

Luke Chapter 20

Luke 20:1 "And it came to pass, [that] on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon [him] with the elders,"

“One of those days”: Probably Tuesday of Passion Week. The triumphal entry was on Sunday, and the cleansing of the temple on Monday. The events in this chapter best fit Tuesday in the chronology of that week. This chapter features a series of carefully coordinated attacks on Christ by the Jewish leaders.

“Chief priests ... scribes ... elders”: Each of these groups played a unique role in the various attacks that follow. Each was also represented in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, suggesting that the council had met to orchestrate the attack against Jesus. Their attacks came in the form of a series of questions designed to entrap Him.

Luke 20:2 "And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?"

This was the first in a series of questions designed to entrap Jesus. This question was raised by the chief priest, scribes and elders, evidently representatives of the Sanhedrin.

Palm Sunday was when Jesus and His disciples had entered into the city. This teaching in the temple took place, probably soon after Jesus' triumphal entry into the city. Jesus had been bringing the good news (gospel), to the people in the temple.

These religious leaders, possibly had confronted Him as He came to speak again. As we have said before, they were jealous because the people had such high regard for Him and His teachings. His teachings were different than the law which they had brought. He taught love of God and your fellowman, and He brought hope to the downtrodden and hopeless.

He ministered to sinners that they refused to have anything at all to do with. He had even stopped their money-making ventures in the temple when He drove them out. He taught with such power and authority. Now they ask Jesus where He got the authority to do this.

Luke 20:3-4 "And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:" "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"

Jesus always answered them with a question they could not answer. Here again, they cannot trap Him. He asks them a question they will not answer. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or men?

Luke 20:5 "And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?"

“Why then believed ye him not”: John had clearly testified that Jesus was the Messiah. If John was a prophet whose words were true, they ought to believe his testimony about Christ. On the other hand, it would have been political folly for the Pharisees to attack the legitimacy of John the Baptist or deny his authority as a prophet of God.

John was enormously popular with the people, and a martyr at the hands of the despised Herod. For the Pharisees to question John’s authority was to attack a national hero, and they knew better than that. So, they pleaded ignorance (verse 7).

Luke 20:6 "But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet."

Jesus has done it again. Either way they answer, they will defeat their own cause. John had been very popular with the people as a prophet of God and after he was beheaded, became even more popular with the people.

If they say John was from heaven, they would have to believe what he said was true; and he had recognized Jesus as Messiah. Either way, they made a fool of themselves, or they would be stoned by the people if they answered.

Luke 20:7 "And they answered, that they could not tell whence [it was]."

This is the only way they could answer, and yet this did not give them any proof of Jesus being worthy of death. They were defeated.

Luke 20:8 "And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

“Neither tell I you”: Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of the question, unmasking their evil motives. He wasted no truth on them (Matt. 7:6).

If it is legal for them to not answer, then it is legal for Jesus not to answer either.

Luke 20:9 "Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time."

Luke alone noted the parable was addressed to all the people, not just the Jewish leaders.

The vineyard here is symbolic of the House of Israel. The husbandmen, the vineyard was let to, were these very leaders of the temple He was speaking to. This long time is the approximately 2,000 years that they had the Abraham covenant.

You see, Jesus was answering their previous question in such a way, that they would not be able to accuse Him. The man in this parable is symbolic of God.

Luke 20:10 "And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent [him] away empty."

You see, the House of Israel brought forth no fruit. The husbandmen failed their job. This prophet God had sent, they beat and did not accept him.

Luke 20:11-12 "And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated [him] shamefully, and sent [him] away empty." "And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast [him] out."

This is just saying, that over and over God has sent prophets to warn Israel and their religious leaders of their errors, and they have beaten them, and even killed some, and threw them out of the temple.

Luke 20:13 "Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence [him] when they see him."

“Beloved son”: Both Luke and Mark recorded this expression, which makes clear that the son in the parable is an illustration of Christ.

Jesus is telling these religious men, in this verse, who He is. He is the beloved Son of God. In this, Jesus shows that God tries time and time again to win Israel. Even when Jesus is telling them this, God is making one last effort. Undoubtedly, they will know the Scriptures well enough that these priests, scribes, etc. will recognize the Son of God.

Luke 20:14 "But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."

From this Scripture, Jesus is saying these men know who He is and want to destroy Him, so they can take over.

Luke 20:15 "So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed [him]. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?"

He is saying here, that the Israelites totally reject the Lord Jesus and even kill Him. Then He asks the question: what do you think God will do to these Israelites?

Luke 20:16 "He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard [it], they said, God forbid."

“Destroy these husbandmen”: This probably pictures the destruction of Jerusalem.

“Give the vineyard to others”: This expression is unique to Luke. It identifies the year from Israel’s captivity (586 B.C. to Babylon; 2 Kings 25), to her restoration in the kingdom (Revelation 20:1-6).

It has been a time during which, in accord with God's purpose, Gentiles have dominated or threatened Jerusalem. The era has also been marked by vast spiritual privileges for the Gentile nations (Isa. 66:12; Mal. 1:11; Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10).

We see here, that God will turn His back on Israel and turn His work on earth over to the Gentiles. There was no question what this meant and it frightened them so badly that before they thought, they cried out: God forbid.

Luke 20:17 "And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?"

Quoted from (Psalm 118:22).

Psalm 118:22 "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head stone of the corner."

Jesus is speaking of Himself as being the stone which had been rejected. He is telling them that they have rejected the foundation of the church. Jesus, whom they rejected, is the cornerstone upon whom all the lively stones (Christians), are fitted together to build the church of the living God.

Luke 20:18 "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

"Whosoever shall fall ... whomsoever it shall fall": The expression was a quotation from (Isa. 8:13-15), which speaks of Jehovah. Like so many other Old Testament passages applied to Christ, it proves that He was Jehovah incarnate.

Falling on that stone is repenting and receiving Jesus. We must be broken and made new all over before we can truly serve Him. To reject Jesus is when the stone falls on you. Total destruction lies ahead for that person.

Luke 20:19 "And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them."

These learned men of the law knew that Jesus had spoken this parable against them. There was no question as to who He had said the Son was. These religious leaders wanted to destroy Jesus even though they understood. The only reason they didn't is because they were afraid of the people.

Luke 20:20 "And they watched [him], and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor."

“Spies”: The fact that the Jewish leaders resorted to such tactics is a measure of their desperation. They could not find any legitimate reason to accuse Him (6:7; 11:53-54; Matt. 22:15; 26:59-60).

“The governor”: I.e. Pilate, who was in town for the coming Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

This is nothing new. They have been trying to find something that they could accuse Him of so they could destroy Him all the time. These spies claim to be followers of Jesus so that they can gather proof to judge Him by.

The governor really did not have the power and authority over Jesus. The only time they had any power over Jesus is when He wanted them to, in order to fulfill His purpose.

Luke Chapter 20 Questions

1. While Jesus was speaking in the temple, who came upon Him to question Him?
2. What did they ask Him?
3. What day had Jesus entered Jerusalem?
4. Why were they jealous of Jesus?
5. What was different about His message?
6. He taught with _____ and _____.
7. What did Jesus ask them about John's baptism?
8. Why would they not answer?
9. How did they answer Jesus?
10. Why did Jesus not answer them?
11. Who is this parable directed at?
12. In the parable, who is the vineyard symbolic of?
13. Who are the husbandmen symbolic of?
14. What is the long time mentioned here?

15. Who are the servants symbolic of?
16. What did they do to these servants?
17. In verse 13, the beloved Son was symbolic of whom?
18. What did the parable say they did to the Son?
19. God will come and _____ these husband men.
20. Before they thought, these religious leaders said _____.
21. The stone the builders rejected has become _____.
22. Whosoever shall fall upon the stone shall be _____.
23. What will happen if the stone falls on you?
24. What was the only reason they didn't grab Jesus then?
25. Who did they send to gather information against Jesus?
26. Who did they pretend to be?