**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 19** Luke 20 Jesus’ Authority Questioned/Parable of the Tenants/

Resurrection and Marriage/Whose Son is the Christ!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture, and how does it apply to your life?
2. Read Wiersbe pages 99-108.

Why should a Christian show respect towards government authority? What are some ways he demonstrates this attitude towards authority?

1. Read Luke 20:1-8. The Authority of Jesus Questioned!

The religious leaders of Israel (chief priests and teachers of the law) were constantly trying to trip Jesus with theological or legal questions designed to trap him into a position where they could charge him with some offense against either the Roman law or the law of Moses. What they did not realize is that they were, in essence, trying to trap God! They did not realize who they were really dealing with. However, they did recognize that Jesus spoke with authority. All of the people recognized this about Jesus. Mark 1:21 and 22 says, “They (Jesus and his first disciples) came to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, bedaze he taught them as one ho had authority, not as the teachers of the law.”

1. What does it mean to speak with authority and why was Jesus able to speak with such great authority (Matthew 28:18)?
2. How did Jesus turn the tables on the religious leaders? Why did he point them back to John the Baptist (Hint: most of the people who went out to see and hear John the Baptist believed him [Mark 1:4-5])?
3. The religious leaders had all rejected John the Baptist. In rejecting him, who were they also rejecting (John 1:29)?
4. Read Luke 20:9-19 and Matthew 21:33-46 along with the article below entitled, “What is the meaning of the Parable of the Vineyard?”

The Parable of the Vineyard appears in three of the gospels (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19), with Matthew’s account being the most complete. However, there are additions in the others; hence, it is wise to study all three accounts so as to achieve the greatest understanding. To get the context of what is happening, we need to look at Matthew 21:18. Early in the morning, Jesus goes to the temple courts to teach (21:23). While He is teaching, the chief priest and elders confront Him, wanting to know by what authority He is teaching. Not allowing them to control the conversation, Jesus answers the question by first asking a question (21:24-26). They do not like His question nor His response to their answer; essentially, He has told them that they can’t save face from their obvious attempt to cajole Him and, therefore, He is not obligated to answer their question (21:27). What Jesus told them is that John the Baptist and He received their authority from the same source. This exchange causes the leaders to become angry and puts them in opposition to Jesus. Jesus then further frustrates the priests by telling two parables: the first one is the Parable of the Two Sons, and the second is the Parable of the Vineyard, sometimes called the Parable of the Wicked Tenants.

The first parable Jesus teaches tells the priests that they have claimed to accept the message from God but they have failed to live up to it by being obedient. Outwardly, they are pious and appear to be people of God, but God knows the heart, and there they have failed miserably. The next parable (the Parable of the Vineyard) is like pouring salt on a wound. Just in case they didn’t fully understand (which they did), Jesus gives a much clearer picture of what He means. Obviously, this further infuriates the priests, but it also gives the others who were present an opportunity to hear Jesus fully explain the implications of the disobedience of the Jewish people throughout the ages.

Background: There are 6 main characters in this parable: 1) the landowner—God, 2) the vineyard—Israel, 3) the tenants/farmers—the Jewish religious leadership, 4) the landowner’s servants—the prophets who remained obedient and preached God’s word to the people of Israel, 5) the son—Jesus, and 6) the other tenants—the Gentiles. The imagery used is similar to Isaiah’s parable of the vineyard (it would be prudent to study this also) found in Isaiah chapter 5. The watchtower and the wall mentioned in verse 33 are means of protecting the vineyard and the ripened grapes. The winepress is obviously for stamping out the juice of the grapes to make the wine. The farmer was apparently away at the time of harvest and had rented the vineyard to the tenants. This was customary of the times, and he could expect as much as half of the grapes as payment by the tenants for use of his land.

Explanation: Verses 34-36 tell us the landowner sent his servants to collect his portion of the harvest and how they were cruelly rejected by the tenants; some were beaten, stoned, and even killed. Then he sent even more the second time and they received the same treatment. The servants sent represent the prophets that God had sent to His people/Israel and then were rejected and killed by the very people who were claiming to be of God and obedient to Him. Jeremiah was beaten (Jeremiah 26:7-11; 38:1-28), John the Baptist was killed (Matthew 14:1-12), and others were stoned (2 Chronicles 24:21). In this parable Jesus is not only reminding the religious establishment what they were like, but He was putting in their minds a question: how could they claim obedience as God’s people and still reject His messengers? We don’t know how many servants the owner sent, but that is not what is important; the theme is God’s repeated appeal through His prophets to an unrepentant people. In the next verses (37-39), the situation becomes even more critical. The landowner sends his own son, believing that they will surely respect him. But the tenants see an opportunity here; they believe that if they kill the son they will then receive his inheritance. The law at the time provided that if there were no heirs then the property would pass to those in possession (possession is nine tenths of the law). This amounts to conspiracy to commit murder by the Jewish leadership, and it is prophetic in the sense that Jesus is now telling them what they are going to do to Him (see Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 28:16). After Jesus’ death, Peter would make the same charges against the religious establishment (Acts 4:8-12). The tenants probably thought that the fight for the property was over, but it wasn’t; the owner would now appear on the scene.

Jesus now (vs.40-41) asks the question, what will the owner do to the evil tenants? What He is doing is forcing the religious leaders/priests to declare their own miserable fate: condemnation for their blatant disobedience. This is similar to the question that Nathan put to David (2 Samuel 12:1-7). Up to this point, Jesus has been dealing with the immediate situation of Israel and its past disobedience; now Jesus leaves open the question of what Israel’s leadership is going to do with the Messiah, the Son of God, whom He refers to as the “chief cornerstone” (vs 42). Cornerstones and capstones are used symbolically in Scripture and picture Christ as the main piece of the foundation of the church and the head of the church, respectively. Jesus is the beginning of and is foundational to the church, and He now stands over the church in His rightful position of honor, guiding the church to fulfill its divine destiny. This verse makes clear prophetically how Jesus will be rejected by the religious establishment and ultimately be crucified (see Psalm 118:22-23).

The key to understanding this parable and what it says about the religious leaders is found in verse 43, where Jesus makes their lack of obedience personal. Jesus tells the leaders that because of their disobedience they will be left out of the kingdom of heaven (individually and as a people); that they have let their opportunity for the time being slip away to be given to the Gentiles (see verse 41, “other tenants”). This will be more than they can tolerate, as we will see in verses 45 and 46. He is saying that there will be a new people of God made up of all peoples who will temporarily replace the Jews so that Jesus can establish His church. This will change the way God deals with man, from the old dispensation of the law to a new dispensation of God’s grace. It will usher in a period of time where man will no longer understand forgiveness of sins as man’s work through what he does or doesn’t do or by the sacrifices of animals on the altar, but by the work of Christ on the cross. It will be a time where each individual can have a personal and saving relationship with the One and only God of the universe. The exciting part of the verse is the phrase “who will produce fruit”; this gives authority to the church to share the gospel of Christ to the lost of the world. Up to this time, the Jews felt that they had automatic membership in God’s kingdom because of their relationship to Abraham; this is why they put so much emphasis on genealogies. But the new people of God would truly have what God wanted for Israel all along: a personal and holy relationship that would be honored through the spreading of God’s word to all peoples (see Exodus 19:5-6).

Jesus continues the stone metaphor in verse 44 to show how a stone can be used to build something beautiful, such as His church, or it can be used to crush and destroy, depending on the situation. This could be likened to God’s word: to some it is salvation, peace and comfort. To others it is foolish and disconcerting because of its ability to convict man of his sins (2 Timothy 3:16).

Verses 45 and 46 give us three insights into the psyche of the chief priest of the religious establishment. 1) They are jealous and envious of Jesus’ popularity with the common people. This encroaches on their authority and power to govern. 2) They have come to the realization that Jesus is talking about them. This hurts their pride and embarrasses them in front of the people. 3) They understood the analogy of the son and that Jesus was referring to Himself. This would be blasphemous to them, and they would now seek to kill Jesus. From here the leaders would meet in secrecy to plot how they would get rid of Jesus. Why all the secrecy? The people thought of Jesus as a prophet from God; arresting Him could cause an uprising. An uprising would jeopardize the leaders’ relationship with the Roman authorities, something that the Jews did not want at any cost.

Application: We apply this parable to our lives by asking two questions; first, have you come to know Christ as your Lord and Savior, or have you rejected Him like the Jewish leadership did? The process is simple, as long as you are sincere in seeking a relationship with Christ. You need to recognize your sins, and then accept Christ as the only One who can save you from the penalty of your sins. Second, if you are a believer, what have you done with Jesus? Are you like the bad tenants, rejecting His Word and living a life of disobedience? If you are, you need to study God’s Word and pray for guidance, seeking His will for your life and living out that will as best as you can, moment by moment, day by day.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. According to the article above, what is the theme of this parable?
2. List some of the prophets who brought the word of God to the people of God (the Jews) and were either rejected, persecuted, or killed.
3. Read Romans 3:1-2; 9:1-5. List some of the benefits that accrued to the Jews, by birthright, and, particularly, to the religious leaders.
4. Why was it so difficult for them to truly have saving faith in God and in his Son, Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:13-15)?

**Personal reflection:** What are some of the spiritual benefits you have by your birthright and place of birth (Acts 17:26-27). Have you found it difficult to believe in Jesus Christ? If yes, why? If no, why?

1. In Matthew 21:43 Jesus declares to the religious leaders, “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.” According to the above article, this is the key verse to understanding the meaning behind the parable of the tenants (vineyard).
2. What is Jesus declaring about both belief and faithfulness?

**Personal reflection:** Have you come to know Christ as your Lord and Savior, or have you rejected Him like the Jewish leadership did? If you are a believer, what have you done with Jesus? Are you like the bad tenants, rejecting His Word and living a life of disobedience? How has this parable changed the way you want to live your life?

1. Read Luke 20:20-26 long with Romans 13:1-8.
2. Why should followers of Christ pay their share of the tax burden wherever they may live?

**Personal reflection:** How are you doing when it come to obeying the commandment to ‘give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s?

1. Read Luke 20:27-40 along with the article below entitled, “Will there be marriage
in heaven?”

The Bible tells us, “At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). This was Jesus’ answer in response to a question concerning a woman who had been married multiple times in her life —whom would she be married to in heaven (Matthew 22:23-28)? Evidently, there will be no such thing as marriage in heaven. This does not mean that a husband and wife will no longer know each other in heaven. This also does not mean that a husband and wife could not still have a close relationship in heaven. What it does seem to indicate, though, is that a husband and wife will no longer be married in heaven.

Most likely, there will be no marriage in heaven simply because there will be no need for it. When God established marriage, He did so to fill certain needs. First, He saw that Adam was in need of a companion. “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’” (Genesis 2:18). Eve was the solution to the problem of Adam’s loneliness, as well as his need for a “helper,” someone to come alongside him as his companion and go through life by his side. In heaven, however, there will be no loneliness, nor will there be any need for helpers. We will be surrounded by multitudes of believers and angels (Revelation 7:9), and all our needs will be met, including the need for companionship.

Second, God created marriage as a means of procreation and the filling of the earth with human beings. Heaven, however, will not be populated by procreation. Those who go to heaven will get there by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; they will not be created there by means of reproduction. Therefore, there is no purpose for marriage in heaven since there is no procreation or loneliness.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. Why will there be no need for marriage in heaven?
2. **Personal reflection:** How do you feel about this?
3. Read Luke 20:41-47, Matthew 22:41-46, Psalm 110:1 and the article below entitled, “What does it mean that the Lord said to my lord?”

In Psalm 110:1, David says, “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool’” (ESV). In Matthew 22:44, Jesus quotes this verse in a discussion with the Pharisees in order to prove that the Messiah is more than David’s son; He is David’s Lord.

The clause *the LORD says to my Lord* contains two different Hebrew words for “lord” in the original. The first word is *Yahweh*, the Hebrew covenant name for God. The second is *adoni*, meaning “lord” or “master.” So, in Psalm 110:1, David writes this: “Yahweh says to my Adoni. . . .” To better understand Jesus’ use of Psalm 110:1, we’ll look at the identity of each “Lord” separately.

The first “Lord” in “the LORD says to my Lord” is the eternal God of the universe, the Great I AM who revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 3. This self-existent, omnipotent God speaks in Psalm 110 to someone else who is also David’s “Lord.”

The second “Lord” in “the LORD says to my Lord” is the Messiah, or the Christ. Psalm 110 describes this second “Lord” as follows:

* He sits at God’s right hand (verse 1)
* He will triumph over all His enemies and rule over them (verses 1–2)
* He will lead a glorious procession of troops (verse 3)
* He will be “a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (verse 4)
* He will have divine power to crush kings, judge nations, and slay the
wicked (verses 5–6)
* He will find refreshment and be exalted (verse 7)

In Matthew 22:44, Jesus unmistakably identifies the second “Lord” of Psalm 110:1 as the Messiah, and the Pharisees all agree that, yes, David was speaking of the Messiah. When David wrote, “The LORD says to my Lord,” he distinctly said that the Messiah (or the Christ) was his lord and master—his Adoni.

A common title for the Messiah in Jesus’ day was “Son of David,” based on the fact that the Messiah would be the descendant of David who would inherit the throne and fulfill the Davidic Covenant (see 2 Samuel 7). Jesus capitalizes on the Jewish use of the title “Son of David” to drive home His point in Matthew 22. “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ‘What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?’ ‘The son of David,’ they replied. He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him “Lord”? For he says, “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”’” If then David calls him “Lord,” how can he be his son?’” (Matthew 22:41–45).

Jesus’ reasoning is this: “Son of David” is your title for the Messiah, yet David himself calls Him “Lord.” The Messiah, then, must be much more than just a son—a physical descendant—of David. According to Psalm 110:1, this “Son of David” was alive during David’s time and was greater than David. All of this information is contained in the statement that “the LORD says to my Lord.” Jesus is David’s Lord; He is the Christ, the Jewish Messiah, and Psalm 110 is a promise of Jesus’ victory at His second coming.

Another important point that Jesus makes in Matthew 22 is that David wrote the psalm under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; David was “speaking by the Spirit,” Jesus says (verse 43). Clearly, Jesus taught the inspiration of Scripture. When David wrote, “The LORD says to my Lord,” he was recording exactly what God wanted him to write.[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. Jesus was a descendant of David both through Mary (Matthew 1:6, 16), his mother, and through Joseph (Luke 3:23, 31), his legal father. The religious leaders knew about his special lineage as the Jews kept meticulous birth records. Knowing this, explain how Jesus used this clever argument to force the Pharisees into a very uncomfortable theological position (See article above).
2. In verses 45-47, Jesus warns the people to beware of these religious leaders. Should we follow this same advice today regarding certain religious leaders? Explain your answer.
3. In Matthew 22:41-42, Jesus asked these religious leaders, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”
4. How is this the key question for every generation and each individual?

**Personal reflection:** Read John 17:3 along with Matthew 7:21-23. Eternal life is defined as knowing Jesus. Moreover, Jesus will turn away everyone who does not know him on the Day of Judgment. So, why is knowing Jesus so important? Do you know him and how certain of this are you? If you are not sure, what should you do?

1. “What is the meaning of the Parable of the Vineyard?” Got Questions Ministries, accessed July 26, 2022, [https://www.gotquestions.org/parable-vineyard.html] [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Will there be marriage in heaven?” accessed July 26, 2022, [https://www.gotquestions.org/marriage-heaven.html] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “What does it mean that “the Lord said to my Lord”?accessed July 27, 2022, [https://www.gotquestions.org/Lord-said-to-my-Lord.html] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)