

John Wesley's Explanatory Notes - Matthew 22

by John Wesley

John Wesley's sermon emphasizes the importance of responding to God's invitation and the necessity of Christ's righteousness for salvation.

Scripture: Matthew 22

Topics: "Righteousness", "God's Invitation", "Resurrection"

Description

John Wesley expounds on Matthew 22, illustrating the parable of the wedding feast as a representation of God's invitation to salvation, initially extended to the Jews but ultimately offered to all. He emphasizes the importance of being prepared with the 'wedding garment' of Christ's righteousness, highlighting that many are called but few are chosen. Wesley also discusses the challenge posed by the Pharisees and Herodians regarding tribute to Caesar, underscoring the necessity of rendering to God what belongs to Him. He concludes with a reflection on the resurrection, affirming that God is the God of the living, and the significance of loving God and neighbor as the greatest commandments.

Transcript

XXII. 1. Jesus answering, spake - That is, spake with reference to what had just past.

Verse 2. A king, who made a marriage feast for his son - So did God, when he brought his first - begotten into the world.

Verse 3. Them that were invited - Namely, the Jews.

Verse 4. Fatlings - Fatted beasts and fowls.

Verse 5. One to his farm, another to his merchandise - One must mind what he has; another, gain what he wants. How many perish by misusing lawful things!

Verse 7. The king sending forth his troops - The Roman armies employed of God for that purpose. Destroyed those murderers - Primarily the Jews.

Verse 8. Go into the highways - The word properly signifies, the by-ways, or turnings of the road.

Verse 10. They gathered all - By preaching every where.

Verse 11. The guest - The members of the visible Church.

Verse 12. A wedding garment - The righteousness of Christ, first imputed, then implanted. It may easily be observed, this has no relation to the Lord's Supper, but to God's proceeding at the last day.

Verse 14. Many are called; few chosen - Many hear; few believe. Yea, many are members of the visible, but few of the invisible Church. Matthew 20:16.

Verse 15. Mark 12:13; Luke 20:20.

Verse 16. The Herodians were a set of men peculiarly attached to Herod, and consequently zealous for the interest of the Roman government, which was the main support of the dignity and royalty of his family. Thou regardest not the person of men - Thou favourest no man for his riches or greatness.

Verse 17. Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar? - If he had said, Yes, the Pharisees would have accused him to the people, as a betrayer of the liberties of his country. If he had said, No, the Herodians would have accused him to the Roman governor.

Verse 18. Ye hypocrites - Pretending a scruple of conscience.

Verse 20. The tribute money - A Roman coin, stamped with the head of Cesar, which was usually paid in tribute.

Verse 21. They say to him, Cesar's - Plainly acknowledging, by their having received his coin, that they were under his government. And indeed this is a standing rule. The current coin of every nation shows who is the supreme governor of it. Render therefore, ye Pharisees, to Cesar the things which ye yourselves acknowledge to be Cesar's: and, ye Herodians, while ye are zealous for Cesar, see that ye render to God the things that are God's.

Verse 23. Mark 12:18.

Verse 24. Deuteronomy 25:5.

Verse 25. Now there were with us seven brethren - This story seems to have been a kind of common-place objection, which no doubt they brought upon all occasions.

Verse 29. Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures - Which plainly assert a resurrection. Nor the power of God - Which is well able to effect it. How many errors flow from the same source?

Verse 30. They are as the angels - Incorruptible and immortal. So is the power of God shown in them! So little need had they of marriage!

Verse 31. Have ye not read - The Sadducees had a peculiar value for the books of Moses. Out of these therefore our Lord argues with them.

Verse 32. I am the God of Abraham - The argument runs thus: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: (for that expression, Thy God, implies both benefit from God to man, and duty from man to God) but he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead, but living. Therefore, the soul does not die with the body. So indeed the Sadducees supposed, and it was on this ground that they denied the resurrection. Exodus 3:6.

Verse 33. At his doctrine - At the clearness and solidity of his answers.

Verse 34. Mark 12:28; Luke 10:25.

Verse 35. A scribe asking him a question, trying him - Not, as it seems, with any ill design: but barely to make a farther trial of that wisdom, which he had shown in silencing the Sadducees.

Verse 37. Deuteronomy 6:5.

Verse 39. Leviticus 19:18.

Verse 42. Luke 20:41.

Verse 43. How doth David then by the Spirit - By inspiration, call him Lord? If he be merely the son (or descendant) of David? If he be, as you suppose, a mere man, the son of a man?

Verse 44. The Lord said to my Lord - This his dominion, to which David himself was subject, shows both the heavenly majesty of the king, and the nature of his kingdom. Sit thou on my right hand - That is, remain in the highest authority and power. Psalms 110:1.

Verse 46. Neither durst any question him any more - Not by way of ensnaring or tempting him.

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