

## How They Might Entangle Him in His Talk

### **Matthew 22:15 – 23:22**

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~ The final sentence of our previous report from our Spiritual Safari made a spectacular anticipatory promise concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Well, I intend to make good on that promise today, friends. Chapter twenty-two marks the end of the Pharisee's questioning of Jesus; and I also promise that Jesus Himself is going to get SO ugly and SO hateful with ALL of us in this report that if you are not completely committed to learning the Word of God properly, completely and correctly – I would just stop reading and be done with your Spiritual Safari. In fact, if you aren't prepared for blistering chastisement – you should just throw your Bible in the garbage can and renounce anything that could even remotely be related to or even merely connected with "Christianity." We are getting very close to the crucifixion and we're going to have an awful, devastating front row view. In Psalm twenty-two, we examined the thoughts in the Mind of the Lord Jesus as He hangs there dying; but Matthew reveals the unspeakable physical brutality of it all. If you have never seen the truly spectacular before in print – if I do say so myself - you're in for one amazing experience with the Spirit of God in the remainder of Matthew's Gospel account.

We have been tracking the movement of Jesus and His disciples through Matthew as He takes miraculous steps down from Philippi and through Galilee – and beyond Jordan to Jericho - and we are already in Jerusalem as of our last report; to attend to the King's business – which is a murder – His murder! Jesus, by riding into Jerusalem on the donkey, made a demand that everyone consider Him, even if only briefly. They are well aware of Whom they will soon cry out, "...crucify Him!" Interestingly, He entered through the sheep gate on the other two days, which Mark and Luke both record; the gate where animals were brought in for sacrifice - but not THIS time! This time He rides in through the east gate as a King and gives everyone an opportunity to accept or reject Him as their Messiah! Those who are with Him recognize Him as the King. You might say Jesus is forcing Himself on the people!

The three major groups of people in Jewish society are all coming against Christ Jesus at this time in which we are studying: the Herodian, the Sadducee's and the Pharisee's – and each presents an onslaught of differing perspectives in this section of Scripture. Their attack on Jesus will end with each of these groups being so specifically and personally insulted that they will not again dare ask Jesus any other theological questions after this. We have traveled about a third of the way through chapter twenty-two already; and, as we begin at verse fifteen, the Herodian's take the first crack at entangling Him in His Words.

The Herodian was a Jewish political party in Israel, as we have already learned. They had no religious ambitions; and their only purpose was to favor, promote and report back to the house of Herod concerning community issues, town practices, local activities - etcetera. The Herodian was, actually, expecting the house of Herod to deliver them from the terrible bondage of that horrible iron-fisted rule of Roman occupation. The Herodian was as confused and frighteningly small-minded as any atheist is today. Fascinatingly, we see the Pharisee's had some connection to the Herodian's and, apparently, prompted them to join this interrogation. Certainly it is possible that many Pharisees were also Herodian – part time politics – you know – just like it is today – especially around this forum on which I teach....

## XXII

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

***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.***

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

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

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

~ Obviously, they weren't interested in Jesus answer – they were only interested in their own sociology. Of course, this is a trick because if Jesus says “no” to paying tribute to Cesar, then they would call Him a traitor. If He says “yes” then He cannot be the true Messiah because the Messiah would never say that! They must have taken a seven-martini lunch together to come up with this question – because it sounds crafty and clever – but they didn't think it through. Three things are notable in Jesus response: (1) He calls them a name that invokes rage. If you think I'm kidding try it on someone – but be careful (2) Jesus uses their coin. Why? – I don't think Jesus had one of His own (3) notice that the coin they bring Him is a penny. I think they probably had to search for one in the crowd of commoners. There is no way they would have handed over a shekel of gold to the Lord Jesus; and every man there had a pocket full of them, you may be sure! Well, either way, they're using the legal tender of the land - and it is a Roman coin....

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

**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 answers them but He says so much more that is simply amazing. Jesus tells them that they owe something to Cesar; and they certainly DID owe Cesar something. They owed Caesar everything! After all, it was Caesar's coin in their hands that they are using! It had an inscription of Cesar – not the man holding it! They were standing on a Roman road and Rome sure did give them, at least, some measure of societal peace and safety. They definitely owed something to Rome. Of course, NONE of them sensed their indebtedness to God; which was far greater than any of those others. Our indebtedness to Him is one that none of us can ever repay....

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

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

**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.**

**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:**

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

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

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

~ The Sadducee's didn't even BELIEVE in the resurrection! This is the most ridiculous illustration from a philosophy that has a question which indicates the theory they hold is desperately clinging to life. Of course, the "theory" we're talking about is the theory that Jesus is wrong! Imagine a woman that had lost seven husband brothers to death in her life. Today, that woman would be investigated and prosecuted for murder; unless she was a Hollywood starlet, of course, but I digress. Who in the world do these men think they are kidding? Who's wife shall she be after all of this death is what these men want to know. This has come to ignorance in two hemispheres. They did not understand the Scripture's they recited and they had no knowledge of the power of God! In fact, they denied the power of God. This abject ignorance is what causes the ridiculous questions and unnecessarily derogatory conversations that banter around this forum all the time....

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

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

~ Notice it says “as the angels” - because we aren’t angels in Heaven. I don’t know how to play a harp – and I don’t really want to learn how. I really don’t need those big bushy wings, either; I’ll recommend we use something like the transporter from that sixties science fiction television series – where we are chopped down into little bitty pieces of atoms and then reorganized and reanimated later for mobility – you know? There won’t be any need to further the race by birthing as we know it in that day, either. How will the multiplication of the race occur? – I don’t know! I do know that marriage will not be the means by which the race is propagated. I also know this does NOT mean a husband and wife that were very close down here won’t be able to be together in Heaven. I also know there will be many who DON’T want to be together in Heaven and they will have that opportunity, also. We’re all going to have a new body and be new individuals – so – we had probably better wait and see because some may actually like each other up there! I’m just very glad I won’t be an angel in Heaven because I want to be something else, actually; but I’m not telling you what that is....

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

***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.***

~ This statement has always been devastating to me to read; and I am sure it was desecrating to the minds of these men standing in front of the Lord Jesus. What about Abraham today? Abraham is still as much Abraham as he ever was! The same is true with Isaac and Jacob. They have been transferred to another LIVING place where they LIVE today. It is critical that we nail this down in our thinking because it’s true for your loved ones that are over on the other side waiting for you to arrive alive with them! This is a tremendous truth we have set before us here....

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

~ And with that, the first two groups of people, the Herodian's and the Sadducee's, are summarily and easily dismissed by the Lord Jesus. The only ones remaining are the best of the best in religion in Israel; and, amazingly, they come up with an utterly ridiculous question. This is the last one. Remember, the Pharisees are a Jewish religio-political party who are trying to restore a kingdom. They wanted to join the Herodians; and I think they all sincerely wanted to see the nation Israel and kingdom of David restored back to and functioning as it had in its original form and power; but they wanted to detach themselves from Rome, too – that's for sure. The Herodian's, however, as a political party, were generally opposed to the Sadducees. The Pharisees could be likened to the conservative wing of the church and the Sadducees correspond to the liberal wing of the church today....

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

~ When the liberal and the conservative get together in a huddle you can know very definitely that there is a third party against which they have a very bad agenda. Otherwise, these two just don't get together on ANYTHING! Now, here comes the scribe, the lawyer, who would be the legal expert of the Mosaic Law at this time. This is the genius clever lawyer – the senior ranking man. Of course, the others have not done so well – so he comes to propound in the form of a question. None of the Mosaic Law is given in response; and the answer our Lord gives should make every one of us realize that we are coming woefully and ignorantly short of the glory of God. Jesus is being very straightforward and this man is reduced to obscurity with His answer. Jesus answer is so accurate they had no choice but to be honest now. To disagree would show embarrassing insincerity. We need a Savior - but they had the Savior speaking directly to them....

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

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

**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.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

~ The Pharisees haven't had enough abuse, so they are in another huddle when Jesus beats them to the punch and asks them a question. David did exactly this same thing in Psalm one hundred ten verse one. How could David call his son his Lord? The Father calling the son Lord is just NOT the way things were done in Israel at this time. A supernatural birth is the ONLY way these Pharisees can answer and retain that last remaining façade of credibility. I think people in the crowd were starting to laugh at this point. Many of them were certainly beginning to realize how wrong they had been – and were starting to see things clearly....

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

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

~ The modern liberal theologian will tell you that King David didn't write Psalm one hundred ten in the power of the Holy Spirit about the Messiah. The Lord Jesus makes it clear here how that Psalm came about. The only possible answer to the question in verse forty-five would be the virgin birth

of the Lord Jesus Christ. Natural birth would not have permitted this and that answer by the Pharisee's would have been not credible with their subjects. The Pharisee's are questioning Jesus birth, too, by the way. They are saying that they themselves are not illegitimate because they are the sons of Abraham - and all that. It's supernatural, friends. You can call it whatever you want to. I accept this as supernatural....

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

~ This marks the end of the public clash between Jesus and the religious rulers. There will be no concerted verbal attack on Jesus after this again because they have resigned to a determination of His death. As the religious rulers now realize they cannot answer Jesus, the most tangible and incontrovertible evidence of His Deity emerges – and a marvelous picture it really is in chapter twenty-three; where Jesus warns the multitudes against the scribes and Pharisees by pronouncing woe's upon both groups. Jesus condemns the religious rulers in no unmistakable terms. This is scathing and scalding, sensational, scorching and sarcastic invective denunciation and merciless judgment. I simply cannot, at all, see how the liberal articulates this chapter; and most of them don't bother. You will find all of this teaching mysteriously missing from most churches today. Even the church where the pastor is literally STUCK in Matthew – and there are many – they avoid this section of Scripture altogether. The idea of a gentle Jesus who never judges by saying ever an unkind word is nonsense, friends. Read this chapter slowly and carefully and it will blanch your own soul – unless you are already dead! I won't even try to outline this section because that would take an entire report. I will point out that this is where Jesus weeps over Jerusalem....

## **XXIII**

***1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,***

***2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:***



***3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.***

***4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.***

***5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,***

***6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,***

***7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.***

~ The scribes and Pharisee's were usurping a position they had no right to occupy. This is how the church leader operates today. People are looking to them for an accurate interpretation of the truth, but they are not getting it. Verse three is the saddest commentary on today's religious rulers that we could possibly shout from a rooftop. The contemporary religious man will always attempt to place you under a set of rules and regulations that they do not keep. Further, those same men love to have titles and they love to be recognized and respected. I see these absolute phonies in their spectacular religious garments and habits that set them apart from an ordinary man and I laugh at them. Jesus is, obviously, condemning this – so I am making several clarifications in the next few verses to ensure we know what we're REALLY talking about. We had better keep this precept before us, too. Of course, there is a certain honor and respect due the pastor of your church - but he's no different from anyone else in the crowd....

***8 But be not ye called Teacher: for one is your Teacher, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.***

***9 And call no man your life giver upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.***

**10 Neither be ye called masters because you don't have any authority: for one is your Master, even Christ.**

**11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. Therefore, asketh Jesus, dost thou desiredst to be the greatest? If yes, thou must become servant of all.**

**12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.**

**13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men and block their way in: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.**

**14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.**

**15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.**

**16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!**

**17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?**

**18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.**

**19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?**

**20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.**

**21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.**

**22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.**

~ “Woe” was used eight times and “hypocrite” was said seven times, in case you weren’t counting. The Pharisee was great at going out and witnessing; the problem is the lie they were spreading. They were “witnessing” on every corner, of course, but they weren’t getting anyone to the Messiah to be healed because they were too busy rejecting Him. The Pharisee was good at splitting hairs until the only thing that was left was something for them. What a dangerous perspective; and you’ll find nothing more lethal in Christian work. This is the absolute harshest beating we have ever received out here on our safari and I think we have had enough for one day. I know I have had all I can take, and I need some sleep with some good dreams. Please pray for me, friends. In our next report, we are going to see this “gentle Jesus” take us to the next level of acidic speech and sarcastic sayings – which hardly seems possible, but, it is – so, I hope you’ll stick around ~

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