



KIAMA ANGLICAN CHURCHES



Bible Studies - Term 1, 2024

Introduction and Studies 1 & 2

Matthew 22:15 - 28:20

Famous Last Words

The final words of Jesus in his final week

A Sermon and Bible Study Series
on the end of Matthew's Gospel

The Preaching Plan		
Sunday	Matthew	Sermon Title
January 28	22:15-22	Government and God
February 4	22:23-33	God of the Living
11	22:34-40	Greatest Commandments
18	22:41-46	David's Son, David's Lord
25	<i>A one-off sermon,</i>	<i>not part of this series.</i>
March 3	23:1-39	You Hypocrites!
10	24:1-44	Keep Watch
17	24:42 - 25:46	Be Faithful and Wise
<i>Palm Sunday</i> 24	26:1-16	Prediction, Plot, Perfume (and Palms)
<i>Good Friday</i> 29	26:17 - 27:66	My God, My God!
<i>Easter</i> 31	28:1-15	Do Not Be Afraid
April 7	28:16-20	Go and Make Disciples

Introduction

Getting Started

What are you hoping to get out of Bible Study in 2024?

As we start this series, Famous Last Words, share some famous last words that you know – serious or humorous.

Some Context

Over the past half-a-dozen years we have commenced each year working our way through part of Matthew's Gospel, and this year we reach the end as we consider Matthew 22-28.

We are calling this series, "Famous Last Words - the final words of Jesus in his final week." In Matthew 21 we read of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on 'Palm Sunday.' This marks the beginning of what is often referred to as 'Holy Week' – Jesus' final week leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection.

We pick it up a day or two in and will hear some of Jesus' final words to the Jewish leaders, to the crowds, and to his disciples. We will hear the well-known 'words of institution' of the Lord's Supper. We will hear words from the cross, words from the resurrected Jesus and finally, even though it's 40 days later, we will hear the words of the Great Commission that conclude Matthew's account of the good news of Jesus.

A Broad Outline

Matt 22:15 – 23:39	Jesus and the Jewish Leaders
Matt 24:1 – 25:46	Jesus and the End of the Age
Matt 26:1 – 28:20	Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension

Homework Exercise

Early in the series, take the time to read through this part of Matthew in one sitting (perhaps backing up a bit and starting at Matthew 21:1) to get the flow and hear each of the smaller sections in context.

For bonus points, read the whole of Matthews' Gospel in one or two sittings. It's been said, "If you have ever binge-watched a series on Netflix, don't use 'time' as an excuse to avoid reading the Bible."

Additional Resources

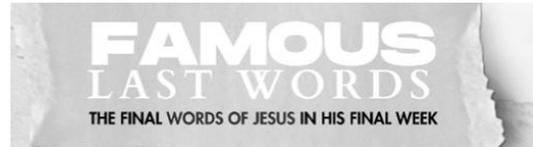
There are many commentaries and study guides available online to assist you in your study of God's Word.

One option that is freely available through [Bible Gateway](#) is the old IVP Commentary Series which provides short comments on the text of Scripture. The relevant sections of Matthew can be accessed at biblegateway.com/resources/ivp-nt/Matthew.

The [Bible Project](#) provides helpful overviews and resources. Their Guide to Matthew can be found at: bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-matthew

Study 1

God and Government



Getting Started

Appearing before a House of Representatives Select Committee in 1991, media mogul Kerry Packer famously said, “I am not evading tax in any way, shape or form. I pay whatever tax I am required to pay under the law, not a penny more, not a penny less. Now of course I am minimising my tax and if anybody in this country doesn’t minimize their tax they want their heads read because as a government I can tell you you’re not spending it that well that we should be donating extra.”

What’s your attitude to paying tax?

1. A Trap is Set

Read Matthew 22:15-18

Who are the Pharisees and Herodians?

Do the comments in verse 16 reflect their real view of Jesus?

What was their goal in asking the tax question?

I guess most people don’t like paying taxes, but what made the imperial tax particularly galling for the Jews?

What answers would have satisfied each of these groups asking Jesus the question?

2. Give to Caesar

Read Matthew 22:19-22

Jesus responds to their hypocritical trap by going on offensive. What is their response to Jesus' answer?

At the time of Jesus, Israel is under the Roman Empire. What would it mean for the Jews to 'give to Caesar'?

In Ancient Israel the political and the religious were linked; the things of God and the things of government were joined. National Israel was collectively the People of God and though led by human leaders and kings, it was a theocracy – ruled by God.

At the time of Jesus, the political power was with Rome. This was not a new thing. At various times in their history other governments and kings ruled over them. One notable time was in the Babylonian Exile.

Read Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7.

How were God's People Israel to relate to this foreign power?

How are we, as God's New Covenant People, to relate to the governments that are over us? **What does it mean for us to 'give to Caesar' in our time and place?**

You may wish to consider some specific questions:

- As a Christian, is there anything you need to change in order to have a clear conscience before God and men in the area of taxes?
- Are Christians responsible to consider how our taxes are used or should we pay taxes and then forget it?

In general, as Christians who see ourselves as part of the Kingdom of God, how should we relate to the kingdoms of this world? How should we exercise our democratic rights and responsibilities in Australia in 2024?

You might like to consider a couple of these other passages: Acts 5:17-29; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; John 18:36.

3. Give to God

Jesus not only says we are to ‘give to Caesar,’ we are also to ‘give to God what is Gods.’

What does it mean for us to “give to God’ in our time and place?

You might like to consider a couple of these other passages: Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 4:1-2; Colossians 3:1-17.

In what circumstances could ‘giving to God’ be in conflict with ‘giving to Caesar’? When should Peter’s words in Acts 5:29 be echoed by us?

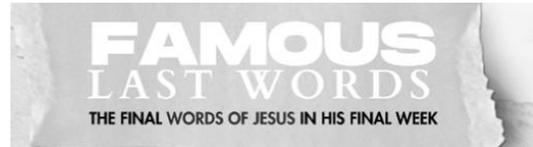
Conclusion

As those who have responded to the invitation to be part of the Kingdom of God, we continue to have obligations to the kingdoms of this world. Jesus’ answer in a tricky situation does not simplistically settle the question of our relationship with the state, but calls us to continually and carefully, prayerfully reflect on our allegiances.

Pray for strength and wisdom and ongoing discernment in living as ‘strangers in a strange land.’

Study 2

God of the Living



Getting Started

A 2021 survey found that, in the United States, some 83% of adults believe in some form of an afterlife. What do imagine are the various understandings of what the afterlife is like, particularly among those without a strong connection to the Christian church?

What do you mean when you say the in the Apostles' Creed, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.'

1. Another Trick Question

Read Matthew 22:23-28

Who were the Sadducees?

How are they different from the Pharisees and Herodians in the previous study? What did they have in common with them?

What did they believe or perhaps what didn't they believe? (See v23 and also Acts 23:6-8)

What is the aim asking their question?

2. Another Profound Answer

Read Matthew 22:29-33

Jesus doesn't hold back in his answer as he turns their question back at them.

What was the error in the Sadducees question?

What two things does Jesus say they do not know?

3. The Resurrection

The Sadducees only held to the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) as authoritative, so Jesus refers back to Exodus 3:6 as part of his answer.

The theme of resurrection is evident early (see for example Job 19:23-27) but is developed more clearly in the later Old Testament. See for example Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-2.

The Resurrection becomes clearer in the New Testament following the resurrection of Jesus. Read Acts 2:22-33, which we might call the first Christian sermon. It quotes Psalm 16 and applies it to Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9

What is the basis of the new birth?

How is our resurrection related to Jesus' resurrection?

What two things do these verses tell us we are born into?

How does this living hope impact your daily living?

The classic passage on resurrection is 1 Corinthians 15. It is worthy of more reflection than this study allows for. If you have time, have a quick look. Verses 20-26 & 51-58 will give you some of the key points.

How should our sure and certain hope of resurrection impact what we do in this life? See verse 58 in particular.

Optional Additional Questions

What does this passage teach us about Scripture, angels and marriage?

Conclusion

A holy man will endeavour to set his affections entirely on things above, and to hold things on earth with a very loose hand. He will not neglect the business of the life that now is; but the first place in his mind and thoughts will be given to the life to come. He will aim to live like one whose treasure is in heaven, and to pass through this world like a stranger and pilgrim traveling to his home. *JC Ryle.*

And so, in the words of the Nicene Creed, we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
Amen

