



Matthew 22

Matthew 22
Tape #8021
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to the twenty-second chapter of the gospel according to Matthew.

If I were to title the chapters in the New Testament, I think I would put a title on chapter twenty-two of "The Gathering Storm." The momentum is building. The die has been cast. The religious leaders have determined that Jesus must die. He is a threat to their job security. And they have determined that the only solution is to get rid of Him. And so in chapter twenty-two, we see the growing controversy, which will, more or less, culminate in His scathing denunciation of them in chapter twenty-three. And from that point on, the plot to put Him to death, the determination has been made and now just the carrying out of the plot, until we find Him hanging on the cross in chapter twenty-seven. So this is the growing storm clouds, the building up in chapter twenty-two.

It actually began in the twenty-first chapter as Jesus was challenged and questioned by them concerning His authorization, who authorized Him to cleanse the temple, to chase away the people who were making merchandise of the things of God, those who were profiting off of the money exchange tables. And having driven them out, they're asking now, Who authorized You to do this? And Jesus answers them with parables. And they recognized that the parables are designed to expose them. The parables are designed against them. And in chapter twenty-two, He continues the parables. We read,

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables,

According to Mark's gospel, this happened on the next day, probably on Tuesday. "And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables,"

and said, (22:1)

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, (22:2)

In this parable, the king, of course, is God and the Son is Jesus Christ. Planned a wedding.

And He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. (22:3)

Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, all things are ready: come unto the marriage. (22:4)

But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: (22:5)

And the rest of them took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and killed them. (22:6)

Now the invited guest was the Jewish nation. They were the ones to whom the promises were given, the promise of the Messiah. But they rejected. He, in the previous parable, talked about the stone which the builders rejected, who had become the chief cornerstone. And they rejected the invitation to the marriage.

So when the king heard thereof, he was angry: he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. (22:7)

Another prophecy of Jesus of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies under Vespasian, the emperor, and Titus, who was the field general, and how the city of Jerusalem was destroyed and burned. Prophecy of it.

Then he said to his servants [the disciples], The wedding is ready, but those who were bidden are not worthy. (22:8)

Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid them to the marriage. (22:9)

Take the Gospel out to the Gentiles to whoever will listen. Invite them to come.

So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. (22:10)

Now when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: (22:11)

And he saith unto him, Friend, how is it that you came in not having a wedding garment? And he was

speechless. (22:12)

Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, take him away, cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (22:13)

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

So the parable, the interpretation of it is quite obvious. The Jews, having rejected Jesus as their Messiah, He is to be presented to the world, the world is invited to come, to be a part of this glorious wedding. And they went out and gathered in many, the King came in to greet the guests and He saw one that did not have on a wedding garment. There is only one way by which we can enter into the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a king, who's prepared a wedding for his son. There's only one way we can enter in, and that is through the merits of Jesus Christ.

We read in the book of Revelation, the bride made herself ready. And she was adorned in fine linen, pure and clean. And the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. But the righteousness of the saints is a righteousness that God imputes to us through our faith in Jesus Christ. So in this parable, it's a warning to those who would seek to enter the kingdom of God apart from Jesus Christ. Those who would dress themselves in the robes of their own works, their own righteousness. We are warned in the scriptures of how unacceptable our righteous deeds are in the sight of God. Isaiah tells us that they are as filthy rags in His sight.

Paul the apostle, talking about the righteousness that he once had according to the law, he said he was blameless. But those things which were gain to him--that is, his obedience and adherence to the Mosaic law--he counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He said, "...for whom I suffered the loss of all things, but count it but refuse, that I may know Him and be found in Him, not being clothed with my own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith." (Philippians 3:8-10)

So there are many who have come to the wedding feast. "Many are called but few are chosen." Those that are chosen are those that are robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, those that are trusting in Him and relying upon Him.

It seems rather sad that a person would actually respond to the invitation to come, but still not be accepted because he came on the wrong basis. I think that many times we make a great mistake in appealing to people to come to Jesus Christ for all of the perks and the benefits that they might enjoy. Your life all disturbed? You're upset? You don't know what to do? Well, Jesus can bring you peace. And they come for the benefits, rather than recognizing that I am hopeless and helpless, a sinner, and I need help. And that repentance from my sin, there are many who have never really repented of their sin. They continue in their deeds of unrighteousness though they have added the dimension to their life of Sunday attendance in church. But it hasn't really had any effect in the transforming of their lives. They don't have the wedding garments. They are not clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And thus, when the time comes and judgment is made, they will not enter into the kingdom but will be cast into what Jesus described as "outer darkness."

They say that the universe has a limit, hard to think of a limit to space but they say that our universe does stretch out some fifteen billion light-years. What lies out beyond that is nothing. It seems, according to many theories, that our universe is expanding into that nothingness. That we are living in an expanding universe, but according to the Big Bang Theory, the energy expended by the bang and thrusting out the galaxies to these vast distances, soon the entropy will take its toll and the whole thing will begin to collapse again into this black hole, and when it does, then the tremendous pressures will create another big bang, and who knows whether or not life will develop in that new big bang that takes place. It's a miracle that it actually happened here, impossible, but here we are.

It is interesting that in a scientific symposium in 1975 in Europe whereby some of the leading scientists of the world gathered to determine in the symposium whether or not there was an attempt at intellectual communication from people in space to the universe to find out if there are other intelligent beings. Possibility of intelligent beings somewhere out there in the universe who have developed to the same degree of intelligence that man has, who are trying to communicate. And so, we have set up these vast listening devices around the world to listen for signals coming from space, radio-type signals that would come in some kind of a sequence and order that could be interpreted intelligently, thus proving that there are

intelligent beings out there in space. And we in turn are sending out cryptic, coded signals into space, spending hundreds of millions of dollars trying to find out whether or not we're alone. Your tax money going for good purposes.

And so they had the symposium, and MIT published a book which was the printed form of the symposium, the various lectures and theories and all that were presented. And the very first presentation was by a group of American scientists who entered into a computer all of the factors that were necessary for the creating of the first cell by these accidental circumstances, by matter acting on matter. As they fed them in to get the compound probability of the first cell ever being formed. *The chances of the first cell ever being formed were so vast that this first symposium suggested that it's impossible that there could be any other life forms anywhere else in the universe. The chances of it being developed are too vast, too remote, it's an utter impossibility that there could be other life forms in the universe.*

I thought that was quite interesting. Carl Sagan actually edited this book called "Extraterrestrial Communication." Why didn't they carry that one step further? Having concluded that it's impossible that a cell could form from just spontaneous kind of regeneration, why can't they carry that one step further and say it's impossible that you exist. It's impossible that life could exist anywhere else in the universe, then how do you explain life existing here? You've got to say it was created. But they can't take that step. That's not scientific. It's just scientific to say it's impossible that can happen anywhere in the universe, other than here. But then how did it happen here except to be God-created.

So, how did we get there? I know, I know, I know, I know, I know. Darkness. Outer darkness. The galaxies in our universe are constantly emitting light. And, of course, now there's an interesting scientific kind of research on whether or not the speed of light is slowing down. With the slow down of entropy and all is the speed of light slowing down and there are many physicists today who concur that it is. And then they talk about the curve of light. We know that light travels at the present time at 186,000 miles per second, but if it's slowing down, it might be 185,000 in another five million years or so. But it's interesting that it is conceivable that you could go so far out into emptiness beyond the farthest galaxy that you could actually get to a point where no light from our universe would even reach that far.

Total darkness. Away completely from light. It could be that that is where God has destined for those who love darkness rather than light. And that eternally they will be in the abyss of darkness, as Jesus said, outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. What a fitting kind of a penalty for those who don't love life. If you love darkness rather than life, God says, Alright, we'll put you into outer darkness. But they'll discover that that's not so good.

The Pharisees took counsel. (22:15)

They realize, Hey, this guy is nailing us but good. We got to do something. We've got to trip Him up somehow. He has strong public appeal, the people think He's a prophet. They're following Him, they're entranced by Him. We've got to somehow catch Him. Catch Him in His speech.

And so they sent out unto him their disciples

They didn't have the courage to come themselves but they sent their disciples.

with the Herodians,

The Herodians and the Pharisees were bitter enemies. They were constantly in controversy with each other. The basic kind of conflict lay in the fact that the Pharisees were strong nationalists, hating the Roman government, believing that they should at the first opportunity rebel against Rome. They chafed under the Roman rule. The Herodians were Jews who had found it profitable to be under the Roman rule. And they advocated the cooperating with Rome because they had received positions of power and authority by the Roman government. So there was this bitter controversy between the Herodians and the Pharisees, but it's amazing how a common enemy can unite men who are otherwise at odds with each other. They're united now in their opposition of Jesus. And so the two representative groups got together and they had formed a question that they figured would catch Him. It was a Catch 22. The Pharisees advocated not paying taxes. The Herodians advocated that you should pay taxes. So they came together to Jesus with the idea of, settle this controversy between us. And so they came with flattering words.

Master, we know that you are true, and you teach the way of God in truth, and neither do you care for

any man: nor regard the person of men. (22:16)

In other words, you are not intimidated by man, you're a square shooter. You're not afraid of man's opinion. You're going to tell what's right, what's true. This kind of acknowledgment of Jesus, of course, was hypocritical, they were trying to set Him up for the question.

Tell us therefore, [instruct us] What do you think? Is it lawful to give taxes unto Caesar, or not? (22:17)

If He says no, it is not lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, the Herodians will rush right down to the Roman government and say there's a fellow that's formed an opposition to tax program and He's speaking against Rome and they will accuse Him of treason against Roman rule. If He says yes, it is lawful, you ought to pay your taxes, then all of the Jews, they'll turn against Him because they all hated paying taxes to Rome. They got Him. He's in a Catch 22, He can't say yes, He can't say no.

So Jesus, perceiving their wickedness,

He caught on, you tried to trap Me, haven't you?

He said, Why do you tempt me, you hypocrites? (22:18)

You're really not looking for an answer, you're looking for a controversy.

There are a lot of questions that people ask that are not honest questions. They really don't want an answer, they want an argument. They want you to express your opinion on an issue and then they're going to argue with you. So the questions are not honest questions, they are questions that are designed to stir up an argument. This was a question that was designed to stir up an argument. They weren't looking for a real answer, they're going to hold to their positions no matter what He says, but they figure that He'll lose half of His support anyhow. But Jesus said,

Show me your tax money, your tribute money.

They had what they call the poll tax, it was a Roman denarius; called a penny but a denarius in the Greek, and the poll tax was a denarius. And so He said, Show me your tax money.

And so they gave Him a denarius. (22:19)

Much more than a penny. Be great if we only had to pay a penny tax, but...

And he said unto them, Whose image and superscription is this? (22:20)

On the denarius, the Roman denarius at the time of Christ, they had a superscription of Caesar and there is a wreath over his head. On the opposite side of the coin, they have Pontimus Maximus, the Maximus or the ultimate ruler. And so Jesus held it up to them and He said, Whose image and superscription is this? Caesar's. Tiberius Caesar, there was the inscription.

And they said unto him, It's Caesar's. Then he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. (22:21)

When they had heard this, they marvelled, and they left him, and went their way. (22:22)

They said, Got out of it, clever.

The same day there came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him, (22:23)

Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. (22:24)

This is under the Mosaic law. And not only is it under the Mosaic law, it precedes the Mosaic law. We find an example of this, it's a cultural thing way back in the book of Genesis with Judah and Tamar. The son of Judah married Tamar. He died without having any children. His brother took Tamar, he died without having any children. And you can go back in Genesis and read the story. But it was incorporated into the Mosaic law. Now it is still practiced today among the Bedouins, and other groups still practice this; if a man takes a wife and he doesn't have any children by her but dies without having any children, his brother takes her and the first son that is born becomes the heir of that which was his uncle's, who died without having any children. So the family is sort of kept intact, the family possessions are kept intact that way. And so under the Mosaic law, it was incorporated there, if a man takes a wife, dies without having any children, the brother takes the wife, the son is named after the dead brother, he was called the "goel," the kinsman redeemer, and he then becomes the heir of the family possessions.

Under the law, there was an out. It was sort of an honorable thing that was supposed to be done. There is

another case in the Old Testament concerning Onan, who refused to do it and was slain of the Lord because of his refusal to do this honorable thing. It was considered the honorable, the right thing to do. But you weren't actually forced to do it. Under the law, if you didn't want to do it, you would come to the elders, the judges, and you'd say, Don't want her. No way, she gave my brother a bad time. I was around, I saw how she reacted. And you would take off your sandal and you'd hand it to her. It's like, You're a dirty shoe and I'm not interested in you. Insulting thing, of course. She, in turn, would then spit in your face but you would be relieved legally from the obligation of taking her as your wife. And in some cases, probably be better to be spit in the face than... but then though you did receive a dirty title, you were called "the man who loosed his shoe." You failed to do the honorable thing, and that was sort of a dirty title, "the man who loosed his shoe."

Now these fellows are making up a real Lulu. It's a hypothetical case. But it is intended to be an argument that shows absurdity. And thus, trying to prove the point by making an absurd kind of a situation. So Moses said if a man dies, and has no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and shall raise up seed unto his brother.

Now there were with us seven brothers: the first, when he had married a wife, died, and, had no children, and so he left his wife to his brother: (22:25)

Likewise the second also died without children, and the third, all the way to the seventh. (22:26)

You're wondering why the police didn't examine the coffee she was giving to her husbands.

Last of all the woman died [she drank her own coffee]. (22:27)

Therefore in the resurrection which brother gets her? (22:28)

[and they could picture a big fist fight or they could picture seven guys running. There are those who have also in view of the resurrection of the dead which the Bible teaches, have seen some real problems with the resurrection of our bodies. For instance, if you have received a heart transplant, which heart will you get? Our body is made up of chemicals. When you die, your body goes back to dust. Dust thou art, to dust thou shall return. It decomposes back into chemicals in the soil. And in the days of the west when they buried them on the prairies, just dug a grave, no coffins, no concrete vaults but just buried their bodies on the plains, and the bodies decompose into the dust, chemicals; and the prairie grass, the roots went down and picked up those chemicals that were once a part of your body, drew them up to nourish this prairie grass; the cows came and ate the prairie grass and the chemicals from your decomposed body went into the cow and became a part of the cow's milk; which was drank by another man who theoretically had some of your chemicals from your decomposed body now making up his body; and they go on with this absurd kind of thoughts and concepts by which they try to make the resurrection from the dead look to be an impossible absurdity.]

Jesus answered and said unto them, You do err on two counts, you don't know the scriptures, and you don't know the power of God. (22:29)

In not believing in the resurrection, they did not know the scriptures. The scriptures definitely teach the resurrection. In not believing the resurrection, they didn't know the power of God, God can do anything. And of course, to clear up the... if you're worried about you might be a part of someone else who decomposed in the past and the chemicals in your body may have made up chemicals in someone else's body in the past, chances are and very likely, it is so. But if you're wondering about it in the resurrection, Paul in First Corinthians 15 said, Now concerning the resurrection of the dead, He points to nature for an illustration. He said when you plant a seed into the ground, the seed does not come forth into a new body until it first of all dies. And he said, that the body then that comes out of the ground is not the body that you planted, because all you planted was a bare seed, by chance, wheat or some other seed, but God gives it a body that pleases Him. (see 1 Corinthians 15:35-38) So we will have a resurrection body. That is, a new body. Paul in Second Corinthians 5 said, "We know that when this earthly tent, our body, is dissolved, we have a building of God that's not made with hands, that's eternal in the heavens. So then we who are in these bodies do often groan, earnestly desiring to be delivered, not that we would become unembodied spirits, but we want to be clothed upon with a body which is from heaven:" (2 Corinthians 5:1-2)

I believe in the resurrection. I believe in a resurrection body. I personally don't believe that this body is

going to be resurrected. I hope not. I'm hoping for curly hair. If God is going to resurrect this body, then I wish I would have died when I was twenty-five. But I'm looking for a new body, a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

They don't know the power of God, they don't know the scriptures, and thus they declare there is no resurrection. But the scriptures declare that there is a resurrection and Jesus points onto the scriptures. But He declares,

In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. (22:30)

Neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but as the angels of God. Now that upsets some people. The idea that there is no marriage or giving in marriage in heaven, couples that have had a great relationship feel, We've had so close..., I can't picture joy apart from the family and relationships and so forth. You don't know the power of God and you don't know the scriptures. Actually there will be such a glorious relationship with all, with the whole family of God that the relationships that we have there will be so superior to anything we could ever experience on the human level.

On the other hand, we had a case a while back of a woman who had been a Mormon whose marriage had been sealed in the temple and she found out what an unfaithful husband he had been and how cruel he was and she actually had a nervous breakdown. We were called in because she was thinking of having to spend eternity with that guy and it was more than she could bear. You don't know the scriptures. So they "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

But as touching

That answers your question about whose wife she's going to be. But He goes on, touching...

the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, (22:31)

Going back to Moses, that which God spoke to you when He said,

I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? [God declared this to Moses] God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (22:32)

Got them!

And the multitude heard this, and they were astonished at his doctrine. (22:33)

The Pharisees and the Sadducees, this was one of their points of disagreement.

And when the Pharisees had heard that he put the Sadducees to silence, [He really quieted them with this] they were gathered together. (22:34)

And then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, (22:35)

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? (22:36)

It would seem that there was with this lawyer a true interest in the opinion of Jesus. The rabbi said that there were over 609 commandments of the law. And it would be impossible to keep all 609 so that there were those that were more important than others. And so was it important to keep the more important laws, but you could sort of slide on some of the others? That there were degrees of sin? Sort of like the Catholics with their mortal and venial sins, there are some sins that are worse than others. And so to them there were some laws that were more important to keep than others. And that he is asking Jesus sincerely, we find in Mark's account of this that when Jesus saw his response to the answer that Jesus gave him, he saw how carefully He responded, Jesus said, Fellow, you're close to the kingdom, you're close, you're getting there. Getting the idea. So what is the great commandment in the law? What's the most important?

Jesus said unto him,

The Lord our God is one God--The Shema. Mark tells us that that's what He started out with. And then He said,

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (22:37)

In other words, your love for God must be supreme. It must exceed all other loves in your life.

That's the first and great commandment is to love God supremely. (22:38)

Now the second, Jesus said, he didn't ask about the second but Jesus said,

The second is like the first, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (22:39)

That's quite a bit, isn't it? Don't give me that. I hate myself, I just hate myself. I've heard people say

that. I'm so ugly I hate myself. If you hated yourself, you'd be thankful that you were ugly, say you ugly thing, I love it that you're so ugly 'cause I hate you.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (22:40)

It sums it up. You see, if you love God with all your heart, soul and mind, you would have no other gods before Him, you would not take His Name in vain, you would want to do that which pleased Him, that would be the supreme desire of your life. So all of the other prohibitions would be unnecessary. It's all summed up in just love God supremely. And if you love your neighbor as yourself, you wouldn't steal from him, you wouldn't covet that which is his, you wouldn't lie about him, and so it's all right here. Loving God supremely and loving your neighbor as yourself. And in these, all the law, it's right here, all of the prophets, all of the writings of the book, summed up right here. Your problem is the fact that you don't love God supremely and you don't love your neighbor as yourself.

We have other loves that come into our life. The Bible speaks of the love of money, and there is the love of possessions, and the love of pleasure. Many other loves that become the supreme love of a person's life turns them away from God. They give first attention, first love to these other things. And so the prophets came and they warned the people about giving themselves over to pleasure. Giving themselves over to sexual licentiousness. Giving themselves over to the possessions and all. All the law and the prophets dealt with these issues. And if you love God supremely and love your neighbor as yourself, you don't have to worry about anything else, it's all wrapped up right there. You're alright.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, (22:41)

They've been questioning Jesus. They've been trying to catch Him. So He turns the table and He asks them a question, He said,

What do you think of the Messiah? whose son is he? They said unto him, He's the son of David. (22:42)

Correct. God promised to David that there would never cease to be one of his seeds sitting upon the throne. David interpreted that correctly as God promising that the Messiah would come through David. God said I will build your house. And thus, the Son of David became one of the titles of the Messiah. He shall sit upon the throne of his father David, the angel promised Mary. Isaiah speaks about Him sitting on the throne of David. He would be the righteous branch out of the stem of Jesse. And Jeremiah, Ezekiel, they speak of the descendant of David being King, reigning forever. So the Messiah was known as the Son of David.

Whose son is he? He is the Son of David. Isn't it Matthew that begins the Gospel the genealogy of Jesus, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David. Paul begins Romans somewhat that way also. Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, there in Matthew 1:1. It's commonly accepted by them. So Jesus then proposes an interesting enigma.

He saith unto them, How then [if He's the Son of David] does David in spirit

[or by the Holy Spirit, recognizing that David was a prophet, and that his words were inspired by the Holy Spirit, how is it that David in the spirit or inspired by the Holy Spirit]

called him Lord, saying, (22:43)

The Lord said unto my Lord,

Quoting from Psalm 110:1, where the Lord the first one being the name of God, the Yahweh, or some people pronounce Jehovah; Yahweh said unto my Adonai, my Lord. David is saying "My Lord" in prophesying of the Messiah. He is to be the Son of David and yet David is calling Him "My Lord." That is a cultural no-no. it was a patriarchal type of society and the father ruled. The father was always addressed as Lord or Sir, sort of the equivalent to the Kurios or the Adonai, title of respect and the acknowledgment of lordship. And how is it then that David would call Him Lord? A father would never address a son as Lord. That was just a total cultural no-no. The father was the lord of the family, and if David be the father, He's the Son of David, and how is it that David called Him Lord? Yahweh said unto my Adonai, my Lord,

Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? (22:44)

This, of course, was a prophecy concerning the present position of Jesus Christ who has ascended into heaven and is now waiting until the Father subdues the people and they make His enemies His footstool.

If David then call him Lord, how is he then his son? (22:45)

No man was able to answer that one, neither dared any man from that day forth to ask him any more

questions. (22:46)

In other words, stay away from Him. Sort of like Romaine, don't get into a verbal kind of an exchange with Romaine. And so, they just after that, didn't dare to ask Him any more questions.

As we move into chapter twenty-three, we find Jesus now in a scathing rebuke. We'll get that in our study next Sunday.

Father, we thank You again for Your Word, thank You Father that You have called us from the highways to come to the feast. What a thrill Lord to be invited, to be a part of this glorious marriage supper. Help us Lord to put on the garments of praise and righteousness that You have provided for us through Jesus Christ. May we not be so presumptuous as to try to gain entrance by our own works of righteousness, by our own merits, and Lord, we stand upon Your merits, and Your work of love and grace for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.