

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCT 17TH-18TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

THE WEDDING FEAST (MATTHEW 22:1-14)

At the end of chapter 21, **Jesus is in the temple during Passover week**

- After He **exposed the religious leaders' refusal to acknowledge God's authority (Matt. 21:23-27)**, Jesus went on the offensive.
- He called out this religious class through three parables- the two sons (21:28-32), the tenants (21:33-46), and **the wedding feast (22:1-14)**.

In the parable of the wedding feast, **Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son (vs. 2)**.

- He sent out servants to **invite the privileged citizens of the land to this elaborate feast**, but shockingly, everyone refuses (vs. 3-6).
- Some are **simply apathetic and have no good reason (vs. 2)**, others are just too busy (vs. 5), and others respond with **hostility and anger (vs. 6)**.

The king viewed these responses as **insulting and disrespectful**- and in his rage he sends soldiers to destroy these ungrateful subjects and **burn their city to the ground (vs. 7)**.

- This is specifically **a picture of God's dealing with Israel**- they rejected God's invitation to "join the wedding feast" and mistreated those who extended **the invitation (the prophets, John the Baptist, and even Christ Himself)**.

Because of Israel's rejection and refusal of God, **God was going to judge them**.

- In **A.D. 70, the Romans destroyed much of Jerusalem**.
- God's invitation to **join the Kingdom is extended to all of humanity**- and yet, many will refuse this invitation and **respond to it with tremendous dishonor to God**.

Some people will **respond with apathy**- they will remain completely unmoved.

- Some people are **just "too busy"**- life on earth with all of its demands and responsibilities takes up all their **time, energy, and attention**.
- And some people will respond with **hostility, anger, and aggression**- they'll find the Christian message offensive and hate any who speak it.

So the king in the parable **invites new guests**- the ones that the messengers would find along the "main roads", the riffraff, **the outcasts of society**, both "bad & good" (vs. 8-10).

- The banquet hall is filled, but in **the middle of festivities the king notices someone who is not properly attired** for a royal wedding feast.
- It's worth noting it was customary for guests at a royal event to **be provided with clothes**.

But this guest isn't wearing **the clothes the king has provided**- and he has no answer for how he got in without having **put on a wedding garment (vs. 12)**.

- So the man is **bound and cast away from the presence of the king**, into a place of darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth (vs. 13).
- Many were invited to these feast, but **those who were chosen to be allowed entrance were limited by a specific criteria (vs. 14)**.

Those guests that were "chosen" were the ones who **received the invitation joyfully and allowed themselves to be clothed by the King**.

- They weren't even the people who were invited first! But they were the ones who were **hungry and willing to honor the King by simply receiving His free gifts**.
- This is about Israel, but it's also about all of humanity.
- Many will be "called" to be a part of the Kingdom- but **those who are chosen will be few**.

TAXES (MATTHEW 22:15-22)

The leaders in the temple were threatened by Jesus and were bent on destroying Him- so they **hoped to trap Him** into saying something that **would permit them to arrest Him (vs. 15)**.

- But there was another reason for the questions, **one that His enemies didn't realize**.
- Jesus was going to die as the Lamb of God, and it was **necessary for the lamb to be examined before Passover (Ex. 12:3-6)**.

If any **spot or blemish was found on the lamb**, it couldn't be sacrificed.

- Jesus was going to be examined, and yet they wouldn't be able to find any fault in Him.
- Two **opposing groups of Jews (Pharisees & Herodians)** on the opposite side of a hot button issue came together to ask **Jesus an impossible question (vs. 16)**.

The question was **whether it was right under the Jewish law to pay** what was probably the poll tax to Caesar, the Roman emperor.

- If Jesus answered, **"Yes, it's right"**, then He'd side with the Herodians who **supported Roman rule**, making Him a heretic and enemy of the people.
- If Jesus answered, **"No, it's not right"**, then He'd side with the **Pharisees who opposed Roman rule**- then the Herodians could arrest Him on charges of treason.

No matter how Jesus answers- **He loses**.

- Either a "yes" or "no" **alienates a significant portion of His following** and might even get Him incriminated under Roman law!
- Immediately, Jesus saw through this scheme and saw their real purpose- so **He called them hypocrites and simply asked for a Roman coin (vs. 19)**.
- Each ruler minted his own coins and put his own image on them, so **Jesus asks whose image was on the coin (vs. 20)**.

If it's Caesar's image, then **there's nothing wrong with giving to Caesar** what is Caesar's.

- In other words, **honoring certain obligations as a citizen of a nation** doesn't indicate our ultimate allegiance.
- Paying taxes, obeying the law, and respecting earthly leaders **isn't a form of worship**- it's simply rendering to them what's due as a resident of the **nation they govern**.

But on the other hand, **we have an obligation** to, "give to God the things that are God's" (vs. 21).

- If a coin bears the image and likeness of a national leader, **who's image and likeness does a human being bear?**

Therefore, we must **honor and obey God first** and we owe God **EVERYTHING**.

When they heard Jesus' answer, they marveled and went away, **probably stunned (vs. 22)**.

- Why? Because they **couldn't paint Him into a corner**, get Him to play for their team, and they couldn't get Him to **endorse their "tribe" and demonize their opponents**.

The authority and wisdom of **Jesus transcends our political and ideological tribes**- He's the true King and His is the true Kingdom.

THE RESURRECTION (MATTHEW 22:23-33)

After Jesus escaped **the Pharisees and Herodians attempt to entrap in a political argument**, the Sadducees entered the scene hoping to trap Him in a **theological argument**.

- This group only accepted the authority of **the five Books of Moses**, they didn't believe in the spirit world or the resurrection, and **they were the doctrinal enemies of the Pharisees**.
- Their absurd "question" was dripping with **hypocrisy and insincerity (vs. 24-27)**.

They were asking **Jesus about the resurrection**- in which they did not believe!

- So they make up this **ridiculous story of a woman who's married to an unfortunate succession of seven brothers (vs. 24-27)**.

- According to the OT law, a man was **obligated to marry his brother's wife so that she wouldn't die childless** and his name wouldn't die out in Israel.
- So at the resurrection (**which they don't believe in**), **whose wife will she be?**

Jesus confronted them as **being ignorant to the Scriptures and the power of God (vs. 29)**.

- Like many people today, **they imagined that this idea of "heaven" (the future life)** is just an extension of the present life- only better.
- But Jesus tells them that there will be no need for marriage in the next life because there will be no death- **there's no reason to bear children**.

Humanity will be **"like angels in heaven"** in the fact that **we won't be married**.

- So since there will be no marriage in heaven, the **Sadducee's question was invalid**.
- The answer was that no one would be the **woman's husband at the resurrection**.
- For some of us, **the idea of an afterlife without marriage or sex** seems unthinkable.

Our marriages now are **simply pictures on earth of the heavenly marriage** between the Messiah and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:22-33).

- When the actual marriage of Christ and Church takes place in heaven, **the greater reality will displace the need for the thing** that pointed to it on earth.
- In **the limitations of our humanity**, we can't understand any greater intimacy or pleasure- but God has more for us than we can imagine (1 Cor. 2:9).

But then Jesus got down the real issue- **the reality of the resurrection**.

- In **Ex. 3:6**, God spoke to Moses from the burning bush telling him, **"I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"**- not, I was, but I AM!
- **The words of God are proof** that these three patriarchs had been resurrected to new life- "He is not **God of the dead, but of the living"** (vs. 32).

"The crowds were astonished at His teaching" (vs. 33)

- Just like the crowd at the **Sermon of the Mount**, this crowd was astonished by **the authority with which Jesus handled the scriptures** and dealt with His opponents.
- Jesus proved His authority over **political and theological debates**, and showed that His truth and **His Kingdom transcend the kingdoms of this world**.

PIGEON-HOLING JESUS...

- *Are we rendering to God the things that are God's? Or are we simply trying to "pigeon-hole" eternal God into our temporal, tiny boxes?*