**Survey of New Testament**

**Matthew 22**

We considered the first fourteen verses in the previous section. The rest of the chapter deals with questions that the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus as they tried to “trap Him in His words”.

1. **Question about Tribute (22:15–22)** This was asked by the Herodians, a religious group with political ambitions. The NT does not give us much information about them. They were opposed to the Pharisees who hated Roman rule, but these two enemies got together to oppose Christ. If Christ opposed tribute to Rome, then He could be arrested as a traitor; but if He favored tribute to Caesar, He would lose the hearts of the Jews who despised their Roman rulers. Christ’s reply shows that the true child of God has obligations both to God and to his country. The best citizen is a Christian citizen. Just as Caesar stamped his image on the coin, so God has stamped His image on man (Gen. 1:26–27). Sin has marred that image, but through Christ that image is restored (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
2. **Question about the Resurrection (22:23–33)** Now the Sadducees enter the picture with a doctrinal question.  They didn’t believe in life after death.  They present a hypothetical question about marriage in the next life, based on the OT law that a man marries his brother’s widow. (see Gen. 38:8; Deut. 25:5–10). They were ignorant, said Jesus, of God’s power and God’s Word. He explained that human marriage as we know it will not exist in the next life, but that people will be as the angels, that is, living in a spiritual world not controlled by human laws. This does not mean that we shall be angels, but that we shall be like them in regards to marriage. Christ answered His critics from the Bible, referring to Ex. 3:6, 15–16. God said, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (v. 32), not “I was the God …” This means that these men are still alive. Death does not destroy the person, although the body will turn to dust.
3. **Question about the Great Commandment (22:34–46)** Now the Pharisees appear openly to ask a legal question about the OT law. (The word “put … to silence” in v. 34 literally means “muzzled.” This shows how completely Christ silenced His enemies!) The doctors of the law debated over which of the many commandments was the greatest. The Pharisees thought they could trap Jesus with this question. Again, Jesus appealed to the Scriptures and quoted Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18. Love for God and love for one’s neighbor: these two commandments sum up the entire Law (see Rom. 13:8–10).

Having silenced the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees, Christ asked a question Himself (vv. 41–42), and no one was able to answer it! He referred to Ps. 110:1 where David calls Him “Lord.” Note that Christ states that David wrote the psalm, wrote it inspired by the Spirit (v. 43), and wrote it concerning Christ, the Son of David. His question was, “If David then calls Him “Lord” [meaning He is God], how is He his Son?” (v. 45) The answer is given in Matt. 1–2—the virgin birth of Christ. As eternal God, Christ is David’s Lord, but as the God-man, come in the flesh, He is David’s Son. If the scribes and Pharisees had answered this question honestly and correctly, they would have had to acknowledge the messiahship of Christ. But in their hardness of heart, they rejected the truth.

**Matthew 23**

Having silenced His enemies, Christ proceeded to expose them openly. In the Sermon on the Mount, He said that our righteousness had to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, if we ever hoped to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20). **Matthew 23:1-12 Explanation to the Multitudes and Disciples**

1. The Pharisees appeared as a group during the time in Israel’s history when the nation was pressured by the Greeks to forsake their law and become liberal. Men like Ezra (Ezra 7:10) remained true to the faith, protected the Law, and separated themselves from pagan defilement. They became the official interpreters of the Law when Israel had no prophet or teaching priests. In this sense, the Pharisees “sat in Moses’ seat.”
2. The great sin of the Pharisees was their religion was external, not internal; it was to impress people, not to please God. They bound people with heavy burdens, while Christ came to set people free (Luke 4:18–19). They loved titles and public recognition and exalted themselves at the expense of others. They had a “form of godliness” but no power (2 Tim. 3:5).
3. We see the Trinity in vv. 8–10. We have one “Master” (meaning teacher), the Holy Spirit, we have one Father (v. 9); and we have one Leader (“Master” here means leader), that is Christ (v. 10). For men to take the place of the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit, is to disobey the Word of God and lead people astray.

**Matthew 23:13-36 Condemnation of the Pharisees**

1. There are eight “woes” here, and you can contrast them with the eight “blessed” (Beatitudes) of Matt. 5:3–12. “The poor in spirit” inherit the kingdom (5:3), while the proud “shut up the kingdom” (v. 13). Mourners are comforted (5:4) while the devourers receive damnation (v. 14). The meek “inherit the earth” (5:5) but the proud send people to hell (v. 15). God fills those who are hungry for holiness (5:6), but those who are greedy for material gain go away empty (vv. 16–22). The merciful “obtain mercy” (5:7), but the Pharisees rejected mercy as they majored in trivialities (vv. 23–24). “The pure in heart” see God (5:8), while the outwardly religious are inwardly corrupt (vv. 25–28). The peacemakers and persecuted are the “children of God” (5:9–12), but the murderers and persecutors are called “children of the devil” (vv. 29–33).

**Matthew 23:37-39 Lamentation over Jerusalem**

1. This final word of sorrow from Christ indicates that God had given the people many opportunities to be saved, but they would not receive His offer. God does not send people to hell; they send themselves there by their own stubbornness.

**Matthew 24–25**

In this discourse, Christ is answering the questions put to Him by His disciples in 24:3. They asked, “When shall these things [the destruction of the temple, v. 2] take place?” He told them (see Luke 21:20–24), but Matthew does not record the answer. It took place in 70AD when Titus conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the city. “What will be the sign of Your coming?” (NIV) is answered in 24:29–44; and “What shall be the sign of the end of the (Jewish) age?” is answered in 24:4–28.The events described in Matt. 24:4–31 will take place during the seven years of tribulation following the rapture of the church. This is the 70th week of Daniel, described in Daniel 9:20–27. This same period of time is described in Rev. 6–19.

**Matthew 24:1-44 Christ’s Coming and Israel**

1. **The beginning of sorrows (vv. 4–8).** These are the signs that tell the world that judgment is beginning. Note how they parallel the events described in Rev. 6. We see these signs in the world today, indicating that the end is near.
2. **Events leading up to the end (vv. 9–14).** The persecution of His servants (v. 9) will increase. During the Tribulation, God will seal 144,000 Jews (Rev. 7) who will probably be missionaries. (v. 14), and through their efforts multitudes of Jews will be saved. However, many will give their lives for their faith. Do not apply vv. 13–14 to the ministry of the church today. Verse 13 has nothing to do with salvation by grace and v. 14 does not mean that the church must get the Gospel into all the world before Christ can return. Both verses apply to the tribulation period.
3. **The Great Tribulation (vv. 15–18).** The Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jewish nation (still in unbelief) for seven years (“one week,” Dan. 9:27), and will break it after 3 1/2 years, or at the middle of the tribulation period. He will set up his own image in the Jewish temple (Dan. 11:31 and 12:11) and force the world to worship him (see Rev. 13; 2 Thes. 2:3–4). Note Matthew’s words: “whoever reads, let him understand” (v. 15, NKJV). Jews living during this tribulation period will read Matt. 24, and understand what to do. In fact, many statements in Dan., Matt. 24–25, and Rev. that are perplexing to us will be understood then. Christ warned the Jews to flee Jerusalem (vv. 16–20), for the last half of this period will be great tribulation and will end with the armies of the nations assembled against Jerusalem. “The elect” in v. 22 are the saved of Israel, not believers in the church. Empowered by Satan, the Antichrist will perform miracles (v. 24, see Rev. 13:13–14; 2 Thes. 2:8–10). The nations, deceived by Satan, will gather at Armageddon to battle Christ (v. 28, see Rev. 19:17–18) and will be defeated.
4. **After the Tribulation (24:29–31).** There will be disturbances in the heavens (Joel 3:11–21) and then the sign of His coming will appear. We are not told what this sign is. Christ will then return to earth with His saints to establish His promised kingdom. There will be great mourning (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7). This is a public return, not a secret one and He comes as King. Israel will have been gathered together by the ministry of angels. (For Israel’s regathering, see Isa. 11:11–12; 27:12–13; Deut. 30:1–5.) At this time, Christ will be received by Israel, now purged of sin and unbelief, and the nation will be the center of the kingdom.
5. **Three exhortations to Israel (24:32–44).** The fig tree is a symbol of Israel (Luke 13:6–10; Joel 1:6–7; Hosea 9:10). When we see Israel “coming back to life,” then we know His return is approaching. This may be happening in our day. Verse 34 teaches that the events described will cover a generation of time.  Just as Noah and his family survived the flood, so Israel will survive the Tribulation. Do not make the word “taken” in vv. 40–41 mean “taken to heaven,” for Jesus was not describing the rapture of the church. In Noah’s day, the flood took people in judgment and left Noah and his family to dwell on the cleansed earth. When God’s judgment falls in the Tribulation, one will be taken (in judgment), but another will be left on earth to enter the glorious kingdom. His final exhortation is for the believer to watch. We as Christians do not look for signs, but for Him—a Person—to return (Phil. 3:20). However, as we see world conditions shaping up, we know that His return is near.

**Matthew 24:45-25:30 Christ’s Coming and the Church.**

The three parables in this section refer to when Christ returns for the church (1 Thes. 4:13–18). This section pictures Christ as delaying His return. These parables exhort us all to be ready for His coming.

1. **The faithful and evil servants (24:45–51).** The church is the household of faith (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19), and the servants are those who must feed the spiritual family. When the heart grows cold, life becomes careless. The word “hypocrite” means “actor,” The servant who backslides is called a hypocrite and will be cast into Hell (Matthew 24:51 “In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”). This parable exhorts us to serve Christ faithfully, looking for His return every day. What a wonderful motive for service—to hear His “Well done!”
2. **The wise and foolish virgins (25:1–13).** In 25:1 we have separation (they were all virgins meaning they were saved); they all had lamps (meaning they all had light), the oil in the lamps (the Holy Spirit); and expectation, as they went forth to meet the bridegroom. Christ’s main lesson in this parable is stay awake and be ready! Five were full of the Spirit (lamps of oil) and five were foolish and had backslid (lamps went out). Jesus told them to depart because He didn’t know them.
3. **The profitable and unprofitable servants (vv. 14–30).** This parable deals with service in Christ's church. The man in the story is Jesus and He has put each of us who are saved in the church to serve. He has created each of us with a  purpose and given us gifts of the Spirit. Verse 15 “he gave to every man “according to his own ability”. We are born with various abilities, but Christ gives us opportunities to exercise our abilities. The first two servants were both faithful and doubled their talents. The Christian who is faithful in his or her service will be rewarded.  The third person called the Lord “a hard man” and said that he was “afraid” (vv. 24–25). He used his gift for worldly things and not for the Lord (he put it in the earth). The principle is given in v. 29: to whom much is given, much shall be required. If we fail to use what He gives us, we will lose it to another.

**Matthew 25:31-46 Christ’s Final Judgment**

1. This speaks of the great white throne of judgement Revelation 20:11-15. This is when all will stand before Jesus. Note they again are judged by their works. Jesus said when you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to Me. When you are saved and on fire for Jesus, you will have a desire to serve Him and others.