

The Attackers: The Attackers Are Amazed, Stunned, & Perplexed, Matt 22:22; Jesus' Support of Divine Institution #4; Plan of God: Cross before the Crown & Formation of the Royal Family; Blessings Are Intrinsic to Execution of Doctrine while Discipline Is Intrinsic to Failure to Execute: These Causes & Effects Are Established in the Divine Decree

1. The key word in this verse is “amazed,” which translates the aorist active indicative of the verb θαυμάζω (*thaumázō*): admiration and astonishment.
2. The word and its derivatives in classical Greek were used in the time of Homer and Hesiod to mean “contemplate,” “to wonder at,” and “to look on with astonishment.”
3. These definitions are retained by the Koine but in addition to the historical and psychological aspects of the verb, it also draws one’s attention to the significance of the event that causes the contemplation, wonderment, admiration, and astonishment.
4. The English word that best describes the reaction of the attackers must take into consideration the significance of the event with regard to the Lord’s answer and its impact on the attackers.
5. The word *thaumázō* is translated “amazed” in these English Bibles: New International Version, New American Standard, and by the NET Bible in an accompanying footnote. Yeager’s *The Renaissance New Testament* uses “amazement” and D. A. Carson chooses “amazing” in his commentary on Matthew in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*.
6. The verb is an ingressive aorist which stresses entrance into a state or condition of amazement. Therefore, how is this word defined in English?:

Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary: Unabridged, s.v.: amaze: to confound with great surprise or sudden wonder; to astound, perplex, astonish. Syn. Astonish, astound, bewilder, dumbfound, surprise, perplex, confound.

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v.: amaze: to fill with wonder: astound; to show or cause astonishment. Suggests an effect of bewilderment.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v.: amaze: driven stupid; stunned or stupefied; out of one's wits. S.v.: amazement: Loss of presence of mind; distraction (due to doubt as to what to do).

Webster's New School & Office Dictionary, s.v.: amaze: to confound or stun with fear, surprise, or wonder; astonish; confusion; perplexity arising from sudden surprise.

7. The NET Bible translates *thaumázō* with "stunned." From this we find the attackers at once impressed, stunned, and perplexed. The Lord's response was ingenious in its discernment, shocking in its impact, and frustrating to the ambitions of the attackers.
8. Jesus' succinct response summed up the relationship between state and church; between "Congress" and "religion."
9. During the Incarnation, Jesus never expressed any interest in altering the governmental status quo in SPQR nor did He in any way suggest a desire to supersede Caiaphas as high priest at the Sanhedrin.
10. As bad as both Tiberius and Caiaphas were as heads of these two organizations, Jesus never challenged their right to rule each.
11. His modus operandi was structured around the policy expressed by Paul in:
1 Corinthians 14:40 - All things must be done properly and in an orderly manner. (NASB)
12. God has a plan. It was decreed in eternity past. That plan is designed to solicit a maximum number of people to live with Him for all eternity.
13. The process and procedure included first of all implementation of a system by which sin and the sin nature could be neutralized.
14. This required a mediator that could reconcile perfect God with imperfect mankind. The bloodline was established with Adam and Eve and narrowed over time to include the Semitic, Jewish, and Davidic bloodlines culminating with the virgin birth of Jesus the Christ.

15. What too many people do not discern is that His mission in the First Advent was to carry out the plan of salvation followed by the institution of Gentile client nations by which the royal family of God would be formed.
16. The process by which God forms His royal family is through evangelism. The way He prospers members of His royal family is by the blessings that are intrinsic to the execution of His Word in the lives of believers.
17. Understanding the definition of the word “intrinsic” is essential to understanding what follows in our study:
Intrinsic: [From the Latin *intrinsicus*, inwardly.] belonging to the real nature of a thing; not dependent on external circumstances; essential; inherent.¹
18. PRINCIPLE: Blessings and rewards or discipline and suffering are intrinsic to the volitional decisions of the individual.
19. Blessings are decreed in eternity past and include God’s sovereign purpose which comprehends simultaneously all things that ever were or will be.
20. The principle of cause and effect is evident in His decree. His plan is so structured that when a believer ignores the principles contained in Scripture, that decision becomes a cause initiating a negative effect: the limitation of that person’s future options.
21. When a believer grows in grace and endeavors to apply these divine principles, they become the cause that results in a positive effect: the expansion of that person’s future options.
22. We conclude from this that both blessing and discipline are decreed in eternity past and occur in time in conjunction with the decision-making process of the believer.

¹ Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language: Unabridged, 2d ed., s.v.: “intrinsic.”

23. PRINCIPLE: The plan of God is structured around cause and effect so that when Bible doctrine is applied in the life of a believer it becomes the cause that results in the effect of blessing.
24. PRINCIPLE: Conversely, His plan is structured so that when Bible doctrine is not applied in the life of a believer it becomes the cause that results in the effect of suffering.
25. The definition of the divine decree needs repeating here:
The decree of God is His eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations, and determining their certain futurity.
26. If God comprehends all things that ever were or will be, then the decision-making of the believer is not only understood by Him but its effect is also managed by Him.
27. Note that “causes” come first in the sequence of events that are decreed. Applied to the believer’s spiritual status quo, the cause refers to thought, decision, or action.