

Matthew 22:34-46

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[0:00] So Matthew 22. And we're going to finish the chapter today, he said, brashly. You may recall that up to now, I mean, if you actually, if you were to flick back to chapter 21, you have Jesus cleansing the temple, driving all the people out of the temple who were using it for extortion and for money raising and for all sorts of criminal activities.

And he drove all the animals out as well. And then he spoke to them after he had cursed the fig tree. And the fig tree was cursed because, like the Jews, it was all leaves and no fruit.

And if you remember, he made this analogy between the fig tree which he had cursed and it had died. It died because it was all show, but wasn't actually bearing any righteous fruit.

And then they challenged Jesus's authority. And at that point, they began to ask awkward questions. And every question they asked was designed to put Jesus in a trap.

Either to make him say something that was completely wrong or contradictory or just to put him in between two groups of people so that whichever way he turned, he was creating mayhem.

[1:31] And these were deliberately structured questions. And so they said, by whose authority are you doing what you're doing? And he very skillfully declined to answer their question because he asked them a similar trap question.

Why was it a trap? Well, because if Jesus said he did it in his own strength, that would have been considered blasphemy. And if he'd said it's in God's strength, that too would have been considered blasphemy because he would have been claiming to be equal with God.

But he diverted their question by asking them a similar question about John the Baptist and about whether John's ministry was from heaven or not or from man.

He then spoke some parables to them. And then after the parables, we then get to the section that we're currently finishing today.

We started with two other questions that they had asked him. He had questions about, is it legal to pay taxes?

[2:42] And that question was deliberately asked in the presence of the Herodians. And so what they were hoping was that he would answer.

He would either say, yes, it's perfectly legal to pay taxes, in which case the Jews would be against him. Or he would answer saying, no, no, no, it's not legal to pay taxes, which if he said that in the presence of the Herodians, he'd have been arrested.

So always set in the place of conflict. And then later on, the Sadducees ask him a question. And the Sadducees don't believe in a resurrection or an afterlife.

And they also don't believe in angels. And Jesus answered their question very, very cleverly by showing them from the small portion of scripture they actually agreed with, which is the Torah. Sadducees only believed in the first five books. They only believe those were inspired. There are many churches that make similar mistakes today. They don't treat the whole of God's word as being anointed.

[3:43] But in answer to them, he showed them from the Torah that angels were real and that the resurrection was a real thing when he spoke of himself being or rather God being the God of the living, not the God of the dead.

And he referred to Moses and Abraham. So now we've got two more questions to deal with. And the first of those was a question asked of Jesus.

And the last one is a question Jesus asks of them. And at the end of this, apart from getting to the end of the chapter, what we get to is the end of their investigation of Jesus as Messiah.

If you recall, in previous chapters, we've talked about the fact that any any pretender for the role of Messiah was always investigated.

And the latter part of that investigation was to question. But what we note is that when they questioned Jesus, this was not a fact finding exercise at all. It was vindictive.

[4:51] It was designed purely to trap, not to find out the facts. So. They had become so irate with Jesus, they were looking for an excuse to do to destroy him.

So let's deal with these two questions. We start reading at verse 23. And what I'm going to do is I'm going to read. I'm going to read the first part and then we'll deal with it. And then I'll read the second part and we'll deal with that.

Sorry, it's not verse 23. It's verse 34. When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.

One of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, testing him. Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? 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.

This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.

[5:57] So we'll deal with that section and then we'll deal with the next section. Next. The first point to notice here, you see the. He has in his previous question, he silenced the Pharisees.

Sorry, in his not immediately previous. Two questions ago, he silenced the Pharisees. In the last question he answered, he'd silenced the Sadducees. And then we note.

That it says. When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. The thing that Pharisees and Sadducees almost never did was gather themselves together.

They were opposed to one another. They didn't agree on anything. And one thought the other was the worst group on the face of the earth.

It was a constant conflict between them. You've got the Pharisees who actually believed the whole of the law and did believe in angels and the resurrection and so on.

[6:59] And you've got the Sadducees who didn't believe any of that stuff and didn't even believe in an afterlife. But they come together now. And one of them, it says, a lawyer asked him a question, testing him.

You've probably all watched and repented of watching law and order programs on the telly where some clever lawyer ties people in knots and manages to present a load of lies as the truth and set traps for a dependent by clever questioning.

So the lawyer would have been somebody who was familiar with the law of Moses, would have been a biblical lawyer in that sense. And would have been put up deliberately to trap Jesus and to get him into some kind of tishwas and in some kind of conflict.

It's unfortunate that lawyers to this day are renowned for people to whom you do not go if you want to find out the truth. Hence, we have this adversarial legal system whereby if the defendant, however guilty, has a clever lawyer, he won't be found guilty because the truth will be prevented from surfacing.

And I remember myself when I was a prosecutor, how I had to be so careful about how I presented evidence so that it couldn't be manipulated.

[8:24] So what we're about to see is definitely a piece of manipulation. And you think, but it's such a short question. Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

Now, this was a subject that the Jews used to argue over. There would be some groups who would say, well, the ceremonial laws are the ones that you really have to stick to.

Now, they, of course, believe. Don't forget, if you look at the Ten Commandments, that was a minuscule portion of what the Jews believed was the law of God.

They had 613 commandments that they said should be adhered to. And over and above that, they had ring fenced the law with loads and loads of other prohibitions to prevent you from getting even

close to disobeying the law.

So, for example, the laws about the Sabbath, they'd added so many extras to prevent you from breaking the Sabbath inadvertently. So it was a subject about which the Jews argued.

[9:34] And therefore, if Jesus had simply picked almost any of the 613 commands, I said, that's the one that's really important. He would have been entering into conflict.

Because the groups to whom he was answering, I mean, he was answering this lawyer, but surrounded by crowds of people. And they would have been, oh, no, that can't be right.

No, this is the right one. No, that's the right one. There'd have been a public affray over the answer that he gave. This was a deliberate placing of Jesus in a trap.

And these two groups, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, had come together only because they now had a common enemy. He'd actually made both groups look ridiculous. And they're now trying to join forces to trap him.

So this question, it's interesting that it uses the word when it says, which is the great commandment. The word used is the word megos.

[10:40] And it's the word from which we get our word mega. And so the word mega means the most important or the greatest, which is the mega commandment of all.

Of all the 613 commands, which is the mega one? And some of your translations will say, which is the greatest commandment of all? So it's interesting his choice of answer.

Would he take the 10 commandments, for example, and start with the first commandment? I don't have any other gods before me. You might think that, mightn't you?

You might expect him to come out with something from the 10 commandments, and he doesn't. So what does he do? And we should note his answer carefully. He quotes from two separate parts of the Torah to bring the answer.

So once again, he's answering from the Torah. Happy for the Sadducees. And the quotations are from Deuteronomy 6, verse 5.

[11:45] You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And he then says the second is like unto it. And he quotes from Leviticus 19, verse 18.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. So he's taken these quotations from the Old Testament. And yes, they are commands, but they're not even associated together in the Old Testament.

But Jesus associates them together when he gives his answer. And he uses the word when he says, and the second is like unto it. He uses the word homion, which means alike in appearance and character.

Which actually further we can infer from this that he's put these two commands together as though one is dependent upon another.

If you keep the one, you will keep the other. And if you don't keep the one, you won't keep the other is what is suggested by him putting these together. Turn with me to 1 John.

[12:49] Not John's gospel, but the book of 1 John, chapter 4. And the key verse. 1 John 5.

1 John 5.

1 John 5.

1 John 5.

1 John 6.

[15:26] without actually saying it you're breaking this law you should be loving your neighbor as yourself the people to whom he's addressing this have been very self-orientated and very self-motivated and very self-obsessed one of the reasons they want to get rid of Jesus is because he because he has shown them all up for what they really are now this of course reflects something else if we go back to Matthew's gospel uh and just quickly look at chapter 23 which of course we will look at again next week and following I'm not going to commit to do the whole of chapter 23 in a week but in verse 11 and we'll precede it with verse 10 do not be called leaders for one is your leader that is Christ but the

greatest among you shall be your servant and whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted this is directly connected to the law the the bit from deuteronomy and levticus we've just read this is directly connected if you're putting yourself first you're not loving god and you're not loving the brethren brethren what can i never put myself first that's correct and it's hard and it's a bitter pill to swallow maybe but we're not entitled to put ourselves first of course we all do and he forgives us but our striving should be not to jesus's example was to wash the feet of the disciples he spent all his time rather than focused on the fact that sometime soon they're going to nail me to a cross feeding people healing people teaching people and ultimately dying for people greater love has no man than he should lay down his life for his brothers so he fulfilled these commandments perfectly and his challenge with his answer was why weren't they doing the same so using these answers he was showing them how far they were from obeying the law they had kept neither of these commandments they hadn't loved the lord their god because they hadn't loved his people and there were probably lots of other reasons too so then we get to the next part which is where jesus asks them a question and remember he's under investigation and his answer to this question ceases that investigation and this happens a matter of a couple of days before he goes to the cross so this is very near the end of his life on earth and he says in verse 40 oh before we move on i forgot to mention uh it says on these two commandments depend the whole law and prophets what a verse for me to miss out it's not even in my notes either but look what does it mean loving the lord your god with all your heart soul and mind and loving your neighbor as yourself that the whole of the law and the prophets hangs on those two statements i take it to mean this and i'm sure this is an oversimplified explanation and there may be much more detailed explanations but to give us something we can work with the whole of the law was put in place we read in other parts of scripture particularly in the book of hebrews that the law and in romans the the law was put in place to demonstrate to us our sinful state

and it was put there so that we could recognize our sinful state and love our brothers and sisters the way we should and love the lord our god the way we should and the prophets were all sent because god himself loved us and they all brought with them a two-part warning one of the wrath of god if we don't treat god the way he should be treated and the other of a blessing for treating him the way he should be treated they all brought that message which confirms these two questions that what you need to do is love and obey god and love and obey the people not love and obey the people love the people so that's my interpretation of that verse there may be others and feel free to tell me what they are if you know them so we go on and it says now this is verse 41 now while the pharisees were gathered together jesus asked them a question what do you think about the christ whose son is he and they answered glibly they said to him the son of david well the answer was correct but it was only a partial answer he was the son of david uh and you have to understand that he was the grandson or the great great great you see they don't have those separations in hebrew in hebrew a son a son of abraham could be anyone who's traceable back to abraham so uh a son of david is anybody who was in the birth line that goes back to and through david he would be referred to as a son of david and they were correct but only partially correct and if you turn to psalm 110 in response to their answer oh it's the son of david jesus then throws them a second part to his question psalm 110 verse 1 the lord says to my lord sit at my hand until i make your enemies a footstool for your feet so jesus says in the matthew passage he says if he was david's son how did david in the spirit call him lord saying the lord said to my lord sit at my right hand until i put your enemies under your feet so the question jesus is raising is if he's just the son of david how does this verse apply from the psalms how can god paul sorry if he is simply the son of david why did god say to david the lord said to my lord sit at my right hand now there's an important little thing to understand here because there are lots of commentators on this verse that say that this was written by one of the

courtiers of david's court and what he was saying was the courtier was saying the lord jehovah yahweh whatever vernacular you leave the tetragrammaton the lord said to my lord david sit at my right hand so he was inviting david to sit at his right hand the trouble is that translation breaks down firstly because jesus cannot apply it in the context he has here if that's true but secondly david is long dead he's not alive to call up to sit at the right hand yes god could resurrect him but there's no evidence

that he has so i just want to point out that if you hear that teaching it's wrong what the verse means is the lord jehovah yahweh father god said to my lord now david says the lord said to my lord but david is king and david doesn't have a lord not an earthly lord anyway there is no one on earth at that time who would be david's lord so he was referring to someone higher than david higher than himself the lord said to my lord and it must have been an eternal lord and it must have been in some form god and we know from other studies that it was god the son it was the second member of the trinity so he's saying the lord god said to my lord god sit at my right hand until i put your enemies under your feet so this is a messianic prediction of where jesus would end up after he had said tetelestai after he had given his life on the cross for our sins after he had then ascended and sat at the right hand of the father with sins forgiven and then been able to say of all of us who enter heaven from that moment on that one's paid for so i hope that's been instructive um it's god was inviting jesus to sit at his right hand prophetically after his job was done so the question that he's asked is designed to question their awareness of what jesus was really like and i do hope i don't lose anyone in this but in their estimation jesus was the son of david end of all that's it just the son of david the flesh and blood son that came down through the birth line by asking this question jesus brings to their attention the fact that messiah was someone who had an inheritance beyond that of the flesh and blood line something eternal something that went back to before the foundation of the earth in other words that messiah had to be fully human and we know from other studies of scripture that he had to be fully human because he had to be a kinsman redeemer if he wasn't human he couldn't be our kinsman redeemer so he had to be fully human but he also had to be fully god and so people get all confused about was he 50 man and 50 god no was he all man acting on behalf of god no what jesus is saying here is david was uh sorry the son of david would be all man and all god and i can't speak for you but i don't understand it i just accept it because god said it you know i studied genetics to a degree and it doesn't work out genetically but god did it i mean the virgin birth doesn't work out genetically either but god did that too so he existed messiah this is humanly as the son of david and existed eternally as the son of god um now if we i'm hoping maybe you still got psalm 110 open if you read about psalm 110 and he's drawn their attention by his quotation he's drawn

their attention to this psalm and let's just read on a bit the lord said to my lord sit at my right hand until i make your enemies a footstool for your feet the lord will stretch forth your strong scepter from zion saying rule in the midst of your enemies your people will volunteer freely in the day of your power in holy array from the womb of the dawn your youth are to you as the dew for the lord has sworn and will not change his mind you are a priest forever according to the order of melchizedek the lord is at your right hand he will shatter kings in the day of his wrath he will judge among nations he will fill them with corpses he will shatter the chief men over a broad country he will drink from the brook by the wayside therefore he will lift up his head so jesus was destined for the cross and jesus had decided to go to the cross because other scriptures will tell us he could have backed out and he refused to but in the long term he was going to judge the earth and going to shatter kings and going to fill some of the nations with corpses he was going to come in massive military judgment and he's speaking about himself and by using this psalm he was telling those who'd questioned him he was telling them what their future held and he only quoted the first verse but when you quote scripture to these jews they don't just take the quotation they take the whole of that psalm and we've covered that a lot in our bible studies so jesus was referring to himself this son in psalm 110 was superior to david and was eternal wasn't just a flesh and blood son but it was superior son psalm 110 is the most quoted psalm in the whole of the new testament and by asking his question jesus was pointing out although actually that's not quite accurate is it because he didn't point anything out he simply asked them a question but it was intended to get their cogs turning to think what does he mean and he was pointing out that messiah had to be a son of david in the flesh but an eternal being in the spirit now they'd often refer to him as the son of david in matthew 12 verse 23 you may as well turn there because we're gonna do a couple of verses in matthew matthew 12 is the point of scripture where it all went south right they actually had said in matthew 12 that jesus was operating under the

power of satan when jesus healed that dumb demon when he cast out the dumb demon and healed the the deaf mute blind mute sorry who was in front of him verse 23 says all the crowds were amazed and were saying this man cannot be the son of david can he so they they'd attributed without the influence of the pharisees they'd attributed this miracle to messiah but they still perceived that messiah was the son of david in order to be saved one has to go to the next level and perceive that he is the son of god if you turn to matthew 16 and verse 20 sorry verse 13 not verse 20 now when jesus came into the district of caesarea philippi he was asking his disciples who do people say that the son of man is

and so they answered some say john the baptist and others elijah but still others jeremiah or one of the prophets and he said to them but who do you say that i am and simon peter answered you are the christ the son of the living god he didn't say the son of david he said the son of the living god and immediately jesus said blessed are you simon barjona because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but my father who is in heaven getting born again is a matter of god showing you who jesus really is and i can't speak for you but when i've talked to people generally out there about jesus well i think he was a good man i think you know he was a nice man and a good man and said some wonderful things and the bit they miss is that he was god in the flesh he was a son of david by his humanity and a son of god spiritually and what we must also embrace here and uh i don't know that i can lead you into a deep understanding of it because i only have a shallow understanding myself romans chapter one verses 24 to 26 and he speaks of something here that that motivates people who are not saved and don't understand god and don't fellowship with god to say how could god be so callous as to do that and he's talking about in the first verses before this he's talking about men rebelling against god and he says this therefore god gave them over in the loss of their hearts to impurity so that their bodies should be dishonored among them for they exchanged the truth of god for a lie and worshiped and served the creator rather than sorry worship and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever amen for this reason god gave them over to degrading passions for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural there are times when god knows that rebellion is never going to turn into obedience and he gives people over to stuff and sometimes sometimes we can see that god gives somebody over to stuff to the point where they get sick of it and they eventually turn back to him and sometimes he gives them over to stuff knowing that they never will turn back to him and they are judged by what comes into their life um so understanding that jesus is god that it was god that said to jesus come and sit at my right hand there is currently a human being sat at the right hand of god and because he is sat there and because he advocates for me i can go and sit there one day but if i don't embrace jesus is godliness or godness or divinity if i don't embrace that if i don't see that i'm given over i can't get there which is why the gospel message is so important because people need to respond to the gospel to get saved so jesus told peter this you you only know this because my father revealed it to you all of us who are sitting in this room who are safe we are only saved because god revealed himself to us these jews with their willful rejection of jesus didn't understand his dual nature otherwise they would

[35:37] not have dared but you know none of us i don't think any of us i could be wrong but i don't think any of us comes to christ because we were browbeaten into it we come to christ because we realize our need i can't speak for you but i knew what i was like now god showed me what i was like which is what he's trying to do to these jews he showed me what i was like and in the end after much rebellion i said yeah i am aren't i that's exactly what i'm like and please lord save me from what i'm like these jews were not for turning are they to use a maggie thatcher phrase these jews these jews are not for turning they're being shown what they're really like and they don't understand his dual nature they don't understand that they are defying the living god when they defy jesus so back to matthew just to finish off matthew 22 so i'm hoping we now understand why jesus would ask them that question and in a sense why he asked all of us the same question all right if jesus was just a man how come god said to him way back in david's time come and sit at my right hand and it gives us that eternal perspective on jesus and verse 46 which i think is amazing no one was able to answer him a word nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask him another question a superficial level of

that is every time we ask him a question we get caught out so let's stop asking him all right if i don't ask i won't be made to look small speaks of their motive hugely they should have been wanting to have these questions answered and wanting to fall at his feet and wanting to say lord save me save me from what i am save me from what i've become and they just wanted to kill him and this brings to an end their so-called investigative process all right they've investigated from chapter 12 in fact a bit before that but we had the unforgivable sin thing in chapter 12 and then we've had various bits of questioning of jesus ever since in every case he's made the questioners look small and in no case have they said you've got me we need to treat you differently you obviously are the messiah despite the fact that he was doing all the things they had taught he would do when he came it was utterly hypocritical and any one of them at that point could have said you obviously are the messiah but they didn't but they stopped their investigation and i don't know whether they stopped their investigation because they'd run out of questions i doubt that i think they stopped their investigation because they were being publicly made to look small and so they didn't dare ask him anything else from that day on but what then happens between now and the end of the chapter is they put jesus on the cross and they do so for entirely selfish reasons father god i thank you for this scripture which i have to say has exercised me in studying it and trying to teach it and i i pray that people will retain the right bits and discard everything that is not of you that i've said

lord let us always see jesus for who he really is let us never be among those who lose sight of the magnitude and the glory of his divinity lord i pity the jehovah's witnesses and i pity the mormons and anybody else who says jesus was not the son of god that jesus was not divine father may the the realization of your divine statement status in jesus may it become more acceptable in the face of the people that we talk to on a daily basis lord as we as we try to give them the gospel as we try to give them your word jesus needs to be seated and enthroned as god in their lives lord teach us how to help to achieve that in jesus name amen