

Adult Sunday School

July 4, 2021

Matthew 22:23-46

Outline

- ¹The Messiah asserts his authority over Jerusalem (21:1-23:39). Jesus' authority over Jerusalem is revealed in his triumphal entry (21:1-11), actions in the temple (21:12-17), cursing the fig tree (21:18-22), debates with religious leaders (21:23-22:46), and woes promised on the teachers of the law and the Pharisees (23:1-39).
 - Controversies in the Temple Court over Jesus' Authority (21:23-22:46) - On Tuesday of Holy Week, Jesus presents three extended parables showing God's judgment on the leaders for not encouraging the people to accept Jesus' invitation to the kingdom of heaven. This is followed by a series of four interactions as the religious leaders try to trap Jesus, who in turn reveals his true identity as the Son of God.

Matthew 22:23-33

Theme- The Sadducees² question about the resurrection

Scope and Purpose

The Sadducees were unhappy men who said there was no resurrection, attempted, like the Pharisees and the Herodians, to perplex Jesus with hard questions. They hoped to entangle him in his talk and injure his reputation among the people. They were completely baffled. ³

Observations

1. Observe that absurd skeptical objections to Bible truths continue through history.
 - a. The Sadducees wanted to show that the resurrection and life to come was absurd. So they concocted this scenario about the woman and the seven brothers. There would be havoc in heaven as to who is the spouse. (Don't sell the Sadducees short! This was good argumentation.)
 - b. These assertions contesting the Bible and life after death should never surprise us. Hypothetical cases are favorite strongholds where an unbelieving mind loves to entrench itself if it is anchored in the imagination and treated as truth, ignoring a mass of plain evidence. They often hang on just a single point.
 - c. We should remember that there are difficult and hard things in a religion that comes from God, which even the greatest philosopher cannot answer.

¹ ESV Study Bible

² The Sadducees, including Caiaphas were primarily wealthy, priestly families in Jerusalem. They were characterized as being unfriendly and unpopular. They rejected the extrabiblical traditions of the Pharisees perhaps only embracing the Pentateuch. This is probably why they did not believe in the resurrection and embraced human responsibility in the Law of Moses.

³ See WSC 37-38

- d. On the other hand, there are countless truths in the Bible that are unmistakable. Make sure we master these and obey them realizing that some unintelligible things will be made plain hereafter.
2. We need to consider the remarkable text Jesus brings forward in proof of the reality of the life to come. These are the words God spoke to Moses at the burning bush. *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. Exodus 3:6.*
 - a. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, long dead, are referred as being still God's people and God is still their God. "I am" NOT "I was."
 - b. We need to ensure that we do not hold truths theoretically but not practically. Give this truth a prominent place in your thoughts and in your piety!
 - c. The dead are still alive even though their bodies are in their graves (still united to Christ) their souls are alive and made perfectly holy and pass into Glory (Intermediate State). Then one day we will be raised up in glory we will be openly acknowledged and acquitted at judgment and made perfectly blessed to all eternity (WSC 37-38).
 - d. "I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." (Nicene Creed)
 - e. NB: Jesus illustrates the good and necessary consequence of WCF 1.6 in terms of the authority of Scripture. *The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture:*
 3. The state of men and women after the resurrection.
 - a. The Sadducees mistook the character of the resurrection state. They took for granted what properties are extended into heaven.
 - b. While we will have physical bodies they will be a different constitution and different necessities from what we now have. At the resurrection they will not be given in marriage but are as the angels of God in heaven.
 - c. We do not have a full understanding of what heaven will be. This is what we know:
 - i. No more hunger, no more thirst, sickness, pain, disease, no wasting old age, no more death. No marriages, children, or a constant succession of inhabitants.
 - ii. We will be angels of God. We shall serve God perfectly, unhesitatingly, and unweariedly. We shall ever be in God's presence, we shall ever delight in his will, and we shall give all the glory to the Lamb. THIS IS DEEP BUT TRUE!!!
 - d. Are we ready for this life? Will we enjoy it, if admitted? Is the company of God, and the service of God pleasant to us now? Is the occupation of angels one in which we should delight? Our hearts must be heavenly on earth while we live. ⁴

⁴ Read The Great Divorce- by C.S. Lewis.

- e. *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4.*
- f. CAVEAT- this is for those who are GOING to heaven! It is another thing for those who are not in Christ. They are going to hell. In hell body and soul are tormented forever and no marriage either. ARE YOU GOING TO HEAVEN???

Matthew 22:34-46

Theme- The lawyer's question about the great commandment. Christ's question to his enemies.

Scope and Purpose

Jesus is replying to the question of a certain lawyer who asked him which was the great commandment of the law. We do not think the lawyer was a sympathizer of Jesus. Praise God that Jesus draws out precious truths.

Prominent Points

1. Let's take notice of the summary of our duty towards God. See also WSC 42. *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. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."* Matthew 22:37-40. Breaking this down:
 - a. Love is the grand secret of true obedience to God. We delight to do our Father's will. They who do the will of God best is those who do it from the heart.
 - b. Love is the grand secret of right behaviour toward our neighbor. We desire to do her good, strive to promote her comfort and happiness in every way, lighten her sorrows, and increase her joys.
 - c. How do we obtain this love to God? Only when we have peace with him through Christ. We obtain the Spirit of adoption. *We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19.*
 - d. How do we obtain this love toward our neighbor? We are born selfish, hateful, and hating one another. *For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. Titus 3:3.* Only being born again can we love our neighbor. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Galatians 5:22.*
 - e. The way to spread true love in the world, is to teach the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. Question to the Pharisees -

What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

*"The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet"?"*

If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" Matthew 22:42-45

- a. The Pharisees could not explain the application. It could only be explained by conceding the pre-existence and divinity of the Messiah. Their view of the Scriptures of which they pretended to know more than anyone else and their low carnal view of Christ were exposed and they dared not ask anything more.
- b. What do WE think of Christ? May we never rest until we give a satisfactory answer and that we are united to him by faith.

BONUS - The Sum of Saving Knowledge (Dickson/Durham)- The sum of the covenant of redemption is this: God having freely chosen to life a certain number of lost mankind, for the glory of his rich grace, did give them, before the world began, to God the Son, appointed Redeemer, that, upon condition he would humble himself so far as to assume the human nature, of a soul and a body, to personal union with his divine nature, and submit himself to the law, as surety for them, and satisfy justice for them, by giving obedience in their name, even to the suffering of the cursed death of the cross, he should ransom and redeem them all from sin and death, and purchase to them righteousness and eternal life, with all saving graces leading there to, to be effectually, by means of his own appointment, applied in due time to every one of them. This condition the Son of God (who is Jesus Christ our Lord) did accept before the world began, and in the fulness of time came into the world, was born of the Virgin Mary, subjected himself to the law, and completely paid the ransom on the cross: But by virtue of the foresaid bargain, made before the world began, he is in all ages, since the fall of Adam, still upon the work of applying actually the purchased benefits of the elect; and that he does by way of entertaining a covenant of free grace and reconciliation with them, through faith in himself; by which covenant, he makes over to every believer a right and interest to himself, and to all his blessings.

