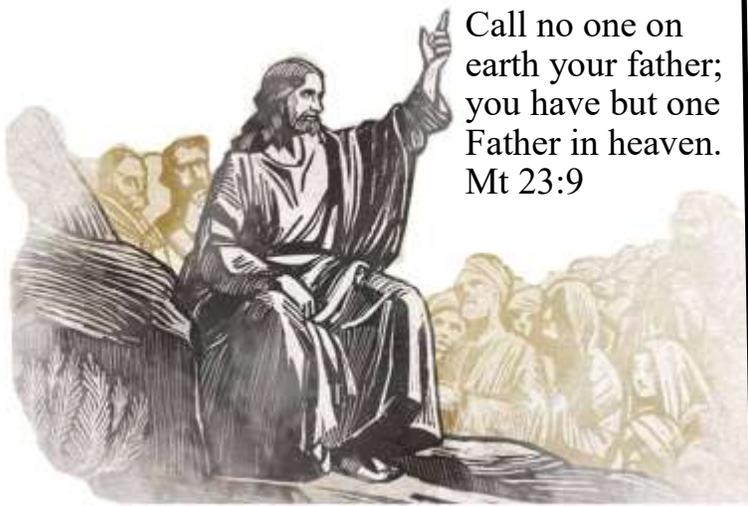


Jesus vs. Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives Discourse (Matthew 22-25)

- The Parable of the Wedding Feast
 - ◇ God is the king and the servants are the Old Testament prophets sent to summon Israel.
 - ◇ The call is not heeded and some of the servants are killed so God will destroy their city and send other messengers (the apostles).
 - ◇ God is impartial in his treatment of those called. They are judged based on their acceptance of their call.
 - ◇ The man lacking a wedding garment is representative of someone who lacks the good deeds that accompany faith.
- A Trap
 - ◇ Jesus is questioned on whether or not it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar.
 - ◇ The collaboration between the Pharisees and Sadducees is demonstrative of their willingness to work with other enemies to eliminate Jesus.
 - ◇ If Jesus affirms that taxes can be paid to Caesar, he would be accused by the Pharisees of being unfaithful to Judaism. If he denies the tax, the Sadducees can charge him as a revolutionary.
 - ◇ Jesus' response centers on the word "likeness".
 - * Coins with Caesar's image are minted in his name and are technically his property. Everyone has the image of God within them that is meant to be returned to God.
 - * Had Israel been faithful to God they would not now find themselves under Roman occupation. Jesus affirms doing one's civic duty while emphasizing the primary duty of all to serve God.
 - * The problem the Jews now face is not Roman occupation. The Jews had always been looking outwardly for enemies (Assyria, Babylon, Greece & Rome) but had ignored the real issue-sin. Sin is the enemy that they were not fierce in resisting.
 - * Jesus disarms the trap by stating that Caesar isn't the problem. Sin is the problem. Give Caesar his due, it doesn't matter but first we must give ourselves back to God.
 - ◇ The Sadducees then step into the conversation questioning him about the resurrection.
 - * Their question centers on the Law (Deut. 25:5-6).
 - * Jesus' response points to a heavenly reality. In heaven the love that forms the bond of marriage is not singular. We all love God which enables us to love each other with the divine love that flows from God.
 - * His answer also reflects that although the Sadducees believe in God, they limit his power. Jesus says that they do not know the scriptures. This is because the Sadducees refused to accept the prophets as part of the Torah and, thus do not have the full lens through which to see the books of Moses.
 - * Jesus then responds by summing up the entire of the Mosaic Law (all 613 commands). They can be summed up by loving God and loving neighbor.
- Jesus, the True King
 - ◇ The question about whose son the Christ is to be is important and illustrates the partial understanding the Pharisees have of the Psalm in question.
 - ◇ Psalm 118 was an enthronement psalm used in coronation ceremonies of Jewish kings. The Pharisees were expecting the Christ to be a Davidic king and restore the Davidic kingdom.
 - ◇ The crucial point they miss is that the psalm has David calling his son, "Lord" which presupposes that the one to come after him will be his superior not just his heir.
 - ◇ Jesus is a son of David by blood but is superior in that he is first Son of God.
- Jesus calls out the Jewish Leaders
 - ◇ The Jewish leaders of Jesus' time are unworthy of imitation. They claim piety but their inner life and personal conduct is not to be followed.





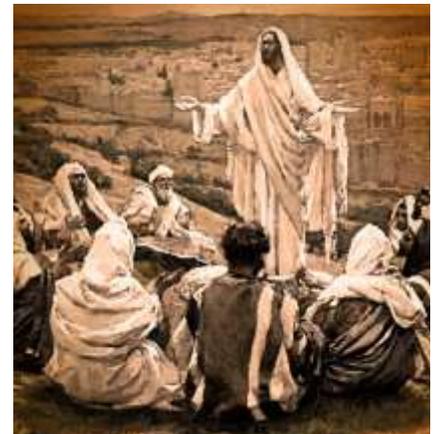
Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Mt 23:9

- Jesus is using hyperbole to emphasize a point. No one should pridefully desire titles of honor.
- He is not meaning that we should never use the word “father”.
- The Old Testament uses the word 627 times and the New Testament uses it another 352.
- St. Paul
 - ◊ Thus he (Abraham) was to be the father of all the uncircumcised who believe...as well as the father of the circumcised who...follow the path of faith that our father Abraham walked while still uncircumcised. Romans 4:11-16
 - ◊ I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 1 Corinthians 4:15

The Seven Woes (23:13-36)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. The Kingdom of Heaven | 5. Washing |
| 2. Proselytes | 6. Sepulchers |
| 3. Swearing | 7. Prophets |
| 4. Tithing | |

- ◊ Jesus is recalling the Old Testament's prophetic message calling judgment upon the Pharisees. In this he presents a covenant lawsuit against unfaithful Israel and the curses come as a result of their infidelity to God (see Deut. 27:15-26).
- ◊ Most of the woes have a common theme: the blindness of the Jewish leaders who are concerned with all the wrong things.
- ◊ The woe concerning the gnat and the camel is indicative of Jesus' overall message.
 - * A gnat is a small animal but is unclean and forbidden to consume. Jews would use a cloth to filter them out of their drinks. A camel, because of its hoof, is also unclean and is among the largest of the unclean animals.
 - * Jesus is pointing out that the Pharisees are concerned with following the smallest part of the Law but miss the greater truths of the spiritual life.
- ◊ The murders Jesus alludes to are the first murder and the murder of a prophet killed in the Temple. Jesus uses them as examples of how God continually offers Israel a chance to heed his call but his messengers were met with violence. (Some see this as the first and last murders in the OT but this is not technically correct. The Zechariah that is the last murder is actually Zechariah son of Jehoiada).
- The Mount of Olives Discourse (Matthew 24 & 25)
 - ◊ Jesus foreshadows the things to come both on earth and at the end of time (including the final judgment).
 - ◊ The destruction of the Temple actually does occur in the year 70 at the hands of the Romans. Spiritually, the Temple serves no purpose after the death of Christ. His sacrifice replaces all the symbolic offerings made within the Temple. This is symbolically seen in the tearing of the Temple veil at Jesus' death.
 - ◊ Jesus states that the Temple is his body. For Jews, the Temple was the place of God's presence and the place where he was worshipped. The body of Christ replaces the Temple but is far more perfect. It is his body that is the real presence of God and it is his body, the Church, in which God is worshipped in spirit and truth.
 - ◊ The calamities that Jesus says will precede the end are somewhat vague. He does not give them a date or time which corresponds with his statement that no one knows the hour.
 - ◊ Jesus does say that many will say that they have are the savior.



- ◇ The desolating sacrilege harkens back to Daniel when the Temple was profaned under Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Jerusalem was plundered and burned and an idol was erected within the Temple.
- ◇ The instruction to flee is meant for Christians to flee Jerusalem before its judgment. Jerusalem is plundered and the Temple destroyed by Titus (Roman general and future Caesar).
- Be Watchful
 - ◇ Jesus reminds his disciples to always be prepared since we do not know the hour at which he will come.
 - ◇ The coming of Christ is seen in three ways: History-Jesus entered time and walked among us; 2. Mystery—Jesus comes to us sacramentally under the guise of bread and wine; 3. Majesty— Jesus will come again and reign as Lord of the Nations.
 - ◇ Some view Matthew 24:36-44 as an example of the rapture. This is completely outside of Biblical teaching and is viewpoint first postulated in the 19th century. Jesus is referencing what happened with Noah. Some were left to die and others were spared. Noah was righteous and was spared.
 - ◇ Jesus uses parables to underscore his message:
 - * The Wise and Foolish Maidens refers to Jewish marriage customs in which the groom would lead the bride to a feast that lasted a week.
 - * The foolish maidens are unprepared and are excluded from the feast while the wise are ready and enjoy the banquet.
 - * The Parable of the Talents looks back at the lesson learned from the fig tree.
 - * Those who take the blessings of God and refuse to do anything with them bear no fruit and are the wicked servants whereas the good servants are those that take what God gives them and use it to advance the kingdom.
 - * The dangers in the spiritual life are highlighted here: sloth and fear. We can be lax in living as Christ enjoins us to live and we can be fearful of putting our faith and trust in God.
- The Judgment of the Nations
 - ◇ We are judged by God not simply on what we believe but upon how we act upon those beliefs.
 - ◇ Both groups call to him as “Lord” but while one group acts in accordance with that belief the other does not.
 - ◇ The Church has taken these ways of serving Christ in others and codified them into the Corporal Works of Mercy. The Spiritual Works of Mercy are the ways in which we care for the spiritual lives of others.
 - ◇ We are called to see Christ in others. Conversion is not a set of beliefs but a way of seeing things differently. The Greek word μετανοία is usually translated as conversion but it means “beyond mind” which means to look at things differently. We are called to look upon people as God looks upon them.



He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Matthew 25:33

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTERS 22-25

Why do you think the Pharisees and Sadducees rejected Jesus so thoroughly?

How does Jesus disarm the question about paying taxes?

Why do Catholics call priests “father” when Jesus tells us to call no man father?

What do the Seven Woes warn us against?

What are the three ways (times) Christ comes to us?

What do you think is important about the Judgment of the Nations?