

Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Lecture 15, Matthew 19-22

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Matthew. This is session 15, Matthew 19-22.

Jesus has talked a lot about discipleship already in the gospel, the demands of discipleship.

Well, some of these now come to a head as he's addressing someone who wants some instruction on what it's going to take to have eternal life. We read about the cost of discipleship in chapter 19, verses 16 through 22. Those who want eternal life must obey God.

Matthew clarifies Mark on this point because somebody could have understood Mark as saying that Jesus was not God. That's not actually what the text says. That's reading into the text.

But Matthew makes sure you can't read into the text that way by clarifying the wording. We see a number of persistent seekers in the gospels where Jesus makes an obstacle to their faith and then they surmount that obstacle. You see that with the Canaanite woman.

You see that probably with the Gentile centurion in Matthew chapter 8. You see it probably with the blind men, although Jesus wasn't the one to raise that obstacle in chapter 20. But not everybody was a persistent seeker. Some people allowed themselves to be deterred by the obstacles.

They said, well if that's what it takes to follow Jesus, that's too much. And Jesus wasn't happy about that. Mark says that Jesus was sad when the man went away.

But Jesus doesn't lower his standard. He lets us know what the standard is. And we have to show that we are determined to follow Jesus no matter what.

Jesus goes on to summon his disciples to absolute commitment in verses 21 and 22. And this is familiar. We see this in some other cultures, especially in Greek culture, with some radical teachers who used a similar technique.

There was a philosopher by the name of Antisthenes who repeatedly tried to drive away Diogenes. But Diogenes persisted and became not only his disciple but his successor among the cynics. Diogenes adopted this as a pedagogical technique for those wanting to be his disciples, telling them they had to forsake everything and

making it hard for them to follow so that only those who were really persistent would become his disciples.

And actually, I've had some people in years past when I was not as busy as I am now, but I was busy. And there were people who asked me to mentor them. And I said I cannot do it.

And they wouldn't let me alone. I said, all right, well, I'm going jogging. You can talk with me if you come jogging with me.

And they would come jogging with me or whatever. But in any case, one of the early Stoic philosophers, Zeno, repulsed rich young men. He said I'm not impressed by your status.

And if they were too proud to humble themselves, which most of them were, then they went away. Diogenes told Crates, who wanted to follow him, to throw into the sea any money you have. Crates did it and then became his follower.

Diogenes welcomed his disciples so long as they were ready to forsake everything. Jesus makes this a requirement for this man who has too much trust in and too much love for his resources. And as Dietrich Bonhoeffer pointed out, we shouldn't be trying to get around this.

We should be trying to see what demands that makes on our own lives. Given the great needs of the world, where should we put our resources if Jesus is really Lord of our life? I do need to qualify if you have a family. Sometimes you do have to work with the values of some of your family members, especially your spouse or your parents or whatever.

But insofar as we can choose how we should do it. Jesus speaks of sacrifice and reward. The man goes away sad because he doesn't want to give away all his possessions to follow Jesus.

And Jesus warns in verses 23 and 24 that the powerful can scarcely enter the kingdom at all. It's like a large animal, a camel going through the eye of a needle. That was a figure of speech for something that was virtually impossible.

You may have heard some people say, well, the needle's eye was simply the name of a gate in Jerusalem that if a camel bent down, it could get through. Unfortunately, that is just made up. That's not true.

There is a gate in Jerusalem that some tour guides may identify as that today. It was built in the Middle Ages, long after Jesus' time. So, the needle's eye, if you read ancient literature, was the same thing back then as it is now.

And it was used as a figure for something that was very small, extremely small. You're not easily going to get an elephant or a camel through it. Now, did rich people ever follow Jesus? We do have some examples of that.

Zacchaeus, but he had to give up a lot. We also have Joseph of Arimathea, who was a member of the Sanhedrin. He followed Jesus.

He came out as a disciple after Jesus' death but provided a tomb for him to be buried in. But keep in mind what was at stake with Joseph doing that. By publicly identifying with someone who had been executed for treason, Joseph was risking not only his resources, he was risking his life.

I can talk about that more when we get to Joseph of Arimathea. But there were some rich people. There were some camels who made it through the eye of a needle, but they really did have to make sacrifices to do so.

Well, Jesus' disciples are ready to say, well, we've left everything. We followed you. So, what will happen to us? Jesus promises that they will receive eternal life.

They will receive the kingdom because they put Jesus first. Jesus promises the kingdom to whoever follows him in verses 25 to 30. And in verse 30, he speaks of the last being first, the first being last.

There was a common Jewish expectation that God would exalt Israel over their Gentile oppressors and so on. And sometimes they also would speak of the lowly being exalted. Of course, that goes back to Isaiah chapter 2 and elsewhere.

It's stated a number of times in the Old Testament. It's stated in Jesus' teachings elsewhere. But notice here we have an inclusio.

An inclusio, again, is where you start and end on the same note, and therefore you bracket off everything in between. Jesus says the first will be last, the last will be first. He says that in chapter 19 in verse 30, talking about their futurist exaltation.

And he also says it in chapter 20 in verse 16. In between, Jesus tells a parable where the kingdom is like a landowner who's hiring workers. In many Jewish parables, you would have a landowner.

The landowner in such Jewish parables ordinarily referred to God. And these workers during the harvest, well, during the harvest, you need lots of workers, more workers than you need ordinarily. So, he goes out, he hires workers at the beginning of the day, and they agree with him to work for a denarius, which is a day's wage.

Well, he's going to need more workers. He doesn't have enough workers. And so, later on, he goes to find some more workers and he offers them what will be fair.

And they need work. The reason that they probably weren't there earlier, probably they were working in their own field or somebody else's field. Well, now they finished what they had to do.

Now he goes and he hires them and he keeps going back and hiring more people. And there were some people who only worked from like 5 to 6 p.m. They only worked one hour. And he starts with them first and he gives them a denarius.

He gives them a day's wage. And when he comes to those who had worked the full day, they're thinking, oh, we're going to get more than the day's wage because he was generous with them. So, he'll be extra generous with us.

But they just get what they agreed on. They get a day's wage also. The point is that grace isn't fair.

Those who worked more didn't lose anything. They got what was agreed on, but they were jealous because somebody else received generosity. They were jealous because those who worked less got paid more.

And the landowner points out to them in verse 15, are you jealous? Because I'm generous. It was a good thing to be generous, right? Grace isn't fair, but that's good. Because if we all got what we deserved before an infinite God, we'd all be lost.

But God is gracious. And some people, you know, I like working for God. I love serving God.

If somebody else comes to God just at the end, well, thank God that they came to God. I mean, that's what we're working for. And actually some of the people who are brand new believers and they're zealous for the Lord, don't necessarily understand much, but I love to see their zeal for the Lord.

But then they're going to face trials. They're going to face tests. And it's through those things we become mature.

But, you know, even if they're just very young and the Lord comes back or they die, thank God they're our brothers and sisters. Grace isn't fair. None of us has the right to look down on someone else.

And that's the meaning of the story of the prodigal son also in the elder brother in Luke 15. The disciples still don't get it. The disciples still want to be the greatest.

Jesus is going to set up the kingdom and they want their place in that kingdom. They aren't expecting still to follow a suffering Messiah. They still don't get it.

So, Mark talks about James and John wanting places on either side of Jesus in the kingdom. Matthew gives us an additional detail. And if this is from Matthew, the disciple, maybe something from his own memory.

But Matthew gives us an additional detail. Older women couldn't get away. Older women could get away with requests that men couldn't make, even sometimes younger women.

But you remember the widow with the unjust judge in Luke chapter 18. Or do you remember Joab wanting to make a point to David in the Old Testament? So, he gets an older wise woman to come into David.

Or an older wise woman in a town makes an agreement with Joab. You know, women could get away with things that men often viewed themselves as rivals in society. But women, well, if this woman is bold enough to speak up, let's hear what she has to say.

This woman makes a request on behalf of her sons. They get their mom to do it for them. They would like places on either side of you when you come into your kingdom.

And they've been good followers of you. So, one on your right and one on your left. So, Jesus says to James and John, are you able to drink from my cup? In Mark, it's also able to be baptized with the baptism with which I'm baptized, which probably is related to what he says in Luke 12, where he talks about, I've come to cast fire on the earth.

And I have a baptism with which to be baptized and how I am in anguish until it's fulfilled. Jesus himself would undergo a baptism of fire. Jesus himself would undergo a judgment in our place on the cross.

Well, Matthew just focuses on the cup, which is helpful because Matthew doesn't give us all the context to understand exactly what the baptism would mean. But he does give us context to understand what the cup means. Are you able to drink from my cup? Oh yeah, we can drink from your cup.

They don't understand what his cup is. In chapter 26, when he gives them the cup, he passes it around. He says this is the cup of the covenant in my blood.

This was a costly cup for Jesus. And that's why in Gethsemane he says, Father, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

Let this cup pass from me. The cup was his suffering. It was his death.

And those who suffered with him the most would be those who would be exalted the most. What was the place on his right and his left? Well, in 27:38, two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left. If his disciples had taken up the cross to follow him, maybe they could have gotten the place on his right and his left.

But that's not what they were willing to do at this point. I'm not saying that the robbers made it into the kingdom. I'm not saying that, but the point is that if we suffer with them, we will also reign with them.

Jesus gives an example. He had given the example of a child earlier to show them that a leader must be a servant. Now he gives another kind of example.

He gives a negative example. Well, you guys don't like Gentiles. Listen to this.

You know how rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them. Don't be like that. The greatest in the kingdom, he says, is the one who serves.

The greatest is the least. I remember years ago, I was working on my PhD and I had a neighbor and her first husband had beaten her. He was an alcoholic.

He beat her and eventually, he died. Later, she remarried and this man also was an alcoholic and he beat her. And he had left her by this point, by the time that I knew her.

But she had such a humble, prayerful heart, a heart full of joy, complete forgiveness, and no animosity in her heart towards anyone. And I was humbled by her presence. I was a doctoral student.

I was going to become a professor. I was a minister. But you know, in the kingdom, God knows what we really are on the inside.

You had the great high priest Eli and you have this humble woman, Hannah, who comes in. She's just praying for a child with a pure and broken heart. I wonder which was closer to God.

We don't have to read too far in the narrative to find out. God knows. It's not our place to judge.

But God knows who's greatest in the kingdom. And we don't get that by seeking a high position. And we need good people in the high positions if we're going to have high positions.

But it's by having a heart that's humble before God. What is humility? Knowing who God is and knowing who we are. I mean, in the presence of God, none of us has a right to boast.

We are before the living God. We are just dust and ashes. And God has graciously chosen to use us.

So whatever ways God has chosen to use us, let's not be jealous of somebody else. Let's be thankful. Let's be grateful that God chooses to use us.

And if he uses us lots and lots, all the better. We give him the glory. We give him the credit.

We're grateful to him for using us. The greatest in the kingdom, are those who serve others. The son of man, well, he's the greatest of all, right? He says in verse 28, the son of man himself didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

I came to die for you. Follow my example and lay down your lives for one another. Care for my people and set an example for yourselves.

Jesus came as a suffering servant. He suffers on behalf of others. Just like you see in Isaiah 53 verses four through six and 11 and 12.

Next, we move to the triumphal entry. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this, but the triumphal entry defines what kind of king Jesus is. Rulers and Roman soldiers actually could impress things.

They could say, okay, lend me your donkey or carry this for me or whatever. That was one of their rights under ancient law and ancient customs. So, Jesus sends two disciples ahead of him and asks to borrow this donkey.

And Jesus instructs his disciples to say, the Lord needs him. Now, some people have said, well, maybe the master wasn't at home. And the people just thought that this was referring to the master.

I think it's more likely, but they understood. There were many Passover pilgrims coming to Jerusalem, but they understood that this was the Lord. This was somebody high up who had the right to ask for this.

And it may have been somebody who knew Jesus. Maybe it's Lazarus's family. I don't know.

But in any case, Jesus knows what's going to happen. He knows what's available there. It's just like in Mark's gospel, where Jesus also knows how to find the house where they're going to go.

Well, when you see a man carrying a pitcher of water, normally, unless there were slaves, it was the women who carried the pitcher of water. So, if this man is carrying a pitcher of water, this is going to be unusual enough. Go follow him because Jesus knew.

He knows everything. So, they went and they borrowed the animal. And in this case, Matthew mentions two animals.

He mentions the mother and the colt that had never been separated from its mother. Well, getting a colt to go, or even maybe getting the mother to go with the newborn colt apart from the mother might have been more difficult. So anyway, he has them both go.

The wording of Zechariah 9:9 speaks of the two animals, but it's really parallel in Hebrew. So really it only needed to be one animal. But sometimes Jewish teachers would read a text for everything it was worth.

They would even take the different parallel lines and get different things out of them. And in this case, Jesus has both to make sure nobody misses the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. Jesus is coming to Jerusalem as a king, but not the kind of king his disciples are expecting, not the kind of king the crowds are expecting. Jesus comes in instead as a king.

The passage was understood as Messianic, although some understood it as referring to God, which may also be the case, but Zechariah 9:9, quotes this passage that talks about your king comes to you meek and on a donkey. Jesus didn't come riding a stallion. Jesus didn't come the way a triumphant military king might come into Jerusalem.

Jesus came as the meek king. Now with regard to kings, as Deidre Good has pointed out, with regard to kings, a meek king didn't mean a king who was lowly and not respected or something like that. A meek king meant a merciful king, a kind king, a king who was thoughtful toward the lowly.

But we've already seen earlier that blessed are the meek, they'll inherit the earth. And we've seen in chapter 11 where Jesus says, I am meek and lowly in heart. So, Jesus fulfills this role fully.

He's kind, he's gentle. He cares about the lowly and the broken. He doesn't have as much patience for the proud who think they are something and are really ignorant of who they are before God.

So, Jesus comes into Jerusalem and the crowds hail him. And they hail him with this kind of language, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Well, that's taken from Psalm 118.

You know, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. And it goes on to talk about the stone that the builders rejected, which he's going to quote soon. That's from the same Psalm.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing. It's marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. The day of celebration in that context is the day that the stone rejected by the builders became the chief cornerstone.

Psalms 113 through Psalms 118 were the Hallel. These were the Psalms that were sung during the Passover and during some other festivals. You find it in Mishnah, Pesach, and elsewhere.

So, it's not surprising. These are the kinds of words that were on people's minds and on people's lips during this very season. And both Jesus and the crowds are quoting them.

The Galilean crowds know who Jesus is. The Jerusalemites don't all know, but hey, they're welcoming all the pilgrims coming in. But this pilgrim gets a special welcome.

Then Jesus goes in, curses a fig tree, then he goes in and he cleanses the temple. Or some scholars would say cleansing isn't a strong enough word. He gives a symbolic act of judgment against the temple.

Although Malachi does speak of the Lord cleansing his temple, the Old Testament temple did not segregate the Gentiles from Israel. The innermost court, of course, was for Yahweh alone. Nobody else went in there except the high priest once a year.

Next was the sanctuary for the priests. Only priests went in there, but the outer court, was for everybody. That's why in 1 Kings chapter 8, when Solomon is praying, Solomon prays.

Well, when the Gentiles pray toward this place, hear their prayer. So, Gentiles were welcome in the outer court in the Old Testament. There were no further divisions.

But due to an understanding of purity as it developed among the Levites and the priests, in Herod's temple, he divided the outer court into various outer courts. So due to purity regulations in this period, this temple had some other divisions. You still had the holy of holies, the most holy place.

You still had the priestly sanctuary. But beyond that was now the court of Israel, which was only for Jewish men. On a lower level and outside that was the court of women, which was only for Jewish women, because women were considered to be less pure than men, especially since one week out of the month and they never knew when it might start.

So, they didn't want the Jewish men, their area being made impure at all. And then outside that on still a lower level was the court for the Gentiles. A very massive outer court, but this was the only place where the Gentiles were welcome.

Nice welcome signs informed the Gentiles. If you go past this point, you will be responsible for your death, which will shortly ensue. Josephus mentions these signs.

Also, archeologists long, long ago found one of these signs when excavating near the temple. In my country, there were places where African Americans weren't allowed to go. They actually had separate water fountains in certain parts of the country.

This is not all the country. In certain parts of the country, they would have a nice water fountain for white people to drink from and a little spigot for black people to drink from. Separate toilet facilities and all sorts of things.

Jesus did not look well. This is illegal now, but Jesus didn't look well, didn't look favorably on this kind of segregation apparently. Jesus apparently challenged this division.

Now there are various possible reasons for why he may have done this in terms of the money changers. Changing money to local currency was necessary. Each town had its own currency.

Each city had its own currency. So, changing it to a standardized currency, the Tyrian stater, was necessary for efficiency and purchasing sacrifices. And people, especially traveling from the Diaspora, but even from Galilee, and in a sense, even from elsewhere in Judea, if you're going to bring an ox or something, it was kind of cumbersome, or even doves or whatever.

It's cumbersome to have to bring these with you. So, they were raising them and they were selling them in the temple. That was a convenience.

It was a way to make the system more efficient for all the people who were there. But it seems to have been a relative novelty. But there's another reason why that was a problem.

It was done in the outer court. This was the only place where the Gentiles were welcome. The Gentiles were already segregated from the heart of divine worship against God's ideal purpose.

And they were in a court that was treated as less holy than the other places. That's why in Mark chapter 11, Jesus cried out two texts as he overturned the tables in the temple. The first is from Isaiah chapter 56, verse 7. The context, I will bring foreigners to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.

For my house should be called a house of prayer for all nations, the international house of prayer. From the beginning, God had intended his house to welcome all peoples. But Matthew and Luke, unlike Mark, omit the for all nations.

It's still part of the context, but Matthew and Luke are probably not laying their emphasis on this aspect of why Jesus went into the temple. It's there in Mark, I believe, that he's protesting the ethnic segregation because the Gentiles were God-fearers. They wouldn't be in the temple normally unless they wanted to honor the God of Israel.

But Matthew and Luke seem to want to emphasize the second verse to which Jesus alludes. In the second verse, Jesus says, my house should be called a house of prayer. And then he says, but you have made it a robber's den.

That's from Jeremiah chapter 7 and verse 11. And the context of that is this. Israel is crying out, the temple, the temple, the temple of the Lord is in our midst.

God will not judge his temple. And God responds, do you think that you're free to commit this sin and that sin? And then come into this house, which is called by my name, and say, we are free to do all these things. Has this house, which is called by my name, become like a den of robbers in your sight? I will do to this house, which is called by my name, as I did to Shiloh, declares the Lord.

Excavations show that Shiloh was destroyed in the time when the ark was taken in first Samuel. Robber's dens were where robbers felt free to store their loot. It's where robbers felt safe like they wouldn't be attacked.

And God says to Israel, you've made this house like a robber's den. You think that you can commit your sins and then come into this house and that this place will be a safe place for you. But I'm going to bring judgment.

And Jesus is announcing judgment as well. As he goes through the temple, he begins overturning the tables in the temple. Now remember, Jeremiah smashed a pot in the temple to symbolize its imminent destruction.

Well, Jesus, even more dramatically, goes beyond smashing a pot. He's overturning tables, he's releasing animals, and so on. Outward religion is not enough to stay the judgment of God.

In my country, having God we trust in our coins is not enough to stay the judgment of God. In Augustine's day, sometime after Rome had become largely Christian, or at least many people had become popular enough that a lot of people became nominally Christian without being fully Christian. But in Augustine's day, Rome was sacked by barbarians.

This wasn't the first time in Rome's history that it had happened. But some people who were not worshipers of the true God complained. And they said, look, it's because we forsook the old gods, that's why Rome fell to these barbarians.

Well, eventually the message of Christ began to spread among the barbarians. But at this point, Augustine's response was this. Rome's sins, alluding to what you read in Revelation 18, Rome's sins were piled as high as heaven for century after century.

Judgment was due. And the obedience of the Christians was too shallow to stay the judgment of God. God sometimes will stay judgment.

But when a nation is living very sinfully, and when even God's people are not living fully for him, we have no right to complain when judgment comes. And that may well be true in my nation, at least during some periods of our history. The murderous tenants, chapter 21, verses 33 to 44.

This parable is true to life whenever possible. Many of the details fit what you would expect in a vineyard. Fences were often built, often of loosely fitted stones that were partly to keep animals out.

Although my wife and I have a garden where we're growing food in our backyard and keeping the animals out is sometimes easier said than done. But the fences could at least keep some of the bigger animals out. Watchmen could use a tower.

Often it was just a hut, which doubled as a shelter during the harvest. But they could stand on top of it and be watchmen, especially if it was a big vineyard. And sometimes one of the things you'd watch against would-be robbers as well.

But one difference is that this is different from what you often have. This isn't contract laborers, but this is leasing a new vineyard to tenants. The vineyard represents Israel.

The language is taken, especially from Isaiah chapter five. The vineyard was Israel in Isaiah 5:2. So, the tenants who rule over the vineyard here are clearly the leaders of Israel, particularly the Sadducean priestly aristocracy, the elite. And the parable underlines the wickedness of these tenants.

Smallholders predominated, people who just owned their own small plots of land. But there were also many tenant farmers who worked on larger estates. They would have clients working on their estates, the landowners.

And rabbis also told stories like this. They told stories of tenant farmers working on estates. Well, some interpreters have argued that this is about a peasant revolt against an unjust landlord, but that's not very likely.

If you go through ancient sources, most people, whatever their social status, would not have identified with these tenants. For example, they kill messengers. Killing messengers was always viewed as treacherous.

Even when Roman soldiers were killed after an oath was given to them that they wouldn't be. When Jewish revolutionaries took over the temple, the adjoining fortress Antonia had a contingent of Roman soldiers there. They were outnumbered.

They were told that if they surrendered, their lives would be spared. And when they surrendered, the Jewish revolutionaries said, we don't have to keep promises to pagans. And they slaughtered them as the Romans asked for judgment on them.

Josephus records that and expects everybody to agree that was foul behavior. That was very bad behavior. Also, people were so accustomed to very mean landholders that they would appreciate a nice one.

And this one is so benevolent that he appears to be almost too nice. I mean, some landlords, if tenants complained too much, some landlords in antiquity actually had hit squads to go assassinate them. But Jesus speaks of this landlord who's so nice, he almost appears naive.

He sends messengers, they kill them, and he sends more. And then he sends his son. Now, no landlord would be that naive, but God is so gracious that as it bursts the bonds of realism here, it almost looks naive to people.

Why has God been this merciful to us? We really have no right to complain. Well, who is the son? Here's what I understand the earlier ones to be the prophets. Now the son is the climax of all that.

Jesus finally in public is beginning to unveil the messianic secret. He's beginning in public to hint at who he really is. But in Jewish parables, often the son was a figure for Israel, even in very similar stories.

So, they might not get it yet. And they certainly couldn't publicly accuse him. Although later on, the Sadducees, who don't like this because they know that they're partly in view, they're partly in trouble, the Sadducees are going to say, so are you God's son? Say yes.

That'll be the end of the messianic secret. Israel's leaders are clearly headed for judgment. All ancient laws would have sided with the landlord.

That would have been even if he was unjust because they favor the rich anyway. Jesus quotes from Psalm 118, which may suggest the image of a new temple. What is the building where the new cornerstone is being laid? And the context of Psalm 118 does talk about a festival in the temple.

I'm not sure if the image of the cornerstone carries over that far, but it seems to be used that way in the New Testament a number of times. First Peter, Romans, Acts. So Jesus' teaching about this cornerstone really caught on.

His followers continued to develop that and speak of a new temple. It is used that way in the Dead Sea Scrolls also. So Jewish people could have understood that.

But in my case, the stone that the builders rejected becomes the chief cornerstone. That was, as we've said, part of the Hallel. It was very relevant for Passover.

This is something that makes perfect sense that Jesus said this during the Passover season. But remember, Jewish teachers also used Gezer HaShavah. They would link together texts based on common keywords.

Well, he not only mentions the cornerstone that the builders rejected, the builders here being the establishment leaders of the temple establishment, but he also mentions the crushing stone of Daniel 2:44. There would be these four kingdoms, and at the end of these kingdoms, these worldly kingdoms, the kingdom of God would come like a great stone and would crush all the others, would supplant all the

other kingdoms. So here are these people who've set themselves up as the leaders of God's people. They would be crushed.

And also, the stumbling stone of Isaiah 8.15 and 28.16. Whether they get crushed by the stone falling on them or whether they stumble over the stone, they're in trouble. Israel's leaders are headed for judgment. Jesus goes on to warn against scorning the king's son.

Some people think this is the same parable as in Luke 14. That's not really clear. Jesus may have used a similar storyline more than once.

Other people did things like that. You travel to different places. You can tell the same story as well as adapt it in different ways.

But if it is the same story, certainly mentioning the son here is emphatic because that's not in the other story. Rejecting God's invitation is a deliberate insult to God's honor and God's dignity. Now, in Luke 14, the insult is kind of clear because people would receive double invitations.

And that's true here too. It says to call all those who've already been, the Greek says, already been invited. It was standard practice we know from ancient business documents to have double invitations.

Somebody would RSVP. They would respond and say, yes, I'm coming. And then when the food was ready, you'd send out messengers again and say, okay, come now.

The second invitation was so the food wouldn't get cold. In Luke 14, when the second invitation goes out, people give excuses. Well, you know, I bought a field.

I need to go look at it. That's really stupid. Who doesn't look at the field before they buy it? Well, I bought a yoke of oxen.

I need to go try them out. No, you do that before you buy the yoke of oxen. Well, I just got married.

I can't come. Look, you knew in advance when you were getting married. So, you didn't double book this, surely.

So, they're very clearly directly insulting the person. Well, here we've got deliberate insults as well. Attendance at weddings was a social obligation.

Attending a patron's banquets was considered an obligation throughout the empire. Inviting or not inviting the wrong person could lead to problems. Refusal to come was an insult.

And they tried to get as many people to come as possible. In fact, there's this one comedy in antiquity that's kind of mocking a wedding invitation. They say, oh, yeah, and bring your dog too.

But you try to get, you know, bring everybody you can because that would honor the person. At many weddings, the entire village would be invited. Well, here, this is a king, a wedding for his son.

Surely a lot of people have been invited. Refusal to come was an insult. In the case of a king, insulting his honor was treason.

God will severely judge those who reject his kindness. Slaughtering messengers, which we have here as we had in the Parable of the Vineyard. Slaughtering messengers was a breach of ancient morality.

We mentioned what happened with the Roman garrison in Antonia. It was equally applicable to the prophets. Jewish tradition had highlighted the martyrdom of the prophets.

We know that in Elijah's day, many prophets were martyred, which was, prophets like messengers of kings, well, prophets were messengers of the supreme king, the supreme God. They had diplomatic immunity. So usually in Israel's history, they weren't supposed to be killed.

Whether you agreed with them or not, it would be like killing messengers of the Assyrian king. That was a declaration of war. So, but in the time of Jezebel, many, many prophets were slaughtered.

And you also had Uriah, who's mentioned in Jeremiah chapter 26, who was martyred as well. But this was developed much further in Jewish tradition. You know, Isaiah hides in a tree and they saw it in half, sawing him in half.

You have probably alluded to that in Hebrews 11, that tradition. You have a heightened emphasis on the martyrdom of the prophets in Jewish tradition. Jewish people were very sensitive to that issue, remembering, oh, our ancestors did this.

And so, Jesus highlights that again with the killing of the messengers. This, again, expands it beyond realism. I mean, is the king going to engage in a military expedition while the food is getting cold? You know, why not save that till after the

banquet? But Matthew narrates this part first so he can end in the part he wants to end on.

So, the judgment happens here for those who've spurned him, who've committed treason, who've declared by the refusal, that we no longer accept you as our king and we actually want to insult you. That was a prelude to war. So the city gets burned, like Jerusalem later got burned.

The arrogant may spurn him, but God invites the lowly. Well, in an honor and shame culture, even if you couldn't get the original people to come, even if they've insulted your dignity if you could at least get somebody to come so the food doesn't go to waste, so at least you get some honor back. The outsiders may imply Gentiles, but also the lowly of Israel.

But where you expect the parable to end, it goes on. Finally, there's the banquet. And Jewish people were expecting the Messianic banquet, again, Isaiah chapter 26 and then further in First Enoch and so on.

But he speaks of this eschatological feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom. He's talked about that earlier. But some come into the feast who aren't prepared for it, who don't belong there.

And this suggests that even those who come inside the church, may insult God and warrant death. I think most of us are aware of people we started with, people who were serving God and turned away and didn't persevere. Or, well, some have since come back, but not everybody.

Not everybody who's in the church at one time necessarily perseveres, necessarily continues to follow God. So, he tells the story of the wedding garment. That was a storyline already in use.

Some other Jewish teachers use the same story. This person comes in with inappropriate garments. Many scholars think that means clean as opposed to soiled garments.

Some others have suggested, well, people were given a garment when they came into something like this. There are different opinions on exactly how that works. But in any case, this person is not really respecting the king.

They're disrespecting the king. Some professing disciples would be unready for the second coming. We see that in chapter 24, verses 45 to 51.

And some were unready at the first coming. Judas is an example of that. But this servant gets cast into outer darkness.

Kings normally didn't do that because they didn't normally have any outer darkness to cast people into. I mean, you could cast them into a dungeon, but outer darkness is stretching the realism again of the parable to underline divine judgment. Jesus goes on to have many conflicts with the elite, the elites in Jerusalem.

The Pharisees and Herodians approach him. Well, do you pay taxes to Caesar? The tax was very unpopular. It had led to a revolt in the year six, nearly 25 years earlier.

That's when Sepphoris was burned down. The silver denarius that was used for this had the image in the name of Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus, calling Augustus a god. Jewish people really didn't appreciate this.

They really didn't like paying taxes, particularly with these kinds of coins. And so, you know, those who might follow Jesus as a revolutionary, which is what many of the Jerusalem leaders think Jesus perceives himself as, those who would follow Jesus as a revolutionary, they want to hear him say, yes, do away with the tax. But if he says that, then there are grounds by which they can charge him before the Roman governor Pilate, who comes into town for the festival.

And according to Luke, they actually do charge him with that anyway, despite what he says. But Jesus asked them for a coin, which interestingly, one of his questioners does have on their person. And he says, whose image and superscription is on it? Well, everybody knows Caesar.

He says, give Caesar what is Caesar's. Give to God what is God's. Again, the relative worthlessness of money, that's not what counts.

And he may also be thinking in terms of giving Caesar what has Caesar's image on it. Give yourself to God, because you are in God's image. Then he's confronted by the Sadducees over the issue of the resurrection.

Now, the Sadducees debated these same things with the Pharisees. The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, and rabbinic literature is full of debates with the Sadducees about this. So, they tell a story about a widow who had seven husbands.

Well, they're not being very creative. That goes back to the story of Sarah in the book of Tobit, the apocryphal book of Tobit. But the Sadducees accepted only arguments from the Torah.

And so, when the Pharisees debated with them, they tried to find the doctrine of the resurrection in the Torah. It's obvious in Daniel chapter 12 and verse 2, but Sadducees wouldn't buy that. So, the Pharisees found hints of it already in the Torah, and Jesus does that too.

Jesus' argument in 22.32 is similar to the Pharisees' arguments versus the Sadducees. The Pharisees, by the way, because of the Sadducean belief, thought that the Sadducees were damned. They didn't believe in the resurrection.

They wouldn't take part in the resurrection. That was historically a Jewish tradition, even though many Jewish people today don't believe in that. The Pharisees and the ancient rabbis, Mishnahs and Hedron, 10:1, would not have appreciated many of the views that circulate today.

But in any case, Jesus said, he said, rendered a Caesar with his Caesars to the Sadducees. He says you err greatly because you don't know the scriptures and you don't know the power of God. Now, the power of God was associated directly with the resurrection in some regularly prayed Jewish prayers on a popular level.

You err greatly because you don't know the scriptures or the power of God. In the resurrection, it's not going to be like that. You're not going to be married to anybody in the resurrection.

You're not going to need that with your resurrection body. Well, then a Pharisaic scribe questions Jesus, what is the greatest commandment? 22:36. That was a debate that we know was going on among Pharisaic teachers in this period. And well, he asks Jesus to weigh in on the debate.

Some, as we've seen, said, honor your parents. The one who came closest to Jesus actually was later than Jesus, Rabbi Akiba. Rabbi Akiba said that the greatest commandment was to love your neighbor.

That wasn't where Jesus ranked it, but it was close. That was number two. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love and that all of the law and the prophets hangs on this.

If you love God with all your heart and you love your neighbor as yourself, you're going to keep everything else that's in the Torah. You'll honor God. You won't break any of God word commandments like the first four or so of the Ten Commandments.

And you won't break any of the human word commandments in the later ten, the leader of the Ten Commandments. This linking of these two commandments would make sense on Jewish principles because they both begin with *vayahavta*, you show love. And so again, by Gezer Shabbat, it made sense to link them.

And Jesus appreciates somebody who understands the Torah, even if it's a pharisaic scribe. Well, in 22 verses 41 to 46, Jesus now turns the tables and has some

questions for them. What do you say of the Messiah? Is he David's son or is he David's Lord? Well, by popular definition, the Messiah was the anointed king.

He was the son of David. But Jesus says he's not just David's son, he's David's Lord. The Old Testament prophets spoke of a new David or a son of David who would rule.

It's in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Amos chapter nine, apparently in Hosea. It's in a number of places. So there's this expectation for the restoration of the house of David with a new David or a son of David.

But the reality was even greater than those prophecies. Jesus cites Psalm 110, verse one, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. And the passage goes on to speak of a priest after the order of Melchizedek, a priest-king, which is something that Hebrews expounds at length after citing verse one.

The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand. And this one too is cited all over the place and alluded to all over the place in the New Testament. Something that Jesus' disciples widely carried over from Jesus' own teaching.

The Lord said to my Lord, well, who is the Lord? The Lord in Hebrew there is Yahweh. And he said to my Lord, well, who is my Lord if it's not the one speaking? Who is my Lord? And if David, the Psalm is attributed to David, if David is the one speaking, then this is David's Lord and not just his son. Normally one's descendant would be one's subordinate.

Jesus can use antimony, the rabbis often did that, both and. He's not repudiating being descended from David, which Matthew elsewhere emphasizes in this gospel. But it's also not something the later church would have made up because it's worded kind of ambiguously.

But Jesus says that he is David's Lord, he's someone greater than David. And in Acts 2 and some other places, this is expounded in a divine way, which would also fit the context, especially because Jesus has just been talking about, love the Lord your God with all your heart. Lord and God were both divine titles in the Old Testament.

And Lord, both Yahweh and Adonai are rendered kurios in Greek, which is the language we have this in front of us. And it may be the language in which Jesus was debating with the Sadducees. Because if you look at the tomb inscriptions, the Sadducees often spoke Greek.

Greek was pretty common in Jerusalem as well as Aramaic. So, he may have been speaking Greek in this setting. In any case, Jesus is David's Lord.

But if you think that Jesus has been debating with the Pharisees and the Sadducees here and has been making them look bad, just wait till we get to chapter 23. In chapter 23, he goes all out to show what's wrong with them and why they have been resistant to his teaching all through the gospel so far. Because they aren't really inside what they claim to be on the outside.

Religion does not make us holy. Only God can make us holy.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Matthew. This is session 15, Matthew 19-22.