

Matthew Chapter 22

Verses 1-3: In preparation for the major confrontation that was coming, Jesus tells the parable of the marriage supper. While similar to the parable in Luke 14, this one differs in its occasion and details.

Again, the “kingdom of heaven” must refer to the church viewed as the kingdom in the church age. The “king” is the Father and Christ is the “son.” The “marriage” must be taken in the full aspect of salvation, including union with Christ, culminating in glorification at the marriage supper, which inaugurates the millennial age.

Rejection of the invitation to attend constitutes disloyalty to the King, as well as discourtesy of the Son, and accounts for the severe treatment of the rebels (verses 6-7), which includes their city being “burned up,” an obvious reference to the coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Matthew 22:1 "And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,"

“And Jesus answered and spake unto them again”: Not to the multitude only, but to the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees. Though Mark seems to intimate, that upon the delivery of the last parable of the vineyard, they left him, and went their way. Yet since he does not relate the following parable, they might not leave him until they had heard that, which is spoken with much the same design as the former.

And that might increase their resentment the more: or if the chief priests and elders did go away, the Pharisees remained behind, as is clear from (Matthew 22:15), to whom he spake by parables, similitudes, and comparisons.

Matthew 22:2 "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,"

“A certain king, which made a marriage for his son”: Jesus told a similar, but different, parable (in Luke 14:16-23). Here, the banquet was a wedding feast for the king’s own son, making the apathy (verse 5), and rejection (verse 6), of those invited much more of a personal slight against the king. Also, here they actually mistreated and killed the king’s messengers, an unthinkable affront to the king’s goodness.

Matthew 22:3 "And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come."

The king spoken of here, is God the Father who is preparing a wedding for His Son Jesus. Jesus has paid for His bride with His shed blood. God has sent out invitations to the wedding. The sad thing is that most of the invited will not come. They are so busy with things of this world they are not interested in coming to this marriage.

Verses 4-14: The “bidden” guests are the people of Israel, whereas those in the “highways” are the Gentiles. “Both bad and good” refer to moral and immoral sinners who alike need God’s gracious invitation.

The man without the “wedding garment” came to the feast but had disregarded the propriety of the king’s provision, since such garments were normally supplied by the host. The reference seems to be to the “robe of righteousness”, which we must receive from the Lord in order to attend the marriage feast.

Casting the unclad guest into “outer darkness” symbolizes the eternal judgment of the lost.

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”: This illustrates God’s patience and forbearance with those who deliberately spurn Him. He continues to extend the invitation even after His goodness has been ignored or rebuffed.

Matthew 22:5 "But they made light of [it], and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:"

“But they made light of it”: They 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 people are engaged so much in their worldly interests that they pretend they have no time to attend to religion. The world is, in their view, of more value than God.

Matthew 22:6 "And the remnant took his servants, and entreated [them] spitefully, and slew [them]."

“And the remnant took his servants”: They that went to their worldly callings and occupations of life troubled themselves no further about the Messiah or his doctrines and ordinances. Others were more spiteful and injurious: they not only slighted the message, and took no notice of the invitation, but also abused the messengers.

Some of the servants they laid hold of and put them in the common prison and detained them there a while; as they did the apostles quickly after our Lord's ascension, particularly Peter and John and treated them spitefully; using hard words, and reproachful language.

Menacing and threatening them with what they would do to them, if they did not forbear preaching in the name of Jesus. Though they were not intimidated hereby, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame on such an account. And even their malice and wickedness proceeded so far, as to take away the lives of some of them.

Thus, they stoned Stephen to death, the first martyr for Christ; and killed James, the brother of John with the sword. Though he was put to death by Herod, yet with the consent and approval of the Jews.

These servants, that the master had sent to invite them to the marriage, were prophets whom God had sent to send His message. The disciples would be included in this also. These ministers, whom that God sent to bring this message, were mistreated; some of them were even martyred.

God's first choice had been the physical house of Israel. They refused to accept Jesus. This "taking light of it" just meant that they did not take God seriously. They only thought of the world, not the everlasting life to come.

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."

“But when the king heard”: This doubtless refers to the Jews and to Jerusalem. They were murderers, having slain the prophets; and God was about to send forth the armies of the Romans under his providential direction, and to burn up their city. and he sent forth his armies.

Not the angels, who are the armies and hosts of heaven; nor desolating judgments only, as pestilence and famine. Though the latter was severely felt by the Jews, but chiefly the Roman armies are here meant; called "his", because they came by the Lord's appointment and permission. And were used by him, for the destruction of these people.

And destroyed those murderers; of Christ and his apostles, as their fathers had been of the prophets before them. And burnt up their city; the city of Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jews, and where the principal of these murderers dwelt. And which was burnt and destroyed by the Roman army, under Titus Vespasian.

Matthew 22:8 "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy."

“But they which were bidden were not worthy”: But they were not only unworthy in themselves, as all men are, of such a blessing and privilege. But they behaved towards it in a very unworthy manner; they were so far from attending on it in a diligent and peaceable way.

As becomes all such persons that are blessed with the external ministry of it; who when they do so, may be said to behave worthily. And, in some sense, to be worthy of such a privilege being continued with them.

(See Matthew 10:13 compared with Luke 10:6), that they contradicted and blasphemed it, and by their own outrageous carriage, showed plainly that they were unworthy of it. And were so judged by Christ and his apostles, who ordered them to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and which may be intended in the following words.

Matthew 22:9 "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

“As many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage”: This illustrates the free offer of the gospel, which is extended to all indiscriminately (Rev. 22:17).

This Scripture was just telling of the message being offered first to the Jews. They totally rejected the message; it was then offered to the Gentiles. He had given up trying to get the physical Israel, and had now sent messengers to the Gentiles.

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."

“So these servants went out into the highways”: Turned from the Jews, and went among the Gentiles, preaching the Gospel to them. Particularly the Apostle Paul, with Barnabas, and others, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both good and bad.

The Gospel ministry is the means of gathering souls to Christ, and to attend his ordinances, and into his churches; and of these that are gathered by it into churches, and to an attendance on outward ordinances. Some are good and some bad, as the fishes gathered in the net of the Gospel are said to be (in Matthew 13:47).

Which may either express the character of the Gentiles before conversion. Some of them being outwardly good in their civil and moral character, closely adhering to the law and light of nature, doing the things of it. Others notoriously wicked; or how they proved when gathered in, some being real believers, godly persons.

Others hypocrites and empty professors; having a form of godliness, and nothing of the power of it, destitute of grace in their hearts, and of holiness in their lives.

“Bad and good”: All descriptions of people. None are good by nature; if they were, they would not need the gospel. But some are worse than others, and they have special need of it. None can be saved without it.

“And the wedding was furnished with guests”: That is, the wedding chamber, or the place where the wedding was kept. And the marriage dinner was prepared and ate or where the feast was kept. Which designs the house and church of God, into which large numbers of the Gentiles were brought, by the ministry of the apostles. So that it was filled with persons that made a profession of Christ and his Gospel.

Christianity was offered to everyone; prostitutes, robbers, adulterers, etc. God has offered salvation through grace to everyone; The Jew first and the Gentile afterward. A person's past is not important. It is what you do after you are saved that counts.

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:"

“Wedding garment”: All without exception were invited to the banquet, so this man is not to be viewed as a common party-crasher. In fact, all the guests were rounded up hastily from “the streets” and therefore none could be expected to come with proper attire. That means the wedding garments were supplied by the king himself.

So this man’s lack of a proper garment indicates he had purposely rejected the king’s own gracious provision. His affront to the king was actually a greater insult than those who refused to come at all, because he committed his impertinence in the very presence of the king.

The imagery seems to represent those who identify with the kingdom externally, profess to be Christians, belong to the church in a visible sense, yet spurn the garment of righteousness Christ offers (Isa. 61:10). By seeking to establish a righteousness of their own (Rom. 10:3; Phil. 3:8-9).

Ashamed to admit their own spiritual poverty, they refuse the better garment the King graciously offers, and thus they are guilty of a horrible sin against His goodness.

Matthew 22:12 "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."

“He was speechless”: I.e., he had no excuse.

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."

“Outer darkness”: This would describe the darkness farthest from the light, i.e., outer darkness.

“Weeping and gnashing of teeth”: This speaks of inconsolable grief and unremitting torment. Jesus commonly used the phrases in this verse to describe hell (13:42, 50; 24:51).

Matthew 22:14 "For many are called, but few [are] chosen."

“Many are called, but few are chosen”: The call spoken of here is sometimes referred to as the “general call” (or the “external” call), a summons to repentance and faith that is inherent in the gospel message. This call extends to all who hear the gospel. “Many” hear it; “few” respond (see the many-few comparison in 7:13-14). Those who respond are the “chosen,” the elect.

In the Pauline writings, the word “call” usually refers to God’s irresistible calling extended to the elect alone (Rom. 8:30), known as the “effectual call” (or the “internal” call). The effectual call is the supernatural drawing of God which Jesus speaks of (in John 6:44). Here a general call is in view, and this call extends to all who hear the gospel, this call is the great “whosoever will” of the gospel (Rev. 22:17).

Here then, is the proper balance between human responsibility and divine sovereignty. The “called” who reject the invitation do so willingly, and therefore their exclusion from the kingdom is perfectly just. The “chosen” enter the kingdom only because of the grace of God in choosing and drawing them.

The Bible is pretty explicit about Jesus being the way to heaven. Anyone who comes any other way is a robber and a thief. There is only one garment that is acceptable, and that is our white robe that has been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

A person can sit on a church pew, and even be baptized, and not be cleansed from all unrighteousness; washed in the blood of the Lamb. Christianity, that is acceptable to God, is a love affair with the Lord Jesus Christ. Pretenders will not be acceptable to God. He will say to them, get away from me, I never knew you (Matt. 7:23).

They like professing atheists will be banished to outer darkness.

The Lord invites all of us to come to Him; but to be chosen of God, we must be washed in the blood of the Lamb, sold out to Jesus, having a brand new heart, and stayed up on the wishes of the Lord. Jesus must not only be Savior to us, but our Lord as well.

Verses 15-22: (See Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26). "The Herodians" were a party that favored the dynasty of Herod and stood for the Roman connection. They cared little or nothing for religion and normally were bitterly opposed by the Pharisees. The statements recorded in verse 16 are insincere and intended as hypocritical flattery.

Their question was intended to place the Lord in a dilemma. If He says yes, He can be held up to the people as a traitor. If He says no, He can be denounced to the Roman authorities.

"Caesar was the Roman Emperor and head of the Roman state. Caesar was the family name of Julius Caesar, the first man who aspired to autocracy. The name was taken over from him by his adopted son Octavian, afterwards titled the Emperor Augustus.

For "penny" see (20:2). "Render therefore unto Caesar:" The Lord means that we are to give the civil magistrates all that is due to them, as long as it does not interfere with the honor due to God.

Jesus had broken the Herodians' dilemma by making light of the ultimate significance of Caesar's claim. The idea is: "if the penny is his, let him have it!" Jesus' response, render "unto God the things that are God's," exposed the spiritual failure of the Herodians.

In essence, Jesus made light of Caesar's temporal claim in favor of God's greater claim over men's lives.

Matthew 22:15 "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in [his] talk."

"Then went the Pharisees ... how they might entangle him": To entangle means to "ensnare," as birds are taken by a net. This is done secretly, by leading them within the compass of the net and then suddenly springing it over them. So to entangle is artfully to lay a plan for enticing; to

beguile by proposing a question, and by leading, if possible, to an incautious answer. This was what the Pharisees and Herodians endeavored to do in regard to Jesus.

They wanted to deliver him unto the power and authority of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, should he say anything against Caesar, which they tried to trap him into by whatever means. They wanted to set the populace against him, and protect themselves from their resentment.

Their main point was the delivery of him up into the hands of the civil government for treason and sedition, so they could have him put to death.

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."

“Herodians”: A party of the Jews who supported the Roman-backed Herodian dynasty. The Herodians were not a religious party, like the Pharisees, but a political party, probably consisting largely of Sadducees (including the rules of the temple). By contrast, the Pharisees hated Roman rule and the Herodian influence.

The fact that these groups would conspire together to entrap Jesus reveals how seriously both groups viewed Him as a threat. Herod himself wanted Jesus dead (Luke 13:31), and the Pharisees were already plotting to kill Him as well (John 11:53). So they joined efforts to seek their common goal.

Matthew 22:17 "Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?"

“Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” At issue was an annual fee of one denarius per person. Such taxes were part of the heavy taxation Rome assessed. Since these funds were used to finance the occupying armies, all Roman taxes were hated by the people. But the poll tax was the most hated of all because it suggested that Rome owned even the people, while they viewed themselves and their nation as possessions of God.

It was therefore significant that they questioned Christ about the poll tax in particular. If He answered no to their question, the Herodians would charge Him with treason against Rome. If He said yes, the Pharisees would accuse Him of disloyalty to the Jewish nation, and He would lose the support of the crowds.

They were trying to trap Jesus into saying something that would be punishable by death. If they really believed that He was the truth, why would they be trying to entangle Him? God is not a respecter of persons, that part of their statement is true.

If Jesus said "no" to the inquiry about paying taxes, they felt that they would be able to turn Caesar against Him. There were two opinions about followers of God paying these taxes. If Jesus answered them with a "yes" or "no", He would offend someone.

If Jesus said to pay the tax, the people would be disappointed. They did not believe God's people should pay. They believed in the sovereignty of God. If Jesus said not to pay it, He would be an enemy of Rome.

Matthew 22:18 "But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, [ye] hypocrites?"

Jesus saw right through their little scheme. He rightly called them hypocrites. They said they believed He taught truth, but they really did not believe in Him at all.

Matthew 22:19 "Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny."

A silver coin was the value of a day's wage for a Roman soldier. The coins were minted under the emperor's authority since only he could issue gold or silver coins. The "denarius" (penny) of Jesus' day was minted by Tiberius.

One side bore an image of his face; the other featured an engraving of him sitting on his throne in priestly robes. The Jews considered such images idolatry, forbidden by the second commandment (Exodus 20:4), which made this tax and these coins doubly offensive.

Matthew 22:20 "And he saith unto them, Whose [is] this image and superscription?"

"Whose is this image and superscription?" He knew well enough whose they were; but he showed the excellency of his wisdom. 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 often falls into it himself.

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."

"Caesar's ... God's": Caesar's image is stamped on the coin; God's image is stamped on the person (Gen. 1:26-27). The Christian must "render" obedience to Caesar in Caesar's realm (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17), but "the things that are God's" are things that do not belong to Caesar and should be given only to God.

Christ thus acknowledged Caesar's right to assess and collect taxes, and He made it the duty of Christians to pay them. But He did not suggest (as some suppose), that Caesar had sole or ultimate authority in the social or political realms.

Ultimately, all things are God's (Rom. 11:36; 2 Cor. 5:18; Rev. 4:11), including the realm in which Caesar or any other earthly ruler exercises authority.

In distinguishing obedience to God from obedience to Caesar, Jesus identified the underlying principle of two different kingdoms: church and state. Both are divinely ordained institutions, but ought to remain separate, since they have two distinct purposes. When church and state are united, the integrity of each institution is often called into question.

This separation does not prohibit the involvement of Christians in areas of social responsibility. A government of the people, by the people and for the people is an anarchy unless governed by eternal, self-evident principles, which are reflected in Scripture.

Jesus taught us not only to “render unto God”, but also to “render unto Caesar.” Christians are therefore responsible for obeying laws, paying taxes, praying for those in authority, and actively speaking out and standing for God and His laws in government.

The example of Christians involved in the political system demonstrates how God uses them to be both salt and light to the world (Matt. 5:13-14).

Matthew 22:22 "When they had heard [these words], they marveled, and left him, and went their way."

This is not telling you to pay taxes to Caesar, or to abstain from paying taxes. When Jesus had them show a coin, and the coin had Caesar's picture on it, it just meant the Roman government was the ruling influence there. Jesus was not about to get into a political battle.

He just said, if you owe any tax to Caesar, pay it. If you owe God anything, pay Him. When they saw that they could not trap Him, they just left. You see, with whatever thing they tried to trap Jesus, they wound up being trapped themselves.

Matthew Chapter 22 Questions

1. With what did he compare the Kingdom of heaven?
2. Who is the king symbolic of?
3. Why would most of the invited not come?
4. When He sent forth the servants the second time, what did He tell them?
5. What did the invited do when they got the second invitation?
6. Who were the servants representative of?
7. Who was God's first choice?
8. When the king became angry, what did he do?
9. When He decided that the first group was not worthy, who did He invite?
10. How was the wedding furnished with guests?
11. When the king came in to the guests, what did he notice was wrong?

12. What did the king tell the servant to do with this person?
13. "For many are called, but few are_____."
14. What is the only acceptable garment?
15. If Christianity is not a formality, what is it?
16. Jesus must not be just Savior, but _____.
17. The Herodians and Pharisees came together to do what?
18. What hypocritical statement did they make to Jesus?
19. What question did they ask Jesus?
20. If Jesus said do not pay taxes, whose enemy would He be?
21. What did Jesus rightfully call them?
22. What did Jesus ask them to show Him?
23. Whose picture was on it?
24. They left when they had heard what words?
25. Who was the ruling government there?