MATTHEW 22

Mat 22:1 - And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying,

Mat 22:2 - “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son,

Mat 22:3 - and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

Mat 22:4 - Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’

Mat 22:5 - But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business,

Mat 22:6 - while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

Mat 22:7 - The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

Mat 22:8 - Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.

Mat 22:9 - Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’

Mat 22:10 - And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

* For the sake of time, we will break this chapter into large chunks rather than move verse by verse.
* The Parable
  + This first parable describes a king who intended to throw a wedding feast for his son.
  + He sent out his servants to invite guests to come join him and enjoy his generosity.
  + But the guests responded in an unimaginable way.
    - They refused to come to the feast
    - They treated the servants “shamefully” and even killed some of them.
  + The king, in understandable outrage, sent his army to destroy the wicked invitees.
  + He then sent his servants out to invite anyone and everyone to the wedding feast.
    - They went out to the street and gathered “all whom they found.”
    - They invited “both bad and good.”
* The Interpretation:
  + What do these pictures represent and how was Jesus’ audience to understand them?
  + As with many other parables, the king or the master of the house is a picture of God.
  + A wedding is about to occur, not just any wedding, but the wedding of His Son.
  + God invites those who He is familiar with, His guests, who likely represent the Jews.
  + But the Jews reject the invitation.
  + God invites them to enjoy His generosity and they respond in an unimaginable way.
  + They abused and killed God’s messengers (prophets).
    - This might also include John the Baptist.
    - May also include the Apostles and their proclamation of the coming Kingdom (Matthew 10)
  + God, whose generous offer and prophets were discarded as rubbish, was understandably outraged.
  + He would punish the guests who were invited first (Jews) and invite others (Gentiles).
  + A broad invitation would be proclaimed in the streets and any who desired would have the opportunity to come to the wedding (be part of the Kingdom of God).
  + The parable is, in part, a condemnation of those first invited.
    - The Jews had been the recipients of God’s revelation for hundreds of years.
    - They had denied innumerable invitations to repent and the ultimate invitation of the Messiah.

Mat 22:11 - “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.

Mat 22:12 - And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.

Mat 22:13 - Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

* Keep in mind, these last 4 verses are part of the same parable.
* The Parable:
  + When all of the new guests have filled the king’s house, the king spots a man who isn’t wearing the proper attire.
  + The man should have been wearing a “wedding garment” but he wasn’t.
  + This section of the parable is a bit difficult for modern readers because we don’t have a similar tradition.
    - I confess, for a long time I looked at this passage and thought, “Poor guy can’t afford a wedding garment and gets thrown out of the feast for it… that isn’t very fair!”
    - But in researching this passage, there is reason to believe these garments were provided by the host of the party and the guests received them as they entered.
    - This would make sense considering random individuals who had not had time to prepare for such a feast were being called off the street.
    - The king’s response makes the most sense if we understand the wedding garment in this context.
  + The king asks the man how he got into the wedding without a wedding garment.
  + The man has no answer to offer.
  + So the king has him thrown out of the feast.
* The Interpretation:
  + Several slightly varying interpretations of this short passage exist. It is difficult for me to say which I like the best.
  + I will try to provide the interpretation I believe is most faithful to the heart of the context.
  + The man in this text accepted the invitation to the feast but rather than clothing himself with the garment selected by the king, he preferred something of his own choosing.
  + He had accepted the invitation but he did not belong among the other guests.
  + It is interesting the king is the one who makes this observation.
    - The servants didn’t stop him at the door.
    - The king pointed out his lack of compliance.
  + It seems to me the man without a wedding garment represents those who appear to answer the invitation to the Kingdom of Heaven but are unwilling to cloth themselves in godliness and submit to the service of the Lord.
  + Instead, they prefer something of their own choosing. A hypocrisy, which may have an appearance of godliness but is actually self serving.
  + They exist “within” the Kingdom (at least in vicinity) but they are not among those clothed in Christ.
  + Their true colors may be hidden to all but the King.
    - They may live among God’s people for years eluding identification as or self-awareness of their condition.
    - But in the end, they will have to face the king who exposes the hearts of all men.
  + Rejecting the gift of a king would likely be offensive.
  + In the same way, their rejection of God’s gift by living a life for personal ends is offensive to God.
  + In summary: the man without a wedding garment is one who appears to have accepted God’s invitation but whose actions are motivated by something other than a love for God.
  + When the King had exposed the man, he had no excuse for his actions, and the king had him cast out into “outer darkness.”
  + This mirrors the punishment which will belong to those who God exposes as hypocrites when the world stands before Him to be judged.

Mat 22:14 - For many are called, but few are chosen.”

* + Notice, in the case of the original guests, it wasn’t that they couldn’t come to the feast.
    - It was because they wouldn’t come to the feast.
    - They all had an excuse or something else to do
    - “But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business”
  + In the case of the man without a wedding garment, it wasn’t that the king hadn’t made the necessary provisions for him to attend the feast.
    - It was that he refused to cloth himself properly.
    - He didn’t even have a reason for his actions.
  + When the world stands before God and all is exposed, there won’t be any question the invitation of Christ was heralded throughout the world.
    - All of the world is invited to the feast of God.
    - He has made provisions for all.
    - Everyone is called to be part of the Kingdom.
    - “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you…” (Matthew 28:19-20)
  + But when the world stands before God and He goes to make His choice of those who are to inherit eternal life from the billions standing in front of Him…
    - He will push aside those who “paid no attention” to His invitation…
    - He will push aside those who couldn’t spare enough time from their farm or business to consider His offer…
    - He will push aside those who treated His name and His servants “shamefully” (verse 6)…
    - He will push aside those who practiced religion with the wrong motives or in hypocrisy…
    - And with what will He be left?
    - Among the billions, who will be chosen for eternal life?
    - Only a small group when compared to the number originally called!
  + APPLICATION:
    - Look at the groups above and ask yourself where you fall
    - Modern people are no less likely to fall into the errors of the guests who refused the invitation.

Mat 22:15 - Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words.

Mat 22:16 - And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances.

Mat 22:17 - Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?

* These passages show us just how dense the Pharisees were.
* They’ve been embarrassed countless times and they are back for more punishment.
  + One could make the case the Pharisees in Jerusalem hadn’t been put to shame as thoroughly as the Pharisees in Galilee, but if you remember, there was a delegation of Pharisees sent from Jerusalem to Galilee previously in the book.
  + Either way, whether it was because of inexperience or extreme stubbornness, the Pharisees would have to learn their lesson again.
  + This time they sent their disciples and the Herodians to do their dirty work (maybe they thought Jesus wouldn’t recognize them).
  + Who were the Herodians?
    - Not a lot is known about this group.
    - Many believe them to be supporters of Herod (makes sense with the name).
    - They were probably a sect of the Jews, just like the Pharisees and Sadducees, but the gospel records mention them much less frequently.
    - Every time they are mentioned they are set in opposition to Jesus’ work.
    - Their interests may have been more political than spiritual.
* In an effort to “entangle Him in His words” the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians approach Christ with an inquiry about taxes.
  + They start off with some flattery, hoping to conceal their true intentions.
  + Then they ask, “Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”
* What is their angle here?
  + They probably thought they could catch Jesus no matter which answer He gave.
  + If He told the people to pay their taxes, He would lose popularity with the people and the Pharisees could go around proclaiming Jesus to be a Roman supporter (obviously not what they people were looking for in a Messiah).
  + If He told the people they didn’t have to pay their taxes, Jesus’ enemies could report Him to the Roman authorities and have Him arrested.
  + “Genius!”… or so they thought.

Mat 22:18 - But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites?

Mat 22:19 - Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius.

Mat 22:20 - And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

Mat 22:21 - They said, “Caesar's.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

Mat 22:22 - When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

* Jesus was not deceived by their flattery.
* He knew immediately who they were and why they came.
* He calls them what they were, “hypocrites.”
* He then asked for the coin used for paying tribute.
* They brought Him the coin shown below:
  + 
  + This is likely the same coin referred to in Matthew 20:1-16 during the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.
  + The man pictured is Emperor Tiberius who reigned from 14 AD – 37 AD
  + 
* He asked them whose likeness was on the coin and they responded “Caesar’s.”
* Jesus told them to give Caesar what belonged to him and give God what belongs to Him.
* You’ll have to forgive me if I’m wrong about this next point but I can’t help but think Jesus is asking people to connect an unstated truth when talking about the likeness on the coin.
  + Why does Jesus ask for the coin?
  + Everyone knew who was on the coin!
  + They didn’t need to physically see it!
  + I think it may have been an object lesson.
  + Jesus was setting up His critics and the listening audience for a truth the coin revealed about their relationship to God.
  + Jesus’ enemies confirmed the coin bore Caesar’s likeness and Jesus tells them that what bears Caesar’s likeness belongs to Caesar
  + Give Caesar his silver if he asks for it.
  + But if they had read the Torah they would have also had to confirm a greater truth based on this principle.
  + Whose image and likeness did they bear? God’s (Genesis 1:26)!
  + What does that mean?
  + It means what bears God’s likeness belongs to God.
  + So give Caesar your silver and give God your heart!
* Is it possible the text should be understood as follows:
  + “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar’s” He said to them [gesturing to the money] “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, [gesturing to the individuals surrounding Him] and to God the things that are God’s.”
* It is possible to interpret the text this way but I wouldn’t be dogmatic about it.
* After looking at the other 2 gospel accounts, I don’t see any evidence to prove or disprove this understanding.
* It would certainly be a masterful answer!
* Either way, upon hearing Christ’s answer, they marveled and walked away without anything else to say.

Mat 22:23 - The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question,

Mat 22:24 - saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.’

Mat 22:25 - Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother.

Mat 22:26 - So too the second and third, down to the seventh.

Mat 22:27 - After them all, the woman died.

Mat 22:28 - In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.”

Mat 22:29 - But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

Mat 22:30 - For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Mat 22:31 - And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God:

Mat 22:32 - ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”

Mat 22:33 - And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

* Another challenge, this one from the Sadducees.
* As we discussed in chapter 3 and as Matthew clarifies here the Sadducees didn’t believe in the resurrection.
* The question they bring to Jesus is probably one they believe is very tricky.
  + They seem to be setting Moses’ Law against the resurrection.
  + Suggesting if one is true the other can’t be true.
* The Hypothetical Question:
  + To understand the question, it is important we know some Old Testament Laws.
    - According to the Old Testament Law, when a married man died without having a son, the widow was not to marry again outside the family.
    - Instead, the brother of the man who died was required to marry his dead brother’s widow and have children with her.
    - The first son of their union was considered the son of the dead brother.
    - You can read about this in Deuteronomy 5:5-10.
  + The Sadducees’ exaggerated question asked, what if this happens 6 times in a family with 7 brothers? On earth she would have been married to 7 different men, so who will be her husband when she and her 7 husbands are resurrected from the dead.
  + They obviously believed this was a great dilemma.
* The Answer:
  + Jesus obviously doesn’t believe this is a great dilemma.
  + Their confusion about the issue is due to their fundamental misunderstanding of the marriage relationship in eternity and their failure to look closely at the scriptures.
  + In two short statements, He dismantles the false dilemma and uses Moses’ own record of God’s words in Exodus 3:6 to show them how foolish their view on the resurrection is.
    - (1) The question about the woman’s true husband following the resurrection is irrelevant because in eternity marriage doesn’t exist in the sense we know it today.
      * The resurrected will be like the angels who are neither married or given in marriage.
    - (2) In regards to the resurrection, God’s own words when speaking to Moses out of the burning bush confirm there is a resurrection
      * Exo 3:5-7 - Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I **am** the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.
      * When God was talking to Moses Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were 400+ years dead.
      * But God didn’t say, “I *was* the God of your father, the God of Abraham…”
      * God said, “I *am* the God of your father, the God of Abraham…”
      * Jesus indicates God’s words here were very specific and not accidental.
        + He was not the God of a bunch of long gone dead people who existed only in past tense.
        + He was the present tense God of some people who were long gone from the earth but still very much alive.
      * The Sadducees “question” was mute.
        + Physical marriage does not translate to spiritual realities.
        + And, the resurrection of the dead is a truth confirmed by Moses.
      * No contradiction or dilemma existed between the commands of Exodus 3 and the resurrection of the dead.
* When the crowds heard Jesus teaching they were astonished.
  + This may have been a point of great contention in Jewish circles as may have been the question about paying taxes.
  + Jesus in a few sentences clarifies the Law.
  + It probably made the people rethink what it meant to be an “expert” in the Law.

Mat 22:34 - But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

Mat 22:35 - And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

Mat 22:36 - “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”

Mat 22:37 - And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Mat 22:38 - This is the great and first commandment.

Mat 22:39 - And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Mat 22:40 - On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

* After the Pharisees hear of the embarrassment of the Sadducees, they decide its their turn to try again. They send a lawyer to Jesus to ask another “question.”
* “Which is the great commandment in the Law.”
  + It’s a bit harder to distinguish the angle the Pharisees are taking with this question.
  + Perhaps their oral traditions ranked the commands least to the greatest.
  + Or it may have been they asked Jesus an open question just to see what He would say and if they could find fault with it.
  + They may have thought they would have a better chance of tripping Him up if their question was broader rather than their specific question about taxes.
* But Jesus’ answer is comprehensive and flawless.
  + The greatest command in the Old Law is to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind.
  + Why is this the greatest command?
    - If we love God, keeping His commandments will come naturally.
    - If our heart is in the right place, our lives will fall in line after it.
    - God’s commands are not burdensome for those who know He seeks our best.
    - “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome” (1John 5:3)
    - You may be familiar with what the Holy Spirit says about the value of things done without love.
      * 1Co 13:1-3 - If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.
      * Of what value are our religious devotions without love for God?
      * At the very hour Jesus spoke these words, Jerusalem was filled with people who practiced religious ritual but without love for God or His Son.
    - See Deut 6:5 for the OT quotation.
  + The second greatest command is to love your neighbor as yourself.
    - Loving God is key to a proper relationship with God.
    - Loving man is a key to a proper relationship with our fellow man.
    - How can this be accomplished? How can we learn to love other human beings properly?
    - I think the answer is contained in the first command!
      * By observing God’s love for us we can understand love.
      * God’s love reflected off us can then be shown to our neighbors.
      * “We love because He first loved us” – (1John 4:19)
    - If our hearts are filled with genuine love for others, even our enemies, we will not have any problem applying the rest of God’s commands in regards to how to treat those around us.

Mat 22:41 - Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question,

Mat 22:42 - saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.”

Mat 22:43 - He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

Mat 22:44 - “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’?

Mat 22:45 - If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”

Mat 22:46 - And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

* This is the final exchange of this chapter.
* Rather than the Pharisees or Sadducees asking the questions, Jesus has a question of His own for them.
* He intended to make clear to the people their rulers were not the experts they claimed to be.
* He asked them what they thought about the coming Messiah. “Whose son is he?
* They responded, “The son of David.”
* Jesus then asked them to offer their interpretation of a passage based on what they just told Him.
  + In Psalm 110:1, David refers to the Christ as “Lord.”
  + This term would have been used to refer to a superior.
  + But how could a father be inferior to one of his descendants?
  + If the Christ was nothing more than a physical descendant of David, like other men who were David’s great, great, great, great,… grandchildren, David would not have referred to Him as a superior.
  + There must have been something more to the Messiah than just being a physical son of David.
  + In verse 44, David talks about the exaltation of the Messiah at the throne of God and how all things will be subjected to Him.
  + Jesus asks them to explain David’s comments.
* They have no idea how to respond!
* “And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask Him any more questions” (Matt 22:46)
* This text suggest the Pharisees believed the Messiah would be a descendant of David but they did not take texts like Isaiah 7:14 literally.
  + “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14)
  + Immanuel means “God with us.”
* If they had believed Messiah would be divine, they wouldn’t have had any problem answering this question.
* But they could provide no answer.
* In stumping the Pharisees Jesus is doing a few things:
  + (1) He is opening the minds of the people to the true nature of the Messiah.
  + (2) He is humbling the Pharisees by stumping them with their own scriptures.
* The Jewish elite had been whipped and had finally learned their lesson.
  + They weren’t smarter or more clever, or wiser, or better students of the Law than a 30 year old from Galilee.
  + They stood no chance against Him on a battlefield governed by reason and civility.
  + They would not return to question Him anymore.
  + They would resort to uncivilized violence to keep their hemorrhaging pride alive.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Herodians.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribute_penny>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiberius>