

Chapter 22

Guests at a Royal Wedding Banquet (22:1–14) (Luke 14:16-24)

Matthew 22:1 *And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying,*

And again Jesus [answered]¹ speaking to them in parables, saying.... The word **answered** has been left out of the ESV but is in the Greek text. The reason it is important is because it “makes the parable a response to the reaction of the chief priests and the Pharisees in 21:45–46.”² As such, it is not a new topic with a new context; **it is a part of the prior context.**

“When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.” (Matthew 21:45, ESV)

Jesus is responding to their reaction. He really was speaking about them and this parable is meant to magnify this point. They had nailed it when they said: “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” (Matthew 21:41, ESV). Jesus follows up that statement with this, giving additional detail on this coming judgment.

Matthew 22:2 *“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son....*

kingdom of heaven.... In the parable this term is used as an equivalent to heaven or the eternal state.

wedding feast.... John, in the book of Revelation uses the same image to address the eternal state.

“And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to **the marriage supper of the Lamb.**” (Revelation 19:9, ESV)

king ... for his son.... The relationship of the father and son in the last two parables continue to be central. In the last parable we read:

“Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’” (Matthew 21:37, ESV)

“The king’s son is clearly Messiah, not uncommonly represented as a bridegroom....”³ **He was not respected in the parables nor in real life.**

¹ *answered ἀποκριθεὶς* “answer, reply, begin speaking, continue speaking.” Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990–), 133.

² Nolland John. (2005). Preface. In *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (p. 885). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

³ Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 456). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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

sent his servants.... These are the prophets of God who, speaking for the master, call Israel to the great supper of God.

they would⁴ not come.... “This was something **completely unnatural**; in real life a royal invitation is not refused, and people are very glad to be present at a royal banquet. We should not miss the point that Jesus regards the actions of the high-priestly party as completely unnatural. When they were summoned by the King of heaven, they should surely have complied with his gracious invitation. But they did not.”⁵

Matthew 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.’ ’

But the king is patient and sends more servants, prophets, and continues to invite these men to the feast. “So, the assurance having been given that everything had been done to ensure that the guests would have a magnificent banquet, the king concludes with “Come to the wedding.””⁶ **He shows immeasurable patience with them.**

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

they paid no attention.... Meaning, they were **without care** as to what the King wanted. This is a condition that we are all in, until God intervenes.

one to his farm, another to his business.... “Jesus is citing typical shallow excuses to bring out the point that the impolite guests had no real reason for staying away from the banquet. They simply did not care.”⁷ **The irony of this depiction is that rejection is not made in the pursuit of evil ends but in the pursuit of good ones.”⁸ They had families to support. Not everyone has a violent hatred of religion, many just don’t care one way or the other. To them the call to the wedding supper of the lamb is just a big yawn. It’s not their “thing.”**

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

Others however, **hate**. The scene turns violent and echoes the previous parable.

⁴ would θέλω “To will, wish, desire, implying active volition and purpose.”⁴ “...their wills were set against coming.” Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew*. (p. 548). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

⁵ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 548). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

⁶ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (pp. 548–549). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

⁷ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 549). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

⁸ Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28* (vol. 2, Revised and Expanded Edition.; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 387–388.

“And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.” (Matthew 21:35, ESV)

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

angry.... Although anger is generally sinful in our lives, there are just reasons for anger, especially by God. This is an example of just anger.

he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers.... As in the previous parable about the tenants of the vineyard, judgment follows this rebellious and murderous behavior:

“They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”” (Matthew 21:41, ESV)

burned their city.... The addition of a **city** was not a part of this or the previous story. It is added to warn his hearers that **Jerusalem is in danger of judgment for failing to respond to the call of the king.** “Most interpreters agree that this is a specific allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, when large parts of the city were burned by the conquering Romans (Josephus, *War* 6.353–355, 363–364, 406–408).”⁹

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

not worthy¹⁰

“And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46, ESV)

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

Go therefore.... In about 53 days he will say it again.

“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,” (Matthew 28:19, ESV)

main roads.... “...the places where the main highways go out from the city to the country, evidently places where poor people tended to congregate.”¹¹

⁹ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 825). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

¹⁰ *worthy* ἄξιος, “... to weigh. An estimate or value. Some believe it refers to a set of scales where the weights bring or draw down (*ágousi*) the beam to a horizontal level when the weights are equal on each side. Worthy, indicating inherent value as contrasted to *tímios* (5093), worthy from attributed value.” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

¹¹ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 550). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

as many as you find.... This phrase anticipates “**the great transfer’ that occurred when the Word of God went out to the Gentile world.**”¹²

Matthew 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.

gathered¹³.... From this term came the word Synagogue, a gathering together of those that worshiped in the Jewish community, had its origin. They *synagogued* all whom they found. Early Christians used the same term as well until the word *ekklesiá* [ἐκκλησία] or church came into use.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.” (Matthew 13:47, ESV)

all whom they found, both bad and good.... John the Baptist did the same thing.

“For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him.” (Matthew 21:32, ESV)

Jesus earlier made the same point.

“When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous” (Matthew 13:48–49, ESV)

“The wedding banquet is a variant of the messianic banquet echoed in 8:11...; the summons is to come to the eschatological banquet which has now been prepared.”¹⁴
We read earlier:

“I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:11–12, ESV)

“The phrase “**everybody they could find, the bad as well as the good,**” points to the gratuity of the gospel, its grace and nondiscrimination, its distinctive openness to outcasts and failures, to problem people and the unimpressive. **The flawed, as this Gospel has taught repeatedly, are especially dear to Jesus’ heart** (cf. most recently the blind and lame in the temple, 21:14).”¹⁵

A Turn in the Story

¹² Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28* (vol. 2, Revised and Expanded Edition.; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 389.

¹³ *gathered* συνάγω “... to lead, assemble, gather together.” Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹⁴ Nolland John. (2005). Preface. In *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (p. 889). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

¹⁵ Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28* (vol. 2, Revised and Expanded Edition.; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 389.

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

the king came.... God is coming and there will be an accounting. Earlier we read:

“*When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” (Matthew 21:40, ESV)*

he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. “To honor the occasion of the wedding of the king’s son would require the best that could be achieved. One guest is visually obvious for not having bothered. There is a presumption here that is insulting to the king and to the occasion.”¹⁶

wedding garment.... “The precise meaning of this is not known, but obviously a marriage is a time when most people would wear appropriate clothing (cf. Isa. 61:10; Ezek. 16:10). In this case, when a king took all sorts of poor people right from the streets into the banqueting hall, it is not impossible that he made available suitable clothing and that this man did not bother to make use of what the king provided....”¹⁷

“...it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” (Revelation 19:8–9, ESV)

If there is any connection between this passage in Matthew and the one here in Revelation, **it would imply that the garment is the demonstration of faith of Jesus’ disciples**. Talking the talk is not the same thing as walking the walk.

“As to the *wedding-garment*, is it faith, or is it a holy life? This is a useless controversy; for faith cannot be separated from good works, nor do good works proceed from any other source than from faith. But Christ intended only to state, that the Lord calls us on the express condition of our being renewed by the Spirit after his image; and that, in order to our remaining permanently in his house, we must *put off the old man with his pollutions*, (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:22,) and lead a new life, that the *garment* may correspond to so honorable a calling.”¹⁸

“*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*” (Isaiah 61:10, ESV)

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

speechless.... Excuse making works on many people, but not on God.

¹⁶ Nolland John. (2005). Preface. In *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (p. 890). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

¹⁷ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 551). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

¹⁸ John Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (vol. 2; Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 174.

“Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.” (Romans 3:19, ESV)

So, how did you get in here? And, are you wearing a wedding garment?

Matthew 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.’

The Parable of the Net concludes:

“So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:49–50, ESV)

The story of the faith of the centurion ends on a similar note for the sons of the kingdom—Israel!

“while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:12, ESV)

Many will not even bother to identify themselves with the King, while others will pretend to do so but eventually they will be found out and excluded from the kingdom.

*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom **prepared for you from the foundation of the world**.’” (Matthew 25:31–34, ESV)*

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

many are called.... The gospel call indiscriminately goes world-wide.

few are chosen¹⁹.... To elect, to select, to pick or to choose. The Presbyterian doctrine of election is in part based on this word.

“This is an expression of the doctrine of election that we find in one form or another throughout the New Testament. The Jews could say, “All Israelites have a share in the world to come” ... but Jesus rejects such views. The gospel invitation goes far and wide, but not everyone who hears it is one of God’s elect. We know those who are elect by their obedient response.”²⁰ Not only must we talk the talk, we must also walk the walk.

¹⁹ ἐκλεκτός “...to choose, select.” Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²⁰ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 553). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

Four Questions (22:15–46)
‘To Caesar ... and to God ...’ (22:15–22)
(Mark 12:13-27; Luke 20:20-38)

“All this probably takes place in the temple courts on Tuesday of Passion Week.”²¹

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

“Jesus’ cleansing of the temple (21:12–17) had been a **revolutionary act against religious authority**; Jesus’ opponents now wanted to provoke Jesus into a **revolutionary remark against civil authority**...”²²

plotted²³.... “Clearly they had learned enough about Jesus to respect him and did not want to make a half-baked attempt to refute him. So they went off and thought about it and took advice.”²⁴

entangle²⁵ **him in his words**. They are trying to entangle the logos (word) in his words (logos).

Matthew 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.

their disciples.... “...people who were learning the Pharisaic way.”²⁶ And possibly people who would not be instantly recognized as Pharisees and therefore more able to deceive.

Herodians.... “...the promoters of the family of Herod were deeply committed to alliances with Rome and would be hostile to any opposition to the existing Roman taxes and keen to report potential ‘mutiny’.”²⁷

“The Herodians were supporters of the descendants of Herod as the ruling party, and as such would have been in favor of Roman rule. On the other hand, the Pharisees were

²¹ Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 458). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

²² Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28* (vol. 2, Revised and Expanded Edition.; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 397.

²³ *plotted* συμβουλος “...to engage in joint planning so as to devise a course of common action, often one with a harmful or evil purpose—‘to confer, to consult, to plot, to make plans against.’” Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*. New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁴ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (pp. 554–555). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

²⁵ *entangle* παγιδεύω “...‘to hunt, to trap,’ ... to acquire information about an error or fault, with the purpose of causing harm or trouble—‘to trap, to catch off guard, to catch in a mistake.’” Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*. New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁶ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 555). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

²⁷ Nolland John. (2005). Preface. In *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (p. 895). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

the conservative religious element, and they would have found it distasteful to be compelled to support the Roman government by their contributions.”²⁸ **But, these of opposite convictions find common cause in the murder of Jesus. The enemy of my enemy is my friend.**

we know that you are true.... “The statement means that Jesus has truth in his very being; he can be relied upon to say what is right, and he will not bend his statement to fit it in with what other people would like to hear.”²⁹

teach the way of God truthfully.... “...what he says about *the way of God* is true, an interesting concession from those who opposed him.”³⁰

you do not care about anyone’s opinion.... “...that Jesus will not modify his action or teaching out of fear or for favour.”³¹

you are not swayed by appearances [you do not show partiality] “...the real emphasis is upon the impartiality with which Jesus treats people, regardless of their status....”³²

“The tempters thus manage to say four things about Jesus in short compass: he was sincere, faithful to the truth, fearless, and no respecter of persons.”³³ This praise was eye wash designed to ‘set Jesus up.’ If they had truly believed all this, they would not be trying to murder him.

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

“This then depicts the dilemma in which the Pharisees hope to snare Jesus. To say that one should not pay taxes to the Romans would put him at **odds with the civil authorities**, while he would have **lost favor with the people** if he had advocated the payment of taxes to the Roman authorities.”³⁴

***lawful*³⁵....** They that sought to break the law of God by murdering Jesus feign concern about what is lawful.

²⁸ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992). *A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (p. 683). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁹ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 555). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

³⁰ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 555). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

³¹ Nolland John. (2005). Preface. In *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (p. 895). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

³² Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992). *A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (p. 683). New York: United Bible Societies.

³³ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 555). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

³⁴ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992). *A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (p. 683). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁵ *lawful* ἔξεστιν “...to be authorized for the doing of something, *it is right, is authorized, is permitted, is proper.*” Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

taxes³⁶.... This was the yearly poll tax.

Caesar “The question whether it is “right” (or lawful) to pay it is clearly not concerned with **Roman law** (which allowed no such question), but with what is right for the people of God under the **Torah**. It thus already presupposes the Zealot assumption that what Rome demands God may forbid. It is a question appropriately directed to a religious teacher.”³⁷

“In this situation it would have seemed to the questioners that Jesus could not win. The question is framed in such a way that the answer is expected to be “Yes” or “No.” If Jesus said “Yes,” presumably the Herodians would agree, but he would alienate many religious Jews who saw support for the Romans as intolerable. If he said “No,” he would satisfy the Pharisees, but be in trouble with the Roman authorities.”³⁸

Historical Background

Let’s note some important historical background to this question. This poll tax was first imposed in Judea in A.D. 6, just before the birth of Jesus. It had resulted in a serious revolt by a patriotic Jew named Judas. “A certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt; and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords.”³⁹

“That revolt was the inspiration for the later Zealot movement which led to the war of independence beginning in **AD 66 and so to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of its temple in AD 70**. Judas, the leader of that first revolt, had been a Galilean, and now here was another Galilean who claimed to be a leader of his people; so what was his view on this political hot potato?”⁴⁰

It was in this context that this seemingly innocent question is asked. It is hoped that the fate of this Judas will now be the fate of Jesus and for the very same reason—payment of the poll tax.

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? We can see here “**the basic presupposition behind their question, that there is an essential incompatibility between loyalty to the governing authority and loyalty to God.**”⁴¹

“The trap, then, put Jesus into the position where he would either alienate a major part of the population or else lay himself open to a charge of treason.”⁴² It was a very well thought out question.

³⁶ *taxes κῆνσοῦς* “In the NT, tribute or poll–tax paid by each person whose name was taken in the census which the Greeks called *epikephálaion*, head tax....” Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³⁷ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (pp. 832–833). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

³⁸ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 556). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

³⁹ Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁴⁰ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 829). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

⁴¹ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 830). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

⁴² Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 459). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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

aware⁴³ or **know**....

malice⁴⁴.... Jesus is not duped with their false praise; he knows the heart of man.

“But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?”
(Matthew 9:4, ESV)

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

coin⁴⁵.... From the Greek word, we get the English word “numismatic.”

denarius⁴⁶.... A Roman silver coin equivalent to a day’s wage of a common laborer.

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

likeness⁴⁷.... From this Greek word, we get the English word icon. The image [icon] on the coin was that of Caesar. But the image placed on man is that of God.

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our **image, after our likeness**.”
(Genesis 1:26, ESV)

inscription.... “A denarius of Tiberius would carry his garlanded portrait surrounded by the inscription “Ti[berius] Caesar Divi Aug[usti] F[ilius] Augustus;” on the reverse would be “Pontif[ex] Maxim[us].” He is thus proclaimed to be not only son of the divine Augustus, but also a high priest; the two titles together could hardly be more calculated to offend Jewish piety.”⁴⁸

Matthew 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.”

render⁴⁹.... Or, **give back**. **Whose likeness and inscription is this? Caesar’s? Well then, give it back.**

⁴³ *aware* γινώσκω “...to come to an understanding as the result of ability to experience and learn—‘to come to understand, to perceive, to comprehend.’” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 381.

⁴⁴ *malice* πονηρία “...an evil, wicked nature—‘wickedness.’” Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*. New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁵ *coin* νόμισμα “numismatic ... of, pertaining to, or consisting of coins, medals, paper money, etc.”

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/numismatic>

⁴⁶ *denarius* δηνάριον “...a Roman silver coin equivalent to a day’s wage of a common laborer—‘denarius.’” Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*. New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁷ *likeness* εικόν “...an object (not necessarily three dimensional) which has been formed to resemble a person, god, animal, etc.—‘likeness, image’....” Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*. New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁸ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 833). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

⁴⁹ *render* ἀποδίδωμι “To give or to do something necessary in fulfillment of an obligation or expectation. To give, bestow....” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

Was it a sin to pay the tax? Is there an unavoidable conflict between state and church? “Jesus asserts that this is not necessarily so: it is possible to pay one’s dues *both* to the emperor *and* to God, to be both a dutiful citizen and a loyal servant of God.”⁵⁰

The image identifies the owner. **The image on the coin was Caesar’s, the coin belonged to Caesar; the image on man is God, man belongs to God. Man is allowed to submit to foreign taxation, man is required to submit to God.**

“The first point of Jesus’ answer is *respect for the state*. The state performs such multiple services for its citizens, symbolized by coinage—from water, sewage, highways, and defense to standards in food, buildings, business, education, and so on—that we should appreciate that the state is, in Paul’s idiom, God’s servant for our well-being (Rom 13:4). When the state thus serves, it is ingrate to refuse payment for services.”⁵¹

In all this, Jesus is making it clear for all to hear, **he is not a new Judas raising an army to attack the Romans**. His kingdom is fundamentally different from what they had hoped the Messiah would bring. They looked for a conquering king attacking Rome. In a short time this image of a conquering king would come to pass—Revelation 19:11-21. However, when that did happen—the enemy would be Israel! How ironic.

and to God the things that are God’s. “But if the first half of Jesus’ answer means *the honor of the state*, the last half means *the limitation of the state*. “*But [you give back] to God the things that belong to God!*” As Caesar’s coin bears Caesar’s image and belongs to Caesar, so God’s human beings bear God’s image and belong to God....”⁵²

However, “Where Caesar claims what is God’s, the claims of God have priority....”⁵³ Peter clarifies this in Acts making the point that when Caesar claims what is God’s, God’s claims have priority.

“But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,” (Acts 4:19, ESV)

“But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29, ESV)

But Peter also adds this critical information on the topic.

“Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of

⁵⁰ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 830). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

⁵¹ Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28* (vol. 2, Revised and Expanded Edition.; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 399.

⁵² Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28* (vol. 2, Revised and Expanded Edition.; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 400.

⁵³ Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 460). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”
(1 Peter 2:13–17, ESV)

Notwithstanding the best efforts of the Church to live peacefully with the State, “some decades later Christians faced the wrath of Rome because they refused to participate in emperor worship—a refusal the state judged to be treason.”⁵⁴ As a result of this charge, thousands were put to death.

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

marveled... “The profundity of his reply is amazing (Mt 22:22); but some of his enemies, no doubt disappointed at their failure to ensnare him, later on lie to pretend that their snare had worked (Luke 23:2).”⁵⁵

“And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”” (Luke 23:2, ESV)

⁵⁴ Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 459). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁵⁵ Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 460). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.