

LUKE - CHAPTER 20

CLEAR AUTHORITY



Jesus has assumed possession of his “Father’s House”. He has cleared the temple of inappropriate activity. He has exposed the shallow leadership of the Pharisees, scribes, and elders. He teaches and preaches to all the people in clear daylight and in the Temple area. The religious leaders try to re-establish their authority by confronting Jesus’ authority.

DAY ONE: A question of Jesus’ Authority. (Read Lk. 20: 1-8)

20:1 Now one ¹ day, as Jesus ² was teaching the people in the temple courts ³ and proclaiming ⁴ the gospel, the chief priests and the experts in the law ⁵ with the elders came up ⁶ **20:2** and said to him, ⁷ “Tell us: By what authority ⁸ are you doing these things? ⁹ Or who it is who gave you this authority?” **20:3** He answered them, ¹⁰ “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: **20:4** John’s baptism ¹¹ – was it from heaven or from people?” ¹² **20:5** So ¹³ they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ **20:6** But if we say, ‘From people,’ all the people will stone us, because they are convinced that John was a prophet.” **20:7** So ¹⁴ they replied that they did not know ¹⁵ where it came from. **20:8** Then ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you ¹⁷ by whose authority ¹⁸ I do these things.”

1. What gave Jesus the authority to cleanse the temple of those who were defiling it?

2. The religious leaders try to trap Jesus with their questions. Why is this trap concerning authority so dangerous for Jesus?

3. How does Jesus trap the trappers?

The Religious leaders try to re-establish their authority. They questioned Jesus’ authority for cleansing the temple. Their hope was that his answer would get him in trouble with the Roman authorities.

Jesus refused to take the bait. Instead, he exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. He questioned them,

“Tell me was John’s baptism of heavenly or human origin?”

If they tried to placate the crowd by saying John was a true prophet from God, the people would confront them. The leaders didn’t believe in John while he was alive. If they were to give their honest opinion that John was not a true prophet, the people would turn on them.

Jesus showed that the problem of the religious leaders was not ignorance but intentional opposition to God's will. Jesus' authority comes from his Father.

DAY TWO: Parable of the wicked tenants. (Read Lk. 20:9-19)



20:9 Then ¹⁹ he began to tell the people this parable: “A man ²⁰ planted a vineyard, ²¹ leased it to tenant farmers, ²² and went on a journey for a long time. **20:10** When harvest time came, he sent a slave ²³ to the tenants so that they would give ²⁴ him his portion of the crop. ²⁵ However, the tenants beat his slave ²⁶ and sent him away empty-handed. **20:11** So ²⁷ he sent another slave. They beat this one too, treated him outrageously, and sent him away empty-handed. ²⁸ **20:12** So ²⁹ he sent still a third. They even wounded this one, and threw him out. **20:13** Then ³⁰ the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What should I do? I will send my one dear son; ³¹ perhaps they will respect him.’ **20:14** But when the tenants saw him, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir; let’s kill him so the inheritance will be

ours!’ **20:15** So ³² they threw him out of the vineyard and killed ³³ him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? **20:16** He will come and destroy ³⁴ those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” ³⁵ When the people ³⁶ heard this, they said, “May this never happen!” ³⁷ **20:17** But Jesus ³⁸ looked straight at them and said, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written: ‘**The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone**’? ³⁹ **20:18** Everyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, ⁴⁰ and the one on whom it falls will be crushed.” ⁴¹ **20:19** Then ⁴² the experts in the law ⁴³ and the chief priests wanted to arrest ⁴⁴ him that very hour, because they realized he had told this parable against them. But ⁴⁵ they were afraid of the people.

<p>1. Who does Jesus confront in this parable?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>2. How does this parable speak about his passion and death?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. Why didn't the religious leaders attack or arrest Jesus upon hearing this parable?</p> <hr/> <hr/>

In the midst of the controversy regarding his authority, Jesus told a parable and asked a question, **“What will the owner of the vineyard do to the tenants?”**

Summary of the parable: A man planted a vineyard and leased it to tenants (Religious leaders). At the harvest time, he sent servants (prophets), on three successive occasions, to collect his share of the produce. The tenants beat the servants. Finally the owner (the Father) sent his own son (Jesus). The tenants murdered him.

The parable gave an overview of God’s plan for his people. It revealed God’s commitment to his son despite rejection by the Jewish leadership. The nation’s rejection would cost them. The kingdom would go to new tenants, the followers of Jesus.

Day Three: A question about tribute to Caesar. (Read Lk 20:20-26)



20:20 Then ⁴⁶ they watched him carefully and sent spies who pretended to be sincere. ⁴⁷ They wanted to take advantage of what he might say ⁴⁸ so that they could deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction ⁴⁹ of the governor. **20:21** Thus ⁵⁰ they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly, ⁵¹ and show no partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. ⁵² **20:22** Is it right ⁵³ for us to pay the tribute tax ⁵⁴ to Caesar ⁵⁵ or not?” **20:23** But Jesus ⁵⁶ perceived their deceit ⁵⁷ and said to them, **20:24** “Show me a denarius. ⁵⁸ Whose image ⁵⁹ and inscription are on it?” ⁶⁰ They said, “Caesar’s.” **20:25** So ⁶¹ he said to them, “Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” ⁶² **20:26** Thus ⁶³ they were unable in the presence of the people to trap ⁶⁴ him with his own words. ⁶⁵ And stunned ⁶⁶ by his answer, they fell silent.

- 1. How do the religious leaders try to trap Jesus now?

- 2. If we are made in the image of God what does this lesson teach us?

TRIBUTE: Lk 20:22: The tribute was an annual tax, which the Romans began in 6 A.D. The tax was greatly resented by the Jewish people. It led to a rebellion under Judas the Galilean (see Acts 5:37). Romans required the payment of the tax with a special coin imprinted with the likeness of the emperor. The emperor considered himself a god. This caused more anger and controversy for the Jewish nation.

Some of the religious leaders approached Jesus and tried to set him up. This time the trap was intended to get him arrested as a rebel against the Roman Empire. They tried to catch Jesus off guard by flattery and then by asking a double-edged question. **“Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar or not?”**

Jesus knew that affirming the tax of the Romans would alienate him from his own people. Denying the lawfulness of the tax would bring Roman wrath upon him.

His answer is brilliant and puts the challenge back on the Pharisees and scribes. **“Whose image and name does the coin bear?”** They replied **“Caesar’s,”** He said to them, **“then repay to Caesar. What belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”**

Jesus’ words imply that since the money they have in their possession is Caesar’s they implicitly acknowledge his civil authority. One receives from the state certain protection, benefits and goods.

Therefore, one has something to returned in the form of good citenzship, which includes taxes. The true question Jesus poses is what do we repay to God? What does the state give to one in comparison to the grace, blessing and benefits given by God? Men & woman bear the image of God and therefore belong entirely to God as the coin belonged to Caesar;

Day Four. A question about the resurrection. (Read Lk 20:27-40)



20:27 Now some Sadducees ⁶⁷ (who contend that there is no resurrection) ⁶⁸ came to him. **20:28** They asked him, ⁶⁹ “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies leaving a wife but no children, that man ⁷⁰ must marry ⁷¹ the widow and father children ⁷² for his brother. ⁷³ **20:29** Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman ⁷⁴ and died without children. **20:30** The second ⁷⁵ **20:31** and then the third married her, and in this same way all seven died, leaving no children. **20:32** Finally the woman died too. **20:33** In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be?

⁷⁶ For all seven had married her.” ⁷⁷ **20:34** So ⁷⁸ Jesus said to them, “The people of this age ⁷⁹ marry and are given in marriage. **20:35** But those who are regarded as worthy to share in ⁸⁰ that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. ⁸¹ **20:36** In fact, they can no longer die, because they are equal to angels ⁸² and are sons of God, since they are ⁸³ sons ⁸⁴ of the resurrection. **20:37** But even Moses revealed that the dead are raised ⁸⁵ in the passage about the bush, ⁸⁶ where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. ⁸⁷ **20:38** Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, ⁸⁸ for all live before him.” ⁸⁹ **20:39** Then ⁹⁰ some of the experts in the law ⁹¹ answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well!” ⁹² **20:40** For they did not dare any longer to ask ⁹³ him anything.

- 1. How did the Sadducees try to trap Jesus?

- 2. What does Jesus tell us about life in our resurrected existence?

- 3. If you could what teaching would you like Jesus to explain more fully?

Luke reports a second and final attempt by the religious leaders to debunk Jesus’ authority. The attack is from the Sadducees. Their faith was based in the first 5 books of the Bible. They did not believe in the resurrection because they held that it was not mentioned in those 5 books. Jesus will publicly show their error.

SADDUCEES: The Sadducees party was comprised of aristocrats and chief priests of the Jewish nation. They are mentioned only in Luke’s Gospel. They were worldly-minded and influential. They were ready to co-operate with the Romans, which of course, enabled them to maintain their privileged position. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

The Sadducees tried to discredit Jesus. They proposed a far-fetched example. Telling a story of a woman who was married successively to seven brothers after each died, the Sadducees asked Jesus, **“ At the resurrection, whose wife will she be, since all seven were married to her? ”** They tried to make the idea of a resurrection a joke and make Jesus to be a fool.

Jesus responded with wisdom and clarity. He revealed their ignorance. In their thought, the resurrection expressed a mere continuation of human existence on earth. Jesus clarifies that the resurrected life is neither a continuation of life on earth nor a continuation of its values. In the resurrected life one is transformed. One enters a new world and a new existence beyond human experience and imagination. Jesus tells us the resurrected are the *“children of God.”*

Likewise, Jesus used the same scripture that the Sadducees accepted to prove life after death. “That the dead will rise even Moses made known in the passage about the bush, when he called “Lord” the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”

Day five: Jesus questions the religious leaders. (Read Lk 20:41-47)

20:41 But ⁹⁴ he said to them, “How is it that they say that the Christ ⁹⁵ is David’s son? ⁹⁶
20:42 For David himself says in the book of Psalms, ‘The Lord said to my ⁹⁷ lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, **20:43** until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” ⁹⁸ **20:44** If David then calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” ⁹⁹ **Jesus Warns the Disciples against Pride**
20:45 As ¹⁰⁰ all the people were listening, Jesus ¹⁰¹ said to his disciples, **20:46** “Beware ¹⁰² of the experts in the law. ¹⁰³ They ¹⁰⁴ like walking around in long robes, and they love elaborate greetings ¹⁰⁵ in the marketplaces and the best seats ¹⁰⁶ in the synagogues ¹⁰⁷ and the places of honor at banquets. **20:47** They ¹⁰⁸ devour ¹⁰⁹ widows’ property, ¹¹⁰ and as a show make long prayers. They will receive a more severe punishment.”



1. Jesus strongly denounced the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. What are parallels in today’s religious structures that we as believers need to be aware of and denounce?
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After his critics decided to ask no further questions, Jesus took the offensive and questioned their beliefs in the Messiah and their two-faced living.

The Messiah and the Son of David.

The scribes designated the Messiah as the Son of David. Jesus referred them to Psalm 110:1 to emphasize that the use of the title, Son of David, was inadequate and misleading as definition of the Messiah's identity. Jesus points out that the Messiah was not a mere earthly replica of King David but rather was David's Lord. He emphasized that the Messiah was divine as well as human.

David was considered the author of the psalms, especially:
Psalm 110;1.

“The Lord says to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool or your feet.”

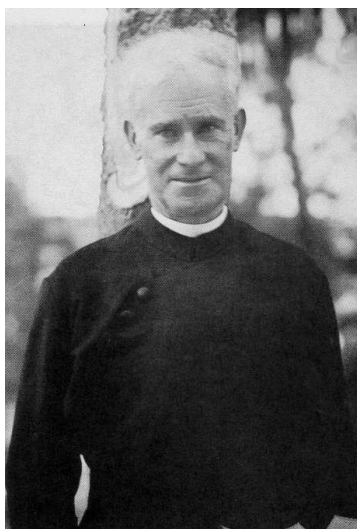
It infers that Jesus is lord and definitely pre-existed David.

Jesus publicly questions the hypocrisy of the scribes. Lk 20:45-47.

These verses describe religion at its worst. These leaders were using their religious positions to advance their own personal ambitions and to feed their pride as well as their wallets.

Jesus takes on all opponents in Chapter 20 and remains the only true voice of authority.

Fr. Judge and faith in the face of discouragement.



“What struggle! What self-sacrifice! Oh! How hard at times it was even to work for the Church. But then the sustaining power was the love of God. How much we can do for the love of Him who loved us so much and how much we can love our neighbor in Him who suffered so much for us... It is so human and natural to become discouraged. It is so easy to find fault in others, faults that seemingly justify us in not being zealous or self-sacrificing. But if we are going to be true to our vocation and work out the big apostolate God has given us, we just cannot be discouraged, so that neither apathy or those we approach, nor their indifference, nor their ingratitude, nor lack of appreciation, no financial strain, nor what we give of our own substance, even to taking the heart and spirit out of us so that we drag ourselves to work, will matter when it's a question of God's honor and glory and being faithful to the traditions of charity and zeal for which the Missionary Cenacle stands.”

(Fr. Judge. Letter dated Feb. 22, 1933. Fr. Judge nine months to the date after this message.)