

The Attackers: The Academic Élitism & Hypocrisy of the Junior Scribes & Herodians: Complimenting Jesus Is a Set-up for a Loaded Question: He Is Truthful, Unable to Lie, & Has Integrity & Rectitude, Matt 22:15–22a

15. These students were used to addressing their teachers thusly. The strategy is to flatter the Lord with the title possessed by the self-professed “true intellects” of Judaism, i.e., the scribes.
16. It is hoped that if Jesus can be made to succumb to flattery He will assert His claim to the throne of Judea and in doing so spring their trap.
17. Following the honorific, they express a number of flattering remarks, “We know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any.”
18. The arrogance of the group is indicated by the declarative “We know,” the perfect active indicative of the verb, **οἶδα (oída)**: “to know and understand.”

Perfect: Consummative or extensive: *emphasizes* not the existing state of knowledge but the consummated process that has led to their current state of brilliance. These students are letting the Lord know they are well-educated and know and understand a lot of stuff. “We have come to know and understand.”

Active: They have produced the action by becoming boy geniuses.

Indic.: Declarative: a statement of an assumed absolute fact.
19. What they claim to know comes next, a series of observations discerned from their vast knowledge of theology about the Lord’s character.
20. Their four-fold analysis includes: **(1)** You are truthful, **(2)** You teach the way of God in truth, **(3)** You defer to no one, and **(4)** you are not partial to any.

21. This sounds complimentary on the surface, but when analyzed it is just a bunch of empty phrases that will hopefully flatter the Lord in to playing their game.
22. Flattery is a rhetorical tactic designed to achieve a self-interest by means of excessive praise; to lavish insincere praise and compliments upon someone, especially to further one's own interests.
23. "You are truthful" is a set up. It implies that whatever response he gives to the upcoming question will be an expression of what the Lord considers truthful and can be quoted.
24. The word used is the noun **ἀληθής (alēthés)** and refers to one who cannot lie. So the first tactic is to assert that whatever the Lord responds will be His statement of what He believes to be true since He cannot lie.
25. Next they announce that Jesus "teaches the way of God in truth." The word "teach" is the present active indicative of the verb **διδάσκω (didáskō)**: "to tutor," "to instruct."
26. A tutor is a person charged with the instruction and guidance of another; a private teacher who teaches a single student or a very small group.
27. This is partially true of our Lord's public ministry. He did teach to individuals, John, Peter, Paul, and to small groups, i.e., the twelve disciples. But He also would hold forth with large groups.
28. Regardless of the number, the message He gave is targeted to individual volition such as the parables, many of which were delivered to groups of people. He had personal encounters with unbelievers such as Nicodemus, the rich young ruler, and Pontus Pilate.
29. The principle is that with regard to our Lord's teachings or the instruction of a disciple, an apostle, an evangelist, or a pastor-teacher, the target of the spoken Word is to individual souls where free will either accepts or rejects the message.

30. Peter discusses the importance of Jesus functioning as a tutor in:
- 1 Peter 2:25** - For you were continually straying like sheep, but you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian [ἐπίσκοπος (*epískopos*): pastor] of your souls. (NASB)
31. As Shepherd, the Lord provides logistics and protection; as Guardian, He is said to oversee the souls of the congregation. The word translated “Guardian” is *epískopos* and it is one of several New Testament words for pastor: rulership authority established by means of teaching doctrine.
32. In Matthew 22:16, *didáskō* refers to the content of that teaching and is identified by its object in the accusative case, the noun ὁδός (*hodós*): literally, way, street, or road; metaphorically, a way of thinking or a manner of life and conduct. In the Septuagint, ὁδός corresponds primarily to דֶּרֶךְ (*derech*): way or path. Synonymous with τροχιά (*trochiá*): wheel-track; figuratively: way of life.
33. The translation of “way” is fine but considering legalistic, rookie scribes are the source of the question we translate: “manner of life and conduct.” The Person that possesses this virtue is credited to Θεός (*Theós*): God.
34. The attackers qualify the Lord’s teaching by identifying it with the instrumental of means from the noun ἀλήθεια (*alétheia*): truth: the will of the one true God; integrity and rectitude.
35. To quote Pontius Pilate, “What is truth?” These greenhorn theologians regard truth as anything taught to them by the scribes from the oral law. For Jesus, truth is divine integrity which underwrites God’s “way of thinking.”
36. So how is the Lord supposed to respond? Is He to reply based on the “truth” asserted by the oral law or is He to respond based on the truth of God’s Word?
- Matthew 22:15** - Then the Pharisees convened to devise a plot to entrap Jesus in His speech.

v. 16 - And they sent their star students to Him along with representatives of the Herodian Party who, from public and temple records, knew Jesus was the rightful heir to the throne of Judea, saying, “Esteemed Theologian, we know from a process imposed throughout our elite level of theological training that You are truthful—unable to lie—and teach the manner of life and conduct of God by means of His integrity and rectitude ...”