

## Episode #902 Matthew 22 Part 4-Tricks and Traps

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was having a final, conclusive confrontation with the corrupt, religious leaders of Israel in Jerusalem. He was facing the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians, who were trying to trap Him with a question about paying taxes to Caesar.

III. Taxes Rendered to Caesar. Matthew 22:15-22.

- B. Verse 18. Their “wickedness” means their wicked purpose in questioning Him. Those who lay traps for the innocent do so out of wicked purpose. “Test” could be test or tempt, in this case tempt is obviously the meaning. “Hypocrites” are actors. They were clearly just acting here, for their real purpose was hidden behind their nice words.
- C. Verse 19. This coin was the typical tribute payment. A denarius was a single day’s wage at the time. We saw this in the parable of the householder and the day laborers.
- D. Verse 20. “Image” is the same word used for Christ as the image of God in Colossians 1:15. This, of course, was his face stamped on the coin. This was not allowed on Jewish coins. They would often substitute symbols for the yearly feasts on their coins, like a lamb or a sheaf of wheat. But they would not stamp images of men on them. This was a Roman coin. The inscription or title was the words written on the coin. The same word is used for the Lord’s title on the cross.
- E. Verse 21. They were using Caesar’s coins with Caesar’s image and inscription. They had already accepted these things from Caesar, yet now they are unwilling to give to Caesar his due. Had they not already accepted the things of Caesar’s? This would be the argument of some, that it was contrary to God to render tribute to Caesar. But acknowledgement was already rendered to Caesar by using his coins! The Lord lays it back on those who use Caesar’s things. Thus He slips out of the neat trap they had laid for Him, and makes them look foolish for asking.
- F. Verse 22. This is the sixth of seven times men marveled at the Lord in the book of Matthew. His disciples; the multitude three times; His disciples again, His enemies here, and finally Pilate. The first five were because of His power, this time because of His wisdom, and the final time because of His silence. “Went their way” means they left, not having accomplished their purpose.

IV. Marriage and the Resurrection. Matthew 22:23-33.

- A. Verse 23. Now the third major party in Israel gets in on the act. This was a concerted effort amongst all of them. The Sadducees were an exclusive party, not very popular, but a large number of the priests were Sadducees. Notice how they follow up the actions of the Pharisees and Herodians. These rival parties who normally disliked each other all band together in seeking to trap the Lord Jesus Christ! That there was no resurrection was the false belief of this party. It is thought that they only acknowledged the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch, the law of Moses), and that they did not find resurrection there, so scoffed at it. Whether they just believed in a disembodied existence like the Greek philosophers is questionable; they may have not believed in any life after this one at all, but that religious principles are for this life only! This was the Epicurean philosophy; a sad and empty one.

- B. Verse 24. *Didaskalos* means a “teacher,” but also implies a master-teacher. It was a *didaskalos* who took disciples. “Children” in Hebrew is *ben*, the word for a son. A daughter was not preferred for carrying on the family line, unless there was no choice. This is from Deuteronomy 25:5-6.
- C. Verse 25. We might wonder if they had a particular case in mind. More than likely this was just a hypothetical situation that did not actually occur, though it certainly was not beyond the realm of possibility that it could occur. We have heard of a woman outliving several husbands, though seven is definitely pushing it! Seven would be a very large family in our day, but would not have been considered so unusual then. The first expired without offspring.
- D. Verse 26. While we might find this unusual, in a time of plague or famine it certainly could happen, if the woman had a particularly strong disposition and the family of the husbands did not.
- E. Verse 27. Of course, she must ultimately go into death too, as all die.
- F. Verse 28. Though the Sadducees asked this question, they did not seek an answer. In truth, their point was supposed to be that there is no answer, and so they wished to conclude that there could be no resurrection, as it would raise insurmountable questions like this. They had no doubt used this question in the past to stump the Pharisees when arguing about resurrection. They made a grave mistake in trying to stump the Lord with it, however, as He would dismantle their pet argument.

V. Conclusion: The Lord stepped easily out of the trap the Pharisees and Herodians tried to set for Him, showing the difference between the arguments of men and the wisdom of God. He ascribed the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God. Do we offer to God His rightful due? The Sadducees tried to trap the Lord with their doubts and quibbling about the resurrection. Do we accept the Bible’s clear teaching of coming resurrection, or do we doubt and quibble like the Lord’s enemies did? Let us believe God’s Word and the hope It holds out of resurrection!