

Introduction:

- This section contains three challenges/questions asked by the Pharisee to Jesus concerning theological and ethical concerns.
 - The first one Matthew calls a trap. Jesus answer amazes them.
 - The second one is ridiculous. Jesus answer silences them.
 - The third is called a test. Jesus answer leaves them with no response to him.
- The series concludes by Jesus asking a counter question, to which they give no answer therefore leaving Jesus in command of the field. Thereby setting him up to deliver a devastating blow to them in chapter 23.

I. A Taxing Question

- A. The question, vs.17, is intended to trap Jesus. My question is: "How has that worked out for you so far?"
- B. This question has the most political implications. And it also shows the Pharisee taking the initiative against Jesus. Get Jesus to mess up here and the Romans will take care of their problem. This tax has been the cause of a revolt around AD6. It continued to stay freshen the minds of Jewish citizens...and Roman authorities.
 1. A positive answer makes Jesus loose the Jerusalem crowd.
 2. A negative answer makes Jesus loose the Romans.
 3. Jesus answer avoids both. In two ways it undercut the Pharisees position and has a principled answer.
 - a) "Jesus' request for a denarius was more than just the provision of a visual aid. Pious Jews objected to the "idolatrous" coin, which carried not only a human portrait (in contravention of the second commandment, Exod 20:4) but also an inscription which described the Roman emperor as *Divi Filius*, son of a god (in contravention of the first commandment, Exod 20:3). Roman imperial policy, aware of this sensitivity, allowed the Jews to coin their own non-idolatrous copper money, which sufficed for normal everyday business; there was therefore no need for them to carry the silver denarius, a coin of higher value. And Jesus apparently did not have one—but they did, and in the holy precincts of the temple at that! Well then, if they were using the emperor's (idolatrous) coinage they could hardly object to paying his tax. NICNT Matthew. By telling them to give it back to Ceaser he really calling them hypocrites.
 - b) Secondly Jesus answer explains that you can pay your tithe and taxes as dutifully bound servant to both God and governing authorities and this was huge! You can be subject to an emperor and be subject to God at that the same time.
- C. 'The implication this passage would then be that, if what is due to the emperor is the coin which bears his image, what is due to God is oneself as a person bearing the image of God.
 1. It reminds us of the parable of the vineyard in which the owner expects payment for his use of His land.

2. They could easily see they owed Caesar a tax but could not see they owed God their lives.
3. vs 22. "His reply amazed them" same thing as saying Jesus 1. Pharisee 0.

II. A Theological Inquiry

- A. "That same day..." is used to tie the thoughts of Matthew together for his reader.
- B. The question, vs. 27, is meant to alienate most of Jesus followers by dividing the Pharisee and Sadducees. The Pharisee believed in the resurrection the Sadducees did not, thus alienating the Sanhedrin. Their goal is two fold:
 1. The goal is to make Jesus look foolish in public.
 2. And to discredit him for believing in the resurrection.
- C. Jesus answer:
 1. One, you have misunderstood the resurrection by comparing it must be like this life. The power of God creates something different, something fitted for the eternal.
 2. He brings to mind a scripture that God calls himself the "God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob."
 - a) God of the living not the dead. God lets Moses know that those relationships are alive and well.
 - b) It reveals the nature by which God binds himself to us in covenant.
 3. "But the narrative gives the impression that it was an unanswerable argument, leaving the crowd favorably impressed and the Sadducees silenced" France, R. T. (2007). Matthew NICNT (p. 837). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 4. Again, the crowds are astonished! Like after the answer to the Pharisees.

III. A Question of Ethics

- A. The crowd is now on Jesus side. The Pharisees and Sadducees are divided.
 1. So they come together to once again "Test" trap Jesus.
 2. A lawyer speaks for them, vs 36 "*Which is the most important commandment?*"
 3. Since there are 613 commands any answer must bring about division among the people.
- B. Jesus answer: Love Dt 6:5 Love God, Love others. Lev 19:18 Love your neighbor as yourself.
 1. Jesus answer Mt 5:17 I did not come to abolish the law but to establish its purpose.
 2. First, "by focusing on "love" rather than on more tangible regulations to be obeyed it lifts the discussion above merely adjudicating between competing rules, and gives the priority to a principle which has potential application to virtually every aspect of religious and communal life." France, R. T. (2007). NICNT Matthew (p. 843). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 - a) *"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets."* (Matthew 7:12, NLT)
 3. "In the second place, by bringing these two texts together Jesus asserts that the one principle of love applies equally to the two main aspects of religious duty, one's attitude to God and one's attitude to other people." NICNT

IV. The Academic Question

- A. Jesus last question put the "nail in coffin" of the challenges. *"Since David called the Messiah 'my Lord,' how can the Messiah be his son?"* (Matthew 22:45, NLT) Ps 110
1. Jesus implies his messianic role with out giving them an argument that could be used against Him!
 2. Ps 110
 - a) David is the speaker.
 - b) He speaks about Messiah
 - c) Messiah is superior to he himself
- B. Son of David is a title common to Matthews book.
1. Messiah is also a common phrase. Messiah can be a son of David.
 2. But what David does is 'out of the box' He calls Messiah, Lord! Meaning He is more than David's son. A King would never call his son Lord!
 3. If David calls Him Lord he must be someone far superior to him. Jesus leads the crowds and religious to face his unspoken claim. *"Since David called Messiah "my Lord," how can Messiah be his son?"*
 4. Son of David is not mentioned again in the book of Matthew.
 5. I will state again, Jesus implies his messianic role with out giving them an argument that could be used against Him! He unanswered question is not answered until (26:63-64)

Conclusion:

- Jesus has now set up the scene so as to give the religious leaders a scathing rebuke. Next week...