting on the robes provided by the King, and sitting down with honest delight to enjoy the good things prepared for them; but there was one among them who hated the King, and his Son, and who resolved to come into the festive assembly without wearing the robe of gladness, and thus to show, even in the royal presence, his contempt for the whole proceedings. He came because he was invited, but he came only in appearance. The banquet was intended to honor the King's Son, but this man meant nothing of the kind; he was willing to eat the good things set before him, but in his heart there was no love either for the King, or his well-beloved Son.

His presence was tolerated till a certain solemn moment: when the King came in to see the guests. Then the eye, which looks over all things, but overlooks nothing, spied out the daring intruder: he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. The wedding

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<sup>16</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:116). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>17</sup>The Nelson Study Bible

garment represents anything that is indispensable to a Christian, but which the unrenewed heart is not willing to accept. The man who had not on the wedding garment was out of sympathy with the assembly, out of harmony with its object, devoid of loyalty to the King, yet he braved and brazened it out, and thrust himself in among the wedding guests. It was a piece of defiant insolence, which could not be allowed to pass unnoticed and unpunished. In some respects he was worse than those who refused the invitation; for while he professed to accept it, he only came that he might insult the King to his face. He would not put on the garment which was freely provided, because by doing so he would have been honoring the Prince, whose marriage was to him an object of contempt and scorn.

It is well to remember that there are foes of the heavenly King, not only outside the professing church of Christ, but also within its borders. Some altogether refuse to come to his Son's weddings, but others help to fill the banqueting-hall, yet all the while they are enemies to the great Founder of the feast. This man without the wedding garment is the type of those who, in these days, pretend to be Christians, but do not honor the Lord Jesus, nor his atoning sacrifice, nor his holy Word. They are not in accord with the design of the gospel feast, namely, the glory, of the Lord Jesus in his 308 saints. They come into the church for gain, for honor, for fashion, or for the purpose of undermining the loyal faith of others. "The godly can often see them: this man must have been conspicuous amongst the wedding guests. The traitors within the church, however, have most to fear from the coming of the King; he will detect them in a moment, even as the royal Host in the parable, as soon as he came in to see the guests, saw there the man who had not on the wedding garment.

### **Matthew 22:12**

**And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.**

Garments for the marriage supper: in Rom 10:3, we will be standing before God by Jesus' righteousness, not our own. Isa 64:6, "our righteousness" is as filthy rags (polite words for "used menstrual cloths").

**[wedding garment]** Sometimes garments were provided for all guests and it was an insult of the highest degree to refuse to use the garments provided.

**[speechless]** Was without excuse, for it had been provided for him by the king.

It was customary for wedding guests to be given garments to wear to the banquet. It was unthinkable to refuse to wear these garments. That would insult the host, who could only assume that the guest was arrogant and thought he didn't need these garments, or that he did not want to take part in the wedding celebration. The wedding clothes picture the righteousness needed to enter God's kingdom—the total acceptance in God's eyes that Christ gives every believer. Christ has provided this garment of righteousness for everyone, but each person must choose to put it on in order to enter the King's banquet (eternal life). There is an open invitation, but we must be ready. For more on the imagery

of clothes of righteousness and salvation, see Psalm 132:16; Isaiah 61:10; Zech. 3:3-5; Rev. 3:4-5; Rev. 19:7-8.<sup>18</sup>

**JNTC:** Kings would sometimes give banquets for their subjects and invite them all, regardless of status, providing suitable clothing for those unable to afford it. Therefore the one not wearing what the king had provided was without excuse. For the meaning of wedding clothes, see Rv 19:8.<sup>19</sup>

Notice that he was speechless! I hear some folk say that they don't need to receive Christ, that they will take their chances before God, that they intend to argue their case. Well, our Lord said that this fellow without the wedding garment was *speechless*.<sup>20</sup>

**Spurgeon:** The King addressed him kindly enough: He saith unto him, "Friend." Perhaps, after all, he did not intend to insult the King; therefore he called him "friend." He pretended to be a friend, therefore the King addressed him as such. Still, it was a grave outrage that he had committed, and he must account for it: "How camest thou hither not having a wedding garment?" "Was it by accident or design? Did not the keeper of the wardrobe tell thee about the garments provided for all my guests? Didst thou not feel like a speckled bird as thou didst see all thy companions in wedding array, while thine own garb ill became this festal hall? If thou art an enemy, how camest thou in hither? Was there no other place in which to defy me than in my own palace? Was there no other time for this insult than my Son's wedding day? What hast thou to say as an explanation or excuse for thy strange conduct? "Notice, how personal the question is. The King addresses him as though he had been the only one present. And he was speechless. He had a fair opportunity of excusing himself if he could; but he was awed by the King's majesty, and convicted by his own conscience. No evidence needed to be given against him; he stood before the whole company, self-condemned, guilty of open and undeniable disloyalty. The original says, "he was muzzled." He may have talked glibly enough before the King came in; he had not a word to say afterwards. Eloquent silence that! Why did he not even then fall on his knees, and seek forgiveness for his daring crime? Alas! pride made him incapable of repentance; he would not yield even at the last moment. There is no defense for a man who is in the Church of Christ, but whose heart is not right towards God. The King still comes in to see the guests who have accepted his royal invitation to his Son's wedding. Woe be to any whom he finds without the wedding garment!

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<sup>18</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>19</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:10). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>20</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:116). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

### **Matthew 22:13**

**Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Here is where the idiom, or the mechanic of the parable yields to the reality which Christ is focusing on. He is obviously taking about something far broader in impact than simply a wedding and a breach of etiquette.

Saul of Tarsus: At first would have tried to come by his own righteousness, but was confronted on Damascus Road and accepted Christ's robe of righteousness (Rom 10:1-13; Phil 3:7-9; Acts 4:12).

This parable shows the need to be properly attired for the wedding feast. A lot of prophetic overtones: the word going out twice, first to Israel and then the Gentiles; the righteousness required...

**[Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth]** The king sent the insulting guest into prison and torment to pay for his crime against his ruler. This is part of the point illustrated, teaching again the punishment of those who reject Christ (Matthew 8:12; Matthew 11:20-24; Matthew 13:40-50; Matthew 24:51; Matthew 25:41-46).

**JNTC: Outside in the dark**, literally, "into outer darkness." This seems to suggest an after-death state different from Gey-Hinnom (5:22N), Sh'ol (Hades, 11:23N) or heaven; the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory is partly based on this verse.

**In that place ....** Verses 13b–14 are Yeshua's comment on the story, not the remarks of the king.<sup>21</sup>

**Bind him hand and foot** is a vivid picture of the man's inability to participate in Christ's kingdom. Someone claiming to belong at the wedding while refusing to wear the correct garments was similar to the Israelites who claimed to be God's people while refusing to obey Him. This man was an impostor, and when he was discovered (as all impostors will be), he was cast ... into outer darkness, referring to the judgment (8:12; 25:30).

**Spurgeon:** He had, by his action, if not in words, said, "I am a free man, and will do as I like." So the king said to the servants "Bind him." Pinion him; let him never be free again. He had made too free with holy things; he had actively insulted the King, he had lifted up his hand in rebellion, and dared to set his foot within the King's palace: "Bind him hands and foot." Prepare the criminal for execution; let there be no possibility of the rebel's escape. He is where he ought not to be: "Take him away." The King's palace is no place for traitors. Sometimes this sentence of excommunication is executed by the church, when deceivers are put out of the ranks of the Lord's people by just discipline; but it is more fully carried out in the hour of death. It is worthy of note that the word for

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<sup>21</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:13). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.



"servants" in this verse is not the same as that used in verses 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10. There it is *douloi*, here it is *diakonoi*, "ministers", meaning the angels, whose business it is especially to gather out of Christ's kingdom "all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Mt 13:41), "and sever the wicked from among the just" (Mt 13:49). The man in the parable had refused the robe of light, so the king says to his servants, "Cast him into outer darkness." Cast him away, as men throw weeds over the garden wall, or shake off vipers into the fire. Cast him far away from the banquet-hall where torches flame and lamps are bright, "into outer darkness." It will be all the darker to him now that he has seen the light within. His daring insolence deserves the most signal punishment: he is appointed to a place where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." It will be no place of repentance, for the tears shed there will not be those of godly sorrow for sin; but hot scalding streams from eyes that flash with the fire of rebellion and envy burning in unsubdued hearts. The "gnashing of teeth" shows the character of the "weeping." The outcast from God would gnash his teeth in all the fury of disappointed hatred, which had been foiled in its attempt to bring dishonor upon the King in connection with his Son's wedding. Those who are professedly Christian, and yet really unbelieving and disobedient, will have such a doom as is here described. May the Lord in mercy save all of us from such a fearful fate!

### **Matthew 22:14**

**For many are called, but few are chosen.**

**[For many are called, but few are chosen]** This is the point illustrated by the parable. All are called to salvation (Matthew 11:28; John 3:16; Rev. 22:17), but few will finally be saved (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-30).

**Many are called, but few are chosen.** Our Saviour often uses this expression. It was probably proverbial. The Jews had been called, but few of them had been chosen to life. The great mass of the nation were wicked; and showed by their lives that they were not chosen to salvation. The Gentiles also were invited to be saved, Isaiah 45:22. Nation after nation has been called; but few, few have yet showed that they were real Christians, the elect of God. It is also true, that many who are in the church may prove to be without the wedding garment, and show at last that they were not the chosen of God. This remark in the 14th verse is in reference from the *whole parable*, and not of the part about the man without the wedding garment. It does not mean, therefore, that the great mass in the church are simply called and not chosen, or are hypocrites; but the great mass *in the human family*, in the time of Christ, who had been called, had rejected the mercy of God.<sup>22</sup>

**McGee:** Whether or not you accept the wedding garment is up to you, but Christ has provided it for you. The invitation has gone out to everyone, but you will have to come on the King's terms.

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<sup>22</sup> Barnes' Notes

Now the enemies of Christ will make their final onslaught, their final attack upon the Lord Jesus. The Herodians will come first, the Sadducees will come next, and finally the Pharisees will come. Then our Lord will question the Pharisees—and they will try to get away from Him as quickly as they can. That marks the final break, and in chapter 23 we will hear Him denounce them.

The Herodians will come with the question of paying tribute to Caesar. The Sadducees will come with a question regarding the resurrection. And the Pharisees will come with their question concerning the great commandment of the Law. We will see the marvelous way in which our Lord answers these men. May I say that I consider one of the proofs of His deity is the way in which He deals with the enemy.<sup>23</sup>

**8-14. The wedding banquet**, however, was prepared. Since **those** who were first **invited** had rejected the invitation, opportunity to attend was then given to a broader group. Though the invitation was extended to **both good and bad**, individual preparation was still necessary. This was evidenced by the fact that one guest at the banquet had not made adequate preparation. He had failed to appropriate what the king provided for he **was not wearing** the proper **wedding clothes**. (Apparently the king gave them all wedding clothes as they arrived, for they came off **the streets** [v. 10]. A person must respond not only outwardly, but also he must be rightly related to God the King by appropriating all the King provides.) Consequently this guest was cast out into a place of separation and suffering. (For comments on **weeping and gnashing of teeth**, see 13:42.) While the kingdom had now been expanded to include individuals from all races and backgrounds (**many are invited**), there is an election (**few are chosen**). And yet individual response is essential.<sup>24</sup>

**Election, Free Will**—The Jews had the first opportunity to be part of God’s kingdom. Having rejected Jesus, they will discover that the believing Gentiles, whom they considered to be last, will join the Jewish faithful remnant as members of God’s elect. The inheritance of God is given not as earthly inheritances are, by priority of birth and seniority, but by God’s good pleasure. People have freedom to reject God’s invitation through indifference, wrong priorities, and hostility. God’s invitation continues to go out without preconditions as to membership in social classes or achievement of ethical standards. Election depends on God’s grace to all people, not on accident of birth or human works. Acceptance of God’s invitation must be in accord with His standard of repentance. Without meeting this standard, one faces expulsion and judgment. In free exercise of will humans respond to God’s call to join the elect. Proper response in faith and repentance means a person is among the elect.<sup>25</sup>

**The Church, God’s Kingdom**—The kingdom of heaven includes those whom others reject. Entrance into God’s kingdom depends on His goodness, not on social rank or good

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<sup>23</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:116). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

v. verse

<sup>24</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:71). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>25</sup>Disciple’s Study Bible

deeds. The kingdom's membership is limited. Just being part of the human race or having a vague belief in some kind of God does not qualify you for membership. You must accept God's invitation on His conditions of repentance and faith. See note on 21:31-32.

**ESV: Many** (Gk. *polloi*) **are called** means that many have been invited to the wedding feast. But not all those invited are actually the ones who are supposed to be there, because **few are chosen**. This has been described as the doctrine of a "general calling": the gospel is proclaimed to all people everywhere, both those who will believe and those who will not. However, Paul also mentions another kind of calling, an effective calling from God that comes powerfully to individuals and brings a positive response. When the gospel is proclaimed, only some are effectively called—that is, those who are the elect, who respond with true faith (1 Cor. 1:24, 26–28). This is consistent with Jesus' statement that "few are chosen," for the ones "chosen" (Gk. *eklektos*, "selected, chosen") are "the elect," a term used by Jesus to refer to his true disciples (cf. Matt. 11:27; 24:22, 24, 31; on the theme of election, see note on Rom. 9:11).

**Yashanet.com: For many are called, but few are chosen.**

This would allude to His parable of the sower as discussed in [chapter 13](#). Many hear the Torah preached, but few truly adhere to it. See also Matthew 7:13-14.

The "call" of God can be traced to the Shema (Deuteronomy 6) which is a call to enter the Kingdom. (See comments to verse 37 below.) The Shema can be considered God's "plan of salvation," as it gives instruction to place our trust in the One true God, and to seek Him and be conformed to His image, by being both hearers and doers of His Torah. All of these principles are reinforced in the various "New Testament" letters.

**Spurgeon:** All who hear that gospel are called, but it does not come with power to every heart: but few are chosen. The result goes to show that, one way and another, the mass miss the wedding feast, and a few choice spirits find it by the choice of God's grace.

These words, of course, relate to the whole parable. Those who were "called" included the rejectors of the King's invitation; who, by their refusal, proved that they were not "chosen." Even amongst those who accepted the invitation there was one who was not "chosen", for he insulted the King in his own palace, and showed his enmity by his disobedience to the royal requirements. There were, however, "chosen" ones; and sufficient to fill the festal hall of the great King, and to render due honor to the wedding of his Son. Blessed are all they that shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb! May the writer and all his readers be amongst that chosen company, and for ever adore the distinguishing grace of God which has so highly favored them!

### **Matthew 22:15**

**Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.**

[entangle him in his talk] Three groups in this plot:

1. Herodians, a political party associated with the fortunes of the Herodian family who believed the doctrines of Herod the Great (Mark 3:6). They advocated submission to the Romans and freedom to conform to pagan

religion as well as to Judaism if it was more convenient and if it helped further their political fortunes and secular gain. The Herodians here could have been courtiers or servants of Herod who was at this time in Jerusalem (Luke 23:7-15).

2. The Sadducees who questioned Jesus but were also defeated (Matthew 22:23-33). See note, <sup>□</sup>Matthew 3:7.
3. The Pharisees who also took their turn in the plot but were quickly silenced (Matthew 22:34-46). They then received the most scathing rebuke in all history (Matthew 23). See note, <sup>□</sup>Matthew 3:7. Christ had put them to confusion by the 3 parables of Matthew 21:23-22:14. They refused to humble themselves and went out to plot afresh the death of their Messiah. Their hatred was further proved by a choice to team up with the Herodians whom they despised. They had been defeated in Christ's answers on religion, so now they questioned Him on state affairs (Matthew 22:17).<sup>26</sup>

**Spurgeon:** Then went the Pharisees: they must have perceived that the parable of the wedding, feast, like that of the wicked husbandmen, was spoken against them. Our Lord's words, however, did not move them to repentance; but only increased their malice and hatred against him. Their hearts were hardened, and their consciences soared; so they took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. They would not acknowledge that Christ was the wisdom of God and the power of God; had they done so, they would not have attempted their impossible task. They, saw that, to ensnare Jesus in his talk, was a difficult undertaking; and therefore they "took counsel" how they might accomplish it. If he had been as faulty as we are, they might have succeeded; for men who wish to entrap us in our talk need not consult much about how to do it.

This incident teaches us that men who can be as precise and formal as these Pharisees were, can yet deliberately set themselves to entangle an opponent. Great outward religiousness may consist with the meanest spirit.

### **Matthew 22:16**

**And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men.**

**The Herodians:** Herodians are pro-Roman Jews. Herod was not Jewish, he was Idumaeon, he was established there by Rome. They were joined with the Pharisees politically, as both were powerful groups even though they had some very substantial differences (the Pharisees being ultra Judaistic and the Herodians being pro-Roman).

The Herodians come to Him with a question which is actually related to their particular position. They were a political party which favored the house of Herod and looked to those of that house to deliver them from the Roman yoke. I don't think the Herodians

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<sup>26</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

could be considered a religious party at all because they were strongly political. However, the Pharisees apparently used them, and it is quite possible that many of the Pharisees were Herodians as well.<sup>27</sup>

Not the same group, only thing in common here is that they are both trying to entrap Jesus.

[**Master**] Greek: *didaskalos* (GSN-1320), teacher (Luke 9:38).

**[we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men]**

Fourfold description of Christ:

1. You are true (Greek: *alethes* (GSN-227), without reserve, sincere, truthful, frank, honest, genuine, and true).
2. You teach the Way of God in truth (Greek: *aletheia* (GSN-225), without pretence, falsehood, or deceit; with sincerity of mind and purpose; without hypocrisy and lust for personal gain).
3. You are fearless. You are not afraid of men or devils and never act with dread, panic, fear, or timidity as to the outcome of what you say or do.
4. You do not court human favor or look on the appearance of any man. You have no respect of persons.

**JNTC: The *P.rushim*** wanted the Jewish theocracy restored and opposed oppressor Rome and its taxes. **Herod's party**—political, not religious—supported the Herodian dynasty set up by Rome and encouraged abiding by the Roman tax laws; they were not usually friendly with the *P.rushim*. The **trap** consisted in putting together an alliance of convenience in which both would ask Yeshua's opinion, hoping his response would alienate him from one group or the other.<sup>28</sup>

**ESV: their disciples.** Probably those in training to become full members of the brotherhood of the Pharisees, and perhaps deceptively **sent** to appear as less of a threat than their masters. **Herodians.** A loosely organized group that sought to advance the political and economic influence of the Herodian family (c. 37 b.c.–a.d. 93). Although the Herodians and the Pharisees were adversaries in regard to many political and religious issues, they join forces here to combat the perceived threat to their power and status.

**Spurgeon:** They sent out unto him their disciples: they were probably ashamed to appear again in the presence of Christ, after his exposure of their conduct towards himself as the King's Son; so they dispatched a select detachment of their disciples, in the hope that the scholars might succeed where their teachers had failed. With the Herodians: the disciples of the Pharisees were to be reinforced by a company from an opposite section of the enemies of Christ. The united band could operate against Jesus from different sides.

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<sup>27</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:116). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>28</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:15). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

The Pharisees hated the rule of a foreign power, while the Herodians advocated the supremacy of Caesar. Differing as these two sections did, even to mutual hate, they for the time laid aside their own disputes, that they might in one way or another ensnare our Lord.

They began with fair speeches. They addressed Jesus by a title of respect, "Master": they only used the word in hypocrisy; but they professed to regard him as a teacher of the Law, and an authority on disputed points of doctrine or practice. They also admitted his sincerity and truthfulness: "We know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth." They further praised him for his fearlessness: "neither caress thou for any man." They then lauded him for his impartiality: "for thou regardest not the person of men." "Thou wilt speak without any regard for what Caesar, or Pilate, or Herod, or any of us may think, or say, or do." Thus did they try to throw him off his guard by what they uttered in sheer flattery. All that they said was true; but they did not mean it. From their lips it was mere cajolery. Let us take note that, when evil men are very loud in their praises of us, they usually have some wicked design against us. They fawn and flatter that they may deceive and destroy.

### **Matthew 22:17**

**Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?**

In asking this question, they thought that Jesus would have to side with one of the groups: either pro-Roman or pro-Temple.

**[tribute]** Greek: *kensos* (GSN-2778), poll tax.

**Caesar.** The Roman emperor. The name Caesar, after the time of Julius Caesar, became common to all the emperors, as Pharaoh was the common name of all the kings of Egypt. *The Caesar* that reigned at this time was *Tiberius*-a man distinguished for the grossest vices, and most disgusting and debasing sensuality.

**15-17** The Pharisees, a religious group, opposed the Roman occupation of Palestine. The Herodians, a political party, supported Herod Antipas and the policies instituted by Rome. Normally these two groups were bitter enemies, but here they united against Jesus. Thinking they had a foolproof plan to corner him, together their representatives asked Jesus about paying Roman taxes. If Jesus agreed that it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, the Pharisees would say he was opposed to God, the only King they recognized. If Jesus said the taxes should not be paid, the Herodians would hand him over to Herod on the charge of rebellion. In this case the Pharisees were not motivated by love for God's laws, and the Herodians were not motivated by love for Roman justice. Jesus' answer exposed their evil motives and embarrassed them both.

The Jews were required to pay taxes to support the Roman government. They hated this taxation because the money went directly into Caesar's treasury, where some of it went to

support the pagan temples and decadent life-style of the Roman aristocracy. Caesar's image on the coins was a constant reminder of Israel's subjection to Rome. They were not wanting His opinion. They had their own answer. It was a trick question. If He had said, "No, you are not to pay tribute to Caesar," He could be accused of being a traitor to Rome, and Rome was ruling over Israel at that time. If He had said, "Yes, you are to pay tribute to Caesar," He could not be the true Messiah. They thought that they had our Lord on the horns of a dilemma.

**15-17.** This incident illustrates that controversy often makes strange bedfellows. The religious leaders of Israel had one goal: to get rid of Jesus of Nazareth. They would do this through any means possible, even if it meant cooperating with lifelong enemies. **The Pharisees** were the purists of the nation who opposed Rome and all attempts by Rome to intrude into the Jewish way of life. But **the Herodians** actively supported the rule of Herod the Great and favored making changes with the times as dictated by Rome. But those issues were less important to them than the pressing issue of getting rid of Jesus. So they sent a delegation to try to trick Jesus.

They began by saying several nice things about Him, but their hypocrisy was obvious for they really did not believe in Him. Their question was, **Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?** Their cleverly devised question appeared to have no clear-cut answer. They thought they had trapped Jesus. If He answered that it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, He would be siding with the Romans against Israel and most Jews, including the Pharisees, would consider Him a traitor. If, however, He said taxes should not be paid to Rome, He could be accused of being a rebel who opposed the authority of Rome, and the Herodians would be against Him.<sup>29</sup>

### **Matthew 22:18**

**But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?**

"tribute money": Roman coins, more valuable.

[perceived their wickedness] Christ had the gifts of the Spirit and could read the minds of men (John 2:25; John 3:34; Isaiah 11:2).

[Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?] An exposing of His enemies before the people. Notice that He called them what they were—hypocrites.

### **Matthew 22:19**

**Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.**

[penny] Greek: denarion (GSN-1220)

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<sup>29</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:71). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**They brought unto him a penny**—A denarius: probably the ordinary capitation tax, though the poll tax in the law, Exodus 30:13, 14, was half a shekel, about twice as much as the denarius. The Roman denarius had the emperor's image with a proper legend stamped on one side of it. It was not therefore the sacred shekel which was to be paid for the repairs of the temple which was now demanded, but the regular tribute required by the Roman government.

It is notable that He used *their* coin. He didn't use His own coin. I think it is because He didn't have one.

### **Matthew 22:20**

**And he saith unto them, *Whose is this image and superscription?***

[**Whose is this image and superscription?**] He knew, but He wanted them to answer to their own confusion.

**Whose is this image and superscription?**—He knew well enough whose they were; but he showed the excellency of his wisdom, 3dly, in making them answer to their own confusion. They came to ensnare our Lord in his discourse, and now they are ensnared in their own. He who digs a pit for his neighbor ordinarily falls into it himself.

They were using the legal tender of the Roman government, and here it was a Roman coin.

### **Matthew 22:21**

**They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, *Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.***

Jesus avoided this trap by showing that we have dual citizenship (1 Peter 2:17). Our citizenship in the nation requires that we pay money for the services and benefits we receive. Our citizenship in the kingdom of heaven requires that we pledge to God our primary obedience and commitment.

[**Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's**] Since you know whose coin it is, then act honestly and give it back to Caesar, also rendering to God the things that are His. This was the sum of wisdom and relieved Him of a trying situation. If He had answered for Caesar the people would have turned against Him. If He had answered against Caesar He would have inflamed the Romans and the Herodians against Him. By His answer both God and Caesar retained what belonged to them and the people were edified by the manifestation of wisdom.

**Render therefore unto Caesar**—The conclusion is drawn from their own premises. You acknowledge this to be Caesar's coin; this coin is current, in your land; the currency of



this coin shows the country to be under the Roman government; and your acknowledgment that it is Caesar's proves you have submitted. Don't therefore be unjust; but render to Caesar the things which you acknowledge to be his; at the same time, be not impious, but render unto God the things which belong to God.

This answer is full of consummate wisdom. It establishes the limits, regulates the rights, and distinguishes the jurisdiction of the two empires of heaven and earth. The image of princes stamped on their coin denotes that temporal things belong all to their government. The image of God stamped on the soul denotes that all its faculties and powers belong to the Most High, and should be employed in his service.

But while the earth is agitated and distracted with the question of political rights and wrongs, the reader will naturally ask, What does a man owe to Caesar?—to the civil government under which he lives? Our Lord has answered the question—That which IS Caesar's. But what is it that is Caesar's? 1. Honour. 2. Obedience. And 3. Tribute.

1. The civil government under which a man lives, and by which he is protected, demands his honor and reverence.
2. The laws which are made for the suppression of evil doers, and the maintenance of good order, which are calculated to promote the benefit of the whole, and the comfort of the individual should be religiously obeyed.
3. The government that charges itself with the support and defense of the whole, should have its unavoidable expenses, however great, repaid by the people, in whose behalf they are incurred; therefore we should pay tribute.

But remember, if Caesar should intrude into the things of God, coin a new creed, or broach a new Gospel, and affect to rule the conscience, while he rules the state, in these things Caesar is not to be obeyed; he is taking the things of God, and he must not get them. Give not therefore God's things to Caesar, and give not Caesar's things to God. That which belongs to the commonwealth should, on no account whatever, be devoted to religious uses; and let no man think he has pleased God, by giving that to charitable or sacred uses which he has purloined from the state. The tribute of half a shekel, which the law, (Exodus 30:13, 14), required every person above twenty years of age to pay to the temple, was, after the destruction of the temple, in the time of Vespasian, paid into the emperor's exchequer. This sum, Melancthon supposes, amounted annually to THREE TONS OF GOLD.

**JNTC: Nu**, Greek *oun*. Paragraph 1 of the entry on “*oun*” in Arndt & Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, says, “Inferential, denoting that what it introduces is the result of or an inference from what precedes: so, therefore, consequently, accordingly, then.” The all-purpose Yiddish word “*nu*” (see 11:9N, Lk 12:42N) is often used with this meaning, but with the inflection, “Can't you figure it out for yourself?!”—thus conveying precisely the tone of Yeshua's answer.

With the answer itself compare Rav Shmu'el's Talmudic dictum (N'darim 28a), *Dina dimalkuta dina*—“The [secular] law of the [reigning Gentile] government is the Law [binding as *halakhah* on Jews].” And contrast the Messianic pretender, Y'hudah HaG'lili

(Ac 5:36&N), who, according to Josephus, said that people who paid Roman taxes were cowards (*Wars of the Jews* 2:8:1).<sup>30</sup>

**McGee:** This is an amazing answer because it involves more than just answering their question—and He certainly did that. In addition, He is saying that they did owe something to Caesar. They were using his coins, they walked down Roman roads, and Rome did provide them with a measure of peace; so they did owe something to Rome. Therefore, render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. But there is another department: Render unto *God* the things that are *God's*.<sup>31</sup>

**18-22. Jesus** was aware of the hypocrisy in their approach and also of the implications of His answer. He therefore answered their question by demonstrating that government does have a rightful place in everyone's life and that one can be in subjection to government and God at the same time. He asked them to give Him a **coin used to pay the tax**. A Roman **denarius**, with its image of Caesar, the Roman emperor, made it obvious they were under Roman authority and taxation. (One coin inscription reads, "Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the Divine Augustus.") Therefore the taxes must be paid: **Give to Caesar what is Caesar's**.

But Jesus also reminded them that a sphere of authority belongs to God: **Give to God what is God's**. Individuals are to be subject *also* to His authority. Man has both political *and* spiritual responsibilities. **Amazed** at Jesus' answer, both the Pharisees and the Herodians were silenced.<sup>32</sup>

**Stewardship, Taxes**—Religious devotion and stewardship to God does not excuse us from responsibilities to civil government. The scribes' intended trap for Jesus backfired. They wanted a reason to keep their money and not support a government they disliked. Jesus said they must give government what was due the government for services rendered. Government loyalty must not exceed or control loyalty to God, but loyalty to God does not eliminate loyalty and responsibility to country.

**ESV: render to Caesar . . . and to God.** Jesus is not establishing a political kingdom in opposition to Caesar, so his followers should pay taxes and obey civil laws. There are matters that belong to the realm of civil government, and there are other matters that belong to God's realm. Jesus does not here specify which matters belong in which realm, but many Christian ethicists today teach that, in general, *civil government* should allow freedom in matters of religious doctrine, worship, and beliefs about God, and the *church* should not attempt to use the power of government to enforce allegiance to any specific religious viewpoint. All forms of the Christian church throughout the world today support some kind of separation between matters of church and matters of state. By contrast, totalitarian governments usually try to suppress the church and subsume everything under

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<sup>30</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:21). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>31</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:117). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>32</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:72). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

the realm of the state. And some extreme Islamic movements have tried to abolish independent civil government and subsume everything under the control of Islamic religious leaders. Historically, when the church and state have become too closely aligned, the result most often has been the compromise of the church.

### **Matthew 22:22**

**When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.**

Caesar's picture was on the coin.

**When they had heard these words, they marvelled**—And well they might—never man spake like this man. By this decision, CAESAR is satisfied—he gets his own to the uttermost farthing. GOD is glorified—his honor is in every respect secured. And the PEOPLE are edified—one of the most difficult questions that could possibly come before them is answered in such a way as to relieve their consciences, and direct their conduct.

Obviously, this reveals that our Lord did not fall into their trap. Although they did owe Caesar something, that did not remove their responsibility to God.

**16-22** Again attempts are made to coerce Jesus into an indefensible position either with the people or with the authorities. The Herodians inquire about the propriety of paying tribute to Caesar. The populace despised the tribute exacted from them. Jesus requests a denarius. His question about the image and superscription concerned ownership. The Herodians admitted imperial ownership, prompting Jesus to suggest the obvious, namely, that Caesar should receive what is rightfully his, while God receives those things that are of spiritual significance (cf. Rom 13:1-7).<sup>33</sup>

**Christian Ethics, Church and State**—The Pharisees intended to trap Jesus in a position which lent loyalty to Caesar and not to God. They wanted to level a charge of blasphemy against Jesus. By getting Him to declare nonallegiance to Caesar, they could get Him charged with a civil crime. Both attempts failed. Jesus' response does not resolve all of our questions regarding the responsibilities we have with church and state, but He does provide some beginning places to inform us. His answer implies we do have responsibilities to the state. These extend only to those "things" that are Caesar's. A yet higher allegiance pulls upon us, too. We must be faithful to those things of God. See note on Ro 13:1-7.<sup>34</sup>

**Spurgeon:** They had some sense left even if they had no feeling. They saw that their plot had ignominiously failed; they marveled at the wisdom with which Christ had baffled their cunning; they knew that it was hopeless to continue the conflict: so they left him, and went their way. Their way was not his way. They had already admitted, in their

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<sup>33</sup> Believer's Study Bible

<sup>34</sup> Disciple's Study Bible

a flattering speech, that he was a true teacher of God's way; and now they. completed their own condemnation by leaving him, and going their own way.

Lord, save us from following their evil example! Rather, may we cleave to Christ, and go his way!

### **Matthew 22:23**

**The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,**

After the Pharisees and Herodians had failed to trap Jesus, the Sadducees smugly stepped in to try. They did not believe in the resurrection because the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) has no direct teaching on it. The Pharisees had never been able to come up with a convincing argument from the Pentateuch for the resurrection, and the Sadducees thought they had trapped Jesus for sure. But Jesus was about to show them otherwise (see Matthew 22:31-32 for Jesus' answer).

**JNTC: *Sh.eilah*.** See *JNT* Glossary entry. The word in Hebrew means simply "question," but among Jews speaking English it means "a question about *Torah* or *halakhah*," usually posed to someone expected to be able to give an authoritative answer. Thus "*sh.eilot utshuvot*" ("questions and answers") is the Hebrew term for the Responsa literature in Judaism. Verse 17 contains a *sh.eilah*; see also vv. 35–36, 41, 46.<sup>35</sup>

### **Yashanet.com: The same day came to him the Sadducees**

We have very little information on the teachings of the Saducees. The Talmud and subsequent Jewish texts reflect the Pharisaic position on issues, as they came to complete power (and the Saducees to extinction) not long after Yeshua's time with the destruction of the Temple. One thing we do know as that the Saducees did not share the same views about the afterlife as their Pharisee opponents. This is also seen in Acts chapter 23, where Paul, who was a Pharisee, made clever use of this point to escape a difficult situation.

**Spurgeon:** The same day: there was no rest for Jesus; as soon as one set of enemies was driven away, another company marched up to attack him. He had silenced the Pharisees and the Herodians; now there came to him the Sadducees, the broad churchmen, the rationalists of our Savior's day: which say that there is no resurrection. They rejected a great deal more of the teaching of the Scriptures than this one point of the resurrection; but this is specially mentioned here as it was the subject on which they hoped to entrap or confuse the Savior. The Sadducees "say that there is no resurrection"; yet they came to Christ to ask what would happen, in a certain contingency, "in the resurrection." They evidently thought that they could state a case which would bring into contempt the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. They might have taken warning from the experience of the Pharisees and the Herodians; but doubtless they felt so

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<sup>35</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:23). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

sure of their own position that they expected to succeed though the others had so conspicuously failed.

### **Matthew 22:24**

**Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.**

Quoting Deut 25:5.

**Raise up seed unto his brother**—This law is mentioned Deuteronomy 25:5. The meaning of the expression is, that the children produced by this marriage should be reckoned in the genealogy of the deceased brother, and enjoy his estates. The word seed should be always translated children or posterity. There is a law precisely similar to this among the Hindoos.

**JNTC:** The question posed by the *Tz. dukim* (see 3:7N) is based on the law of *yibbum* (“levirate marriage”), set forth in Deuteronomy 25:5–10 and elaborated in Talmud tractate *Yevamot*, wherein the brother of a man who dies without children is expected to marry his brother’s widow in order to maintain the family line (as the *Tz. dukim* correctly state). The firstborn son of the new marriage would count as the dead man’s child for inheritance purposes. Should the *yavam* (brother-in-law) refuse to marry his brother’s widow, Deuteronomy 25:7–10 provides for a ceremony called *chalitzah* which both humiliates him and releases the widow from her obligation to marry him. The stories of Onan and Tamar (Genesis 38) and of Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4) are biblical examples of *yibbum* and *chalitzah* respectively. Curiously, rabbinic decrees over the centuries have reversed the *Torah*’s priorities; the Chief Rabbinate of Israel requires *chalitzah* and bans *yibbum* entirely.<sup>36</sup>

### **Matthew 22:25**

**Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:**

Obviously a contrived question meant to entrap Jesus.

**[seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother]** Rabbis taught that if a woman has two husbands in this life she will have only the first in the next life. It is very likely that the Sadducees increased the number, merely to make the question the more difficult.

**Spurgeon:** These Sadducees may have known such a case as they stated, though it is extremely unlikely; more probably, this was one of the stock stories they were in the habit of telling in order to cast ridicule upon the resurrection. They had no belief in

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<sup>36</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:24). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

spiritual beings; therefore, they supposed that, if there were a future state, it would be similar to the present. Having stated their case, they put to the Savior this perplexing question: "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her." They doubtless thought that this question would puzzle Christ, as it had puzzled others to whom it had been put; but he had no more difficulty in answering this than he had with the previous esquires.

### **Matthew 22:26**

**Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.**

### **Matthew 22:27**

**And last of all the woman died also.**

### **Matthew 22:28**

**Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.**

Their way of poking fun at the Pharisaical belief of a resurrection. They are not trying to get at this Levitical law, but rather the idea of a resurrection.

Jesus does not attack a lot of things here, instead He focuses on one issue. He draws upon the one common base that they all have, the Torah. The Sadducees did not accept the rest of the Old Testament, but they did accept the five books of Moses, the Torah or what we call the Pentateuch.

**McGee:** The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They used a ridiculous illustration to try to trap the Lord. Imagine a woman who had had seven brothers for her husbands! She must have lived in Hollywood to accomplish this. Their question was, "Whose wife shall she be?" Now the Sadducees erred in two respects, and the Lord brings this to their attention.<sup>37</sup>

**23-28. The Sadducees** were the next religious group to try to discredit Jesus and His ministry. The Sadducees were the "religious liberals" of their day for they said **there is** no resurrection or angels or spirits (Acts 23:8). Purposely their question centered on the doctrine of resurrection and its implications in a particular case. They cited the story of a woman who married a man who later died. In accordance with the levirate law (Deut. 25:5-10), her husband's brother took her as his wife (in order to perpetuate the dead brother's line). But he too died shortly thereafter. This happened with seven brothers.

The Sadducees' question therefore was, At the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her? The Sadducees implied that heaven was simply an extension of things on earth men most enjoy, such as marital relationships. But

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<sup>37</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:117). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

if this woman had seven husbands, how could her marital relationship be possible? The Sadducees were trying to make the resurrection appear ridiculous.<sup>38</sup>

### **Matthew 22:29**

**Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.**

He does not deal with the issue deeply, He just points out that they are all messed up.

**[Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God]** You are deceived in thinking that there will be marriages in the next life as in this one, and in believing that there will be no resurrection (Matthew 22:23). You do not know either the Scriptures or the power of God to resurrect men. Men and women in the resurrection will not marry.

The Sadducees were ignorant in two spheres: ignorant of the Scriptures and ignorant of the power of God. Ignorance of the Scriptures and ignorance of the power of God caused them to bring up such a ridiculous illustration.<sup>39</sup>

**Holy Scripture, Authoritative**—Scriptures are the only source of authority for beliefs and doctrines. The Sadducees prided themselves on being the strict interpreters of Scripture. They were unwilling to believe what they could not find in the books of Moses. Thus they did not believe in resurrection (v. 23) and angels and spirits (Ac 23:8). Jesus saw in them an illustration of the fact that false doctrine is built on a false understanding of Scripture. They were more interested in building proper logical connections and constructing theological puzzles to trap Jesus than they were in discovering and obeying the truth. Scripture calls us to careful study of all its words so we may understand more fully God's teachings for us. Proper understanding of Scripture may well correct long-cherished ideas and astonish us (v. 33).

### **Matthew 22:30**

**For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.**

First, Jesus points out that the concept of marriage in the resurrection is just not Scriptural. He does not say that angels are sex-less, just that they do not marry.

**[as the angels of God in heaven]** The purpose of marriage is to replenish the earth and keep the race going. Resurrected saints and angels do not die and do not need to marry to keep their kind in existence. Hence, there is no marriage among angels or resurrected

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<sup>38</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:72). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>39</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:117). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

men and women. Jesus did not say that angels were sexless or that they could not marry and have offspring with women. That fallen angels did leave their own first estate and marry the daughters of men and produce races of giants is clear from Genesis 6:1-4, notes. That those who committed fornication are now in hell is clear in Jude 1:6-7; 2 Peter 2:4. Angels are capable of many human activities.

The Sadducees asked Jesus what marriage would be like in heaven. Jesus said it was more important to understand God's power than know what heaven will be like. In every generation and culture, ideas of eternal life tend to be based on images and experiences of present life. Jesus answered that these faulty ideas are caused by ignorance of God's Word. We must not make up our own ideas about eternity and heaven by thinking of it and God in human terms. We should concentrate more on our relationship with God than about what heaven will look like. Eventually we will find out, and it will be far beyond our greatest expectations.

**McGee:** He is not saying that they are angels. Neither will *we* be angels in heaven. But we will be like angels in that we will not marry in heaven. In other words, in heaven there will not be any necessity to continue the race by means of birth. This does not mean that a husband and wife who were very close down here cannot be together in heaven. If they want to be together, of course they can be together. But, my friend, think of the ones who wouldn't want to be together. They won't have to be together. However, they both will have new dispositions, and probably they will get along lots better up there than they did down here!<sup>40</sup>

**29-30** The Sadducees now tried their hand at entrapping Jesus. They employed an old trick question which doubtless baffled their Pharisee friends. The question involved the law of levirate marriage (cf. Deut 25:5, 6). According to this law, one of the brothers of a deceased and childless brother was to marry his widow and raise up seed to him. The Sadducees hypothesize about a case involving seven such adjustments and conclude by asking how those relationships can be resolved in the resurrection. They ask this because they do not believe in the possibility of the resurrection. Jesus responds that they err because they neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God. He proceeds to reveal that there is no marriage in heaven, men being like (though not identical with) the angels.<sup>41</sup>

**ESV:** The Sadducees are making two errors: (1) they do not know . . . the Scriptures well enough to know that Scripture teaches the reality of the resurrection, and (2) they do not know the power of God to create a much more wonderful world than anyone can now imagine. They neither marry nor are given in marriage implies that the present institution of marriage will not continue in heaven. But are like angels in heaven means living without an exclusive lifelong marriage commitment to one person. This teaching might at first seem discouraging to married couples who are deeply in love with each other in this life, but surely people will know their loved ones in heaven (cf. 8:11; Luke 9:30, 33), and

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<sup>40</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:117). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>41</sup> Believer's Study Bible



the joy and love of close relationships in heaven will be more rather than less than it is here on earth. Jesus' reference to "the power of God" suggests that God is able to establish relationships of even deeper friendship, joy, and love in the life to come. God has not revealed anything more about this, though Scripture indicates that the eternal glories awaiting the redeemed will be more splendid than anyone can begin to ask or think (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9; Eph. 3:20).

**Spurgeon:** "In the resurrection" our Lord implied that there is a resurrection; he did not even stay to prove that truth, but went on to speak of the resurrection life as being of a higher order than our present natural life: "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Our Savior's answer struck at another Sadducean error; his questioners did not believe in angels. Jesus did not attempt to prove the existence of angels; but took that fact also for granted, by saying that, "in the resurrection "men" are as the angels of God in heaven." He did not say that they are changed into angels; but, as Luke records his words, "they are equal unto the angels." They are spiritual beings, as Paul explains in (1Co 15:1-58.)

### **Matthew 22:31**

**But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,**

The real issue is the resurrection, which Jesus addresses head on.

**Have ye not read**—This quotation is taken from Exodus 3:6, 16; and as the five books of Moses were the only part of Scripture which the Sadducees acknowledged as Divine, our Lord, by confuting them from those books, proved the second part of his assertion, "Ye are ignorant of those very scriptures which ye profess to hold sacred."

### **Matthew 22:32**

**I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**

It is amazing that the God of the universe is calling Himself by the names of these three men. Note that He does not say that He was the God of.. But rather is the God of .. Present tense, not just that God is in the present tense, but that those three men are in the present tense, not past.

**[I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob]** Quoted from Exodus 3:6,16. Sadducees held that the books of Moses were the only Scriptures. Christ used them to prove His point. If Jesus claimed these three men were still alive several hundred years after their physical death, then all who cease to live among mortals are still alive. Sadducees believed in eternal annihilation at death, so Christ's answer (that the dead still live and that God is not the God of dead bodies but of living souls) not only refuted the annihilation doctrine, but proved they did not know the Scriptures.

[**living**] Jesus here teaches immortality of the soul and that God is the God of all departed souls. In Luke it is stated that "all live unto Him" (Luke 20:38). Many other scriptures teach immortality of the soul (Luke 16:19-31; Luke 23:43; Matthew 17:3; 2 Cor. 4:18; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-24; 1 Peter 3:4; 1 Peter 4:6; Hebrews 12:22-23; Rev. 6:9-11; Isaiah 14:9; Ephes. 4:8-10).

**I am the God of Abraham**—Let it be observed, that Abraham was dead upwards of 300 years before these words were spoken to Moses: yet still God calls himself the God of Abraham, etc. Now Christ properly observes that God is not the God of the dead, (that word being equal, in the sense of the Sadducees, to an eternal annihilation), but of the living; it therefore follows that, if he be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, these are not dead, but alive; alive with God, though they had ceased, for some hundreds of years, to exist among mortals. We may see, from this, that our Lord combats and confutes another opinion of the Sadducees, viz. that there is neither angel nor spirit; by showing that the soul is not only immortal, but lives with God, even while the body is detained in the dust of the earth, which body is afterwards to be raised to life, and united with its soul by the miraculous power of God, of which power they showed themselves to be ignorant when they denied the possibility of a resurrection.<sup>42</sup>

**JNTC:** Yeshua derives the doctrine of resurrection from the *Torah* because the *Tz. dukim* accepted only the Pentateuch as absolutely authoritative. This is why he cites Exodus 3:6 rather than the more obvious Scriptural refutations at Isaiah 26:19 (quoted below), Daniel 12:2 (especially) and Job 19:26. Compare the following extract from the Talmud:

“*Minim* [“sectarians”] asked *Rabban Gamli’el*: ‘How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, will resurrect the dead?’ He answered them from the *Torah*, the Prophets and the Writings, yet they did not accept it [as conclusive proof]. From the *Torah*, as it is written, ‘The Lord said to Moses, “Here, you will sleep with your fathers and rise up”’ (Deuteronomy 31:16). ‘But maybe,’ they said to him [by way of objection], ‘the verse reads, “and the people will rise up”’ [as in fact it does read]. From the Prophets, as it is written, ‘Your dead will live and arise with my dead body. Wake up, sing, you who dwell in the dust! for your dew is like the dew on herbs, and the earth will throw out the shades of its dead’ (Isaiah 26:19). ‘But maybe this refers to the dead whom Ezekiel resurrected?’ (Ezekiel 37). From the Writings, as it is written, ‘And the roof of your mouth, like the best wine of my beloved, that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak’ (Song of Songs 7:9 [taken to refer to Israel]). ‘But maybe it means only that their lips will move ...’ [They did not accept his proof] until he cited this verse: ‘... which *Adonai* swore to your fathers to give to them’ (Deuteronomy 11:21)—not to you, but to them [to your fathers, who are now dead]; hence resurrection is derived from the *Torah*....” (Sanhedrin 90b)

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<sup>42</sup> Adam Clarke’s Commentary

The passage gains interest from the fact that “*minim*” often means Messianic Jews, and *Rabban Gamli’el* is mentioned in the New Testament (Ac 5:34&N, Ac 22:3). Travers Herford suggests they did not reject the doctrine of resurrection but questioned its derivability from the *Tanakh* (*Christianity in the Talmud*, pp. 232–233). I think these *minim* were other sectarians and not Messianic Jews at all, for, Herford’s reasoning notwithstanding, there is no reason why Messianic Jews would object to deriving resurrection from the Scriptures.

There are several other passages in the same part of tractate Sanhedrin which derive resurrection from the *Tanakh*. One example:

“Our rabbis taught: ‘It is written, “I kill, and I make alive” (Deuteronomy 32:39). I could understand: I kill one person and give life to a different one, as the world goes on [some die, others are born]. This is why Scripture says [immediately afterwards, in the same verse], “I wound, and I heal.” Just as the wounding and healing [clearly] refer to the same person, likewise putting to death and bringing to life refer to the same person. This refutes those who claim that resurrection is not implied by the *Torah*.’ ” (Sanhedrin 91b)<sup>43</sup>

This is a devastating statement! What about those who have gone before? What about Abraham today? Well, he is just as much Abraham today as he ever was. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been simply transferred from earth to another place. They are not dead; they are alive. And this is true of your loved ones who are in Christ and are waiting in heaven for you. This is a glorious truth!

**ESV: I am the God of Abraham, and . . . Isaac, and . . . Jacob.** The present tense in the quotation from Ex. 3:6 logically implies that when God spoke these words to Moses, God was still in covenant relationship with the patriarchs, even though they had been dead for centuries. If the Pentateuch thus implies that the patriarchs are still alive, and if the rest of the OT points to the resurrection (as it does), then the Sadducees should recognize God's power to raise the patriarchs and all of God's people to enjoy his eternal covenant in a life beyond this one.

### **Matthew 22:33**

**And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.**

**29-33.** The Sadducees’ problems arose, Jesus said, because they did **not know the Scriptures or the power of God**. This was a strong denunciation of religious leaders, for of all people certainly they should have known God’s Word and His power. God’s Word taught the resurrection, and His power can bring people back to life. Jesus then corrected the Sadducees’ two false notions: (1) **Heaven**, He said, is not simply an extension of the pleasures people enjoy on earth. In fact in the eternal state **marriage** will be unnecessary. Once individuals have received glorified bodies no longer subject to death, the need for procreation, one of the basic purposes for marriage, will no longer exist. Believers in

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<sup>43</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:31). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

glorified bodies **will be like the angels in** that regard, for angels do not reproduce themselves. (He did not say people will *become* angels.) Jesus did not answer all the questions about the eternal state and the eternal relationship of those married in this life. But He did answer the immediate question raised by the Sadducees. (2) A more important issue raised by the Sadducees pertained to **the resurrection**. If they had read and understood the Old Testament Scriptures, they would have clearly seen there is a future life and that when a person dies he continues to exist. To the Sadducees the resurrection was ridiculous because they believed death ended man's existence. But Jesus quoted a statement God had made directly to Moses at the burning bush: **I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob** (Ex. 3:6). If the Sadducees were correct and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died and were no longer present anywhere, the words "I am" should have been "I was." The use of the present tense, "I am," implied that God is still the God of these patriarchs for they are alive with God and ultimately will share in the resurrection of the righteous. As a result of this encounter, **the crowds . . . were astonished** (exoplēssonto; cf. comments on Matt. 7:28; and cf. *ethaumasān* in 22:22) all the more **at His teaching**. Jesus thus successfully answered and defeated these religious experts.<sup>44</sup>

### **Matthew 22:34**

**But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.**

[**silence**] Believers are promised such wisdom (Luke 21:15; 1 Cor. 12:8; James 1:5; John 14:12; cp. Acts 7:10).

**They were gathered together**—they came together with one accord, or, for the same purpose; i.e. of ensnaring him in his discourse, as the Sadducees had done, Matthew 22:23. The Codex Bezae and several of the Itala have, against him. *Camēn togidre into oon*.—Old MS. Eng, Bib.<sup>45</sup>

**Spurgeon:** The multitude that had listened to Christ, and had been "astonished" at his answers to the Sadducees, would soon publish the tidings of their defeat. When the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they doubtless felt pleased that their natural enemies had been routed, but grieved that Jesus had again proved victorious in argument. He had, in one day, baffled the chief priests and elders of the people, Pharisees and their disciples, Herodians and Sadducees. If he continued to prevail, all the people would be won over to his side. So once more they met in consultation: they were gathered together. They must think of some fresh device, some new plan for his overthrow. How persevering wicked men are in their evil courses! While we deplore their wickedness, let us imitate their persistency.

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cf. *confer*, compare

<sup>44</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:72). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>45</sup>Adam Clarke's Commentary

## **Matthew 22:35**

**Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,**

Now the Herodians and the Sadducees have been silenced. The Pharisees have been watching Jesus and these two groups. The Pharisees were a religio-political party. They wanted to see the kingdom of David brought back into power in order to rid themselves of Rome. In restoring the kingdom they could join the Herodians, but as a religious party they opposed the Sadducees. The Pharisees would correspond to the conservative wing of the church today, and the Sadducees would correspond to the liberal wing of the church. The Pharisees, like the other two groups, were out to trap the Lord, and so their representative, a lawyer, posed a very interesting question. The Pharisees have a huddle, then they plan a strategy and put forth this very clever lawyer, that is, a scribe, an expert in the Mosaic Law, to propound a question<sup>46</sup>

**[lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him]** First of eight times in Scripture (Matthew 22:35; Luke 7:30; Luke 10:25; Luke 11:45-52; Luke 14:3; Titus 3:13). They were scribes.

**A Lawyer.** This does not mean one that *practised law*, as among us; but one learned or skilled in the law of Moses. Mark calls him "one of the scribes." This means the same thing. The scribes were men of learning; particularly men skilled in the law of Moses. He had heard him reasoning with the Sadducees, and perceived that he answered them well; and he was thought to be better qualified to hold a debate with him, (Mark.) This man was probably of a candid turn of mind; perhaps willing to know the truth; and not entering very fully into their malicious intentions, but acting as their agent, Mark 12:34.<sup>47</sup>

**Spurgeon:** Apparently, the result of their conference was that they selected one of their number to put to Jesus another enquiry: one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question. Mark says that this man was one of the scribes, one of those constantly engaged in copying the Law, and also one who explained its meaning to the people. He was a gentleman "learned in the Law." He came, either as the representative of the Pharisees, or on his own account, and asked Jesus a question, tempting him. Putting the mildest meaning on the word "tempting", it conveys the idea of testing and trying in an unfriendly sense. Probably he was a man of clearer light and greater discernment than his associates; for he was evidently only half-hearted in the work of "tempting" Christ. Mark says that he had heard our Lord's words to the Sadducees, "and perceiving that he had answered them well," he put his own question to Jesus. He was evidently a man of candor, possessing a considerable amount of spiritual knowledge. This may help to explain the reason for his question:—

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<sup>46</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:118). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>47</sup> Barnes' Notes

## **Matthew 22:36**

### **Master, which is the great commandment in the law?**

[**Master**] Greek: *didaskalos* (GSN-1320), teacher (Luke 9:38).

[**which is the great commandment in the law?**] Scribes divided them into 248 affirmative ones to correspond with the number of the members of the body, and 365 negative ones to correspond with days of the year, making 613 commandments, the number of letters in the decalogue. They considered some great and some small, so here Jesus was being tempted as to whether He was in harmony with accepted truth or not.

**Which is the great commandment**—We see here three kinds of enemies and false accusers of Christ and his disciples; and three sorts of accusations brought against them.

1. The Herodians, or politicians and courtiers, who form their questions and accusations on the rights of the prince, and matters of state, Matthew 22:16.
2. The Sadducees, or libertines, who found theirs upon matters of religion, and articles of faith, which they did not credit, Matthew 22:23.
3. The Pharisees, lawyers, scribes, or Karaites, hypocritical pretenders to devotion, who found theirs on that vital and practical godliness (the love of God and man) of which they wished themselves to be thought the sole proprietors, Matthew 22:36.

[**commandment**] *Mitzvot*, literally, “commandments” (see 5:19N), but here better understood as “central principles”; see Mk 12:28N.<sup>48</sup>

## **Matthew 22:37**

**Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.**

Quoting Deut 6:5. *Phylacteries* are leather boxes containing Scriptures that are strapped to their left hand and to their foreheads. Note Deut 6 notes “with all thy strength” vs. Jesus’ quote of “with all thy mind.” Jesus adds the part of mind, and Paul discusses renewing one’s mind, a New Testament concept.

[**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind**] Quoted from Deut. 6:5; Deut. 10:12; Deut. 30:6. Love for God must come from:

1. The heart: all inward affections
2. The soul: all consciousness
3. The mind: all thoughts

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<sup>48</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:36). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,** The meaning of this is, thou shalt love him with all thy faculties or powers. Thou shalt love him supremely, more than all other beings and things, and with all the ardour possible. To love him with all the heart is to fix the affections supremely on him, more strongly than on anything else, and to be willing to give up all that we hold dear at his command.

**With all thy soul.** Or, with all thy *life*. This means, to be willing to give up the life to him, and to devote it all to his service; to live to him, and to be willing to die at his command.

**With all thy mind.** To submit the intellect to his will. To love his law and gospel more than we do the decisions of our own minds. To be willing to submit all our faculties to his teaching and guidance, and to devote to him all our intellectual attainments, and all the results of our intellectual efforts. *With all thy strength*, (Mark.) With all the faculties of soul and body. To labour and toil for his glory, and to make that the great object of all our efforts.

**JNTC:** From the parallel passage at Mk 12:28–34 one learns that Yeshua quoted also Deuteronomy 6:4, the central affirmation of Judaism, “*Sh·ma Israel, Adonai Eloheynu, Adonai echad*” (“Hear, O Israel, *Adonai* our God, *Adonai* is one”); see Mk 12:29N.<sup>49</sup>

### **Matthew 22:38**

**This is the first and great commandment.**

### **Matthew 22:39**

**And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

Quoting Lev 19:18. Cf. Rom 13:10; also 8, 9, 10. Love is the controlling principle: 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 3:14; 5:1,2.

He did not pick any one of the Ten Commandments. He gives them a second one.

**Discipleship, Neighbor Love**—Christian love is the active, vitalizing power necessary in Christian living. Jesus’ command to love God is directed primarily to the will rather than the emotions. It means to esteem God, to regard Him above all else, to give Him unchallenged first place, and to give His claims unquestioned priority. This love means, likewise, to esteem all that God esteems, to love what God loves to the extent not only of *doing* but of *being*. Our lives are to radiate Christ’s love continuously. Christian relationships must be built on love; Christian fellowship must be maintained in love; and Christian service must be motivated by love. Love, of its own nature, produces the fruits of Christian devotion and service. The love Jesus commands eliminates injustice in

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<sup>49</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:37). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

human relations. It fulfills the law by abstaining from all that law forbids. See Ro 13:10. Jesus states that the twofold love commandment fulfills “the Law” and “the Prophets,” which when combined indicates the whole Old Testament.<sup>50</sup>

**Yashanet.com: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

Yeshua is quoting from *the Shema* (Deuteronomy 6), the fundamental "statement of faith" of Judaism. Note the means that God gives for **how** we are to love Him, as found in the verses surrounding Shema.

Love for God is directly tied to following His Torah:

*Deuteronomy 6:1-9 - Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

The entire Torah presents itself in commandments toward God and toward fellow man. The latter are of equal importance as our fellow man is made in the image of God. A famous Torah teacher was the Ba'al Shem Tov. He, like Yeshua, directly connected these two commandments.

*"Love your fellow as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) is an interpretation of and commentary on "Love the Lord, your God" (Deuteronomy 6:5). He who loves a fellow Jew loves God, because the Jew has within himself a "part of God Above" (Job 31:2). When one loves a fellow Jew, he loves the Jew's inner essence, and thereby loves God.*

**Matthew 22:40**

**On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

**[On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets]** These commandments are the sum of all divine revelation and responsibility.

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<sup>50</sup> Disciple's Study Bible



These two commandments actually summarized the entire Mosaic Law. The answer of Jesus was so obviously accurate that if the Pharisees had been honest, they would have said, "We have fallen short. We cannot be saved by the Law; we do need a Savior." And at that time the Lord Jesus, the Savior, was almost under the shadow of the cross.<sup>51</sup>

**34-40.** When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had answered the Sadducees, they quickly sent a representative, a well-versed expert in the Law, to Jesus with a question . . . Which is the greatest commandment in the Law? This question was being debated among the religious leaders at the time and various commandments were being championed as the greatest. Jesus' quick reply summarized the entire Decalogue. He replied that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord . . . God with all one's heart . . . soul, and . . . mind (cf. Deut. 6:5). He added that the second commandment is to love one's neighbor as oneself (cf. Lev. 19:18). The first summarizes the first table of the Law, and the second summarizes the second table. Jesus said, All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments, that is, all the Old Testament develops and amplifies these two points: love for God and love for others, who are made in God's image.

Mark reported that the teacher of the Law said Jesus had correctly answered the question, and that love for God and one's neighbor is more important than burnt offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:32-33). The light was beginning to shine into his heart. He was not far, Jesus said, from the kingdom of God. Mark also added, "From then on no one dared ask Him any more questions" (Mark 12:34). The reason was obvious. Jesus was answering them as no had ever done. In fact in this last incident, the questioner was close to leaving the Pharisees and accepting Jesus. Perhaps they felt they should stop before they would lose any more people to Jesus' cause.<sup>52</sup>

**Yashanet.com: On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

This teaching (verses 37-40), is reflective of the thought of Rabbi Hillel as well as Paul:

**Talmud, Mas. Shabbath 31a** - *What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it.*

**Romans 13:8-10** - *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

Neither Yeshua, Hillel or Paul taught that the "law of Moses" is "done away with," and replaced by some emotional concept of "love." However, Christianity, in the name of the

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<sup>51</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:118). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

cf. *confer*, compare

<sup>52</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:73). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Messiah, says that "the law of Moses" is done away and all we need now is this type of "love."

As previously mentioned in our study of the sermon of Matthew chapters 5-7, there will be those who did great things, even miracles, in Messiah's name, yet He will not recognize them as they did not have proper regard for the will of the Father (Torah, the "law of Moses"). The book of Revelation also makes it clear that those who follow the commandments (Torah, the "law of Moses") are the ones who enter New Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 22:41**

**While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,**

### **Matthew 22:42**

**Saying, *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* They say unto him, *The Son of David.***

On this question hangs our entire life. "Whose son is he?"

**[son of David, the son of Abraham]** Son of Abraham and David by direct descent (Matthew 1:2-16; Romans 9:5), and by promise (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:6-22; Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 22:41-46; 2 Tim. 2:8). "Son of David" is used nine times of Christ in Matthew (Matthew 1:1; Matthew 9:27; Matthew 12:23; Matthew 15:22; Matthew 20:30-31; Matthew 21:9,15; Matthew 22:42). David is mentioned first because he was the most illustrious of His ancestors (as king and prophet) and because his line is singled out by later prophets as the one of Abraham's seed through whom the Messiah was to come.

### **Matthew 22:43**

**He saith unto them, *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,***

### **Matthew 22:44**

***The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?***

Quoting Ps 110. Cf. Rom 1:1-4; Micah 5:2; Ps 2.

**[The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool]** The 19th Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Matthew (Matthew 22:44; Psalm 110:1). This is referred to 7 times in the New Testament (Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; 1 Cor. 15:25; Hebrews 1:13; Hebrews 10:13). All enemies will be put down at the end of the Millennium (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Ephes. 1:10; Rev. 20-22).

**The Lord said unto my Lord, my prop, stay, master, support), Sit thou on my right hand**—Take the place of the greatest eminence and authority. Till I make thine enemies thy footstool—till I subdue both Jews and Gentiles under thee, and cause them to acknowledge thee as their sovereign and Lord. This quotation is taken from Psalm 110:1; and, from it, these two points are clear:

1. That David wrote it by the inspiration of God; and
2. That it is a prophetic declaration of the Messiah.

**JNTC:** All of Psalm 110 is considered Messianic and is quoted or alluded to in the New Testament more than any other passage of the *Tanakh*, namely, here and at 26:64; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42; Ac 2:34–35; 1C 15:25; Ep 1:20; Co 3:1; MJ 1:3, 13; 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17, 21; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Ke 3:22.<sup>53</sup>

The Lord Jesus is quoting Psalm 110:1. How could David call his *son* his *Lord*? The Pharisees would have to say that the son would have to be supernaturally born for David to call him “my Lord.”

### **Matthew 22:45**

**If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?**

**[how is he his son?]** He is David's Lord because He is God; He is David's Son because He became man through Mary of the house of David (Luke 1:34-35; Luke 3:23-38)

This is the searching question which our Lord put to the Pharisees.

There are several implications in this question which are tremendous. Our Lord said that David wrote Psalm 110, that he wrote it by the Holy Spirit, and that he wrote it about the Messiah. “If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” How could David call his son superior unless He was? The only logical answer to this question is the Virgin Birth. Jesus is David’s son, but He is greater than David. A son of David cannot be greater than David unless there is something greater introduced into the line to make a greater son. The records of the supernatural birth of Jesus afford the only satisfactory answer. The *Lord* of David got into David’s line, as stated in Luke’s gospel, “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). He is greater than David because He is the Lord from heaven.

The Lord Jesus was forcing the Pharisees to face up to the real issue and to acknowledge Him as David’s son and as David’s Lord.

This ended the verbal clash with the religious rulers.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 22:44). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>54</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:118). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Psalm 110:1 uses two different Hebrew words for God. The first, translated **LORD**, is the name Yahweh, the proper name of Israel's God. The second **Lord** means "Master." David, the great king of Israel, calls one of his offspring "Lord" or "Master," a title for deity. The implication is that Jesus, the Son of David, is God. He is a descendant of David and therefore human, but He is also divine.

### **Matthew 22:46**

**And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.**

**[word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions]**

Their mouths were silenced but their deceitful hearts were plotting against His life more than ever. This was two days before the crucifixion.

They made no verbal attack upon Him after this. They had determined His death, and that is the thing toward which they are going to move. They see that they cannot answer Him. This is one of the great proofs of His deity.<sup>55</sup>

**41-46.** Since the Pharisees refused to ask Jesus any further questions, He took the offensive and posed a question to them. His question sought to solicit their views concerning Messiah. He asked, What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He? Their answer came quickly for they knew the Messiah was to come from the line of David. Jesus' reply (vv. 43-45) demonstrated that the Messiah had to be more than simply a human son of David, as many in that time were thinking. If the Messiah were simply an earthly son of David, why did David ascribe deity to Him? Jesus quoted from a messianic psalm (Ps. 110:1), in which David referred to the Messiah as my Lord. "Lord" translates the Hebrew ' *ādōnāy*, used only of God (e.g., Gen. 18:27; Job 28:28). If David called this Son "Lord," He certainly must be more than a human son.

The complexities of this theological discussion were too much for the Pharisees who were not ready to acknowledge the deity of this Son of David. No one . . . dared answer His question or debate points of practice or theology with Jesus. All His opponents had been silenced, including the chief priests and elders (Matt. 21:23-27), the Pharisees and the Herodians together (22:15-22), the Sadducees (vv. 23-33), and the Pharisees (vv. 34-36).<sup>56</sup>

**ESV:** 22:41–46 Having dealt with malicious questions from his adversaries, Jesus now asked them, concerning the long-awaited Messiah (the Christ), Whose son is he? Their reply, "The son of David," reflected the common understanding that the Messiah would

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<sup>55</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:119). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

vv. verses

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

<sup>56</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:73). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

be a royal descendant of David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12–14; Ps. 89:4; Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5). Jesus then quotes from Ps. 110:1, one of the most important messianic texts in the OT and the one most quoted in the NT. The Pharisees would have recognized this psalm of David as a divinely inspired messianic prophecy. In the psalm, David said that the coming Messiah (i.e., David's “son”) will not be just a special human descended from David; he will be David's Lord. Because the Pharisees acknowledged the messianic import of the psalm, they did not dare to ask Jesus any more questions. The fact that David's descendant (Jesus) would have a more prominent role and title than the ancestor (David) further indicates the uniqueness of the Messiah and the greater honor that is due him as the Son of God. Matthew does not say how exalted a person Jesus was claiming to be in his use of Ps. 110:1; but the psalm itself may well imply the deity of the Messiah (see note on Ps. 110:5), i.e., that the Messiah is to be Yahweh incarnate (cf. John 1:14).