

Luke 20:1-44

Verses 1-8: Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him saying, “Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?”

But He answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?”

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.” So they answered that they did not know where it was from.

And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

--(1-2) **Now it happened on one of those days.** . . is likely either Tuesday or Wednesday, which would have given the religious leaders at least a night or two to plan their reaction to Jesus’ cleansing of the temple.

--Jesus is teaching and preaching the gospel in the temple—which is what should have been happening in the temple—when the religious leaders approach Him.

--This seems to have been an official delegation as it was made up of the three main parties that constituted the Sanhedrin. The priests were the spiritual authorities. The scribes were the moral authorities. The elders were the civil authorities.

--They publicly challenge His authority. They want Jesus to state His credentials!

John 7:15: And the Jews marveled, saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

--Man can never confer spiritual authority on other men. Human authority without divine authority is meaningless.

--(3-4) Jesus asks them this question to prove that they were not interested in the source of His divine authority.

--Jesus’ ministry was still connected to John’s witness, message, and baptism. *Wonderfully, we see that Jesus always remembers the faithfulness of His ministers.*

--(5-7) These men care about publicity and the thoughts of others. They care nothing for the truth. *This from those who thought their own spiritual authority was beyond questioning!*

--**They did not know.** . . People still claim ignorance instead of willfulness. It is so much easier to lie about religious things than it is to live or love them.

--(8) Jesus is under no obligation to answer the dishonest questions of those intent on disobedience.

Verses 9-19: Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out.

"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.' But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others."

And when they heard it they said, "Certainly not!"

Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

**'The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone'?**

Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

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.

--(9) This is one of only three parables repeated in three gospels (Mt. 21:33-46; Mk. 12:1-12)—along with the parables of The Sower and Mustard Seed.

--The planter is the Father. The vineyard is the people of Israel (Isa. 5:7). The vinedressers are the religious leaders.

--The owner of the vineyard is gone for a considerable period of time.

--(10-12) When the owner comes looking for fruit at the proper time, his servants instead receive mistreatment. *Such a sad history for God and His servants!*

--(13-16) The son stands in a totally different relationship to the vineyard than the servants. He is the heir!

--**I will send my beloved son. . . (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:32; Gal. 4:4; 2 Cor. 9:15).**

--The crowd cannot imagine the vineyard given to others! What does this mean? It means that the fruit God is looking for from Israel will now be found in the Church.

Acts 28:28: Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!

--It does not mean God is now done with Israel as a nation.

Romans 11:11-12: I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!

--(17) **Then He looked at them.** . . . gives us the sense of a serious, if not negative, expression. Jesus asks, if there is not to be rejection, then why do the Scriptures say things like **Ps. 118:22-23?** (Also: **Isa. 28:16; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6.**)

--(18) Those who fall on the stone and are broken are those who reject Christ through the Church Age, and those on whom the stone falls and grinds to powder are those judged by Him at His Second Coming (Also: **Isa. 8:14-15; Dan. 2:44.**)

***Luke 2:34: Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against. . . ***

--(19) The meaning of the parable was very clear to everyone in Jesus' day. The religious leaders would have killed Him right then, but then they would have fulfilled the parable in everyone's sight!

Verses 20-26: 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.

Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me?" Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?"

They answered and said, "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."

But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.

--(20-21) The spies are made up of a mixed group of Pharisees and Herodians (**Mk. 12:13**).

--This was a pre-planned attack meant to force Jesus into a position of political rebellion. Satan loves using falsely crafted political charges against God's people: Daniel, Nehemiah, Esther, etc.

--They pretend to honor Jesus, coming secretly like a snake rather than boldly like a lion.

--They acknowledge that Jesus was a teacher (**Mt. 26:55; Mk. 14:49; Lk. 21:37; Jn. 18:20**), and taught God's way without favoritism (**Jn. 1:18; 3:34; 8:28; 12:49**). All with no intent to listen!

--(22) The tax referred to was likely a poll tax collected from every adult male.

--It seems they expect Jesus to lean toward the religious answer, which would put Him in conflict with **the power and the authority of the governor**. That would give them a reason to turn the Romans against Him.

--**(23-25)** The dangerous connotations to their question were obvious.

--Jesus asks for a coin, which one of the religious leaders likely handed over to Him. It would have been a silver coin, worth a day's wage, with the bust of Tiberius Caesar on one side of it.

--**Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.** . . They thought the answer had to be *either-or*, but Jesus makes it clear the answer to their question is *both-and*. Yes, to taxes. No, to worship.

--The Pharisees and Herodians were carrying around and using Caesar's money, and therefore, Caesar had a right to what was his. They were also carrying around the image of God, and therefore, God had a right to what was His.

*Scroggie (Scroggie On Luke And John, pg. 71): *"The fact that our citizenship is in heaven does not affect this other fact, that we pay for a police force, and are glad of its protection."**

--The authority of human government comes from God and should be honored in all things that God Himself would honor. When human government commands something against God, or God's good, something evil in God's sight, we honor God over men.

--Yet God, in whose image we are made, should have much more than our taxes! He alone should have our body, soul, and spirit—as He Himself is essential spirit, though in Christ God has become the Son of Man.

--**(26)** Jesus' enemies are stunned, and they remain silent before The Teacher of God's way.

Verses 27-33: Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

--**(27)** Now the Sadducees take their turn at stumping Jesus. As a group, they were not as popular as the Pharisees but were tied in with the priesthood (**Acts 4:1; 5:17**) and the wealthy class.

--They did not believe in the resurrection or supernatural beings.

Acts 23:8: For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and not angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

--(28-33) The Sadducees refer to **Deut. 25:5-10**, a law of Moses which describes how a brother or near of kin, opposed to a stranger, was to raise up a living seed for a dead brother.

--They were creating a hypothetical situation meant to make the doctrine of resurrection look comical. *Always beware of those who question or defend God's truth with hypotheticals!*

Verses 34-39: *Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."*

Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." But after that they dared not question Him anymore.

--(34-36) We are told in the other gospels (**Mt. 22:29; Mk. 12:24**) that Jesus began His answer with a rebuke: ***Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?***

--I find that this passage is particularly important because, when it comes to heavenly things, so many modern believers are still making the same two mistakes:

1) They don't believe what the Bible says because they do not trust the power of God: to make crowns we would actually like to wear; to make the New Jerusalem just as He says; to make a city we would enjoy living in; to design a quality of life greater than all of earth's sorrows or joys (such as marriage and raising children), etc.

2) They don't actually know what the Bible says about eternity. The Sadducees were familiar with the Scripture Jesus mentions, but never took it as literally and simply as they should have!

The Word of God is written for normal people!

--First, Jesus answers the Sadducees by revealing to them something of the resurrection life in eternity that they could not definitively know otherwise. *Who else could tell us this but Him?!*

--Jesus states that people in this life marry and are given in marriage due to the necessity of procreation, but in the next **age** that is not so.

--The next **age** concerns those who **attain** the **resurrection from the dead**—which is *ek nekros* in the Greek, meaning a resurrection *out from among the dead*.

--Meaning, those who **are the sons of God, being sons of resurrection**, are risen from the dead, never to return. They no longer marry because they no longer die.

--Our bodies will be fashioned like His glorious body. *God, as the Creator of marriage, will not rip us off by designing a form of life without marriage. Remember the power of God!*

--(37-38) Now Jesus gives them a Scripture they should have known! Jesus refers back to the scene of the burning bush (**Exodus 3:1-16**), and makes the simple point that God cannot be the God of someone who no longer exists. So how is He still the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

The Word of God is often more literal than we would think!

--There are many other OT Scriptures referring to resurrection: **Job 14:14; 19:25-27; Ps. 16:9-11; 17:15; 73:24-26; Isa. 26:19; Ex. 37:1-14 + 24-25; Hos. 6:2; 13:14; Dan. 12:2-3**; etc.

--(39-40) They are dumbfounded! It seems at least some of the scribes are honest.

--Isn't it remarkable they *stopped* asking Him questions?

--First, it proves they didn't sincerely want the truth. *When someone stops sincerely seeking the truth, it is a telltale sign they don't actually want the truth.*

--Second, it is remarkable because of how *amazing* His answers were. Just think of what incredible, illuminating, and spiritual truths Jesus relayed in this chapter alone—all from references to singular verses in the OT!

--How many more questions I wish I could have asked Him about spiritual authority, the confluence of religion and politics, and life in the resurrection!

Verses 41-44: And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:

"The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?"

--Jesus ends the section by asking a question of His own. The question is about the Messiah's character as the Son of David (**Mt. 21:9; Lk. 18:38+22:69-70**).

--The Scriptural dilemma being, if the Messiah is only David's descendant by birth, how is He called by David his Lord?

--Jesus again refers to a singular verse, **Psalm 110:1**. The *Jehovah* said to my *Adonai*. . . leads one to ask, if this coming Person is also David's Lord. . . then what?

--In the flesh, Jesus was the Son of Man and the Son of David. In truth and in nature, He was also the Son of God.

****Romans 1:1-4: Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.****

--And so Christ is now sitting at the right hand of the Father, until. . .