

Dr. David Turner, Matthew

Lecture 9B – Matthew 21-22: The Triumphal Entry and the Tragic Aftermath

NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, FAQs

1) Abstract

Dr. David Turner's lecture 9B offers an insightful analysis of **Matthew chapters 21 and 22**, focusing on Jesus' **triumphal entry into Jerusalem** and the ensuing "tragic aftermath" of his interactions with the Jewish religious establishment. The lecture meticulously examines key events, including Jesus' **cleansing of the temple**, the **cursing of the fig tree**, and the **disputes regarding Jesus' authority** through several parables like the **two sons**, the **evil tenant farmers**, and the **wedding feast**. Furthermore, it explores the **controversies surrounding taxation, resurrection, and the greatest commandment**, culminating in Jesus' unanswerable question about the Messiah being both **David's son and Lord**. Turner emphasizes the profound **theological implications** of these narratives, particularly concerning the **rejection of God's Messiah** by the leadership and the **transfer of spiritual authority** to those who bear fruit.

2) Briefing Document: Detailed Briefing Document: Matthew 21-22 – The Triumphal Entry and Tragic Aftermath

I. Introduction and Overview of Matthew 21-22

David Turner's Lecture 9B on Matthew 21-22 provides a detailed exegetical review of pivotal events in Jesus' final days in Jerusalem. The lecture highlights Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem, which is paradoxically also a "tragic entry" due to the misunderstanding of his messianic identity. This period is marked by Jesus' direct confrontation with the religious establishment through symbolic actions, parables, and challenging dialogues, culminating in a clear and irreconcilable divide between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

II. Key Themes and Important Ideas/Facts

A. The Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-11)

- **Paradoxical Nature:** Jesus' entry combines "the trappings of power and glory with the imagery of humility." He rides an "unpretentious young donkey, not a dashing war horse," and is "meek, not militaristic." This epitomizes "the upside-down values of Jesus' kingdom," which radically shifts the world's paradigm of greatness to "humble service, not arrogant rule."
- **Mixed Signals and Misunderstanding:** Jerusalem is "perplexed about his identity." The crowd's shouts are "correct in ascribing messianic language to Jesus,

but incorrect in their understanding of the meaning of that messianic language." They wrongly model their Messiah after a "conquering military hero," a misunderstanding shared even by the disciples.

- **Tragic Implications:** Despite the initial celebratory atmosphere, the entry is ultimately "a tragic entry" because of this profound misunderstanding and impending rejection.

B. Cleansing and Cursing: Symbolic Actions (Matthew 21:12-22)

1. Cleansing of the Temple (Matthew 21:12-17)

- **Focus of Jesus' Action:** Jesus' first action is not to confront Roman occupation but to "deliver [Israel] from its own hypocrisy," targeting the temple, "the religious center of Israel, and its established leadership."
- **Nature of the Corruption:** The temple, meant to be "a house of prayer," had been "perverted into a center of commercial activity." Jesus' actions were likely directed against "unscrupulous greed which capitalized upon the sincere religious motives of the religious pilgrims," rather than commerce in principle.
- **Prophetic and Eschatological Significance:** Jesus, like Old Testament prophets, acted "against the corruption of Israel's established worship and for those who are without status." This action argues for an "eschatological reversal in which the meek will inherit the earth, while corrupt leaders will be brought low."
- **Christology:** Jesus' healing and cleansing of the temple demonstrate his authority, fulfilling his earlier statement in 12:6, "one greater than the temple is here." The children's praise, vindicated by Jesus citing Psalm 8:2, implicitly claims his worthiness of "praise and worship which the psalm directs to God the creator."
- **Renewal or Destruction:** The cleansing symbolized both "the reformation of abuses of the temple and the judgment to come if the abuses continued." Jesus predicted the temple's destruction (24:2), but his immediate actions were against "commercial enterprises which were parasitic to it," not the sacrificial system itself.

1. Cursing of the Fig Tree (Matthew 21:18-22)

- **Symbolic Act:** This is the "third symbolic act of Jesus in this context," following the donkey entry (kingly role) and temple cleansing (prophetic role).
- **Two Theological Lessons:**
- **Fruitless Jewish Leaders:** The barren fig tree "pictures the fruitless Jewish leaders whose temple was so recently cleared." They question Jesus' authority despite his miracles, demonstrating their lack of appreciation compared to children. Their "fruitlessness" is a recurring theme, with a "full and final denunciation" to come in chapter 23.
- **Disciples' Need for Faith:** The incident challenges the disciples to "grow in their faith" and "develop faith in the power of God to answer their prayers," a lesson connected to the temple as a "house of prayer for all nations."
- **Contrast:** The two lessons contrast the "fruitlessness of the unbelieving Jewish leaders with the potential fruitfulness of Jesus' believing disciples."

C. Authority and Parables of Judgment (Matthew 21:23-22:14)

1. **Jesus' Authority and John (Matthew 21:23-32)**

- **Challenge to Authority:** The Jewish leaders' question about Jesus' authority is "motivated by animosity and probably by the desire to trap Jesus into saying something that could be construed as blasphemy."
- **Jesus Turns the Tables:** Jesus counters by asking about the source of John's authority, which the leaders "dare not answer" for fear of the crowds who regarded John as a prophet.
- **Parable of the Two Sons:** This parable devastates the leaders, highlighting their sin of "refusing to perform what they promised" and refusing to follow the example of tax collectors and prostitutes whose repentance "ought to have influenced the leaders to repent."
- **Deeds vs. Words:** Being a disciple "involves deeds, not mere words." It is "astonishing to think that the temple officials... do not perform the will of the Father," while God's grace draws "notorious sinners in repentance into the kingdom."
- **Israel and the Church (Interpretation):** The parable primarily contrasts "groups within Israel" – "unrepentant folks in the establishment are replaced by repentant people of no status, but the enfranchised replacements are just as Jewish as the disenfranchised former leaders." The lesson for the predominantly Gentile church today is to "avoid repeating the error of the Jewish establishment."

1. **Parable of the Evil Tenant Farmers (Matthew 21:33-46)**

- **Themes:** This parable combines Old Testament themes of "Israel as God's vineyard and its rejection of the prophets" with the new theme of "Jesus as the culmination of God's revelation and his rejection as the culmination of Israel's rebellion."
- **God's Patience and Leaders' Rejection:** God is "amazingly patient with the leaders of His people who have regularly rejected His messengers." The leaders are about to "destroy the owner's son, Jesus," thinking this will secure their authority, but "the owner of the vineyard will yet have the last word, destroying those leaders and replacing them with new ones, the disciples of Jesus."
- **"Kingdom Taken and Given" (Matthew 21:43):** This verse is often misinterpreted. It does *not* predict "the demise of national Israel as the people of God and its replacement by the predominantly Gentile church."
- **Recipient of Judgment:** The "recalcitrant farmers" from whom authority is taken represent the "Jewish religious leaders," not Israel as a whole. They are the "builders who reject the stone" and the "ones broken to pieces and ground into powder by the stone."
- **Recipient of Authority:** The "new nation" (ethnos) is an "ethical entity, not an ethnic entity." It refers to "those who produce fruit, that is, those who practice kingdom ethics," whether Jew or Gentile.
- **"Intramural Transfer":** Matthew 21:33-46 "should be interpreted as an intramural transfer of leadership in the kingdom from the fruitless Jerusalem religious establishment to the fruitful Mithian Christian Jewish community led by

the apostles of Jesus." This community is "the eschatological remnant of Israel," which becomes the "nucleus of the nascent church."

- **Anti-Semitism Warning:** Supersessionistic interpretations (Gentiles replacing Jews with no further franchise) have "sadly supported anti-semitism" and "the holocaust," and should be reconsidered. "Salvation comes through the Jews."
- 1. **Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)**
 - **Continuation of Judgment:** This is the third parable in a set, continuing the case "against the leaders of Israel" for their rejection of God's Messiah. It stresses "the contempt with which the Jewish leaders have treated God's rule and Jesus the Messiah."
 - **Common Interpretation (with caveats):** The king (God) invites Israel (subjects), who refuse and kill servants (prophets). The king destroys the city (Jerusalem/Rome). New guests are invited from highways (Gentiles). A guest without garments (hypocrite) is punished.
 - **Refinement of Interpretation:** The "many are called but few are chosen" (22:14) summarizes the parable. Those who killed God's messengers are "not Israel as a whole but the leaders of Israel."
 - **Warning to Disciples:** The man without a wedding garment portrays "the horrific end of those who finally reject Jesus in the kingdom, whether they appear to be righteous or not." It warns disciples that "their troubles will not come merely from outside opponents" and that they "cannot become complacent and assume a notion of divine approval that overrides the necessity of obedience to all that Jesus has commanded."

D. Confrontations with Jewish Leaders (Matthew 22:15-46)

1. **Paying Taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22)**
 - **Attempt to Trap Jesus:** Pharisees and Herodians attempt to challenge Jesus' wisdom and trap him.
 - **Masterful Answer:** Jesus' answer "confounds both the Herodians and the Pharisees."
 - "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, to God what is God's."
 - He does not deny the tax's validity (comforting tax collectors) nor affirm blind loyalty to Rome (alienating nationalists).
 - It reminds Herodians their allegiance to emperor "cannot supersede their allegiance to God."
 - The coin's inscription is "blasphemous," but Jesus' "hypocritical questioners have brought the blasphemous coin into the temple complex."
1. **Marriage and the Resurrection (Matthew 22:23-33)**
 - **Sadducees' Challenge:** Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, attempt to discredit Jesus by posing a question about levirate marriage in the afterlife.
 - **Jesus' Correction:** Jesus tells them their denial is "an error caused by ignorance" of both "the power of God to transform people at their resurrection" (no longer sexually active) and "the scriptures," specifically Exodus 3:6, which implies the patriarchs' eventual resurrection.

1. The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40)

- **Least Controversial Exchange:** A legal expert asks about the greatest commandment.
- **Jesus' Synthesis:** Jesus "succinctly synthesizes the ethical teaching of the Old Testament," identifying "love for God" (Deuteronomy 6:5) as the "first and greatest commandment" and "love for neighbor" (Leviticus 19:18) as equally important.
- **Theocentric Basis:** "Divine love to humans enables them to respond in love to God and their fellow humans." The "theocentric or vertical obligation is the basis of the anthropocentric or horizontal obligation."
- **Modern Psychology Critique:** The idea of needing to love oneself first is "modern psychological jargon" that "seems to turn the biblical pattern on its head."

1. David's Son and David's Lord (Matthew 22:41-46)

- **Jesus Takes Initiative:** Jesus questions the Pharisees, not to trap them, but to "win their hearts with his teaching" and confront the "paramount issue... that Jesus is the Messiah and they are in the process of rejecting him."
- **Theological Implication:** While they agree the Messiah is "David's son," Jesus challenges them on how David could call his son "Lord" (Psalm 110:1).
- **Messianic Identity:** This implies Jesus' dual nature: "humble Davidic roots" but also the "miraculously born, divinely attested son of God." He is "greater than David."
- **Unanswerable Question:** This question brings dialogue to a halt, as the only answer is that "David's son is divine," trapping the Pharisees and revealing Jesus' exalted identity.

III. Conclusion

Matthew 21-22 showcases Jesus' final, decisive confrontations with the Jewish religious establishment in Jerusalem. The "triumphal entry" immediately sets a paradoxical tone, revealing a Messiah whose kingdom values are "upside-down" from worldly expectations. Through symbolic actions (temple cleansing, fig tree cursing), parables (two sons, wicked tenants, wedding feast), and direct challenges to their authority and understanding of scripture, Jesus exposes the leaders' hypocrisy, fruitlessness, and ultimate rejection of God's plan.

The lecture emphasizes that the judgment pronounced in these chapters is primarily on the **Jewish religious leadership** for their rejection of God's Messiah, not a wholesale replacement of Israel by the Gentile church. This is an "intramural transfer of leadership" to an "ethical entity" – those, whether Jew or Gentile, who bear the "fruit of righteousness" and practice "kingdom ethics." The "verbal hostilities" escalate to an "ominous" silence, signaling the irreconcilable divide between Jesus and those who refuse to acknowledge him as both David's Son and David's Lord.

3) Study Guide

Study Guide: Matthew 21-22 – The Triumphal Entry and the Tragic Aftermath

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem paradoxically combine elements of power and humility, and what does this signify about his kingdom values?
2. What was Jesus' primary motivation for cleansing the temple, and against what specific actions or attitudes was his anger directed?
3. Explain the dual theological lessons conveyed by Jesus' cursing of the fig tree.
4. Why did the Jewish leaders question Jesus' authority, and how did Jesus turn the tables on their inquiry?
5. What was the "sin" of the Jewish leaders according to Jesus' parable of the two sons, and who did the "first son" represent in this parable?
6. How does the parable of the evil tenant farmers serve as a "miniature history of redemption," and what Old Testament passage provides its background?
7. According to Dr. Turner, why is it problematic to interpret Matthew 21:43 (the kingdom being taken and given) as a supersessionistic replacement of Israel by the Gentile church?
8. Beyond the initial refusal of the invited guests, what additional dimension of judgment is added by the man without a wedding garment in the parable of the wedding feast?
9. How did Jesus masterfully respond to the question about paying taxes to Caesar, and what allegiances did he subtly emphasize for both the Herodians and the Pharisees?
10. In his encounter with the Sadducees regarding the resurrection, what two types of ignorance did Jesus attribute to them, leading to their faulty understanding?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Jesus' entry combines the imagery of a conquering king with his unpretentious ride on a young donkey and simple clothing. This signifies his "upside-down values" where true greatness is found in humble service, not arrogant rule, shifting the world's paradigm of power.
2. Jesus' primary motivation was to deliver the temple from its own hypocrisy, not directly from Roman occupation. He confronted the temple's perversion into a center of commercial activity and unscrupulous greed, acting against corruption and on behalf of the needy.
3. First, the barren fig tree pictured the fruitless Jewish leaders who questioned Jesus' authority despite his miracles, stressing their lack of appreciation and impending denunciation. Second, it challenged the weak disciples to develop greater faith in God's power to answer prayers.
4. The Jewish leaders questioned Jesus' authority not innocently, but from animosity and a desire to trap him into blasphemy. Jesus turned the tables by asking them

about the source of John's authority, a question they dared not answer for fear of the crowd.

5. Their sin was not only refusing to perform what they promised (like the second son), but also refusing to follow the example of the first son, who represented tax collectors and prostitutes whose repentance should have influenced the leaders to repent.
6. The parable is a miniature history of redemption by joining themes of Israel as God's vineyard and its rejection of prophets, culminating in Jesus' rejection and prediction of his death and resurrection. Its background is Isaiah's song of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7.
7. Dr. Turner argues it's problematic because the "you" refers to the recalcitrant Jewish religious leaders (the farmers), not Israel as a whole (the vineyard). It's an "intramural transfer of leadership" to a "Christian Jewish community" (the ethical entity), not a replacement of ethnic Israel by the Gentile church.
8. The man without a wedding garment adds the dimension of internal judgment within the kingdom. It pictures the horrific end of those who appear righteous and respond to the invitation, but do not truly belong, warning disciples against complacency and the necessity of obedience.
9. Jesus masterfully responded by asking whose image was on the coin, then stating, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." This reminded Herodians that allegiance to Caesar could not supersede allegiance to God, while telling Pharisees they should pay taxes to the Roman government.
10. Jesus attributed their error to two types of ignorance: ignorance of the power of God to transform people at resurrection (making them non-sexually active) and ignorance of the scriptures, specifically Exodus 3:6, which implies the patriarchs' eventual resurrection.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the pervasive theme of "upside-down values" in Matthew 21 and 22, as exemplified by Jesus' triumphal entry, cleansing of the temple, and various parables. How do these events challenge conventional notions of power, righteousness, and divine approval?
2. Discuss the significance of Jesus' three symbolic acts—the triumphal entry, the temple cleansing, and the cursing of the fig tree—as presented in Matthew 21. How do these acts collectively convey Jesus' kingly and prophetic roles, and what theological messages do they communicate to different audiences (leaders, disciples, the crowd)?
3. Examine the series of confrontations and parables in Matthew 21-22 (two sons, evil tenant farmers, wedding feast, tax question, resurrection question, great commandment, David's son). How do these interactions reveal the escalating hostility between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, and what specific criticisms or warnings does Jesus issue against them through these encounters?
4. Evaluate Dr. Turner's interpretation of Matthew 21:43 and the concept of "supersessionism." Argue for or against his view that the passage describes an

"intramural transfer of leadership" within Israel rather than a replacement of Israel by the Gentile church, drawing specific evidence from the lecture.

5. Trace the Christological implications throughout Matthew 21-22. How do events like the temple cleansing, Jesus' questions about his authority and David's Lord, and his synthesis of the greatest commandment collectively build a robust picture of Jesus' identity as both Messiah and Son of God?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Triumphal Entry:** Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, traditionally seen as a kingly parade, but paradoxically characterized by humility (riding a donkey, simple clothing).
- **Upside-Down Values:** A core concept of Jesus' kingdom, where greatness is found in humble service rather than arrogant rule, contrasting with the world's paradigm of power.
- **Cleansing of the Temple:** Jesus' action in Matthew 21:12-17, where he drives out merchants and money-changers from the temple courts, confronting hypocrisy and perversion of worship.
- **Eschatological Reversal:** A prophetic theme where the meek inherit the earth, and corrupt leaders are brought low, demonstrated by Jesus' actions in the temple.
- **Christology:** The study of the person and work of Christ. The lecture notes how Jesus' healing and cleansing of the temple demonstrate his unique divine identity, as one "greater than the temple."
- **Cursing of the Fig Tree:** Jesus' symbolic act in Matthew 21:18-22, which serves as a prophetic acted parable conveying two lessons: the fruitlessness of Jewish leaders and the need for disciples to develop faith in prayer.
- **Prophetic Acted Parable:** A symbolic action performed by a prophet to convey a theological message, often strange or unexpected, as exemplified by the cursing of the fig tree.
- **Parable of the Two Sons:** A parable told by Jesus in Matthew 21:28-31, contrasting an obedient son (tax collectors and prostitutes who repent) with a disobedient one (Jewish leaders who profess obedience but do not do God's will).
- **Parable of the Evil Tenant Farmers:** A parable told by Jesus in Matthew 21:33-46, illustrating Israel's history of rejecting God's prophets and culminating in the rejection of His Son (Jesus), leading to the forfeiture of leadership by the current religious establishment.
- **Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard:** A passage from Isaiah 5:1-7 that provides the Old Testament background and imagery for Jesus' parable of the evil tenant farmers, depicting Israel's unfaithfulness as a vineyard that fails to produce good fruit.
- **Supersessionism:** A theological view that the Christian Church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people in His covenant plan. Dr. Turner argues against this interpretation of Matthew 21:43.
- **Intramural Transfer of Leadership:** Dr. Turner's proposed interpretation of Matthew 21:43, suggesting that leadership within Israel is transferred from the

fruitless Jerusalem religious establishment to the fruitful "Mithian Christian Jewish community" (an ethical entity, not an ethnic replacement).

- **Ethical Entity vs. Ethnic Entity:** Dr. Turner's distinction regarding the "nation" to whom the kingdom authority is given in Matthew 21:43. He argues it refers to those who produce fruit (kingdom ethics), not a new ethnic group replacing Israel.
- **Parable of the Wedding Feast:** The third in a series of parables (Matthew 22:1-14) that condemn the leaders of Israel for rejecting God's invitation to His Son's feast, culminating in the judgment of those who appear to respond but lack genuine commitment.
- **Man Without Wedding Garment:** A figure in the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:11-13) who represents those who respond to the invitation but lack true righteousness or obedience, facing final judgment.
- **Render to Caesar What is Caesar's, and to God What is God's:** Jesus' masterful response to the question about paying taxes to the Roman emperor (Matthew 22:15-22), emphasizing that civil obligations do not supersede allegiance to God.
- **Levirate Marriage:** A Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 25:5) requiring a man to marry his deceased brother's widow to raise offspring for the deceased. The Sadducees used this law to challenge the concept of resurrection.
- **Great Commandment:** Jesus' synthesis of the Law (Matthew 22:34-40), stating that the greatest commandments are to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind, and to love one's neighbor as oneself.
- **David's Son and David's Lord:** Jesus' final question to the Pharisees (Matthew 22:41-46), challenging their understanding of the Messiah's identity by quoting Psalm 110:1, implying the Messiah's divine nature beyond merely being David's human descendant.

4) FAQs

Q1: What is the significance of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, and why is it described as both "triumphal" and "tragic"?

- **A1:** Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is paradoxical. It's "triumphal" in the sense that he is parading as a king, fulfilling messianic prophecies (like riding on a donkey, as predicted in Zechariah 9:9). The crowd, though misguided, correctly uses messianic language, shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David." However, it's also "tragic" because the crowd and even his disciples fundamentally misunderstand his kingship. They anticipate a conquering military hero who will overthrow Roman oppression, whereas Jesus embodies "exalted humility." His kingdom radically shifts the world's paradigm of greatness, emphasizing humble service over arrogant rule. This misunderstanding foreshadows Israel's rejection of their true Messiah.
- **Q2: How did Jesus' cleansing of the Temple demonstrate his authority and what was the main issue he addressed?**

- A2: Jesus' first action upon entering Jerusalem was to confront the Temple's corruption, demonstrating his authority over it ("one greater than the temple is here," Matthew 12:6). He wasn't objecting to commerce in principle, but rather the "unscrupulous greed" and "hypocrisy" that had perverted the Temple from a "house of prayer" into a "center of commercial activity." His actions, similar to Old Testament prophets, were directed against the corruption of established worship and in behalf of the needy, symbolizing both a reformation of abuses and a judgment if those abuses continued. This act also implicitly claims his worthiness of divine praise, as even children recognize his identity better than the established hierarchy.
- **Q3: What theological lessons are conveyed by Jesus cursing the fig tree?**
- A3: The cursing of the fig tree serves two primary theological lessons. Firstly, the "barren fig tree" symbolizes the "fruitless Jewish leaders" who fail to produce "right living" or "fruit." Despite witnessing Jesus' miracles, they question his authority instead of praising God. This act foreshadows Jesus' coming denunciation of their fruitlessness. Secondly, it teaches the disciples about the necessity of developing "faith in the power of God to answer their prayers." It contrasts the fruitlessness of unbelieving leaders with the potential fruitfulness of believing disciples, highlighting the importance of prayer in connection with the Temple, which was meant to be "a house of prayer for all nations."
- **Q4: How did Jesus address the Jewish leaders' challenge to his authority in Matthew 21, and what was the underlying message of his parables?**
- A4: When questioned about his authority, Jesus cleverly turned the tables by asking them about the source of John the Baptist's authority, knowing they dared not answer. He then used parables—the Parable of the Two Sons and the Parable of the Evil Tenant Farmers—to expose their hypocrisy and impending judgment. These parables highlight their refusal to do God's will (like the second son who promised but didn't obey) and their historical rejection of God's messengers and ultimately His Son. The underlying message was that "entrance into the kingdom is promised not to those who merely say, 'Lord, Lord,' but to those who actually do the will of the Father."
- **Q5: What is the meaning of the "kingdom being taken and the kingdom being given" in Matthew 21:43, and how does the lecture clarify this passage?**
- A5: Matthew 21:43 states that the "kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit." The lecture clarifies that "you" refers to the "recalcitrant farmers"—the Jewish religious leaders—who failed to produce "fruit" or "right living." It does *not* imply a supersessionistic replacement of national Israel by the Gentile church. Instead, it signifies an "intramural transfer of leadership" within Israel. The "nation" or "people" to whom the kingdom is given is an "ethical entity, not an ethnic entity," referring to the "fruitful Mithian Christian Jewish community" (Matthew's community), which includes both Jews and Gentiles who "practice kingdom ethics" and produce God's fruit. This

community becomes the "eschatological remnant of Israel," leading Israel in righteousness.

- **Q6: What main points did Jesus make through the Parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22?**
- A6: The Parable of the Wedding Feast, like the previous two parables, condemns the leaders of Israel for rejecting God's Messiah. It illustrates the king (God) inviting his subjects (Israel, specifically its leaders) to a feast for his son (Jesus). Their refusal and hostile treatment of the king's servants (prophets) lead to their destruction. The invitation is then extended to others from the "main highways" (Gentiles). A key additional dimension is the man without a wedding garment, symbolizing those who appear to respond to the invitation but lack genuine obedience ("hypocrites"). The parable concludes with the warning, "Many are called, but few are chosen," stressing that merely accepting the invitation is not enough; true belonging requires producing the "fruit" of obedience.
- **Q7: How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' question about paying taxes to Caesar, and what principle did he establish?**
- A7: Jesus gave a masterful and confounding answer to the question of paying taxes to Caesar: "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." This response avoids both sedition against Rome and alienation from Jewish nationalists. He establishes the principle that while civil obligations are due to governing authorities (represented by Caesar's image on the coin), a higher allegiance and ultimate claim belong to God. This reminds the Herodians that their loyalty to the emperor cannot supersede their loyalty to God, and it tells the Pharisees that they should pay taxes to the Roman government, recognizing God's providence in their placement.
- **Q8: How did Jesus challenge the Sadducees' denial of the resurrection, and what was his core argument?**
- A8: The Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, tried to trap Jesus with a hypothetical question about levirate marriage in the afterlife. Jesus declared that their error stemmed from "ignorance" of both "the power of God" and "the scriptures." He explained that in the resurrection, people will be transformed and "no longer sexually active beings," rendering the levirate law irrelevant. Furthermore, by citing Exodus 3:6 ("I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"), Jesus argued that God's covenantal loyalty to the patriarchs implies their continued existence and eventual resurrection, along with all of God's people. His core argument was that God is the God of the living, not the dead.