

## Matthew 22D

- In our verse-by-verse study of Matthew, we're studying the events that took place in the temple on the Tuesday before Jesus died
  - Tuesday is one of four days that the Lamb of God was tested so He could be shown spotless and without blemish, without sin
    - His testing came in the form of trick questions brought by the religious leaders of Israel who opposed His claims
    - And so far, Jesus has endured three rounds with these guys and each time He's put them back on their heels
  - Moments earlier the Sadducees had tried stumbling Jesus on the issue resurrection with that question involving Levirate marriages
    - The Sadducees didn't believe in a literal, physical resurrection
    - So they were seeking to discredit the idea and Jesus with a ridiculous scenario
  - Jesus responded by saying the Sadducees didn't understand Scripture nor the power of God
    - Those two reasons are always behind all misunderstandings, debates, confusion and false teaching about God and the Bible
    - Whenever we overestimate our understanding of the Bible or underestimate the power of God, we get it wrong
  - So Jesus corrected the Sadducees by showing how Moses taught the reality of resurrection, stunning them and the crowd into silence
    - The Sadducees' rivals, the Pharisees, were standing by watching this happen, delighted by their dressing-down
    - Pharisees taught a literal, physical resurrection too, so for at least this brief moment, Jesus and the Pharisees were in agreement
    - So I'm sure they were pleased that Jesus sided with them on the question of resurrection
- But that moment was more impactful to these guys than we realize, because Jesus just settled a long-standing dispute

- These two groups had debated whether resurrection was true or not for years and the arguments went no where
  - Neither side could convince the other, yet Jesus settled that argument in one moment with one example from Scripture
  - He cited the yet-to-be fulfilled Abrahamic covenant to show that resurrection must be true or else God is a liar
- Imagine how the two sides felt when they realized their debate had ended, and the Sadducees were wrong and the Pharisees were correct?
  - The Pharisees felt vindicated and smug, while the Sadducees were disoriented, deflated, embarrassment and maybe angry
  - But Scripture had the answer all along in Genesis
- And if either group had known the Bible well enough, they could have put the issue to rest
  - The Sadducees weren't listening to Scripture because they were set in their view
  - And they preferred winning an argument over knowing the truth
  - While the Pharisees, who believed in resurrection, couldn't teach the Bible sufficiently to convince the Sadducees it was true
- In my experience, this is how a lot of debates go in the Church today...scholars and pastor and Bible teachers arguing over ideas and never making progress
  - Both sides are ruled by pride, by academic achievements or fear of being diminished in the eyes of their congregations
    - So everyone digs their heels in without truly examining Scripture together with an open heart
    - And as a result, many of us who watch these exchanges assume that if the experts can't agree, then no one can figure it out
    - The answer must be unknowable or unimportant, and then we "agree to disagree", which is basically giving up
  - But as I like to say, just because many people can get the Bible wrong doesn't mean you have to be one of them
    - In my experience in these debates, someone usually has the truth

- One side in the debate will often know the answer\
- But the other side isn't listening or won't change their mind even in the face of Scripture that proves the point
- Which is proof that pride can rob us of our ability to see the truth or even to care what the truth is
- Always remember there are answers in the Bible, and the Lord delights to reveal them to those who seek Him with a teachable heart
  - And I think the reason we haven't settled more disagreements in the Church is because we let pride and ignorance get the better of us
    - If we study the Bible to have our views affirmed, we will make fools of ourselves by missing the truth as the Sadducees did
    - Or if we are arrogant with the truth and unskilled at defending it from the Bible like the Pharisees, then we won't convince others
    - But if we pursue a deeper understanding of the Bible while maintaining a teachable heart, we'll all know Jesus better
  - But don't forget that sooner or later we have to play the part of the Sadducees...sooner or later we will be the one who is wrong
    - And when it's your turn to be on the wrong side of the Bible, I encourage you remember one of my favorite sayings:
    - I'd rather know the truth than be right
  - If you always have to be "right," you will miss the truth sooner or later, because sooner or later we aren't right
    - And the Lord may eventually bring us the truth so we can grow spiritually
    - But He probably won't bring the truth in a midnight revelation with a lightening bolt or from an angel
    - Usually He just places the truth in our path, maybe in a podcast or book...or it maybe a word from a spouse or friend or pastor
  - And if our default response to those moments is to defend our current position, then we will miss the truth when God gives it to us

- A Christian who wants to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ must get comfortable with being wrong in order to receive the truth
- If you develop a teachable heart willing to be corrected, you will learn a lot more truth than if you reflexively defend your views
- Because when all is said and done and we're with Jesus, then we will all know the truth no matter what we may have thought before
  - And that moment is not the time to discover we missed so much truth because we were more interested in protecting our pride
  - We want to enter that moment with a testimony of humility, of having allowed the Lord to correct us whenever necessary
  - As He did is doing to the Pharisees and Sadducees here
- Back in Matthew in v.35, we move into Round 4 of Jesus' testing, but the nature of the question changes in this round
  - Rather than asking a trick question, the religious leaders come this time with a legitimate question about Scripture
    - But as usual, it merely becomes opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate their ignorance of Scripture

**Matt. 22:34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.**

**Matt. 22:35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,**

**Matt. 22:36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"**

- A lawyer from among the Pharisees comes asking Jesus a question to test Him
  - Mark describes this man as a scribe, but that's just another name for a lawyer
    - Scribes/lawyers were aligned with the Pharisees in teaching Israel and enforcing observance of the law
    - But these men specialized in settling disputes over the law and resolving conflicts between different laws
    - So for a scribe, questions like the one he asks Jesus here were especially important to their job

- So after this lawyer watches Jesus addressing question of resurrection, he sees an opportunity to settle another long-standing dispute
  - In fact in Mark's account the lawyer acknowledges that Jesus handling the previous question well
  - So he asks Jesus to name the most important commandment in the law
- All laws were important to a Jew, of course, but sometimes two laws might come into conflict
  - And whenever that happened, the religious leaders would try to figure out which law was greater
  - And that investigation ultimately lead them to ask which law was the greatest of all, and of course multiple views were offered
- So this man asks Jesus to resolve the question, but Matthew tells us this was a test, so we know the question has the potential to trip up Jesus
  - But this time the test didn't come in the form of a trick question, but rather this is a test of the depths of Jesus' understanding
  - The Pharisee wants to test whether Jesus had the knowledge of the Scriptures to answer the question wisely or foolishly
  - Depending on which law Jesus chose to call the greatest, the religious leaders could pick it apart or challenge it
- Nevertheless, this man's question was legitimate and reasonable, so Jesus answers it without objection

**[Matt. 22:37](#) And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’**

**[Matt. 22:38](#) “This is the great and foremost commandment.**

**[Matt. 22:39](#) “The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’**

**[Matt. 22:40](#) “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”**

- Jesus quotes the Jewish Sh'ma, which is a recitation that orthodox Jews make twice a day is taken from Deuteronomy 6:4-5
  - Deuteronomy means the second law, and it's the final book of the Torah

- In Deuteronomy the Lord repeats the Law to a new generation of Israel on the eve of entering into the Promised Land
- The earlier generation of Israel that left Egypt received the law in Exodus and Leviticus, but they were unbelieving and disobeyed the Law
  - So the Lord judged that generation by declaring they would wander in the desert for 40 years until they all died
  - After the 40 years, the Lord repeated His law to the next generation of Israel and commanded them to obey it
  - Deuteronomy is that second giving of the Law, and just like the first time in Exodus, the Law begins with the ten commandments
- But before the ten commandments, the Lord says this to Israel

**Deut. 6:1** “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it,

**Deut. 6:2** so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

**Deut. 6:3** “O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

**Deut. 6:4** “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

**Deut. 6:5** “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

- Notice that before the ten commandments, the Lord declares that our highest duty is to love God with everything we have
- Because the Lord introduces His law with this statement, the Pharisees determined this must be the greatest commandment
- So they called it the Sh'ma and required that Jews recite this passage of Scripture daily to never forget it
- Now Jesus confirms that their interpretation was correct, this is the greatest command in the Law
  - Above all else, we are to love God with our heart, soul, and might or strength...and Mark adds mind

- Jesus says this is the great and foremost commandment And the Greek word for great is megas, meaning nothing is greater, nothing overshadows this command
- And foremost simply means first, so we show God love first, and show Him love over all else
- We notice Jesus mentions four aspects of our being to cover all the ways human beings interact with our world
  - First, we love God with our heart, meaning in our affections
  - Love God more than you love your hobbies or job, even before your spouse or your children
- Secondly, we love Him with our mind, meaning in our thinking and understanding
  - We seek the truth of His word over the world's lies through regular study of God's word
  - We commit Scripture to memory, allowing God to renew our mind by training us to think as He does
  - And when God's word comes into conflict with the world's "truth" (and it often will), we choose God's word
- Thirdly, we love Him with our soul, meaning in our devotion of worship
  - We can't share our worship of God with a pantheon of other gods or spiritual powers we follow
  - We can't worship God properly if we also acknowledge other supposed spiritual powers like horoscopes or mother nature
  - That's not loving God with all our soul because our soul is divided in its worship
- And finally, we love Him with all our strength, which means in our physical struggles against our own sin and the resistance of the world
  - Following the Lord in a fallen world isn't going to be easy and the enemy is determined to make it even harder
  - So to truly love God, we commit ourselves to persevering in those struggles against sin and temptation

- And we remain determined to continue loving God even in the face of persecution
- Jesus' answer agreed with the Pharisees' view which pleased the lawyer
  - In fact, in Mark's Gospel we're told that the lawyer compliments Jesus for having the right answer, (and I'm sure Jesus was relieved to hear that)
    - But Jesus doesn't stop there...He goes a second step, adding a second commandment not found in Deuteronomy 6
    - Jesus says the second commandment is to love your neighbor like you love yourself
    - This Law is found in Leviticus, and the Pharisees hadn't thought to include that one in their list
  - But Jesus says this particular law is so important that when you add it to the first commandment, the two together summarize the entire law
    - In other words, every one of the 613 commandments of the Law is related to ensuring our love of God and of others
    - Such that if a person kept these two greatest laws perfectly, then he or she would also have kept all 613 laws perfectly as well
  - And that begs a question...why wasn't God's law just these two laws? Why have 613 rules when just two rules would have been enough?
    - We might suppose it was to help us know how to love God and our neighbors by giving us a checklist of the right things to do
    - But the Bible tells us it was exactly the opposite reason
  - Paul tells us in Romans 7 that the Law was given so we would recognize we were sinning as we failed
    - In other words, our sin nature prevents us from doing what's right and it didn't matter how many laws we had
    - If God had given us only two laws, we still would have violated them repeatedly
    - But we would have had much less understanding of how much sin we truly possessed
  - So the Lord wrote 613 laws which clearly spell out how we sin, so that now as we sin we can see it clearly and recognize our need for a Savior

- Or as Paul put it:

**Rom. 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.”**

- So Jesus gives these men the answer they sought, and it pleased them, but then rather than leaving it there, the lawyer decides to challenge Jesus
  - We don't see his challenge in Mathew's account, but Mark reports that the scribe responded to Jesus this way:

**Mark 12:32 The scribe said to Him, “Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM;**

- The scribe compliments Jesus for His answer and then repeats the Sh'ma from Deut 6:4 saying God is One and the only one
- By his response, the lawyer seems to imply that Jesus' claim to being the Son of God contradicted this commandment
  - I think this is the test this man intended to use to trap Jesus
    - He asks Jesus to affirm the Sh'ma so that he, in turn, could deny Jesus' claim to be the Son of God
    - The Pharisees intended to use Jesus' own words to trap Him
  - But Deuteronomy 6:4 doesn't contradict Jesus' claim to be the Son of God , because Jesus never claimed to be a *competing* God
    - Paganism says there are many gods which compete or challenge one another for rule over aspects of the creation
    - But the God of the Bible is One and the only Creator God of all and there is not other god competing with Him
  - Nevertheless, the Bible goes on to declare that the Creator God exists in the form of Three Persons named the Father, Son and Spirit
    - Together they are God, not three separate gods
    - They don't compete or challenge one another to rule over different parts of Creation

- They all work in perfect unison ruling over all Creation as One God
- And the Bible has always represented God as Three and also as One, even from the opening verses of Genesis
  - The first verse of the Bible says in the beginning God created the heavens and earth
    - The Hebrew word for God (Elohim) in that verse is plural yet the Hebrew verb for “created” is conjugated in the singular tense
    - Interestingly, the Hebrew scribes that reproduced the Scriptures faithfully preserved these seemingly contradictory grammar
  - Just 25 verses later in Genesis Moses quotes God says “Let Us make Man in Our image...”
    - And even in Deuteronomy 6:4 the Hebrew word translated “one” can also refer to a plurality
    - So they knew the Bible presented God as One and as a plurality
  - And Jesus has consistently reflected this tension in His teaching, as He has called Himself God and the Son of God
    - At one point He says He is the the great I AM, meaning God, and elsewhere He spoke of doing the Father’s will
    - Yet the Pharisees and other religious leaders couldn’t comprehend the plural nature of the one God
  - So when Jesus claim He was God and also the Son of God, they thought He was contradicting Deuteronomy 6:4
    - And that’s why this scribe pointedly reminds Jesus that God is One and there is no one besides Him
    - Which leads Jesus to respond with a question of His own

**Matt. 22:41** Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: **Matt. 22:42** “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” They said to Him, “The son of David.”

**Matt. 22:43** He said to them, “Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying,

**Matt. 22:44** ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,  
 “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,  
 UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET”’?

[Matt. 22:45](#) “If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?”

[Matt. 22:46](#) No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

- Having made his point to Jesus, the scribe returns to the group of Pharisees, and Jesus turns to the group and asks them a question
  - Jesus quizzes them on their understanding of the Christ, specifically asking from whom is the Messiah supposed to descend?
    - The Old Testament foretold that the Messiah would come to Israel from the line of David
    - God made this promise to David through the prophet Nathan

[2Sam. 7:12](#) “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

[2Sam. 7:13](#) “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

- The Lord assured David that in the future He would raise up one of David’s descendants to rule a Jewish kingdom that never ends
  - We call this promise the Davidic Covenant and we know that it was a promise to bring the Messiah to rule Israel and the rule
    - That Messiah would be a descendant of David, or a son of David as the Bible says it
    - So when Jesus asks these men who the Messiah will be, they correctly answer he will be the son of David
  - Jesus says you are correct, but then asks how does David refer to this future descendant he never knew as “Lord?”
    - Jesus is referring to the great Messianic Psalm 110, in which David writes

[Psa. 110:0](#) A Psalm of David.

[Psa. 110:1](#) The LORD says to my Lord:

“Sit at My right hand

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

- Everyone knew this psalm was written by David and the subject was the Messiah, the coming descendant of David

- Yet in v.1 David calls this future son his Lord, and that makes no sense to a Jewish way of thinking
  - David wrote that Yahweh (the Lord) says to Adonai (the Messiah), sit at my right hand...
  - So God directs this future Messiah to have the position greatest honor above anyone else, the right hand of God
  - But in Jewish society, a father was always greater than a son or grandson
- So in human terms, a descendant of David couldn't be David's Lord or superior, and that was the conundrum Jesus asked these men to solve
  - In v.45 Jesus asks them how can David call this future Messiah "Lord" if the Messiah descended from David?
  - None of these men were able to answer the question, because it requires understanding that the Messiah was the Son of God
- In human terms, Jesus was a descendant of David and therefore David would have been a superior of Jesus
  - But Jesus wasn't merely a human descendant of David as the religious leaders had assumed
  - He was God incarnate, divinity and humanity in one,
  - In human terms, the Messiah was David's descendant, but in divine terms, He was David's Creator, David's Lord
- Obviously, David knew this truth, which is why He wrote psalm 110, and we might ask how did David know this while these men didn't
  - And the answer is in the text we read: in v.43 Jesus said that David wrote psalm 110 "in the Spirit"
  - In other words, David was directed by the Spirit of God to write these words, which means that God revealed this truth to David
  - And self-evidently, the Spirit had not revealed them to these men in that day
- And did you notice that in this sort passage, Jesus has affirmed the Trinity itself?
  - In v.44 Jesus points out that David wrote of the Father speaking to the Son and placing the Son at His right hand

- That statement clearly reveals that God is a Father and a Son
- And then a verse earlier in v.43, Jesus said this truth was revealed to David through the third person of the Godhead, the Spirit
- Once again, the Bible teaches Father, Son and Spirit...three Persons but One God
- These concepts lay outside the grasp of these men, and because they couldn't understand Scripture, they didn't recognize Jesus as Messiah
  - Jesus' question silences the religious leaders and that's what the truth always does in the end
  - We may argue and disagree about Scripture with each other at times, and we certainly disagree with the world
  - But one day everyone will be silent before the Lord, because no one will argue with Him and all will confess He is the truth
- Notice in v.46 that no one even dared to ask Jesus another question, and this is indeed the end of the questioning Jesus received
  - In the next chapter, Jesus is going to do all the talking, lecturing the Pharisees and the crowd for their unbelief
  - This moment is a good example of how the Lord will deal with all who oppose Him in a day to come
- In a day not too far from now, the Lord will assemble all who opposed the truth of the Gospel and call them to account
  - In that moment, Jesus will do all the talking and those under scrutiny will have nothing to say in their defense
  - And the result will be a great judgment from which there is no escape
- A countless number of people will enter into that moment and be crushed by the weight of God's righteous judgment
  - Remember earlier I said that just because a lot of people get the Bible wrong doesn't mean we have to be one of them
    - And likewise, just because a lot of people have rejected the truth of Jesus doesn't mean you have to follow their mistake

- Surely you see the truth of what we studied today...the Bible testifies that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of David and His Lord
- Surely you agree that loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength is your highest duty
- So if David knew God and was lead by the Spirit of God to write that the Messiah would be His Lord, then surely we can trust that word
  - Surely we should all agree that Jesus is deserving of our love and worship and confession
  - The Pharisees couldn't see this truth, but surely you can, no?
  - Wouldn't you rather know the truth than think yourself right?
- You can trust the Scriptures when they say that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will not be disappointed
  - Jesus is God, Who came to earth to live a perfect life for you to meet the standard for Heaven that you can't meet
  - And then He died on a cross to pay for your sins, and in that way He did all that was required for us to be saved
  - You can believe that truth