

Matthew 22:15 - 23:12

Day 1

Jesus' Enemies Try to Trap Him. Read Matthew 22:15-22

1. What plan did the Pharisees' come up with? 22:15 What was their objective? Luke 20:20b
2. Who did they enlist to help them? 22:16a (See the supplemental sheet: *Jewish Political Groups*.)
 - How would you describe their approach? 22:16b (See Luke 20:20a)

FYI: "This alliance between the Pharisees and Herodians was quite surprising. The Pharisees (and indeed most Jews of the time) hated being subjected to Rome; the Herodians encouraged cheerful subjection to Rome. Only the common bond of strong opposition to Jesus could bring such diverse groups together in alliance. "How bitter the Pharisees's hostility was [toward Jesus] is shown by their willingness to unite with Herodians" [Thomas, 320]."
- scripture studies.com

"The Pharisees, their disciples and the Herodians gathered to entrap Him. This was a powerful coalition of religious and political heavyweights."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1158)

3. What trap would Jesus have fallen into if He had answered in favor of one side or the other? (i.e. If Jesus had said to pay Caesar, how would the crowd have responded? If Jesus had said not to pay Caesar, what would the scribes and chief priest have done?)

FYI: "Whatever answer Jesus gave would land Him in trouble...If Jesus favored the payment of colonial taxes, He could alienate His followers who hated the imposition of taxes by a foreign occupying army. If He rejected the taxes, He could be charged with sedition and inciting others to dishonor Caesar."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1158)

4. How did Jesus turn the tables? 22:18 What was the answer to Jesus' question? Why do you think He asked it?

Digging Deeper
Whose image do we bear? Genesis 1:27

What does that imply?
1 Corinthians 3:23

5. What did He ask them to observe about a coin? 22:19,20

- What did Jesus say about our allegiance to authority? 22:21 (See Romans 13:1-7)
- What happens when the two conflict? Acts 4:19; 5:29

6. Underline the things that belong to God (2:21).

- 1 Chronicles 29:11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. NIV
- Job 12:10 In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. NIV
- Psalm 100:3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. NIV
- Acts 17:28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' NIV
- Colossians 1:16-17 ...all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. NIV

Food for Thought: "Everyone has the image of God impressed upon them. This means that we belong to God - not to Caesar, or not even to ourselves." - David Guzik

7. How were the leaders affected by Jesus' response? 22:22 See also Luke 20:26

- What accusation did the leaders use later in Jesus' trial? Luke 23:2

Applying the Word: Have you ever found yourself at odds between human versus divine authority? How did you handle it? What has Jesus' example taught you?

Day 2

The Sadducees Question Jesus. Read Matthew 22:23-33

8. Who approached Jesus next? 22:23 (How wearying would these confrontations have been for Jesus, just 3 days before the cross.)

- How do you think they were trying to make the idea of resurrection appear by their question? 22:23-28 What do you think they were trying to do to Jesus? (See Deuteronomy 25:5,6 for the basis for their question.)

FYI: "The Sadducees...were anti-supernaturalists, only accepting the first five books (The Torah) as authentic - and disregarding the Torah when it pleased them to do so." - David Guzik

9. What was faulty about the Sadducees' thinking? 22:29 (See the article on "Sadducees" at the end.)

FYI: KNOW, oida (Perf. of NT:1492), from the same root as *eidon*, "to see," is a perfect tense with a present meaning, signifying, primarily, "to have seen or perceived"... in the case of human "knowledge," to know from observation"
 - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"A good grasp of [scripture's] revelation of God and His activities in history should be adequate for acknowledging His power. Part of the Sadducee's problem may have been that they felt they had the authority to pick and choose what suited them as Scripture."
 - Africa Bible commentary (1158)

10. Underline what the Old Testament teaches about resurrection.

- Job 19:25-27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! NIV
- Psalm 17:15 And I-in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness. NIV
- Psalm 49:15 But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself. NIV
- Isaiah 26:19 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. NIV
- Hosea 13:14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? NIV

Digging Deeper
 What did Paul write about the resurrection from the dead?
 Acts 26:6-8

 1 Corinthians 15:12-14

 Philippians 3:21

11. How did Jesus correct their understanding about those who are resurrected from the dead? 22:30

FYI: "Jesus reminds them that life in the resurrection life is quite different from this life. It does not merely continue this world and its arrangements, but it is life of a completely different order. We can't be completely certain what life in glory beyond will be like, but we can know with certainty that no one will be disappointed with the arrangements."
 - David Guzik

12. What kind of heavenly bodies will we have?

- 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 49
- Philippians 3:21

13. What Jesus said about life after death in John 6:39,40?

14. What event did Jesus use to support a belief about resurrection (Exodus 3:6)? 22:31,32
Why was quoting the Pentateuch significant?

- By saying “I AM” not “I was”, what did God communicate about the hope of the patriarchs that had died? 22:32 (See Luke 20:38b)

15. What effect did Jesus’ response have on the people? 22:33 (The scribes? Luke 20:39,40)

Applying the Word: How does the hope of resurrection affect your life? Why do you think God doesn’t give us a more “clear and complete” picture of what heaven will be like?

Day 3

More Confrontations. Read Matthew 22:34-46

The Pharisees: A Lawyer

16. From 22:34-36, who questioned Jesus next and why? How would his question be “testing” Jesus? 22:36

FYI: “While this (question) may not look like a trap, it was an attempt to involve Jesus in their ongoing theological arguments. They were hoping that His answer would provide grounds for some other attack.”

- Africa Bible Commentary (1159)

17. What is the most important commandment we can follow and what is the second most important thing we can do? 22:37-39

18. How would you explain why the law *depends/hangs/hinges* (22:40) on these principles? See Romans 13:8b-9 i.e *How are they the foundation on which the others rest?*

- What does our love for others say about our relationship with God? 1 John 4:7,8,16

Digging Deeper

From Mark 12:28,32-34, what else do you learn about this encounter?

Jesus Questions the Pharisees

19. What did the Pharisees understand about the Messiah who had been prophesied? 22:41,42 (See prophecies such as Jeremiah 23:5,6; Ezekiel 34:23,24)
20. What title did David use (in Ps. 110:1) for the promised Messiah? 22:43,44 (To whom is "my Lord" referring? Acts 2:34-36)
21. What was the answer to Jesus' question in 22:45? See John 20:31
22. What is the only way that Christ can be both David's Lord (divine) and David's descendant (human)? 22:45 (See John 1:14)
- Why did Jesus need to be both? Romans 8:3 (See also 1 Peter 1:18-21)
23. Why do you think the Pharisees could call the Messiah the Son of David but didn't want to admit that the Messiah was also the Lord God; both truly man and truly God?
- What happened later? Luke 22:67-71
24. Where had their plans to trap Jesus gotten the leaders? 22:46 (Note the phrases in 22:22,33,46 that describe the reactions to Jesus.

FYI: "Logic and rhetoric have proved to be of no help in destroying Jesus. Now His enemies will resort to treachery and violence."
- David Guzik

Applying the Word: Consider a decision you are faced with about which course of action to take. Do the greatest commandments (22:37-39) affect that decision in any way?

Day 4

Scribes and Pharisees Exposed: Read Matthew 23:1- 12

25. What warning did Jesus give about the leaders' authority and why? 23:1-3 (*See the article on "Pharisees" at the end.*)

26. How did Jesus illustrate their unwillingness to "practice what they preached"? 23:4 (Compare Jesus' yoke and burden. 11:29)

FYI: "They tie up heavy burdens" by insisting upon the minute circumstances of the law...by adding to God's words, and imposing their own inventions and traditions."
- Matthew Henry's Commentary

27. What was the problem with their focus? 23:5a

- How was this manifested in their actions and attitudes? 23:5b-7

Digging Deeper
(See the reasons for *Phylacteries: Ex. 13:9; and Tassels: Numbers 15:38,39.*)
See Proverbs 3:3; 7:2,3 and Deut. 11:18,19 for a deeper meaning beyond outward adornment.

FYI: Phylacteries...tassels "no longer served their original purpose as simple reminders of God's law, but had become a way of drawing attention to the piety of the person who wore them"
- Africa Bible Commentaries (1160)

28. Why shouldn't we seek titles and places of honor? 23:8-10

FYI: "These titles are used elsewhere in Scripture with no qualification or admonishment [Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:17]. The hypocrites sought these titles for the prestige and power that went with them, and not for the purpose of using the positions to serve others."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1618)

29. What position should we seek? How does the Lord's definition of greatness compare to the scribes and Pharisees'? 23:11,12 (*Do you think the promise of 23:12 applies to life now or in eternity?*)

Digging Deeper
See 1 Corinthians 12:20-27 for descriptions of the relationship of believers with each other.

Food for Thought: "In the flesh, we determine greatness by how many people serve and honor us. In Jesus, we determine greatness by how we serve and honor others."
- David Guzik

Applying the Word: How should the idea of being a “brother” or a “servant” affect your interaction with others even when you are in a position of leadership? Can you think of ways you have seen a leader model this?



SADDUCEES

“Sadducees were members of a Jewish faction that opposed Jesus during His ministry. Known for their denial of the bodily resurrection, the Sadducees came from the leading families of the nation—the priests, merchants, and aristocrats. The high priests and the most powerful members of the priesthood were mainly Sadducees (Acts 5:17)...

Many of the wealthy lay people were also Sadducees. This may be the reason why the Sadducees gave the impression of wanting to preserve things as they were. They enjoyed privileged positions in society and managed to get along well under Roman rule. Any movement that might upset order and authority was bound to appear dangerous in their eyes.

The Sadducees rejected "the tradition of the elders," that body of oral and written commentary which interpreted the law of Moses. This automatically placed them in direct conflict with another Jewish group, the PHARISEES, who had made the traditions surrounding the Law almost as important as the Law itself. The Sadducees insisted that only the laws that were written in the law of Moses (the PENTATEUCH, the first five books of the Old Testament) were really binding. The Sadducees thought this way because of religious practices that had taken place for several centuries.

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or the immortality of the soul, since these doctrines are not mentioned in the law of Moses. Neither did they believe in rewards or punishments handed out after death, as in the doctrines of heaven and hell. Acts 23:8 indicates that they did not believe in angels or spirits, either.

- Excerpts from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

PHARISEES

(Separated ones)-a religious and political party in Palestine in New Testament times.

The Pharisees were known for insisting that the law of God be observed as the scribes interpreted it and for their special commitment to keeping the laws of tithing and ritual purity.

One distinctive feature of the Pharisees was their **strong commitment to observing the law of God as it was interpreted and applied by the scribes**. Although the priests had been responsible for teaching and interpreting the Law (Lev 10:8-11; Deut 33:8-10) in Old Testament times, many people had lost all respect for the priests because of the corruption in the Jerusalem priesthood. They looked to the scribes instead to interpret the Law for them. Some scribes were priests; many were not. Still, they lived pious, disciplined lives; and they had been trained to become experts in the Law. It was natural, then, for people to follow their leading rather than that of the priests.

The way in which the scribes spelled out the meaning of the Mosaic Law, the ways in which they adapted that Law to suit the needs of their day, the time-honored customs which they endorsed-all these became a part of the **"tradition of the elders"** (Mark 7:3). Although these traditions were not put into writing, they were passed on from one scribe to another and from the scribes to the people.

According to the New Testament, the Pharisees were concerned about **strictly interpreting and keeping the law on all matters** (Acts 26:5), including the Sabbath (Mark 2:24), divorce (Mark 10:2), oaths (Matt 23:16-22), the wearing of PHYLACTERIES and FRINGES (Matt 23:5), and so on. But they showed special zeal in insisting that laws of tithing and ritual purity be kept (Matt 23:23-26; Mark 7:1-13; Luke 11:37-42; 18:12).

Unlike the SADDUCEES, the **Pharisees did believe in the resurrection of the dead**. On this point, they were on common ground with the early Christians (Acts 23:6-9).

The Pharisees and their scribes enjoyed a good deal of popular support. In one way this is surprising, since the Pharisees kept apart from other Jews. They always seemed to be ready to criticize others for not keeping the laws, and they often looked down on "sinners" who showed no interest in God's law (Mark 2:16; Luke 7:39; 15:2; 18:11).

Still, unlike the Sadducees, who were mostly rich landowners and powerful priests, many Pharisees were ordinary people. And even though other Jews could not be bothered with observing all the details of the law, they respected the Pharisees for making the effort. Even Paul credited unbelieving Jews with having a "zeal for God" (Rom 10:2)-even though it was misguided.

In the New Testament, the Pharisees appear frequently in the accounts of Jesus' ministry and the history of the early church. In these passages a number of the typical failings of the Pharisees are evident. Pharisees observed the Law carefully as far as appearances went, but their hearts were far from God. Their motives were wrong because they wanted the praise of men (Matt 6:2,5,16; 23:5-7). They also had evil desires that were hidden by their pious show (Matt 23:25-28). That is why Pharisees are often called hypocrites: their hearts did not match their outward appearance.

The Pharisees thought they could match God's standards by keeping all the outward rules. Luke 18:9 says *they "trusted in themselves that they were righteous."*... Their desire to keep all of God's laws was commendable, but sometimes they put the emphasis on the wrong places. Minor details became a major preoccupation, and they forgot the more important things (Matt 23:23).