

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Commission: A Study of Matthew 21–28

STUDY FOUR

A Dialogue with Deceivers

Matthew 22:1–22

Those who stood against Jesus were master deceivers. They didn't announce their motives. They just conspired to find a way to get Him on that cross.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

It's impossible to overstate the sheer courage of Jesus. Despite the price on His head, He entered Jerusalem in full view of those seeking to kill Him. Any other hunted man would hide from his pursuers, but not Jesus. He ministered in the open at the temple while His enemies lurked in the shadows.

When His enemies attacked, they used deception and trickery, concealing their evil motives in the folds of their religious robes. Their goal was to inflict deadly harm on Jesus while they kept their hands clean. Jesus, however, knew exactly what they were up to. Not once did He try to avoid His enemies or back down when cornered. He faced them with the calm of a person who was in complete control of His circumstances and in charge at all times.

In fact, Jesus even went on the offensive as we'll see in this *Searching the Scriptures* study that examines the third of three parables indicting the leading priests and elders. Let's explore how Jesus combated these deceivers and discover truths to counter deception in our own lives.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

A Dialogue with Deceivers

Matthew 22:1–22



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Each devious attack on Jesus underscored the fact that Jesus' enemies were merely pawns of the greatest deceiver, the devil. As followers of Jesus, we must be aware of the spiritual battles around us and rely on our Lord's power. Take time right now to still your heart. Reflect on what the apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:10–13. Ask Jesus to equip you through this study.

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The priests and elders had come to Jesus demanding, "By what authority are you doing these things?" (Matthew 21:23). The real issue, though, wasn't Jesus' authority but their resistance to authority.

Israel's leaders *disobeyed* God like the son in Jesus' first parable who said he would obey his father but then didn't (21:28–32). They *defied* God by silencing His prophets and plotting to kill His Son, just like the greedy tenant farmers in Jesus' second parable who killed the landowner's servants and his son (21:33–46).

Now, in His third parable, Jesus illustrates the religious leaders' *disregard* of God in a story about a great king and his son.



Observation: A Revealing Parable and a Deceptive Plan

We begin *Searching the Scriptures* by observing the text, noting contrasts and comparisons, descriptions and action words, and, particularly in Jesus' parables, unexpected twists.¹



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A Story That Revealed the Truth—Matthew 22:1–14

Read *Matthew 22:1–3* and write down what would have surprised Jesus' listeners.

What did the king do next according to *22:4–8*? How might Jesus' listeners have reacted to the attitude of the invited guests? What did the king say about those he had invited?

How did the king fill his banquet hall according to *22:9–14*. Other than accepting the invitation, what requirement did the king expect from his guests?



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A Deceptive Plan That Failed to Entrap—Matthew 22:15–22

The Pharisees seem to step right out of Jesus' parable into the episode that Matthew described in [Matthew 22:15–18](#). These conniving religious leaders perfectly illustrate the wicked guests who killed the king's messengers. How did they plan to catch Jesus with His own words? Describe the substance as well as the emotion of Jesus' immediate response to their question?

How did Jesus answer their question without falling into their trap, according to [22:19–22](#)?

Here's a perfect example of Jesus being "wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove." His answer was disarming. They just walked away. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Matthew 22:1–22



Interpretation: Worthy and Unworthy, Seeing through Deception

Throughout His ministry, Jesus preached a simple message: “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near” (Matthew 4:17). He was inviting the Jews to enter a state of blessing under God’s rule by believing in Him and becoming His followers.

What represented the kingdom of heaven in Jesus’ parable, based on [22:1–2](#)?² What features of this grand event make it similar to God’s kingdom?

How had God been calling Israel’s religious leaders into His kingdom, and why did they ignore His invitations, according to [22:3–6](#)?

The religious leaders proved themselves unworthy, even to the point of murder, by rejecting God’s invitations. How do you interpret the analogy of the king opening the banquet to all people, “good and bad alike” (22:10)? Consult page 167 of Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s commentary, *Insights on Matthew 16–28*.



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Matthew 22:1–22

How are we to interpret the king's response to the improperly dressed guest? The new guests came as they were (Matthew 22:10), so we can assume that the king would have graciously provided each guest a suitable banquet robe. This guest, apparently, rejected the gift, which surprised the king. "How is it you are here without wedding clothes?" (22:12). The man's silence revealed his pride. He considered his old garments good enough.

Use your resources to explain what this part of the parable means—the need for proper clothing, the severe judgment, and Jesus' conclusion, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (22:14). For help, read pages 167–168 of *Insights on Matthew 16–28*, and for an online resource, consult *Constable's Notes* at netbible.org.

In 22:15–22, the Pharisees and their Herodian coconspirators model the treachery of the original guests in Jesus' parable. Jesus perceived their evil intent and rebuked them, "You hypocrites!" (22:18). Why is hypocrisy such a serious and deadly sin—practically and spiritually?

Their question concealed a trap. If Jesus had said one must pay the tax, the Jewish nationalists led by the Pharisees would have turned against Jesus as a traitor. If Jesus had said one must not pay the tax, the Herodians (loyalists to Rome) would have had Him arrested. Traitor or insurgent—there seemed no alternative!



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How did Jesus' answer resolve the dilemma? What does He mean, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God" in Matthew 22:21, and why is this statement so significant for Jesus-followers today?

When you catch a hypocrite in deception, he or she will never admit the truth in return, saying, "You're right. I'm guilty." The person just walks away. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Invitation to the World

Jesus already told the religious leaders that God would take away the kingdom of heaven from them and give it "to a nation that will produce the proper fruit" (Matthew 21:43). In this parable Jesus explained how: by going "out to the street corners" and calling everyone, including Gentiles, to come to His kingdom banquet (22:9).

In Luke's parallel passage, Jesus expands the range of the call. Whom did the master tell the servants to invite, and where did he tell them to go according to [Luke 14:21–23](#)?

Like the master who opened wide His banquet hall to anyone who would come, God "wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Because the Jews rejected Christ, "God offered salvation to the rest of the world" (Romans 11:15).



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What is our part in delivering God's generous invitation according to *Matthew 28:18–20* and *Acts 1:8*?

*We make the offer of salvation available to our friends, the people at work, at school.
We tell them, "Whosoever may come, but you must come through Christ to the cross."
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

Application: What Do We Learn?

History is filled with tragic accounts of dictators and tyrants deceiving people.

But from Jesus, we learn that *God is the true sovereign*. He is the gracious king who offers a banquet of spiritual blessings. We learn that *God is just*. He has the right to determine how we enter His kingdom—by the singular way of His Son. Finally, *God is God*. To Him we must give our highest allegiance and humblest obedience. We can render to "Caesar" what is his; but God alone is our king, and we give Him our all.

What lessons did you learn from Jesus' dealings with deceivers in this passage?



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Matthew 22:1–22

Express your own gratitude and praise to the King who invited you to the wedding feast of His Son.

There's only one way to enter His banquet hall: we must wear the righteous robe of Jesus that covers our tattered rags. Praise God for His grace, which not only invites us but makes us fit for eternity, **secure in the righteousness of Christ!**



A FINAL PRAYER

Dear Father, thank You for rescuing me from a state of separation and calling me near to Your side through Jesus Christ. You have prepared the banquet—what generosity! You have issued the invitations—what love! You have dressed me for eternity—what grace! My allegiance is to You alone as my sovereign King and loving Master. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Learn more about Pastor Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* method on the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](http://insight.org)" at insight.org.
2. A banquet open to all people is a beautiful illustration of God's grace and a common metaphor for God's kingdom in Scripture: *Isaiah 25:6–8; 55:1–2; Revelation 19:9.*

