

A black and white photograph of a city skyline, including skyscrapers and a bridge, is shown upside down at the top of the page. The text 'MATTHEW' is centered below the image.

# MATTHEW

The Upside umog Kingdom

Matthew 21-22

The kingdom of God belongs to those who believe in Jesus



## Matthew 21:23-32

**The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

**MATTHEW**  
The Upside down Kingdom



## **The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

- These parables explain why Jesus was doing “these things” questioned by the chief priests and elders.
- These things: riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, clearing the temple, cursing the fig tree, teaching and healing in the temple.
- These three parables are all His way of answering their question.



## **The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

- Jesus refused to answer them because their goal wasn't to learn.
- They were caught in their own hypocrisy.
- Though they claimed to speak for God, they did not recognize His prophets when they saw them (verses 25–27).



## **The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

- The parable of the two sons contrasts lip service with delayed obedience.
- Which is better: for someone to say he won't do his father's will and then do it or for someone to say he will do his father's will and then not do it?



## **The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

- The religious leaders knew the right answer.
- The second son represents the religious leaders themselves, those who say they follow God, but don't do what He says.
- The first son represents the tax collectors and prostitutes, who initially did not follow God but "changed their minds" (verse 29) when they met Jesus.



## **The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

- Jesus was saying that they gave only lip service to God, that they didn't really follow Him.
- If they didn't follow Jesus, if they didn't recognize Him as being from heaven (verses 23–27), they didn't really know or follow God, no matter what they said.



## **The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

- Jesus was not only calling out the religious leaders for their hypocrisy, but He was also teaching us something about the kingdom of God.
- No matter what kind of past we have had, Jesus is only concerned about how we respond when we are called. Do we repent?



## **The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who do God's will**

- The kingdom of God is for any sinner who repents.
- For the tax collector and prostitutes, the poor and the lowly, the rejected and the judged.
- No matter what our past was like, He will make us a new creation in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17).



## **Matthew 21:33-46**

**The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

**MATTHEW**  
The Upside down Kingdom



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- This parable illustrates how they rejected Him as a prophet.
- Once again, Jesus used illustrations from typical life; just like the parable before it, a master and a vineyard.
- In the Old Testament, Israel was often compared to a vine and God the vineyard keeper.



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- In Isaiah 5, God described how He took the vine from another field (Egypt) and brought it to His field (the promised land).
- God did everything for them, and yet they still rejected Him and followed false gods.
- Jesus used the same details in this parable.



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- The master planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, built a tower.
- His audience would have recognized the allusion to the passage in Isaiah.
- He was clearly talking about God and Israel.



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- But in this parable, Jesus said the master leased it to tenants and went to another country.
- The tenants represent Israel's religious leaders.
- Jesus was referring to what God had said in the prophets, that the religious leaders of Israel were like the "bad shepherds" described in Ezekiel 34.



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- Jesus was describing how the leaders of Israel had rejected so many of God's prophets.
- He finally sent His own Son, believing "they will respect my son" (verse 37).
- Instead they plotted to kill him so they could have the vineyard for themselves.



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- Though He had been referring to Israel's past leaders and prophets, now Jesus was talking about Himself and them, predicting His own death at their hands.
- God has been patient with Israel's leaders for centuries, but now that they had rejected His Son, He would finally judge them when He returns (verses 40–41).



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- In asking those who challenged Him what the master would do, He allowed them to pronounce their own judgment.
- Their future judgment would not be unfair; it would be justified and righteous.
- Jesus quoted from Psalm 118, the same psalm from the Hallel that the people sang in praise on Palm Sunday.



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- The religious leaders may have rejected and even killed Him, but He would become the cornerstone of His Church.
- As Paul wrote in Corinthians, we are God's building, built on the foundation of Christ.
- We are His temple, the Spirit dwelling in us (1 Corinthians 3:1–17).



## **The world has rejected Jesus, the cornerstone of God's temple**

- The Holy Spirit dwells in us as His temple and works in us to bear His fruit.
- He is the vine, and we are the branches.
- Through Him we bear fruit. It is not something we do in our own strength, but something the Holy Spirit produces in us (John 15).



## **Matthew 22:1-14**

**Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment**



## **Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment**

- In the ancient world, wedding feasts took a long time to prepare.
- The invitation was given long in advance. When the feast was ready, a servant was sent out to “invite” them again.
- Because wedding feasts took so much preparation, the guests were never really sure when it would be ready.



## Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment

- In Israel, attendance at weddings was a social obligation for family, friends or anyone of your social class.
- No one would refuse the invitation of a king, especially not the wedding banquet for his son.
- If you were honorable enough to be invited, you didn't say no.



## **Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment**

- The guests in this story had replied yes to the invitation, but when the servant came to tell them it was ready, they would not come.
- As in the last parable, Jesus is talking about the religious leaders who said yes to God's promise of a Messiah but then, when He came, they rejected Him.



## **Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment**

- This parable would have sent the religious leaders a very clear message about their coming judgment
- It would have also painted a clear picture of exactly what they were rejecting
- These religious leaders had no idea what they were saying no to when they rejected following Jesus.



## **Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment**

- Jesus adds one twist at the end.
- There was one guest at the banquet who wasn't wearing wedding clothes.
- He received a severe final-judgment punishment as well.
- He was thrown into "the outer darkness," a phrase used for hell.



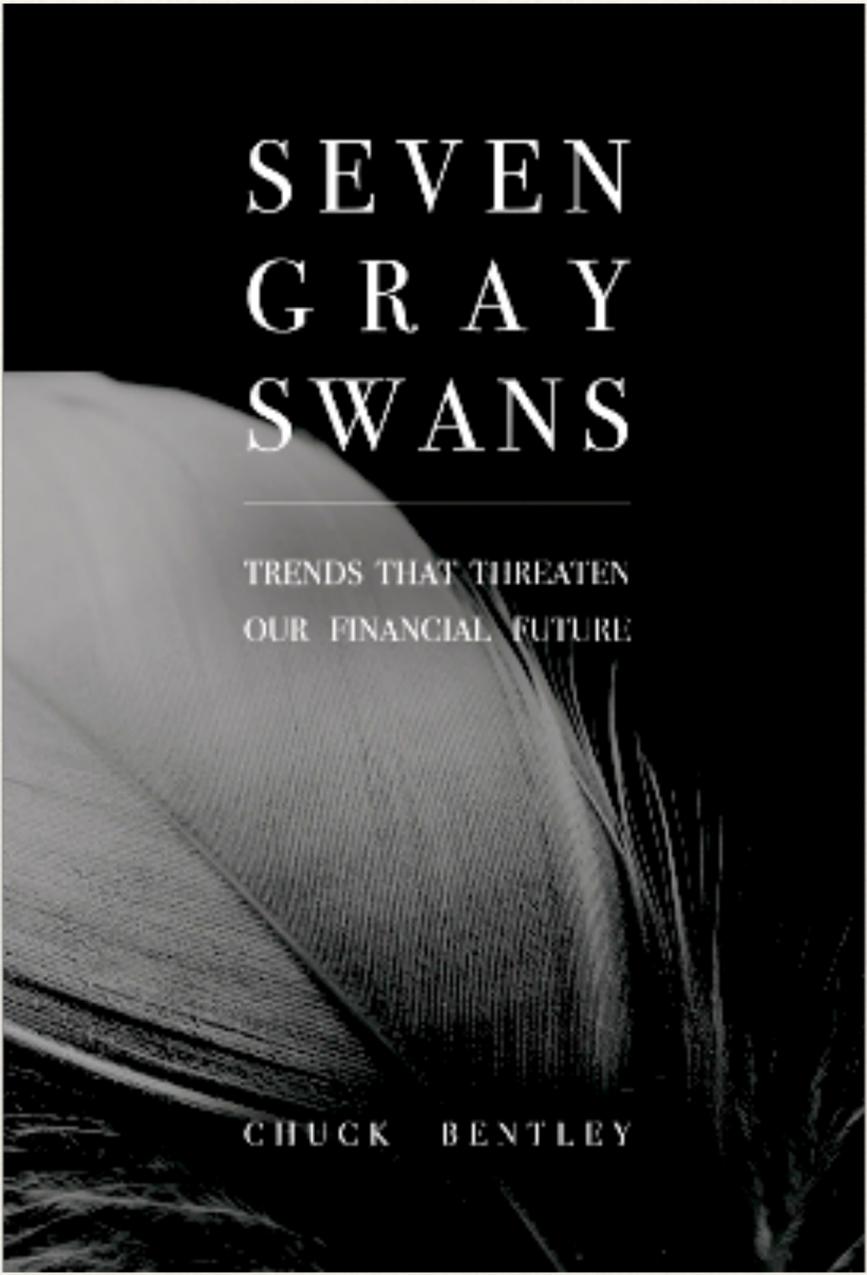
## **Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment**

- This is not just a warning to the religious leaders who openly rejected Jesus – the characters who rejected the king’s invitation.
- It is also a warning to those who would try to partake of His banquet without repenting of their sins and putting on the new self in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3).



## **Those who reject Jesus will be punished in the final judgment**

- “Many are called, but few are chosen” is a warning.
- “Chosen” refers to the chosen nation of Israel.
- The Church is His new Israel, the true kingdom of God.
- Jesus gives us this invitation: Come to me and find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:28–30).



SEVEN  
GRAY  
SWANS

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TRENDS THAT THREATEN  
OUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

CHUCK BENTLEY

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# Gray Swans?

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- A black swan has been described by economists as an extremely unpredictable event that is beyond what is normally expected.
- A gray swan, on the other hand, describes a potentially significant event that is considered unlikely to happen but still possible.
- Because it can occur, it should be anticipated especially since it could have devastating consequences to our world and the economy.

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# Universal Basic Income

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- Proponents of this economic idea argue that it will help resolve inequalities and eliminate the need for humiliating welfare programs.
- It was the central promise of Andrew Yang's presidential campaign. He proposed that everyone would receive \$1000 per month in what he called the Freedom Dividend.
- Many futurists support the idea because they are convinced that robotics and artificial intelligence will result in massive job loss in the future.

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# Universal Basic Income

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- Paying people for not working is not a good idea.
- Chuck Bentley says it is like holding a lottery and then declaring everyone the winner.
- If you are familiar with the sad stories of lottery winners who squander their winnings, you can see the problem.
- Proverbs 13:11 (ESV) says that “wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers it little by little will increase it.”

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# Universal Basic Income

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- God created us to work and receive the fruits of our labor.
- Proverbs 28:19 (NIV) reminds us that “those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty.”
- Lest you think such an idea would never happen, think of the checks or direct deposits you received from the federal government’s stimulus bills.

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# Digital Currency

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- America has been moving towards a cashless society for many decades. This electronic economy has many benefits.
- You can leave your home without any cash in your wallet or purse. All you need is a credit card.
- Young people love the convenience and expect to have a cashless society.
- Older people may also enjoy the convenience but often have some concerns.

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# Digital Currency

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- One significant concern is the lack of privacy.
- Everything you buy with a credit card and everything you buy online is recorded.
- This also sets you up for hacking and other threats. In the near future, it will likely require the use of biometric IDs.
- While we are talking about biometric IDs, we should mention that the Bible does predict a future one world government in which every transaction will be validated and recorded by a mark of the beast “on the right hand or the forehead” (Revelation 13:16).

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# Modern Monetary Theory

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- This a technical phrase for the idea that government can print as much money as it needs without any consideration of the long-term impact on the economy or society.
- Deficits don't matter, and the government should not be limited by the supply of money.
- Nearly a quarter (23.6%) of all U.S. dollars were created last year.
- In order to put that amount in perspective, consider that the year-to-year growth in the money supply never exceeded 15 percent.

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# Democratic Socialism

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- Many members of Congress along with professors and pundits are calling for the country to turn away from capitalism and towards socialism. Chuck Bentley even mentions a book with the arresting title, *Jesus Was a Socialist*.
- Democratic socialism is “a political philosophy supporting political democracy within a socially-owned economy.”
- He explains that “many well-meaning Christians tend to confuse the role of the church and the role of the government when they advocate for socialism as a means to serve the poor.”

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# Social Scoring

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- This is a reality in China where a “social credit” rating system is used to monitor the citizens of that communist country. People are “punished” when they engage in what the government considers unacceptable behaviors.
- Nothing like this is taking place in this country, but social scoring has been used. Life insurance companies can base premiums on what they find in your social media posts. Airbnb can disable your account for life. Uber can ban you from their service. Of course, Twitter and Facebook have banned various people because of what they post.

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# Biometric ID

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- This has been a great convenience for many Americans. But we only have to look to China to see how ubiquitous cameras and facial recognition software allow the leaders to track every citizen.
- “Law enforcement agencies, banks, airports, hotels, doctors’ offices, travel agencies, and more are collecting records.” They could even connect them to someone’s social credit score.
- Chuck Bentley concludes that: “This is the kind of gray swan that engulfs almost every aspect of our lives. It is difficult to deny that it provides both a useful convenience and an Orwellian nightmare.”

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# Fragile Networks

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- Most of us depend on networks on the Internet that are insecure.
- Hacking into networks and data breaches are just one problem.
- Mobile networks for cellular carriers have had outages. Blackouts of the electric grid has occurred in various parts of the country.
- Many years ago, there was a malicious software worm that shut down large portions of the Internet.
- Cyber-attack incidents have increased significantly in the last two decades.

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# Fragile Networks

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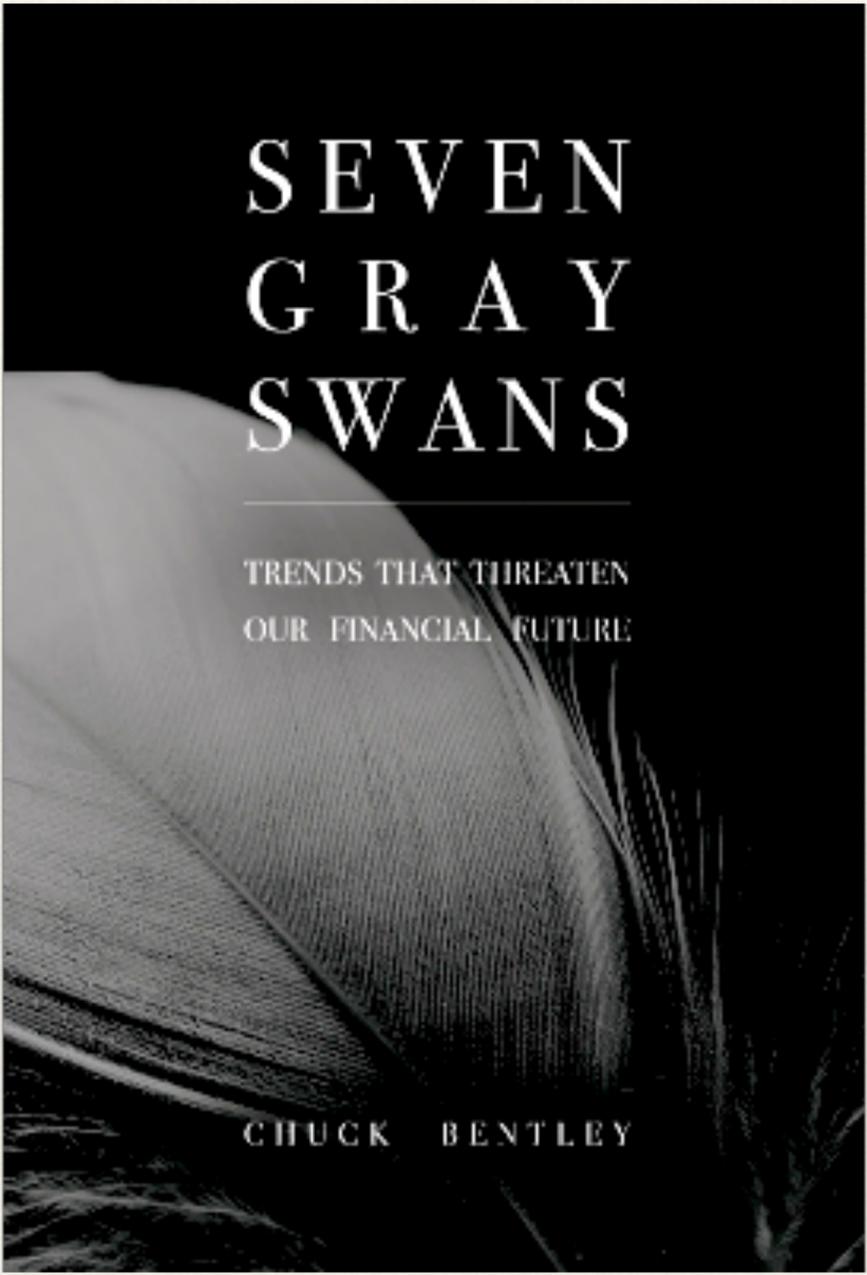
- You should do all that you can to protect you and your family.
- That includes choosing strong passwords, using two-factor authentication whenever possible, keep physical backups, etc.
- Make sure security settings are turned on.
- Be aware of phishing attacks that come through your emails.

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# Action Items

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1. Increase your capacity to weather storms. Save and keep 15 months of annual income / funds in emergency savings. Joseph preparing for the Great Famine in Egypt is an appropriate biblical example.
2. Get free of encumbrances. Be debt free and in a position of financial freedom. Be as liquid as possible in order to have access to resources you might need quickly.
3. Don't conform to the world's philosophies.



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