

# **The Mind of Christ**

## **Coming Face to Face with the Enemy**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- I. On Tuesday of Passover Week – just DAYS before Jesus would be crucified – the Lord came face to face with His most bitter enemies.
  - A. The FIRST challenge came from those who questioned His authority – the chief priests and elders of the people.
    1. If you remember, on Sunday Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey surrounded by throngs of people shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David” – clearly acknowledging Jesus as the promised Messiah.
    2. The following day, Jesus entered the Temple and ran out all the money changers and those who sold animals – saying they had turned the house of God into a den of thieves.
    3. And now, on Tuesday, Jesus returned to the Temple and was boldly teaching.
    4. Therefore, the chief priests and elders of the people challenged Jesus by demanding to know by what authority He did these things, and who gave Him this authority.

- B. Jesus proceeded to show the wickedness and corruption of these men by specifically directing three parables at them.
1. Jesus wanted the chief priests and elders of the people to see why God was rejecting them.
    - a. God had appointed these men as the spiritual leaders of the people of Israel, but they had failed to perform their responsibilities.
    - b. Not only that, but they had actually shown contempt for God by rejecting those who prophesied about the coming Messiah – specifically John the Baptist – and now they were showing bitter hatred and contempt toward God’s Son, Jesus.
    - c. They were also men who had clothed themselves in wickedness, rebellion and unrighteousness – they had become morally and ethically corrupt.
    - d. Therefore, they were undeserving of the great blessings God had in store for those who love Him and who believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
    - e. As a result, God was not only going to bring judgment against these men, but against the entire nation of Israel which had, for the most part, become just as wicked and morally corrupt as it’s leaders.

2. When Jesus finished teaching these three parables against these corrupt men, their reaction clearly shows that they were enraged.
  - a. **Matthew 22:15** – *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.*
  - b. **Mark 12:12-13** – *And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away. Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words.*
  - c. **Luke 20:19-20** – *And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people – for they knew He had spoken this parable against them. So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.*
- C. Although Jesus silenced the chief priests and the elders of the people (including some of the scribes), there were others waiting in the wings to take up the attack.
  1. Let's take a closer look at those who came forward to attack the credibility of Jesus.

**BODY:**

- I. After silencing the first group of His attackers, Jesus was immediately assaulted by three more groups – the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Herodians.
  - A. The Pharisees and Herodians challenged Jesus over the question of whether or not it is right to taxes to Rome. They were hoping to entrap Jesus regardless of how He answered their question.
    1. **Matthew 22:15-22** – *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*
    2. Please don't think for a minute that these wicked men were actually trying to COMPLIMENT Jesus when they said, "Teacher,

*we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men." (v. 16)*

- a. Matthew's account says they, "*plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk*" (**Matthew 22:15**), while Mark writes that they were trying "*to catch Him in His words*" (**Mark 12:13**).
- b. But LUKE'S account tells us even MORE: "*So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.*" (**Luke 20:20**)
  - (1). So, don't think this was a compliment.
  - (2). In fact, in his commentary, Matthew Henry, wrote, "*Here is hatred covered with deceit, and a wicked heart with burning lips.*" Matthew Henry then makes reference to **Proverbs 26:23** — "*Fervent lips with a wicked heart are like earthenware covered with silver dross.*"
  - (3). You can almost see the hypocrisy oozing and dripping off every word coming from the mouths of these wicked and corrupt men.

- (4). They believed Jesus WAS a false teacher – NOT one who is TRUE, and CERTAINLY NOT one who teaches *“the way of God in truth.”*
  - b. And what about their comment, *“nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men”* – meaning *“we know You’re impartial and don’t show favoritism to anyone?”*
    - (1). THESE men didn’t believe a WORD of what they were saying. In fact, they had the audacity to ACTUALLY BELIEVE that JESUS couldn’t SEE through this sham.
  - c. That’s why Matthew’s account says, *“Jesus perceived their wickedness” (v. 18)*, and why Mark says, *“He, knowing their hypocrisy” (Mark 12:15)*.
  - d. Jesus – who “searches the hearts” – could see RIGHT THROUGH these wicked men.
3. These men were CERTAIN they had Jesus in a REAL dilemma.
    - a. If Jesus said it is LAWFUL to pay taxes, the Pharisees would have stirred up resentment against Jesus from among the people who DESPISED Rome and despised paying ANY TAXES to Rome.

- b. If, on the other hand, Jesus said it is in keeping with God's Law to NOT pay taxes to Rome, Jesus would have won the popular support of the people, but the Herodians would have IMMEDIATELY gone to Pilate and charged Jesus with being an insurrectionist who was urging the people to rise up against Rome by refusing to pay taxes.
4. But when Jesus answered, "*Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's,*" Luke's gospel account says, "*... they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people,*" while Matthew's account reads, "*When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.*" **(Luke 20:26; Matthew 22:21-22)**
- B. The Sadducees, who say there is no such thing AS a resurrection from the dead, were the next group to step forward to publicly challenge Jesus over a question CONCERNING the resurrection of the dead.
  1. **Matthew 22:23-33** – *The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.*

*Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her." Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.*

2. The Sadducees were not trying to discredit the PERSON Jesus as much as they were bent on discrediting the TEACHING of Jesus concerning the resurrection.
  - a. The Sadducees thought they found a INSURMOUNTABLE DILEMMA in **Deuteronomy 25:5-6** – *"If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will*

*succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel."*

- b. The Sadducees saw this commandment as a perfect opportunity to show the absurdity of the belief in a resurrection.
    - (1). If this woman had been married to seven different brothers, then, at one time or another, she had been the wife of seven different men.
    - (2). So, if there IS such a thing as a resurrection, then whose wife will she be in this supposed resurrection?
  - c. Can't you just SEE the smug smiles on their faces? "Answer THAT one, Jesus, if you CAN!"
3. Since their attack was of a public manner, then it was fair game for Jesus to rebuke, and thereby embarrass them publicly. And Jesus DID that by showing these Sadducees that they don't know the Scriptures as well as they THINK they do, NOR do they truly believe in the omnipotent POWER OF GOD. **(Matthew 22:29)**
- a. Jesus said, "*in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.*" **(Matthew 22:30)** In other words, in heaven, angels don't have wives (since all angels are spoken of in the masculine

sense), nor do they have children, because they're not married.

- b. But have you ever noticed what lies BENEATH the comment of Jesus? How would Jesus KNOW there is no marriage in heaven, UNLESS He had come FROM there?
4. To FURTHER prove His argument, Jesus quotes God Himself, Who said, "*I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,*" – this was a statement God made to Moses more than 400 years AFTER Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead.

**(Exodus 3:6; Matthew 22:32)**

- a. God did NOT say, "*I WAS the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,*" but rather, "*I AM the God...*" – meaning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are now in heaven where God CONTINUES to be their God.
  - b. Therefore, Jesus said there was only ONE CONCLUSION a reasonable man could reach – "*God is not the God of the DEAD, but of the LIVING.*" **(Matthew 22:32)**
    - (1). By the way, this is a wonderful example of a "Necessary Inference," or "Necessary Conclusion."
5. Matthew's account in **verse 33** says, "*And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching,*" whereas Luke

says, *"Then some of the scribes [remember, scribes, along with their friends the Pharisees, BELIEVED in the resurrection] answered and said, 'Teacher, You have spoken well.' But after that they [all those who had challenged Him – the Pharisees, the Herodians and the Sadducees] dared not question Him anymore."*

**(Matthew 22:33; Luke 20:39-40)**

a. Although Jesus had silenced all of the political and religious leaders who opposed Him, there was still one remaining challenge.

C. The Pharisees (who BELIEVED in the resurrection) were obviously pleased by the way Jesus had silenced the Sadducees (who did NOT believe in the resurrection), but after grouping together to discuss Jesus' response, one of their group – a young lawyer (Mark calls him "a scribe") – came to Jesus with another question to **"test"** Him.

**(Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34)**

1. **Matthew 22:34-40** – *But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first*

*and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

2. Both Matthew and Mark say the lawyer/scribe asked, "*Which is the great commandment in the Law.*"
  - a. However, Luke (**Luke 10:25-28**) records a SIMILAR incident that took place several months EARLIER. And in LUKE'S account the lawyer asked, "*Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*"
3. While Matthew's account focuses on the response of Jesus, Mark's account tells of about the lawyer/scribe's sincere response to what Jesus said.
  - a. **Mark 12:32-34** – *So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

- b. The lawyer/scribe that set out to “TEST” Jesus (Matthew’s account) is NOW so IMPRESSED with Jesus’ reply that he not only COMPLIMENTED Jesus, but added that to love God and to love our neighbor is MORE important to God than all the sacrifices the people of Israel had been making simply because the Law required it – sacrifices that were made without even thinking about the REAL significance BEHIND the sacrifice.
- c. This man knew that to draw near to God with our mouths and honor Him with our lips, when our hearts are FAR FROM Him, is VAIN worship.
- d. Now do you understand why Jesus would tell this man, “*You are not far from the kingdom of God.*”?
  - (1). A.T. Robertson (Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament) wrote, “*The critical attitude of the lawyer had melted before the reply of Jesus into genuine enthusiasm that showed him to be near the kingdom of God.*”
  - (2). Most commentators say, that although we don’t know whatever became of this man, we should not be surprised to find that this man eventually obeyed the

gospel of Christ, nor be surprised to meet him in heaven.

D. Jesus then goes on the OFFENSIVE, and poses a question to the Pharisees who are still gathered around Him.

1. **Matthew 22:41-46** – *Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit [or by inspiration of the Holy Spirit] call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'? [a quote from Psalm 110] If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?"*

2. While the scribes and Pharisees believed in a coming Messiah, and understood that the Scriptures spoke of the Messiah (the Christ – the Anointed One) as “The Son of David,” but they thought that simply meant the Messiah would be a descendent of David – One who came from the lineage of David.

a. They could quote from memory all the Old Testament prophecies that affirmed this fact:

(1). **Psalm 89:35-36** – *I will not lie to David; his seed shall endure for ever...*

(2). **Isaiah 9:7** – *Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever.*

(3). **Isaiah 11:1** – *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.*

3. But Jesus asked, *If David then calls Him 'Lord,' [in Psalm 110] how is He his Son?"*

a. No father calls his own son "Lord." But David says this descendent of his is "My Lord."

b. Furthermore, this descendent of David would sit at the right hand of God.

c. So, if this descendent of David – the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One – is David's LORD, and is sitting at the right hand of GOD, then Whose Son IS He, really?

4. There was only one answer – the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One, the Son of David, was in REALITY the SON OF GOD!

a. And NOT ONE of those scribes or Pharisees who were still gathered around Jesus missed what Jesus was saying.

- b. Jesus was not ONLY claiming to be the MESSIAH, the Anointed One, but He was ALSO claiming to be THE VERY SON OF GOD!
- E. With this, Jesus had completely silenced EVERY ONE of his enemies.
- 1. First were the chief priests and the elders of the people (the corrupt and immoral religious leaders of Israel who had led the attack against Jesus, and most of whom were also Sadducees).
    - a. They saw Jesus as a threat to their political and economic power.
  - 2. Next were the hypocritical and arrogant scribes and Pharisees.
    - a. They saw Jesus as a threat to the Law of Moses, and to their man-made “traditions of the elders.” To them, Jesus was a heretic – a false teacher and a deceiver who must be stopped at all cost.
    - b. And while they believed in the coming of the Messiah, they CATEGORICALLY DENIED that Jesus had any right to that claim.
  - 3. Then there were the Sadducees (most of whom were also chief priests and elders), but all of whom denied the resurrection, the existence of the soul, life after death, the final judgment, angels, and even the Devil himself – plus they rejected every Scripture as

inspired by God except for the first five books of the Old Testament.

- a. These were men of immense political power and wealth, and saw Jesus as a threat to both if somehow He actually BECAME the Messiah.
4. And along with the Sadducees, Jesus silenced their Herodian friends.
    - a. The Herodians were not a religious party, but a powerful and influential political party made up of wealthy and politically powerful business leaders.
    - b. They wanted to guarantee the peace and economic prosperity that had made them rich. Therefore, their loyalty was with the continued rule of the descendants of Herod the Great, and ultimately with Roman rule.
    - d. If Jesus rose to power and became the Messiah, they were afraid they would lose everything.
  5. Therefore, Matthew concludes by saying, “*And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.*” **(Matthew 22:46)**
  6. These men would never come face to face with Jesus again until the night our Lord would be arrested, bound and dragged before

the Sanhedrin in an illegal trial to eventually be condemned and crucified.

## **CONCLUSION:**

- I. What can we learn from this encounter between Jesus and His enemies?  
What are the lessons for us here?
  - A. In His discourse with the Pharisees and Herodians over the question of taxes, Jesus taught that men were to have allegiance to God AND to the ruling political power under which they lived.
    1. We are to not only give back to God of our material blessings, but also the civil government which rules over us has a right to require us as citizens to financially contribute to the cost of government.
      - a. Our founding fathers weren't opposed to taxes, they were opposed to taxes without representation.
      - b. They recognized that every government incurs costs in providing for the health, safety and welfare of its citizens, and therefore has a right to ask its citizens to contribute to that cost.
    2. And while we are to "*obey God rather than men*" when asked to do something contrary to God's will (Peter to the Sanhedrin – Acts 5:29), NOWHERE does the Lord COMMAND or even INFER that

we can refuse to pay tribute (taxes) as a means of protesting or refusing to financially support a government policy that is contrary to God's will.

3. Rome and it's ruling emperor was the most politically and morally corrupt nation in the WORLD in the days of Jesus, and if Jesus urged the payment of taxes to CAESAR, what makes US think we can do anything LESS?

B. In His discourse with the Sadducees over the question of the resurrection, we need to understand there WILL BE a resurrection, and we need to begin preparing for it NOW.

1. In Luke's account of this discourse, Jesus spoke about, *"those who are counted worthy to ATTAIN that age, and the resurrection from the dead..."* (Luke 20:35)
2. Are YOU worthy to attain heaven and the resurrection from the dead?
3. I know of only ONE way to be worthy of that. The apostle Paul said it was his desire for the Christians in Colossee (**Colossians 1:10**), *"that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God..."* (**Colossians 1:10**)

- a. Are you doing that? Are you pleasing the Lord FULLY, being fruitful in EVERY good work, and INCREASING in the knowledge of God?
  - b. If you have to answer “No,” then you’re NOT walking worthy of Christ, and CERTAINLY not worthy of the resurrection.
- C. And, as in the discourse of Jesus with the scribe/lawyer, do YOU truly *“love the LORD your God with ALL your heart, with ALL your soul, and with ALL your mind,”* and truly *“love your NEIGHBOR as yourself?”*
1. The Lord will simply accept NOTHING LESS.
- D. And finally, consider the discourse of Jesus with the Pharisees. What do YOU think of Christ?
1. Do you recognize Jesus as the Son of God – the Savior Who came to this earth to give His life for YOU, and to make it possible for YOU to go to heaven when you die?
  2. Or could it be that YOU are still REJECTING Jesus, just like the Pharisees did?
- E. The hope and assurance of heaven and of eternal life is reserved for those who are willing to make Jesus Christ the Lord of THEIR life – those who have made Him the Lord of their life through their obedience to the gospel of Christ and by continuing to faithfully serve Him all the days of their life as a Christian.

1. So, what do you think of Christ?
  - a. Was there a time when you HAPPILY thought of Jesus as the Lord of YOUR LIFE, but then you began to slowly drift further and further away, and now you FEAR the time when you will stand before Him in judgment?
  - b. Or have you thought over and over again that you NEED to make Jesus the Lord of your life, but you've never been able to bring yourself to make the commitment He requires of those who would be His disciples?
2. If I've just described you, please know that the Lord is STILL WAITING for you to come to Him.
3. So, won't you do that now?