

LUKE

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Luke chapter 20 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that we have entered the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry as He entered Jerusalem riding in on a donkey as Messiah the King. Also keep in mind that from the 10th of Nisan until the 14th of Nisan the Passover lambs would be inspected for any spot or blemish. (Exodus 12:1-6).

Now this just fascinates me. Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, is going through that inspection until He was placed on the cross of Calvary to pay the penalty for our sins, the perfect sacrifice, without spot or blemish! It is as John the Baptist said, "**... 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'**" John 1:29.

This evening we will see a series of questioning that the Jewish religious leaders will lay upon Jesus, trying to catch Him, trying to find some spot or blemish upon Him to discredit Him. But, as Peter reminds us, "**knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**" I Peter 1:18-21.

I realize that you may not see that as important, but it is. If there was some inherited or acquired sin found in Jesus, then He could not be that perfect sacrifice for us. He could not have completed the work! But He was without sin and thus, He was the perfect sacrifice for our sins!

Keep in mind that in our last study we concluded with Jesus driving out the money changers and those who were selling the sacrifices, ripping the people off, driving them out of the Temple area. You see, the Temple was to be a place of prayer, of worship, a place where people could be touched and healed by God.

It is after this that we will pick up our study this evening in Luke chapter 20, starting in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

LUKE 20

VERSES 1-2

Luke tells us that this began on “**one of those days**” and he does not give us a specific day. Some feel it was Tuesday, others on the Wednesday before Passover, and we can debate this and miss the real meaning of what is going on here. The questioning of these religious leaders and the response that Jesus gave to them.

Here's the thing, “Jesus' teaching, preaching, and surely His cleansing of the temple (Luke 1:45-46), were viewed by the officials as highly controversial if not adversarial.” (Pate)

And thus, they had enough and they were coming after Him to bring Him down. Jesus caused them plenty of trouble and in all that He did, they are questioning by what authority was He doing these things!

That is interesting to me because His life showed that He had that authority. He healed the sick. Raised the dead. Gave sight to the blind. Opened the ears of the deaf. Delivered those who were demon possessed. Calmed the sea. Fed the multitudes. And we can go on but, as you can see, His life showed that He was the Messiah and forgiving the sins of the people showed that He is Almighty God. Thus, He had the authority to do these things because He is God!

And as we read on listen to the response of Jesus to this question given by the priests, and Scribes along with the elders, it is interesting.

VERSES 3-8

Instead of answering their question, He questions them. Now as you read that you may think that Jesus is evading their question, but He is not. Look again at what Jesus asked them,

“The baptism of John – was it from heaven or from men?”

What Jesus is saying is that if John the Baptist is from God, then what he said is true, that Jesus is the Messiah. And if that is true, and it is, then Jesus has all the authority to do those things, for He is God!

Now what did John proclaim? In John chapter 1 we read beginning in verse 15, **“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. . . . And John bore witness, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”** John 1:15-17, 32-34.

I think his message is clear. Jesus is the Messiah. And as Jesus asked them this question, their answer should have been easy. But it was not. Why was this so difficult for them? Luke gives us the reason and it is not good. He tells us that they said, **“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.”** Luke 20:5-6.

In other words, they were not interested in the truth. They couldn’t handle the truth. Why? Because they were interested in what they believed instead of the truth of what God was saying to them.

And that is so true today. People have their own beliefs about God, about how to obtain salvation and when you speak the truth to them, they get angry, they don’t want to hear it because they can’t handle the truth. They would have to admit that they were wrong and thus, it truly is a pride issue that keeps people from God.

For these religious leaders, it was a catch 22 for them. If they said John was sent from God, then they would have to believe his teachings, that Jesus is the Messiah. If they say John was not from God, they feared what the people would do to them for they believed John was a prophet of God.

Thus, they came up with this brilliant answer after they had a pow wow together, “**So they answered that they did not know where it was from.**” Isn’t that amazing, these brilliant religious leaders had no answer for Jesus because it would expose their error.

And then the response of Jesus, “**Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.**” Luke 20:8. Again, that seems out of character for Jesus but the reality was, they were not interested in the truth and Jesus was not going to waste His time arguing with them. One writer put it like this, “If you do not recognize authority when you see it, He said in effect, no amount of arguing will convince you of it.” (Geldenhuys)

Make no mistake about it, if you are not interested in the truth, Jesus is not going to give you more truth. You need to deal with what He has already shown you and then He will give you more. And what we are going to see as we read on is that Jesus is going to give them a parable to show them who gave Him the authority to do these things. It is the Parable of the Vineyard Owner or the Vinedressers.

Before we get to this parable, let me show you that in the Scriptures Israel is spoken of as a vineyard. We see this in Isaiah 5:1-7 where we are told, **“Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: my Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it.’ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.”**

What we are being told is that God did everything possible so they would produce good fruit but instead they produced sour grapes! And if you have ever seen anyone trying to keep the Law for their salvation, their face looks like they have just eaten a bunch of sour grapes! God will not force anyone but He will give everyone a chance to produce good fruit!

We also see this illustration for us in Psalm 80:8-19, where we read, **“You have brought a vine out of Egypt; you have cast out the nations, and planted it. You prepared room for it, and caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with its shadow, and the mighty cedars with its boughs. She sent out her boughs to the Sea, and her branches to the River. Why have You broken down her hedges, so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit? The boar out of the woods uproots it, and the wild beast of the field devours it. Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine and the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, and the branch that You made strong for Yourself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. Then we will not turn back from You; revive us, and we will call upon Your name. Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!”** I think you get the idea, and so let’s dig into this parable and see what Jesus is going to say.

VERSES 9-12

As you read through this parable please understand that this sort of tenant farming arrangement was a common practice in Jesus’ day. This was especially true in Galilee. In fact, archaeologists have discovered records of this same sort of dispute between landowners and tenant farmers.

Let’s look at this picture that Jesus is painting for us. And keep in mind that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Here we see that God the Father planted a vineyard. As we have seen, this vineyard is the nation of Israel.

And God the Father allowed the vinedressers to care for the land, nurturing it, which speaks of the religious leaders and their role of bringing people to God so they may produce good fruit. The servants were the prophets of God who came and were beaten, some even killed.

As you read through the Old Testament you clearly see this happening. That the leaders turned from God, they turned the hearts of the people from God and when the prophets warned them and encouraged them to return to God, they beat them and even killed them!

We see Stephen speak of their sordid history as he addressed the religious council before he was put to death for his faith in Jesus. He said to them, **“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”**

Acts 7:51-53.

There was not much you could argue about that. It was very true and the Scriptures they said they were obeying spoke very clearly of what their fathers had done. And here's the thing. The nation of Israel was to shine the light of God to the world and when the light was dimming God sent the prophets to get them back on track, as I have said. But they rejected the prophets and now the people could no longer see the true God reflected in them!

But that is not the end of the parable. Listen to what Jesus says next starting in verse 13 of Luke chapter 20.

VERSES 13-16

Since they did not listen to servants or prophets, God sends His Son into the picture. We see this spoken to us in John 3:16-17 where Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

Now think about the question they asked Jesus as we opened up this chapter. **“Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?”**

And Jesus is telling them who gave Him the authority to do these things – *THE FATHER!*

And notice what they do with the Son, they killed Him! And what we see here is that Jesus is speaking of what they would do in just a few days - put Him to death!

Now the big question is, “Why were they going to do this?” That is a great question. Why would they put to death their Messiah? In this parable, Jesus said in regard to the reason they put to death the Son, **“This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.”**

And the reason that these Jewish religious leaders were going to put Jesus to death was so they would not lose their positions, their wealth, the things they held dear to them, and it wasn't God they were holding on to!

In John 11:47-48 we see this played out for us as we are told, **“Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.’”**

What we see here is the jealousy, the pride, the arrogance, the covetousness they had in their hearts. They were plotting to kill Jesus, they just weren't sure how, and they are trying to catch Him breaking either the Jewish law or the Roman law so they could eliminate this trouble maker! But this was not going to happen according to their time table, but God's! It will take place on Passover, as our Passover Lamb dies for us, paying the penalty for our sins.

And in response to their actions, killing the Son, Jesus says that, "**He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.**" And I am sure that when Jesus said those words the hair on the back of their necks stood up!

To take this away from them, the children of Abraham and give it to another, to the Gentiles, who were only created to fuel the fires of Hell in their minds, was just too much for them.

And in their blindness, in their arrogance, in their pride, they basically said to Jesus, "*This could never be us. We would never do something like that!*" And it cut them right to the heart. Which is good but their response is not good. They were angry at Jesus and not repentant of their sin!

I wonder what God thinks as He looks down at the church of Jesus Christ today? Has our witness become distorted? Are people seeing Jesus when they look at our lives? Has our light gone out?

Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16, "**You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**"

You see, we are to be the light of the world, a witness to the world of the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are to give people a correct picture of God and His love for them. Let your light shine for there are many out there giving people a distorted picture of God!

VERSE 17

Jesus is quoting out of Psalm 118:22, one of the Hallel or Messianic Psalms which the people were shouting out a few days earlier on Palm Sunday. Let me share with you a few verses from this Psalm. In Psalm 118:21-28 we are told, **“I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. God is the Lord, And He has given us light; Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You.”**

Now as you read this after the parable that Jesus just said, it almost seems out of place, but it is not. You see, the point that Jesus is making is this. The builders were the religious leaders who have rejected the Stone, the Rock, Jesus Christ, and it is Jesus that our faith must be based and built upon. Without Him we have nothing!

The One that the prophets spoke of, the One that they were waiting for, they are now rejecting because it did not fit in with what they thought of the Messiah. This was an authority issue and thus, they rejected Jesus and thus, they rejected His authority. But it did not change the fact that Jesus is Almighty God and thus, He has all authority. He is the Rock, the chief cornerstone of our faith!

In Acts chapter 4 the religious council is asking Peter and John, who they have arrested, by what authority they had to heal this lame man. Kind of like what the religious leaders were doing in this chapter here in Luke. And we read in Acts 4:8-12, **“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the “stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.” Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’”**

You see, without the chief cornerstone the structure is unstable and without Jesus our faith is unstable, it won't stand! One writer put it like this in regard to the cornerstone, that the cornerstone was “designated in antiquity the stone used at the building's corner to bear the weight or the stress of the two walls. It would have functioned somewhat like a ‘keystone’ or ‘capstone’ in an arch or other architectural form. It was the stone which was essential or crucial to the whole structure.” (Fitzmyer, cited in Pate)

And this is what the religious leaders were rejecting and it is what many today are rejecting, Jesus Christ, the One who gave His life for a sacrifice for our sins! He had the authority to accomplish the task and He completed it!

And then Jesus is going to conclude this by showing that there are really only two choices to make. To receive Him or reject Him and they both have consequences in our lives, that decision that we make. Listen to what Jesus said in verse 18.

VERSE 18

This had to hurt them very much. You see, Jesus is telling these pious religious leaders that those who fall upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, those who are broken of self-will, broken of pride, and fall upon Jesus in repentance, will be saved as they reach out to the Savior.

But, on the other hand, if you reject Jesus He will crush you in His judgment! This is where these Jewish religious leaders were at, being crushed by Jesus!

You see, there is a choice you have to make. To accept the free gift of God that is only found in Jesus and enter into eternal life with Him. There is salvation in no other name. But if you reject Him you can't blame God for what happens to you! You have a choice to make!

Now do you think these religious leaders understood what Jesus was saying? You bet they did and we don't have to make an assumption here, listen to what the next verse says here in Luke chapter 20.

VERSE 19

They knew Jesus spoke these things against them and it made their blood boil in anger. They wanted Him dead but the crowds around Jesus were too great to get Him now. But that is not going to stop them from planning His demise!

Listen to what we are told in regard to how these Jewish religious leaders felt as Jesus rebuked them and showed them that He did have the authority to do the things that He was doing, even if they didn't agree. The evidence before them or really against them was overwhelming.

We are told in Matthew 21:45-46, **“Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.”**

They were ready to explode. No one talks to them like that and gets away with it. And thus, they are planning on how to destroy this Jesus!

Now, according to Mark 12:13 we see this next group who is going to inspect the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. They are going to try to find a spot or blemish upon Him and as you will see, there are none! Mark tells us that, **“Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words.”** Let's read on and see what they have to say.

VERSES 20-22

They are still trying to take Jesus down, always a big mistake. Here we see the Pharisees, who were the ultra-conservatives of their day, and the Herodians who were the ultra-liberals of their day, and they came together to bring Jesus down. They hated each other but in times of conflict, they were willing to work together for this cause.

Notice the actions of these supposedly holy men of god, how wicked they really were. We are told, **“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.”** Luke 20:20.

You see, their fruit is being exposed and it is not good fruit, but sour grapes! Notice what they are going to do to try and bring Jesus down, they are going to try and catch Him in the words He says.

The first thing they do, to try to get Jesus’ guard down, is they butter Him up. They said, **“Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God truly.”**

Isn’t that sweet. By reading that you would think they loved Jesus, that they did see Him as Almighty God. But as you read what Luke tells us in verse 20, it shows the evil in their heart. They wanted Jesus to say something that would either go against the Jews or Rome so they could turn Him over to the authorities and get Him out of their hair!

And the question that they give to Jesus is a great one. They must have thought about this for some time. They ask Jesus, **“Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”** Luke 20:22.

What a brilliant question that was. You see, ever since 6 A. D. the Jews were forced to pay taxes to Rome, to the emperor’s treasury. And, of course, the Jews didn’t like this at all.

And here is the brilliance of this question. You see, if Jesus says it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar then the Jews would be upset and leave Him. If He said that they should not pay taxes to Caesar then Rome would have Him arrested.

I told you, it was a brilliant question because it was a no-win response that Jesus would have to give. It is kind of like this question. “Are you still beating your wife?” You see, if you answer “Yes” that convicts you. And if you answer “No” that means you have stopped but you did beat her and you are convicted once again.

So they have Jesus, or so they thought. Keep in mind you are never going to outsmart the Lord but they just didn’t get that and they kept trying! Notice how Jesus handles this question.

VERSES 23-26

First of all we need to understand that you are not going to hide anything from Jesus. Here we are told that Jesus knew their hearts and what they were trying to do. And secondly, like I have said, they were finding out you can’t outsmart God!

So with this question Jesus asks them to bring Him a denarius. And keep in mind that a denarius was the average day’s pay for a worker. And on this coin, was a picture of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, and the inscription on the coin read in Latin, “Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus.”

You see, they saw themselves as a god! On the other side of the coin was Caesar dressed in priestly garments and the phrase “Chief Priest” or as it was written in Latin, “PONTIUS MAXIMUS.” Not only did they see themselves as a god, but also as the high priest. Thus, you could see how this irritated the Jews

Upon holding this coin in His hand, He gives to them this great answer, “**Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.**”

What a perfect answer!

There is no way they could argue against what Jesus said or try to discredit Him. He just tells them to pay Rome what you owe them, give to Caesar that which belongs to him. And give to God that which belongs to Him - ***YOUR LIFE!***

Now let me ask you this. How many of you like to pay taxes? None of you and I would expect that. No one likes to pay taxes. But if you look at the Scriptures, we are to pay taxes and that is what Jesus is saying here.

But I have talked with people who say that our government is more wicked than what Rome was like back then and the things our taxes support are wicked, ungodly, more so than Rome.

Yes, our taxes may support some wicked things, but to say that we are more wicked than Rome, I don’t think so. And even if we are more wicked than Rome was, Jesus told them to pay their taxes, and thus, so should we!

And our taxes do benefit us with our military, road repair, schools, police and fire departments and-so-on. So we are to pay taxes or give to Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God that which belongs to Him and folks, like I have said, it is our life! Lay your life before Him as a living sacrifice, all of it!

It is as Paul said in Romans 12:1-2, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** Thus, pay your taxes, that is important. But even more important, give your life to God!

VERSES 27-33

Here are another group of Jewish religious leaders, the Sadducees. They tended to be wealthy and held powerful positions, including that of chief priests and high priest, and they held the majority of the 70 seats of the ruling council called the Sanhedrin.

And like the majority of liberal theologians of our day, they were the liberals of their day. They only believed in the first five books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy. They did not believe in angels. They did not believe in the afterlife or immortality and thus, they did not believe in the resurrection.

Thus, they come up with this absurd, hypothetical story of a woman whose husband dies and they have no children. Now in the law of Moses a single man was supposed to marry his brother's widow in order to carry on the family name and preserve the family property - it is called the law of the Levirate marriage and it is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. That is what is taking place here, and all seven brothers marry this woman and they each die.

As Spurgeon wrote, “Probably, this was one of the stock stories they were in the habit of telling in order to cast ridicule upon the resurrection.” I would have to agree!

And so the question to this story is simple, “**Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.**” Luke 20:33.

Now that is not the first question I would ask. I would ask, “What is she putting in their matzah ball soup?” Right? Sounds like a black widow to me! But they ask their question because they don’t believe in the afterlife, in the resurrection and they are trying to show how foolish it is to believe in it.

Again, they are trying to discredit Jesus and really the Pharisees who also believed in resurrection life!

VERSES 34-38

First of all we need to understand that the life we are living now is not the same as the life we will be living with the Lord. One of the main issues that Jesus deals with here, and related to the question the Sadducees asked, is that in this life we marry and in that safe environment we raise children, at least that is the kind of environment God wants us to raise our children in.

But in the afterlife, there is no need to marry and have children for there is no death. Now for some of you the idea of not being married to your spouse in heaven troubles you and for others it is a blessing. I’m not going there, don’t tell me, but I will say this, in heaven we are married to the Lord, and we will know each other. I don’t think we will fully understand the relationship we will have with our spouse and others until we get to heaven!

But let me also say this. In heaven you are not going to be missing anything. Heaven is perfect, it is beautiful and our needs are met in Christ!

Not only are we not married in heaven but there are angels in heaven. Keep in mind that they denied angels as well and Jesus makes the point that there are angels!

Also, keep in mind that the Sadducees only believed in the first five books of Moses, so Jesus takes them to Exodus chapter 3 and shows them that years after the death of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob God spoke of being their God not that He **WAS** their God!

He did not speak in the past tense, speaking of while they were living, but in the present tense, He is still their God even after their physical bodies have gone back to the dust of the earth.

Thus, if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in the afterlife, then there must be an afterlife, and there is. Even the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible, tells us, **“For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”** Job 19:25-27. In other words, Job talked about resurrection life. That even after he died he will see his redeemer!

In the New Testament Paul speaks of resurrection life, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, we do not cease to exist. In fact, in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul tells us, **“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”**

He is speaking of resurrection life! Keep in mind that when we die now, our spirit and soul go to be with the Lord and at the Rapture, the Lord gives to us a new body for our spirit and soul to dwell in!

Also, we are told in I Thessalonians 5:23, **“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Yes, there is resurrection life! As Spurgeon wrote, “A living God is the God of living men; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive.”

VERSES 39-40

Now the Scribes speak up and they say, **“Teacher, You have spoken well.”** In other words, they were saying, ***“You got the Sadducees, good job!”***

Keep in mind that the Scribes were teachers of the Law and they found 613 individual commands in the Mosaic Law. There were 365 negative ones and 248 positive ones. And they would argue over which one was the greatest.

But they still refused to open their own eyes to the truth and now, since they keep getting shot down, they are going to keep silent! But Jesus is not going to let them off that easily. He is going to try to draw out their faith and make them think about what they believe as we are going to see.

VERSES 41-44

If the other things that Jesus said didn't get to them, then this should have. In fact, according to Mark 12:36, we are told that David spoke these words in Psalm 110 out of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Now, in our culture we may miss the point but they didn't. You see, a father would never call his son lord but a son would call his father lord. They knew the Messiah was to be a son of David but how can David then call him lord if he is a son, a descendent? He wouldn't be able to unless he was more than a son!

Paul tells us in Romans 1:3-4, "**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.**"

You see, the seed of David but also the Son of God! Thus, David could rightly call his son Lord because He was more than a son of David, He was the Son of God!

And in Matthew 22:46 we are told their response, "**And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.**" They rejected what their own Scriptures said because it didn't agree with what they believed, and guess who was wrong - not God!

And Jesus is not done. As much as these Jewish religious leaders were silent before Him because they rejected the truth. He is not going to be silent in regard to what they were teaching, the things they were doing. Listen to how this chapter closes.

VERSES 45-47

Now, as Jesus turns to His disciples, in the hearing of all the people who were standing there, including these religious leaders, He warns them of these religious hypocrites who were not drawing people to God but keeping them away from God, putting up all kinds of roadblocks! These men were all for show, they liked the honor, the recognition, they took advantage of people, had a form of godliness but not in truth, and Jesus is condemning them.

And Jesus is warning the people to stay away from these religious phony's! Ouch, that had to hurt. The thing is, Jesus exposed their hearts and they refused to look and repent of their sins. They were more willing to believe their lies than to receive the truth that was before them and the warning is to stay away from people like this, they will bring you down.

What we see in the church today is people being drawn to false teachers and thus, their books sell, their churches grow because the people did not heed the warning to beware of them, stay away from them because they will bring you down!

Let me share this with you and then I will close. William Willimon, who was the Dean of the Chapel at Duke University wrote an article, "Been There, Preached That." This is what he said,

Do you know how disillusioning it has been for me to realize that many of these self-proclaimed biblical preaches now sound more like liberal mainliners than liberal mainliners? . . . these "biblical preachers" were becoming "user friendly" and "inclusive," taking their homiletical cues from the "felt needs" of us "boomers" and "busters" rather than the excruciating demands of the Bible.

I know why they do this. After all, we mainline-liberal-experiential-expressionists played this game before the conservative-evangelical-reformed-orthodox got there . . . reducing salvation to self-esteem, sin to maladjustment, church to group therapy, and Jesus to Dear Abby – is our chief means of perverting the biblical text.

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume 2, That You May Know the Truth, p. 285

How true that is. And I have seen it with well-intentioned Christians who murder the text to say what they want it to say. And if you try to correct them, they are not happy. But how far are you going to abuse the text to make it talk or say what you want it to say? God has told us what He wants to say and all we must do is listen and obey.

Another thing, which is related to these religious leaders of Jesus' day, is their behavior and how it drove people from God. I wonder how many people we are driving away from God by our actions, by our rules and regulations? Jesus didn't approve of it back then nor does He approve of it today. The invitation that we are to give to the world is simple. It is the Gospel message and it is the power of God at work in a person's life that will bring them to saving faith!

Let me leave you this evening with these words out of Isaiah 55:1-3 where we read, "**Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you - the sure mercies of David.**" Compel people to come in, invite them to come in, don't drive them away!