

Luke 20 Commentary

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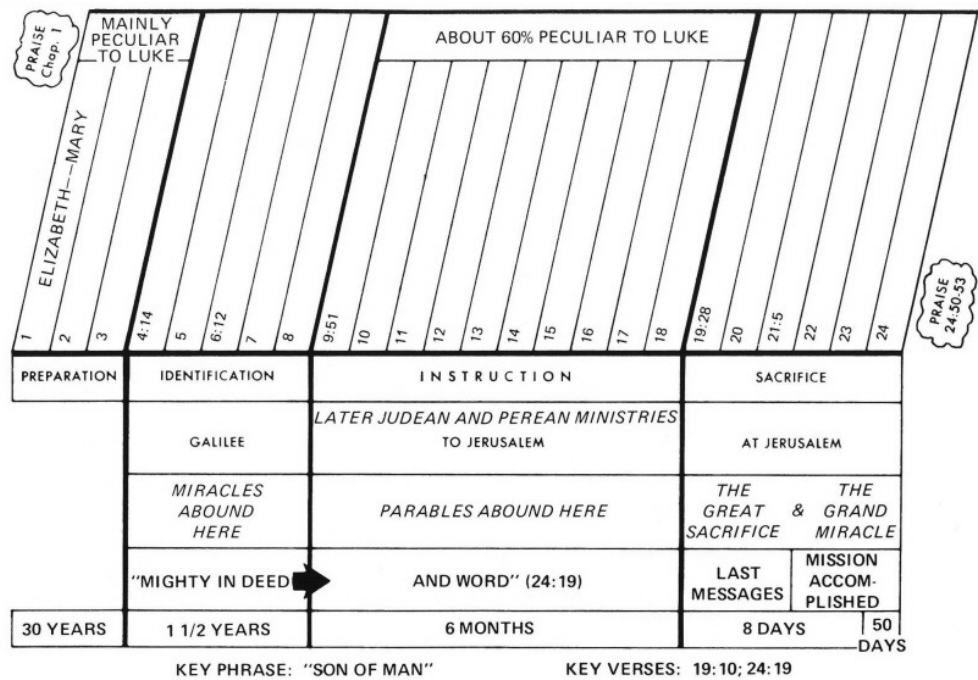
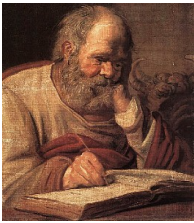
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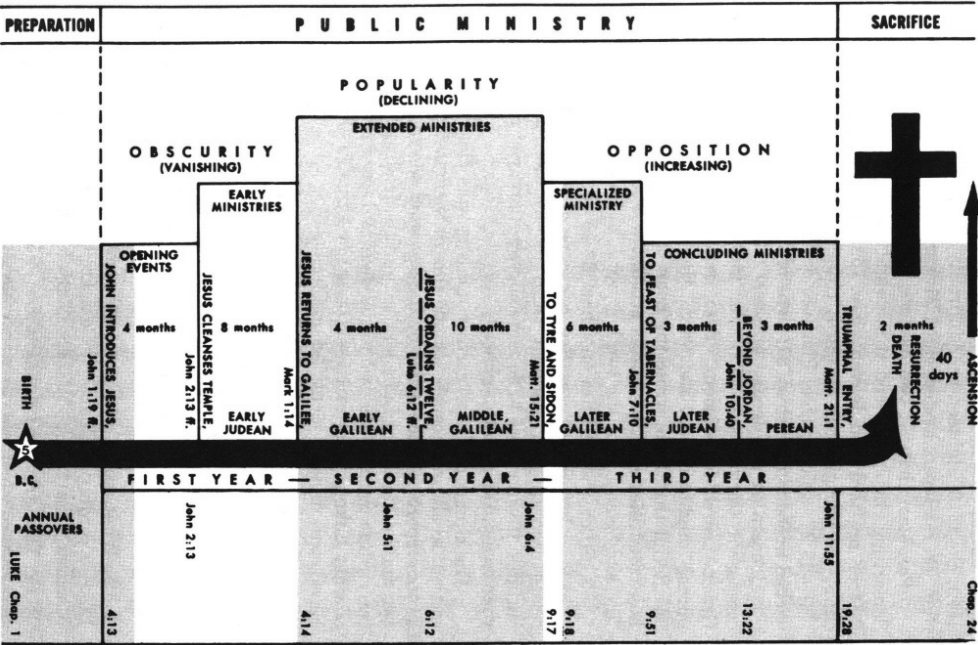
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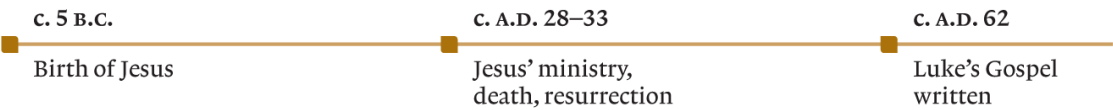


From [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) by permission
[John MacArthur's Introduction to the Gospel of Luke](#)
[Charles Swindoll's Introduction to Luke](#)
[Luke Overview Chart](#) by Charles Swindoll



Click chart to enlarge LIFE OF CHRIST IN GOSPEL OF LUKE (See Shaded Areas)
Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

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Source: [ESV Global Study Bible](#)

The public ministry of the Son of Man concluded (Lk 20:1-21:38)

1) The opposition of the priests (Lk 20:1-26)

- a) Over authority (Lk 20:1-19)
 - i). The question of authority (Lk 20:1-2)
 - ii). Jesus' reply: a silencing question (Lk 20:3-8)
 - iii). The parable of His rejection and the promise of His triumph (Lk 20:9-19)
- b) Over tribute (Lk 20:20-26)
 - i) The question of taxes (Lk 20:20-22)
 - ii) Jesus' reply (Lk 20:23-26)

2) The opposition of the Sadducees (Lk 20:27-38)

- a) The question (Lk 20:27-33)
- b) The reply (Lk 20:34-38)

3) The opposition of the Scribes (Lk 20:39-21:4)

- a) Their statement (Lk 20:39-40)
- b) Jesus' question (Lk 20:41-44)
- c) Jesus' condemnation of the Scribes (Lk 20:45-47)
- d) The widow's contrast to the Scribes (Lk 21:1-4)

Click to Enlarge Summary of Passion Week
(Source: [NIV Study Bible](#))

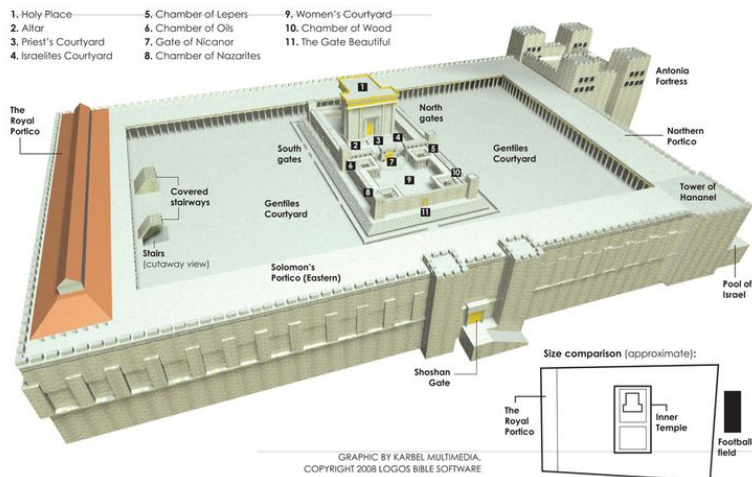
Luke 20:1 On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the Temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him,

Luke 20:1KJV 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,

- **On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple**Lk 19:47,48; Mark 11:27; John 18:20
- **the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him,** 1 Chronicles 24:1-31
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

Herod's Temple

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple wasn't completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



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Compare parallels in Matt. 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33.

The chief priests and the experts in the law with the elders came up. The description is similar to Luke 19:47. The leaders are really watching Jesus at this point.

Steven Cole has [an interesting introduction](#) to this section on authority imagining himself as a reporter in Jerusalem interviewing a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

On one of the days while He was teaching ([didasko](#) in present tense - continually) **the people in the Temple** ([hieros](#)) **and preaching the gospel** ([euaggelizo](#)) - When is one of the days? Most say this is probably Tuesday morning, but MacArthur thinks it is Wednesday (because he feels that "Palm Sunday" really occurred on Monday! [See his logic here](#)) Where in the Temple? We don't know for certain, but the biggest space would have been the **Court of the Gentiles** (about 10 football fields in size - see diagram above) which had just been purged of the perversion being practiced.

That Jesus was **teaching** is only fitting for that is how He began His "3 Year Race" - "And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all." (Lk. 4:15+) So He began in a synagogue and ended in the Temple. What an example for every pastor and teacher all across the world (1 Peter 2:21+, 1 Jn 2:6+)! And remember that the Jewish crowd acknowledged that Jesus' teaching was different "for He was teaching them as one having **authority** ([exousia](#)), and not as their scribes. Matthew recording." (Matthew 7:29+)

Mark's version gives more background of what Jesus did each day (Note MacArthur's scene would advance each day, so Sunday is really Monday, etc) -

- Sunday PM - Mk 11:11;
- Monday AM - Mk 11:12-18 (Fig tree cursing not in Luke),
- Monday PM - Mk 11:19
- Tuesday AM - Mk 11:20-26 (Not found in Luke)

It is notable that in Jesus' final days of life He made **teaching and preaching** in the Temple the focal point of His last days ministry. It is not surprising that these same two verbs (**teaching and preaching**) were used to describe His followers who walked in His steps (Acts 5:42; 15:35, cf 1 Pe 2:21-note). We do well to follow their example!

Teaching (cf Lk 19:47+)([1321](#))([didasko](#)) indicates that Jesus was the passing on information focused on content, with the purpose of discovering the truth. Synagogue teaching, as illustrated by that of Jesus, was basically expository. The root meaning of **didasko** carries with it the idea of systematic teaching or systematic training. It is the word that is used to refer to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. In Scripture to **teach** means to pass on the truth about the Word of God, the God of the Word and the faith of the saints, with the goal of influencing the understanding and stimulating obedience to the truth taught and resultant Spirit energized transformation and Christ-likeness. The essence of a disciple in fact is that he or she is a learner. The teacher teaches and the disciple hears and processes what is heard so that this truth affects his or her innermost being. Ultimately the purpose of **didasko** is to shape the will of the one taught. And this is what Jesus was trying to do in these last of His last days!

Luke's uses of **didasko** - Lk. 4:15; Lk. 4:31; Lk. 5:3; Lk. 5:17; Lk. 6:6; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 12:12; Lk. 13:10; Lk. 13:22; Lk. 13:26; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:1; Lk. 20:21; Lk. 21:37; Lk. 23:5; Acts 4:2; Acts 4:18; Acts 5:21; Acts 5:25; Acts 5:28; Acts 5:42; Acts 11:26; Acts 15:1; Acts 15:35; Acts 18:11; Acts 18:25; Acts 20:20; Acts 21:21; Acts 21:28; Acts 28:31

Preaching the gospel (good news)(present tense - continually) ([2097](#))([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#) from **eu** = good, well + **aggello** = proclaim, tell; English = evangelize) means to announce good news concerning something. **Euaggelizo** was often used in the [Septuagint](#) for preaching a glad or joyful message (cf. 1Sam. 31:9; 2 Sa 1:20; 4:10). **Euaggelizo/euangelizo** in its original sense could be used to refer to an announcement or declaration of any kind of good news, but in the NT it refers especially to the glad tidings of salvation obtained through Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. One wonders if this was what He was preaching even as the day of His death came ever closer.

Luke's uses of **euaggelizo** - Lk. 1:19; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 3:18; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 9:6; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 20:1; Acts 5:42; Acts 8:4; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:25; Acts 8:35; Acts 8:40; Acts 10:36; Acts 11:20; Acts 13:32; Acts 14:7; Acts 14:15; Acts 14:21; Acts 15:35; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:18

Matthew adds that Jesus also continued to perform miraculous healing recording "And the blind and the lame came to Him **in the temple**, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, "[Hosanna](#) ("Save now") to the Son of David (recognized Messianic title)," they became indignant ([aganakteo](#))." (Mt 21:14-15) The religious leaders saw the miracles, but still refused to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah. As noted, they never refuted the miracles per se, just the Miracle Worker! **Point** - Miracles per se don't save anyone! The Gospel has the inherent power ([dunamis](#)) to save everyone who believes (Ro 1:16+). What is the message - Preach the Gospel in season and out of season (2Ti 4:2+)!

Three groups of the most important religious leaders in Israel confront the authority of Jesus. The fact that all three conspire together is indicative of the great alarm Jesus had created among the religious crowd. And keep in mind that these three groups had Jewish sects that were not usually congenial (e.g., Sadducees were often in priesthood, Pharisees would be among the Scribes). This unlikely amalgamation was an example of the ancient proverb "[The enemy of my enemy is my friend!](#)" Of course Jesus was the common "enemy" of all three groups leading to their alliance. These three groups comprised the Sanhedrin, which was in effect the "Supreme Court" of Israel which was composed of 70 members with the head of the group being the Jewish high priest.

We see this religious triad mentioned by Jesus in a prophecy in Lk 9:22+ declaring that

"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by **the elders and chief priests and scribes**, and be killed and be raised up on the third day."

Comment: Note that this evil triad of Jewish leaders was instrumental in bringing His crucifixion to fruition. Of course the reader also knows that they were but instruments in God's sovereign plan. And the Romans carried out the actual crucifixion.

And then we see them at Jesus' mock trial Luke recording "

When it was day, the **Council of elders** (probably a reference to the Jewish Sanhedrin, the council of seventy leaders.) of the people assembled, both **chief priests and scribes**, and they led Him away to their council chamber." 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; (Lk 22:66-67, cf Lk 23:10)

We see a similar "unholy triad" confront Jesus' Peter and the disciples with him in Acts 4:1-2,

As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.

The treatment of the disciples in the early Church recalls Jesus' words of warning in His final time intimate teaching time with His 11 disciples just before His Sacrificial Death on the Cross...

"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (John 15:20, cf 2 Ti 3:12+)

Comment: Notice that this is a Prophetic Promise, but you won't find this one in most book collections of "God's Promises!" As one of my mentors used to say "Preach the Word and duck!" And if you have preached or taught the pure milk of the Word for any length of time, undoubtedly you have had to "duck!"

All of the men in these three groups should have been the wisest men in Israel and yet they prove themselves to be the most foolish. They all undoubtedly had great knowledge of the Law of Moses and the traditions, but their eyes were blinded to the deeper heart meaning of God's Word. Over and over in His Sermon on the Mount Jesus says "you have heard the ancients were told..." (e.g. do not commit murder) following up with "but I say to you..." as He proceeded to unfold the true meaning of God's Holy Law. (eg, Mt 5:21, 22, Mt 5:27, 28, etc). Their legalistic hearts were hardened to the truth of God's Word.

Wuest - As He walked along He was teaching the people (Matthew). Then, representatives of three orders approach Him, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. The definite article is used in each case, which fact indicates that those who came, represented their own group. This united action was probably agreed upon during the night. Their questions were in themselves reasonable ones from their point of view. They were the custodians of the Temple. Our Lord, by forcibly ejecting those who were engaged in business in the Temple, was claiming a superior jurisdiction. They ask Him in public now to produce His credentials, first, to state the nature of His authority, and second, to name the person from whom He had received it.

Priests (749) (**archiereus** from **arche** = leader idea of rank + **hiereus** = priest) refers to the priests that were chief over other priests. In the plural as in this verse **archiereus** refers to all the ruling priests, the members of the high-priestly families as a group, the upper echelons of the priestly class, especially those who served on the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court (Lk 9:22, Mk 8:31) There were 24 courses of priests who took turns serving in the Temple. At Passover, ALL of the priests were in attendance, and without doubt the upper echelon from among the priests would be in this delegation.

Scribes (1122) (**grammateus** from **grapho** = to write) were recognized experts in the law of Moses and in traditional laws and regulations. (Mt 2.4). Most sources consider the **lawyers** (nomikos - meaning one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be scribes specialized in the jurisprudence of the Law of Moses. The traditional rendering as "**scribes**" does not communicate much to the modern English reader, for whom the term might mean professional copyist, if it means anything at all so a rendering such as "experts in the law" comes closer to the actual meaning.

Elders (4245) (**presbuteros** the comparative form of **présbus** = an old man or an ambassador) referred to men who were older or more senior and deserving of a sense of venerability. **Presbuteros** is transliterated into English as "presbyter" (a leader in one of the Jewish communities--especially a member of the **Sanhedrin**--or of the early Christian churches) and from which the word "priest" (from Late Latin presbyter) was derived.

Elders in the The Intertestamental Period . The office of elder survived the Babylonian exile, but not without change. As previously, elders were in positions of leadership both in the homeland (Ezra 10:14) and Babylon (Jeremiah 29:1 ; Ezekiel 8:1 ; 14:1 ; 20:1,3). With the disintegration of the tribal unit, influential families came to fill the void of authority left by the breakdown of the clan. Whereas the elders' authority once derived from their position within the tribe, real authority now became based on the prominence of a particular family and an aristocratic ruling class emerged. By the second century b.c., we read of a council comprised of aristocratic elders (cf. 1 Maccabees 12:6 ; 14:20 ; Josephus, Antiquities, 12.3.3), which by the first century was known as the Sanhedrin (Josephus, Antiquities, 14.9.3-5). Although elders were historically the oldest members, in later times they became less important compared to the priests and scribes and the term "elders" came to signify lay members. This is the situation encountered in the New Testament, where **the triad of chief priests, scribes, and elders is often referred to as the Sanhedrin** (Mark 11:27 ; 14:43 ; also cf. Matthew 16:21 ; Mark 15:1) ([Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#))

Confronted (stand over) (2186) (**ephistemi**) literally means to stand near (it makes me think these evil religious leaders were "in His face" so to speak). Many times this verb is used of someone coming suddenly upon an individual, which may have been the case with the religious leaders. One can see then coming on the scene and interrupting His proclamation of good news! This is an interesting verb to use here for it is the same verb used by Paul in one of his last exhortations to "preach the word, be ready (ephistemi) in season and out of season" (2 Ti 4:2) which is what the religious leaders should have been doing instead of confronting Jesus! The English word **confront** means to oppose, as in hostility or a competition (and in a sense both of these nuances would aptly describe the jealous religious leaders).

Luke 2:4+ gives us a sense of what **ephistemi** pictures in the present confrontation, for in that passage Luke describes "an angel of the Lord **suddenly stood before** them." (cf uses of ephistemi in Lk 2:38+, Lk 21:34+, Lk 24:4+. And picture Martha coming up to Jesus in Lk 10:40+!) So one gets the picture that suddenly the religious leaders stood in front of Jesus. (This is not a fair fight but they don't know it yet!)

John Stevenson gives an interesting **illustration** introducing his message on Luke 20 - His name was Irwin Rommel. He was to be

known as the Desert Fox. But before leading the Axis army in North Africa, Rommel was a commander in the German army as they invaded France in 1940. It was during that invasion that Rommel tells of having taken a ride in his command car to reconnoiter the front. He was driving through the Belgium hills when he rounded a turn and came face to face with a truck filled with enemy soldiers. Without missing a beat, Rommel was out of his command car and calling loudly to the soldiers, "You are all now prisoners of the German army. Just drive your truck in that direction and you will be processed accordingly." The soldiers in the truck nodded their agreement and moved to comply. The truck behind them followed suit. As did the truck behind that one. In amazement, Rommel watched while 20 truckloads of soldiers meekly surrendered, all because one man had spoken with authority.

One of the distinctive things about Jesus was that He spoke with a calm but unshakable authority. This set him apart from the rabbinical teachers of that day who were always having to quote the opinion of some earlier rabbi or expert. Jesus spoke from God. He was able to say, "Thus saith the Lord." And He even went further to say, "Thus saith ME."

He did not only speak with authority; He also ACTED with authority. He acted with authority when He commanded demons to leave those whom they had possessed. He acted with authority when He told a storm to be silent. He acted with authority when He told a lame man to walk, when He rebuked disease and it departed, and when He commanded a dead girl to get up. And He acted with authority when He came in and cleansed the Temple, driving out those who had come to make a profit instead of to listen to the Prophet.

Imagine what would be the reaction if an out-of-town carpenter showed up this Sunday in your church and began overturning pews and tossing around the offering plates. What would be your reaction? It would probably be the same as was seen by the Temple leaders: "What gives you the right to do these things? Just who do you think you are?" ([The Authority of the King - Luke 20:1-47](#))

Luke 20:2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?"

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

- **Tell us by what authority You are doing these things**, Lk 19:35-40,45,46; Mt 21:23-27; Mark 11:28-33
- **who is the one who gave You this authority** Exodus 2:14; John 2:18; 5:22-27; Acts 4:7-10; 7:27,35-39,51
- [The Question of Christ's Authority](#) - Alfred Edersheim
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

Parallel Passage:

Mark 11:28-33+ and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?" 29 And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me." 31 They began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 32 "But shall we say, 'From men?'"—they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet. 33 Answering Jesus, they *said, "We do not know." And Jesus *said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."



James Tissot: Jesus' Authority Questioned

A QUESTION OF

AUTHORITY

The leadership is looking back to acts like the temple cleansing (Luke 19:45–48). How could a Galilean preacher do these things?

Tell us (command in the aorist imperative - Do this now! Don't delay!) **by what authority** ([exousia](#)) **You are doing these things** - This entire chapter is about **authority** ([exousia](#)). And notice who raises the question - those who were assigned "authority" over the Temple complex. To what do **these things** refer? Most agree that from the immediate context (Lk 19:45-48+) **these things** refer to His cleansing of the Temple and expulsion of the corrupt merchants which would have significantly impacted the income of the religious leaders who were skimming off the top. **These things** (note it is plural supporting more than just the Temple cleansing) would also obviously refer to the enthusiastic reception of Jesus' triumphal entry and the crowd acknowledging Him as Messiah and King (Lk 19:38+). What is sad is that Jesus had in effect told them by what authority He had cleansed the Temple and His authority was the Word of God quoting Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 in Luke 19:46+! Perhaps these religious leaders did not hear Him state His basis for the cleansing. More likely is they did not want to hear it for although they pontificated and spoke the Scriptures, they did not live the Scriptures, once again showing that they were hypocrites of the highest order! This was about their pocket book not their "hymn book" (so to speak)!

The reaction of the religious leaders to their loss of revenue stream reminds me of Paul in Philippi when he cast out a "spirit of divination" of a slave girl who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling (Acts 16:16+). This act incited the ire of her masters and the pagan crowd who beat Paul and Silas and had them thrown in prison (Acts 16:19-24+).

Stevenson comments "Jesus has not been ordained by any reputable denomination. He has no seminary degrees hanging on His wall. He goes by not title such as "reverend" or "rabbi." So what gives Him the right to overturn money changers' tables or to drive out animals being bought and sold? What gives Him the right to stop the "business as usual" within the Temple?"

Notice that this is the first of a series of questions calculated to trip up Jesus. In this case, if Jesus stated that He was teaching and preaching based on His own authority, these evil men could say He was in effect out of His mind, acting like a meglomaniac! On the other hand if Jesus said He was acting on the authority of God, they would accuse Him of blaspheming God. So it looks good for these tricksters who now think they have Jesus boxed into a corner!

English definition of [authority](#) - the power or right to give orders or make decisions; the power or right to control, judge, or prohibit the actions of others; power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior; the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience; the moral or legal right or ability to control.

Authority (1849) ([exousia](#) from **éxesti** = it is permitted, it is lawful) means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. "[Authority](#) or right is the dominant meaning (of *exousia*) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousia** refers to delegated [authority](#) and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone. **Exousia** is an important term in the Gospels because as in our present verse, many conflicts in Jesus' ministry turn on debates about **authority** or the idea that Jesus taught with an unparalleled **authority** (Mt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 21:23-27; 28:18; Mk 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 11:28-33; Lk 4:32, 36; 5:24; 7:8; 20:2-8).

Power and authority (right and might, power and privilege) are a recurrent theme in Matthew (see Mt 8:9; 9:6, 8; 10:1; 21:23, 24, 27). In fact Matthew 28:18 sums it up very well "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All **authority** (*exousia*) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." That settles any quibbling over **authority**, for He is sovereign over all the Creation (which He created)!

Luke's uses of **exousia** - Lk. 4:6; Lk. 4:32; Lk. 4:36; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 7:8; Lk. 9:1; Lk. 10:19; Lk. 12:5; Lk. 12:11; Lk. 19:17; Lk. 20:2; Lk. 20:8; Lk. 20:20; Lk. 22:53; Lk. 23:7; Acts 1:7; Acts 5:4; Acts 8:19; Acts 9:14; Acts 26:10; Acts 26:12; Acts 26:18

The New Testament affirms that even Jesus' speaking conveyed a clear sense of His **authority** as Mark records

They went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority ([exousia](#)), and not as the scribes. (Mark 1:21-22+)

Lane comments that Mark's "primary emphasis is on the **authority** of Jesus' teaching and the response of the people, whose astonishment conveys the impression of real alarm. Jesus' word, presented with a sovereign **authority** which permitted neither debate nor theoretical reflection, confronted the congregation with the absolute claim of God upon their whole person. Jesus' teaching recalled the categorical demand of the prophets rather than scribal tradition....In the presence of Jesus men are disturbed, and this disturbance is the precise act of fishing to which Jesus had called the four fishermen." (NICNT-Mark)

Comment - Jesus' **teaching** differed from the "scribes" for many of them limited their teaching to the authorities they cited, and a great part of their training centered on memorizing the received traditions. They spoke by the **authority** of others, whereas Jesus spoke with His own **authority**. As explained above, **authority** ([exousia](#)), speaks of the fact that Jesus possessed both the power and the privilege, and in the NT His authority served to prove His sovereignty. Whereas the scribes quoted other human sources to lend a sense of **authority** to their proclamations, Jesus quoted God's Word, the final **authority**.

[Exousia](#) is used for the power that proves and reflects the sovereignty of Jesus. Jesus' declaration with power was in marked contrast to the scribes who quoted others to lend authority to their teachings. Jesus quoted only God's Word and spoke as the final authority on truth. He spoke eternal truth simply, directly, with love (in contrast to the bitter hatred of the Pharisees), and without hesitation or consultation. That astounded the crowd.

Matthew records a similar reaction from the Jewish audience at the end of the Sermon on the Mount

When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having **authority**, ([exousia](#)) and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29+)

A. T. Pierson observed that Christ taught the Scriptures to the people as if He were its Author (cp Heb 1:1, [2note](#)) rather than its commentator. How incredible, **Pierson** added, that He "comes forth from the carpenter's shop, where like all other well-trained Hebrew youth, He had learned His father's trade, and His first public utterance (referring to Sermon on the Mount) is the most original and revolutionary address on practical morals which the world has ever heard."

Wiersbe notes that "there was more to this series of questions than mere guile. The word translated "rejected" in Luke 9:22 (and also Luke 20:17) means "to reject after investigation." It was required that the Jews carefully examine the Passover lambs from the tenth day to the fourteenth day to make sure they had no blemishes (Ex. 12:1-6). Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), was watched and tested by His enemies during that final week; and yet in spite of what they saw and learned, they rejected Him. However, *Jesus was also examining them!* (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

[Steven Cole](#) has a practical, personal application regarding Jesus' **authority** - The problem that those Jewish religious leaders faced is the same problem that every person who comes into contact with Jesus faces: **His authority confronts my authority**. At first, maybe it's just an irritating sermon that makes you a bit uncomfortable. You don't like it, but you brush it aside and continue on with your agenda for your life. Then, perhaps you have another encounter with Jesus: a passage in the Bible steps on your toes. Your level of discomfort goes up a notch. You realize that if He takes over your life, there are going to be some radical changes, and you're not sure that you want to give up control. So you scramble to dodge the implications of who Jesus is. You raise all sorts of intellectual questions so that you don't have to face the fact that He is Lord. But, He keeps coming to town and confronting your authority to run your own life. Sooner or later, you come to a crisis point where you have to deal with the question that these Jewish religious leaders asked: **"By what authority does Jesus say and do these things?"** The bottom line for them is the same for us today: If Jesus is acting by God's authority, then we had better submit to Him. **Authority** is a fundamental question of life: Who has the right to govern?

J C Ryle - The spirit which prompted this demand is too evident to be mistaken. These men hated and envied Christ. They saw His influence increasing. They saw their own power waning. They resolved, if possible, to stop the progress of this new teacher; and the point on which they made their assault was His authority. His mighty works they ought to have examined. His teaching they ought, in all fairness, to have compared with their own Scriptures. But they refused to take either one course or the other. They preferred to call in question His commission.

Every true-hearted Christian who tries to do good in the world, must make up his mind to be treated like his Master. He must never be surprised to find, that the self-righteous and the worldly-minded dislike His ways. The lawfulness of his proceedings will be constantly called in question. He will be regarded as meddling, disorderly, and self-conceited, a pestilent fellow, and a troubler of Israel. (Acts 24:5; 1 Kings 18:17.) Scripture-readers, district-visitors, lay-agents, and un-ordained missionaries, are specially liable to meet with such treatment. And worst of all they will often meet with enemies, where they ought to find friends.

Let all who are attacked by the world for trying to do good, take comfort in the thought that they are only drinking of the cup which Christ drank. Their Master in heaven sympathizes with them. Let them work on patiently, and believe that, if they are faithful, their work will speak for itself. The world's opposition is sure to attend every really good work. If the servants of Christ are to cease from every movement which the world calls in question, they will soon come to an entire standstill. If we are to wait till the world approves our plans, and is satisfied with the propriety of our efforts, we shall never do anything on earth. ([Luke 20](#))

THOUGHT on the authority of Jesus - Has the Lord Jesus upended any tables in your selfish life? Has He stopped you in your tracks in a way that shocked and upset you? Maybe, like those moneychangers, you weren't doing anything illegal. You were just going about your business, making a living, providing for your

family. You attended church regularly. You weren't doing anything immoral or flagrantly sinful. Then one day Jesus stepped up to your life, took hold of it, and with a sudden jerk, everything was upended. His authority suddenly confronted the self-oriented direction of your life. Perhaps, like these religious men, your immediate reaction was, "Who do You think You are, to upset my life like this? By what authority do You do this to me?" (From [Steven Cole](#))

Luke 20:3 Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me:

Luke 20:3KJV And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

- **I will also ask you a question** Lk 22:68; Mt 15:2,3; Colossians 4:6
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS' COUNTER-QUESTION

Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question(literally "a word"), **and you tell Me** - Answering a question by asking another question was a common rabbinic practice, especially in the context of debate. This method was used to force the questioner (the one who asked the first question) to consider the issue at a deeper level. And so we see that Jesus commonly responded to questions, with a question of His own, to force them to consider the matter in question in greater depth. For example, in Mark 10:2-3 we read "Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" (cf Mt 19:16, 17, Mark 10:17, 18)

Wuest - Our Lord meets their questions with another question. He says that He has one question to ask them. The one question is not contrasted to the two questions asked Him, but points to the simplicity of the issue. The answer to our Lord's one question should clear the air. He refers to John the Baptist. The latter had testified to the divine source of His mission. The question of the Sanhedrin resolved itself into a question as to the source of the Baptist's teaching. In demanding an answer from them, our Lord was claiming an answer as from authorized teachers who were acquainted with the facts. In twentieth century language, He put them on the spot. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

In Matthew Jesus added "I will also ask you one thing, **which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.**" (Mt 21:24) Mark is similar - "And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, **and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.**" (Mk 11:29)

Hendriksen summarizes Jesus' answers to His opponents' attacks...(Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

| The opponents' attack | Jesus' answer |
|-----------------------|--|
| Luke 5:21 | Luke 5:22-24 |
| Luke 5:33 | Luke 5:34-39 |
| Luke 6:2 | Luke 6:3-5 |
| Luke 11:15 | Luke 11:17-22 |
| Luke 20:27-33 | Luke 20:34-38 (for the question see Mark 12:24) |
| Luke 20:1,2 | Luke 20:3-8 |

Luke 20:4 "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?"

Luke 20:4KJV The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

- **Was the baptism of John from heaven** Lk 7:28-35; Mt 11:7-19; 17:11,12; 21:25-32; John 1:6,19-28
- **From men** Lk 15:18; Daniel 4:25,26

- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

John 1:6 (SOURCE OF JOHN'S BAPTISM) There came a man **sent from God**, whose name was John.

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers **rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.**

THE AUTHORITY FOR THE BAPTISMS PERFORMED BY JOHN

Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? - Jesus is implying clearly that there are only two sources of authority - from Heaven (God) and from man. Note that **from heaven** is a Jewish way of saying "from God." In Mark 11:30 Jesus adds this command - "**Answer** (aorist imperative) Me." If the Jewish leaders had been under God's (Heaven's) authority, they would have followed John the Baptist whose baptism was one of repentance, and ultimately pointed to Jesus.

Steven Cole Jesus doesn't dodge their question. He says, in effect, that if they will answer His question rightly, they will have the answer to their question. If John was God's prophet and he pointed to Jesus as Messiah, then Jesus was acting under God's authority....Even so, their question, turned back against them, is a basic question in life that we all must answer: **Who or what is the final authority in life?** Who determines what is right or wrong? Who said that you could act as you do?....**'By what authority'** is a fundamental question of life each of us must answer. Will you live your life under God's authority or under some human authority, be it yourself or someone else?

What the Bible teaches - The Lord knew that His questioners were acting a part. They neither wanted to hear about His schools of learning nor the authority of His acts, but they did want to discredit Him in the eyes of the people who were listening so attentively to Him. Knowing their hearts He asked them a question that was also of great importance in the court of public opinion. Was John commissioned by God or was he only a messenger from men? ([What the Bible Teaches – Luke](#))

It is notable that Jesus did not ask about John's ministry in general or about John's character but specifically about the **baptism** which John performed. Why did Jesus focus on the **baptism of John**? To understand what Jesus was doing, one needs to know that the **baptism of John** was a type of baptism that had never been practiced in Israel prior to John's ministry. Yes, the [Jews had practiced ritual baptism](#) (notice in this article there is NO mention of John's baptism!) for centuries, for Jewish laws (man made) required every Jew to immerse themselves in water (called [tevillah or tvilah](#)) in order to enter the precincts of the Sanctuary. The Jews used an immersion pool called the [mikveh](#) (See [picture](#)), and immersion in the mikveh (or in "living water" = springs, etc) was a major requirement for a Gentile who sought to convert to Judaism. "There are many ancient mikva'ot (plural of mikveh) to be seen in Jerusalem, and it is clear to see the two sets of steps for each one – a set of steps going down to the mikveh in an impure (tamay) state on one side, and on the other side, steps where the pilgrim will emerge fresh and ritually clean (tahor)." ([Ref](#))

Jewish baptisms practiced before John were ritualistic, symbolic, external and not associated with genuine repentance and a radical change of one's heart. In marked contrast, **the Baptism of John** called for confession of sins (Mt 3:6+) and repentance shown to be genuine by the spiritual "fruit" that subsequent "grew forth" in one's life. In other words, no spiritual fruit would demonstrate that one's repentance had been intellectual without true change of one's heart.

Luke helps us understand the true spiritual nature of the **Baptism of John** writing in Acts 19:4

Paul said, "John baptized with **the baptism of repentance** (Mt 3:1, 11+, Mk 1:7-8+, Lk 3:16-17+, Jn 1:26+), telling the people to **believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus**"

In fact even before John the Baptist was born these prophetic words spoke of the radical nature of the baptism of John and also of the **divine authority** bestowed on John...

And you, child (JOHN THE BAPTIZER), will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; **To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness (aphesis) of their sins** (WHICH IS THE FOUNDATION OF SALVATION - cf Luke 24:47+), (Lk 1:76-77+)

The New Living Translation of Luke 3:3 says it this way...

Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had turned to God to receive forgiveness ([aphesis](#)) for their sins. (Luke 3:3NLT+)

So let's summarize - What is the essence of **the baptism of John**? It is not the physical act of immersion in water, but it is what this act symbolized which was belief in the coming Messiah, confession of sins, repentance and forgiveness of sins resulting in genuine salvation. In short, those whose lives subsequently demonstrated supernatural "fruit in keeping with repentance," were saved. The diagram below helps us understand how they were saved as they looked forward to the atoning death of Messiah (from the article [What is Progressive Revelation as It Relates to Salvation?](#)).

Thus it is fitting that Jesus would zero in on the unique aspect of John's ministry which the Jewish religious leaders had rejected. We see this rejection by the religious leaders demonstrated in their reaction to John's baptism in the Gospel of Matthew

Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they **confessed their sins**. 7 But when he saw **many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism**, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore **bear** (aorist imperative) fruit in keeping with **repentance** (metanoia); 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father' (see Ryrie's note below) ; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. (Mt 3:5-9)

Comment - Repentance is not just words or intellectual belief, but is a supernatural "transaction" in one's heart which is enabled by the Spirit of God, as a gift from the Father (Acts 5:31, Acts 11:18, Ro 2:4-note, 2 Ti 2:25-note). How sad to see many in modern evangelicalism "jettison" the need for repentance in salvation.

Charles Ryrie - The common teaching of that day said that the Jews participated in the merits of Abraham, which made their prayers acceptable, helped in war, expiated sins, appeased the wrath of God, and assured a share in God's eternal kingdom. Consequently, the people were startled when John and Jesus preached the necessity of personal repentance. (Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition](#))

Henry Morris - John's baptism was conditioned on repentance--that is, a genuine change of mind and attitude toward God. It symbolized a washing away of fleshly sins, as well as a new life following death to the old life. Peter's exhortation after Pentecost was very similar (Acts 2:38). In both cases, true repentance, as well as faith in God and His promises, are assumed as conditions for forgiveness of sins. Without these, baptism is meaningless. (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

Luke adds this "commentary" on the reaction of the religious leaders to the baptism of John...

(Jesus declared) "I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." 29 When all the people and the (DESPISED) **tax collectors** heard this, they acknowledged God's justice (NLT = "agreed that God's way was right." -- NOTICE WHO ACKNOWLEDGES IN EFFECT THAT JOHN HAD AUTHORITY TO PERFORM A BAPTISM CALLING FOR CONFESSION OF SINS AND GENUINE REPENTANCE), having been baptized with the **baptism of John**. 30 But **the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected** ([atheteo](#) = declared invalid, annulled!) **God's purpose for themselves**, not having been baptized by John. (Luke 7:28-30+)

Comment - So when they rejected God's purpose for themselves, they were rejecting the baptism of John and by default were rejecting the One to Whom the baptism of John was pointing. In other words these leaders were in effect rejecting the Messiah!

The decision of the religious leaders regarding John's baptism would in effect determine their decision about Jesus and about His **authority**. Stated another way what Jesus is doing is in a sense staking the authenticity of His **authority** on the **authority** of John the Baptist to carry out a this new baptism calling for repentance and associated with forgiveness of sins. The way Jesus phrases the question leaves these cowardly hypocrits with only two possible conclusions, either **John's authority and Jesus' authority** was from God or it was from men. In effect, Jesus' implication is clear - while He does not directly state it, the nature of His question clearly implies that His authority, like that of the baptism of John, is commissioned by God.. God is the Source of John's authority (John 1:33 = "'I did not recognize Him, but He Who [REFERRING TO GOD] sent me to baptize in water said to me...") and God is the Source of Jesus' authority.

In John's Gospel we see Jesus repeatedly attest the fact that the Source of His **authority** is God the Father..

Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of**

Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. 20 "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. 21 "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. 22 "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (John 5:19-23)

(Jesus declared) **"I can do nothing on My own initiative.** As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 5:30)

"So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and **I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.** (John 8:28)

"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. 50 "I know that His commandment is eternal life; **therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."** (John 12:49-50)

Henry Morris - Jesus responded to the challenge of these religious leaders by reminding them of how they had ignored the teaching of John the Baptist. John had clearly, in the hearing of their delegates, stressed that the authority of Jesus had come from God (John 1:19, 29-34). (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

Mattoon - He turned the tables by putting these leaders on the defensive by asking them about the ministry of John the Baptist. Was John's ministry of men or of God? What was the authority behind the baptism of John? Why would the Lord ask about this? The point is that their answer to Jesus' question would answer their own question. First of all, John pointed men to the Lord Jesus. He told the Jewish people that Jesus was the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world. John proclaimed Jesus as his superior. John 1:26-27... "John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. 27 "It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." If these men rejected John, they would be rejecting Jesus, too. If they were unwilling to accept the truth of John's message, then they would not benefit from the truth that Jesus was sharing with them. If they accepted John's message as from God, then they would need to accept Jesus who was the focus of John's ministry. In essence, they would be answering their own question by answering the question of Jesus. Thus, they are careful to answer the Lord's question. Notice verse Lk 20:5.

John, like Jesus, was not a part of the official rabbinic order. So the question "John's baptism—was it from heaven or from men?" draws an analogy between John the Baptist and Jesus. See Luke 3:1–20; 7:24–27. The phrase John's baptism refers to the baptism practiced by John.

The question is whether John's ministry was of divine or human origin.

Baptism (908) (**baptisma** from **bapto** = dip as in dye to color - see study of verb **baptizo**) is the result of the act of dipping, plunging, immersing, washing. something or someone. The verb **baptizo** pictures the introduction or placing of a person into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition.

Stevenson explains - The baptism of John was something new and different in the religious life of Israel. They were used to ceremonial washings. At several of the main entrances of the Temple there were large pools dedicated to ceremonial washings. The priests were constantly having to wash themselves before serving in the Temple. But John's baptism was different. It was in rivers and streams. And it was part of a call to repentance. And it was accompanied by the promise of One who was to come to establish a Kingdom.

Hendriksen - Now by means of the counter-question—"The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?"—Jesus was by no means evading the question that had been asked him, for an honest and correct answer to his question would unmistakably have pointed to himself as the Greater One whom John had proclaimed, and would therefore have meant that Jesus' right or authority to do these things had come from God. It was by God that Jesus had been commissioned (Luke 9:48; cf. Matt. 10:40; Mark 9:37). It was while John was baptizing that he had proclaimed Jesus as being his superior (Luke 3:16 f.; cf. John 1:26, 27), and it was soon after the Lord's baptism by John that the latter had described Jesus as "the Lamb of God who is taking away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

Steven Cole - Their question, turned back against them, is a basic question in life that we all must answer: *Who or what is the final authority in life?* Who determines what is right or wrong? Who said that you could act as you do? Have you answered it for your life? Who is your final authority? You say, "I let my conscience be my guide." What informs your conscience? You say, "I just feel inside what is right." Really? I've read of hired killers who could shoot a man in the face without a twinge of conscience! Perhaps you say, "I obey the laws of the land." What about when those laws say that it's okay to kill babies or gas the Jews? Does that make it right?

Do you obey the state when you don't like its laws or just when they agree with you? Maybe you obey reason? Whose reason? There are proponents on both sides of most moral questions. By what authority do you live your life? Our society generally used to agree that the Judeo-Christian standards of the Bible were moral absolutes. But now that we have rejected that moral base, our judicial system is in crisis. You often hear, "You can't legislate morality." Really? Aren't rape, murder, molesting children, and racial discrimination *moral* issues? The crucial question is, how do we determine *whose* morals we are going to legislate and uphold in our courts? If we throw out God's moral standards in the Bible, we have no basis for determining right and wrong, other than majority opinion. "By what authority" is a fundamental question of life each of us must answer. Will you live your life under God's authority or under some human authority, be it yourself or someone else? [By What Authority?](#)

ILLUSTRATION - The late Bill Klem was one of major league baseball's best-known and powerful umpires. When he was behind the plate, he made it clear that he was completely in charge of everything that mattered. In one important game, it was the ninth inning. The batter hit the ball to left field. The runner on third ran for home with the potential winning run. The catcher crouched to make the tag. The runner, the catcher, and the umpire all collided and were laid out in the dirt. From one dugout, the players were screaming, "He's safe! He's safe!" In the other dugout, they were shouting, "He's out! He's out!" The fans in the stands were going wild. In the midst of all the confusion and noise, Bill Klem stood up, looked directly into the stands, raised his fist and exclaimed, "He ain't nothin' till I've called it!" Bill Klem made it clear that everyone had to submit to his authority.

Gotquestions on Baptism of John:

Question: "What was the meaning and importance of the baptism of John the Baptist?"

Answer: Though today the word **baptism** generally evokes thoughts of identifying with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (cf Ro 6:2-3-note, Col 2:9-12-note), **baptism did not begin with Christians**. For years before Christ, the Jews had used baptism in ritual cleansing ceremonies of Gentile proselytes. John the Baptist took baptism and applied it to the Jews themselves—it wasn't just the Gentiles who needed cleansing. Many believed John's message and were baptized by him (Matthew 3:5–6). The baptisms John performed had a specific purpose.

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist mentions the purpose of his baptisms: "I baptize you with water for repentance." Paul affirms this in Acts 19:4: "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." John's baptism had to do with repentance—it was a symbolic representation of changing one's mind and going a new direction. "Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River" (Matthew 3:6). Being baptized by John demonstrated a recognition of one's sin, a desire for spiritual cleansing, and a commitment to follow God's law in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival.

There were some, like the Pharisees, who came to the Jordan to observe John's ministry but who had no desire to step into the water themselves. John rebuked them sternly: "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance'" (Matthew 3:7–8). Even the religious leaders needed to repent of their sin, although they saw no need of it.

[Christian baptism today](#) also symbolizes repentance, cleansing, and commitment, but Jesus has given it a different emphasis. Christian baptism is a mark of one's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is representative of a cleansing that is complete and a commitment that is the natural response of one who has been made new. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross completely washes away our sins, and we are raised to new life empowered by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Romans 6:1–11). With John's baptism, a person repented of sin and was therefore ready to place his faith in Jesus Christ. John's baptism foreshadowed what Jesus would accomplish, much as the Old Testament sacrificial system did.

John prepared the way for Christ by calling people to acknowledge their sin and their need for salvation. His baptism was a purification ceremony meant to ready the peoples' hearts to receive their Savior. ([Gotquestions.org](#) - this site is highly recommended)

Related Resources:

- [What is the baptism of/by/with fire?](#)
- [Is baptism necessary for salvation?](#)
- [In what way was John the Baptist the greatest \(Matthew 11:11\)?](#)
- [What is the symbolism of water baptism?](#)
- [What is the origin of baptism?](#)

Luke 20:5 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'"

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

- **Why did you not believe him** John 1:15-18,30,34; 3:26,36; 5:33-35; Acts 13:25
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

REASONING OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

They reasoned among ([sullogizomai](#)) themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe ([pisteuo](#)) him?'" - The religious leaders are at least smart enough to know they are ["in a pickle"](#) (in a quandary or some other difficult position.) ([see interesting origin of phrase](#)) . **From heaven** means from God. In other words, the authority of John's baptism was from God, and they did not believe or receive John's baptism, so they rejected God's authority over their lives and religious service.

Wuest on reasoned among themselves - Conference in groups was scarcely possibly at this time. The same thought flashed through their minds. If they would accept the divine mission of the Baptist, they would charge themselves as a class with having rejected his baptism. This would give our Lord an advantage which He would not be slow to use. If they said that John's baptism was of purely human origin, they would place themselves in a dangerous position with regard to the crowds, even to the place of being stoned. The people might look upon their attribution to man's words, that which they held to be of God. Furthermore, John's martyrdom had deepened the regard with which he was held by the people. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Reasoned among ([4817](#))([sullogizomai](#) from **sun** = with, speaks of intimacy + **logizomai** = to reason, calculate) describes thinking and talking over something with someone else. Liddell-Scott - "to collect and bring at once before the mind, to compute fully, sum up." The idea is to ponder or discuss various possibilities relating to a matter, in this case Jesus' question. This is the only use in the NT. There are 5 uses in the Septuagint - Lev. 25:27; Lev. 25:50; Lev. 25:52; Num. 23:9; Isa. 43:18.

Matthew 21:25 has [dialogizomai](#) which means to ponder, to inwardly think about thoroughly. **Robertson** comments that Matthew uses the "Picturesque imperfect tense (over and over, again and again) describing their hopeless quandary."

Why did you not believe him - Especially what he said about Jesus. As explained above to **believe** the **baptism of John** would have meant that the religious leaders in effect believed in the coming Messiah Who instead they **rejected** (Lk 7:30-note).

Believe ([4100](#))([pisteuo](#)) means to consider something to be true and thus worthy of one's trust. Luke 7:30 says "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John." So the true message of John the Baptist ("Baptism of John") was a call to confess their sins and repent and turn in faith to Messiah (Yeshua). So when these "righteous" ones rejected John's baptism, they rejected not only John the Baptist, but the Messiah (2 Ti 2:12 Mt 10:33; Mk 8:38, Lu 12:9, 2 Jn 1:9), their only hope for deliverance from sins and imputation of God's righteousness in place of their legalistic righteousness.

MacArthur - 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. (Borrow [The MacArthur study Bible](#))

What the Bible teaches - If they admitted, as the people believed, that John was a prophet from God, then their rejection of him was rank unbelief against the messenger of God. ([What the Bible Teaches – Luke](#))

Stevenson writes "I enjoy playing chess. There sometimes comes a point in a chess game where, no matter what you do, you are going to lose a piece. That is what happened here. They pondered their possible range of answers and came to the conclusion that, no matter what they said, it would be wrong. Notice that they are more interested in fighting Jesus and in holding onto their popularity than they are in learning the truth. The one thing that they do not do is to ask, "I wonder if John and Jesus are right in what they are saying?" Why? Why don't they see their need for the truth? It is because they have a vested interest in continuing in their unbelief. And so, they refuse to answer the question."

Luke 20:6 "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet."

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

- **all the people will stone us to death** Mt 21:26,46; 26:5; Mark 12:12; Acts 5:26
- **for they are convinced that John was a prophet** Lk 1:76; 7:26-29; Mt 14:5; 21:26; John 10:41
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

FEAR OF MEN NOT OF GOD

But (term of contrast - the other [horn of their dilemma](#)) **if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone s to death** ([katalithazo](#)) **for they are convinced that John was a prophet.**- Luke alone mentions the possibility of stoning. Why would they stone them? Because if they rejected God's prophet they would in effect be rejecting and blaspheming God Himself and this was considered a crime punishable by death by stoning. See [Stoning in Judaism](#). **For** (gar) is a term of explanation (see my [youtube video](#)). What is Luke explaining? This one is easy -- he is explaining why the Jews would stone their leaders if they denied John B was sent by God. The answer is that the people **WERE CONVINCED** ([peitho](#)) John B was from God!

Norman Crawford on stone us to death - It expresses the potential violence of the crowd, for these religious leaders genuinely feared the people who had been "very attentive to hear" Christ (Luke 19:48) and a large company waited to hear their answer. ([What the Bible Teaches – Luke](#))

Robert Stein on **stone us to death** - This threat of being stoned is unique to Luke. This probably should not be interpreted as an example of hyperbole, for the volatility of the people made something like this quite possible (cf Acts 5:26; Acts 7:54–60; Acts 14:19; John 10:31–33.). Another possible interpretation is that by claiming John the Baptist was not a true prophet, the Jewish leadership would have been liable to the penalty for false prophesy—"stoning" (Dt 13:1–11). On the other hand the implication might be that by claiming John the Baptist was not a true prophet, the Jewish leadership would be guilty of false witness and liable to that punishment the falsely accused would have received—in this case stoning as a false prophet. The latter two suggestions probably would have been too subtle for Luke's readers. (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

Grotius has an interesting remark - They had themselves accustomed the people to this violence. When they could not legally convict their enemies, they incited the people to stone them. It was called the judgment of zeal. (This reminds one of the zeal of Phinehas in Nu 25:6-8). (See [Expository thoughts on the Gospels](#))

Adam Clarke adds "the judgment of zeal" was "when the mob took the execution of the laws into their own hands, and massacred those whom they pretended to be blasphemers of God."

Stone (2642) ([katalithazo](#) from **kata** = down or used to intensify meaning + **lithazo** = to stone) is literally to "stone down" which means to stone to death by hurling stones and is used only here. To overwhelm with stones. (cf. Ex. 17:4; Nu 14:10).

For they are convinced that John was a prophet- Mark 11:32 adds "a real prophet." The consensus was that John was a true prophet from God.

Convinced (3982) ([peitho](#)) means they were persuaded that John was a true prophet. The perfect tense indicates this was their settled state of persuasion.

MacArthur - 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 (Luke 20:7). (Borrow [The MacArthur study Bible](#))

Luke 20:7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from.

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

- **that they did not know where it came from** Isaiah 6:9,10; 26:11; 29:9-12,14; 41:28; 42:19,20; 44:18; Jer 8:7-9; Zechariah 11:15,17; Malachi 2:7-9; John 3:19,20; 9:39; 2 Th 2:10-12; 2 Ti 3:8,9; 2 Peter 3:3
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA

The idiomatic phrase that is apropos regarding the response of the religious leaders is that they were **'on the horns of a dilemma'** which is defined as having to choose between two things, both of which are unpleasant or difficult. In short they were between **"a between a rock and a hard place"** if they said ANYTHING and they knew it, so they said NOTHING!

So - I would say about them what my wife used to say about my children when she knew they were guilty of lying - "Liar, liar, pants on fire!" "The Jewish leaders saved themselves from this dilemma by professing ignorance. (Wuest)

They answered that they did not know where it came from- Notice that their statement was dishonest because they do not say, "We don't want to answer Your question." That would have been a cowardly but honest answer. But to say "We do not know" was a lie. **Stein** adds "it was not ignorance but insincerity and hypocrisy that shaped their answer."

Very few questions could have so completely revealed the wicked intentions of the religious leaders. Jesus' question revealed the motivation of the religious leaders and exposed them for what they really were—hypocrites. They indicted themselves when they cited only two options and chose neither of them. The point of Luke 20:1–8 is that no matter what Jesus said in response to their question they were not going to believe it and would in the end use it against him.

John MacArthur - After three years of teaching and performing miracles, Jesus had given them sufficient proof that He was the Messiah. No more information would be forthcoming. There was no point in continuing to cast pearls before swine. The Jewish leaders had willfully rejected all the light they had seen; there was no reason to give them more. This was a pronouncement of judgment on the leadership of Israel. At His mock trial two days later, these men demanded of Jesus, "If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God'" (Luke 22:67-69). There was nothing left for them but judgment, and He would sit on that judgment seat to render sentence on them. There is a limit to God's patience. Those who hard-heartedly reject the light will eventually be abandoned to judicial darkness. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

R C Foster summarizes this section - "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" Two questions are matched against the two which they have asked. Baptism was such a concrete, vivid, impressive act they could not avoid His question about John by asking "What teaching?" and then beclouding the issue with fine distinctions. Moreover, the baptism of John had been an innovation. Since nothing like it had been commanded in the law, the same acute issue was faced: Did John have the right to set up an institution for the forgiveness of sins when the Old Testament plainly declared the sacrifices in the temple were to be offered for that purpose? Only on the ground that John was a prophet directly inspired to speak for God, as had been the case with Moses when he gave the law, was John justified in doing this. Whether their decision as to a reply resulted from an immediate, covert, desperate exchange of ideas by looks and whispers or by withdrawal and lengthy consideration, their public reply which was awaited by Jesus and the multitude left them utterly discomfited. They refused to answer the question as to whether the authority of John's baptism was from heaven or merely from men, but their refusal constituted the most humiliating kind of confession. And in thus admitting that they dared not answer the dilemma (their hypocritical statement, "we know not," was too thin to deceive any one), they showed that the nation knew, and they did not dare deny, that John had been sent with a message from heaven. (Studies in the Life of Christ)

Luke 20:8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

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

- Lk 22:68; Job 5:12,13; Pr 26:4,5; Mt 15:14; 16:4; 21:27; Mark 11:33
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 19:45-20:8 By What Authority?](#) - Steven Cole

- [Luke 20:1-8 Rejecting the King's Authority](#) - John MacArthur

NO ANSWER FROM JEWS RECEIVES NO ANSWER FROM JESUS

And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority ([exousia](#)) I do these things - Though Jesus gave no answer, the analogy he used to their own question makes His view clear. His authority came from heaven. He did not say that he had no authority. Jesus refused to give them more light for they refused to accept the light that He had been clearly presented. (cf John 7:17 - "If (**CONDITIONAL PROMISE**) anyone is **willing to do His will**, [**NB**: NOT JUST HEAR HIS WILL IN HIS WORD BUT DO IT!] he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.").

Stevenson - There is a lesson here. It is that when you refuse to believe the teachings of Jesus, then no further teachings are given. The criteria for receiving further spiritual truth is receiving and believing that which you have been given.

William Hendriksen adds - An important practical lesson is taught here. Christ's opponents failed to see the truth because they hardened themselves against it. The reason why many people know so little about Jesus and about the joy of living the Christian life is that they refuse to submit themselves to his will. The prayer of everyone should be: "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God" (Ps. 143:10). (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

R Kent Hughes - To these craven "leaders" Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things" (v. 8). This was another authoritative slam dunk by "gentle Jesus, meek and mild"—and in one of the temple courts! (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

Robert Stein - Discussion with such biased and hostile people was worthless, so Jesus ended the conversation. Compare...

Luke 22:67-68 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; 68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer.

Proverbs 9:7-8 He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, And he who reproves a wicked man gets insults for himself. 8 Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, Reprove a wise man and he will love you.

R C Foster - Jesus had answered their question with a question because He had already made repeated and explicit declarations covering the ground of their question as to His deity and authority. They were not willing to be convinced and hence did not deserve further assurance. By a question which was much more effective than a mere affirmative reply, Jesus really answered their question and at the same time revealed to the multitude the revolting hypocrisy of the Pharisees John's main thesis was that all should heed the Christ. The whole force of his ministry and testimony was to direct the nation to Jesus as the Christ. Thus the proof of the Pharisees' rejection of God in the person of His Son was made plain to all in a manner that the leaders did not dare to deny. The manner of Jesus' reply made very pointed reference to their hypocrisy. They had said: "We know not"; Jesus now replied: "Neither tell I you." This means: "Yes, you do know, but you are too cowardly and corrupt to tell the truth you know. I simply refuse to answer because it is unnecessary. You have already answered your own question."

William Lane comments (on parallel passages in Mark) that "The implied judgment upon the chief priests and elders in Mark 11:27–33 is sustained in the parable of the vineyard which immediately follows (Mark 12:1–11). The climax of that section serves both as the application of the parable and as the reproach of the authorities, who have rejected both John and Jesus. The leading idea of the whole section is that the leaders of the Jewish people have rejected the will of God." (NICNT)

Walter Kaiser - Lk 20:8 Neither Will I Tell You?

Why did Jesus refuse to give a straight answer to those who asked him why he acted as he did?

It was during Holy Week, while he was walking in the temple precincts in Jerusalem, that some representatives of the Sanhedrin, Israel's supreme court (comprising chief priests, scribes, or teachers of the law, and elders, as we are told in Mk 11:27), came to Jesus and asked him, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?" By "these things" they meant not so much his teaching in the outer court but his cleansing of the temple, which had taken place the previous day. What right had he to put a stop to buying and selling within the bounds of the temple, or to forbid anyone to carry anything through the temple—to use the outer court as a short cut on their business errands? Many religious people might have agreed with him that the sacred area should not be turned into a bazaar, but a temple police force was stationed to protect its sanctity. Who authorized Jesus to act as he did?

His cleansing of the temple was what would have been recognized in Old Testament times as a prophetic action—the kind of action by which a prophet would occasionally confirm his spoken message and bring it home to the people around him. Jesus protested

that the temple was being prevented from fulfilling its purpose as “a house of prayer for all nations” (see Is 56:7). Gentiles were not allowed to enter the inner courts, but in the outer court they might draw near to the true and living God and worship him, like those “Greeks” who, according to John 12:20, went up to worship at Passover. Because of this the outer court was sometimes called “the court of the Gentiles.” But Gentiles were hindered in using it for its proper purpose if space within it was taken up by market stalls and the like. One of the latest Old Testament prophets had foretold how, when representatives of all the nations were to go up to Jerusalem to worship, “there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day” (Zech 14:21 RSV). Jesus’ prophetic action was designed to enforce this lesson.

But by what authority did he perform such a prophetic action? By what authority did any of the ancient prophets perform prophetic actions? By the authority of God, in whose name they spoke to the people. So, when Jesus was asked, “Who gave you this authority?” the true answer was “God.” Why then did he not say so? Because his questioners would not have believed him. He tested them first with another question, to see if they were capable of recognizing divine authority when they saw it. Reminding them of John the Baptist’s ministry, he asked them whether John’s authority was derived “from heaven [that is, from God] or from men.” This put them on the spot: they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men?’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet” (Lk 20:6). Could they recognize divine authority when it was expressed in the actions and teaching of John? If so, they might be expected to recognize it when it was manifested in the deeds and words of Jesus. But they professed themselves unable to say what the source of John’s authority was. So Jesus said to them in effect, “If you cannot recognize divine authority when you see it in action, no amount of argument will convince you of its presence. If you cannot tell me by what authority John baptized, I will not tell you by what authority I do these things.” There are some people who will demand authority for truth itself, forgetting that truth is the highest authority. (Go to page 451 of [Hard Sayings](#))

Luke 20:9 And He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time.

Luke 20:9KJV 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.

- **this parable** Mt 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12
- **A man planted a vineyard** Ps 80:8-14; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jer 2:21; John 15:1-8; 1 Cor 3:6-9
- **rented it out** Song of Solomon 8:11,12
- **to vine-growers** Deuteronomy 1:15-18; 16:18; 17:8-15
- **went on a journey for a long time** Lk 19:12
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Parallel Passages:

Matthew 21:33-46 “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who **PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER**, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. 34 “When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. 35 “The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. 36 “Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. 37 “But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 “But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ 39 “They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard (cf JESUS “SUFFERED OUTSIDE THE GATE” - Heb 13:12) and killed him. 40 “Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?” 41 They *said to Him, “**He will bring those wretches to a wretched end**, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.” 42 Jesus *said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘**THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES**’? 43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. 44 “And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it

falls, it will scatter him like dust.” 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. 46 When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.

Mark 12:1-12+ And He began to speak to them in parables: “A man PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. 2 “At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. 3 “They took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 “Again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. 5 “And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with **many others, beating some and killing others**. 6 “He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 7 “But those vine-growers said to one another, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!’ 8 “They took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 “What will the owner of the vineyard do? **He will come and destroy the vine-growers**, and will give the vineyard to others. 10 “Have you not even read this Scripture: ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; 11 THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES’?” 12 And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him and went away.

Watchtower in the Vineyard
(Bible-history.com)

A PROPHETIC PARABLE: THE WICKED TENANTS

Parallel parables are found in Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12 (see above). The fact that this parable is recorded three times makes it one of the most important in the NT. The only other parables in all 3 synoptic gospels are the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the soils.

It is interesting that some have referred to this day (most take it as Tuesday, but as noted MacArthur thinks it is Wednesday) as "the Day of Antagonism."

Matthew tells another parable before the parable of the wicked tenants - Mt 21:28-32 (See the [Parable of the Two Sons](#))

Jesus often told parables to hide truth, but not in this case. The players in Jesus' parable can be readily discerned:

- The Owner of the Vineyard = God the Father
- The Vineyard = The nation of Israel
- Vine-growers = The religious rulers of Israel entrusted with leading Israel - chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, and the elders.
- Slaves = The prophets of God that were persecuted and killed.
- Son = The Lord Jesus

It should not surprise us to hear that liberal theologians deny that this passage was spoken by Jesus, claiming it was added by the early church. Why would they do this? Simply because while it is a story, it is also an incredibly accurate prophecy by Jesus not only of His death, but also of the destruction of Jerusalem. Liberals don't like predictive prophecy that comes true (as it always does!) because they know to accept it as literal truth means that there is a "Literal God" to Whom they will one day have to give an account! Amen!

Mattoon says this parable "was designed to force His foes to face their terrible and chronic unbelief. Jesus told this parable that (1) indirectly answered the religious leaders' question about His **authority**, (2) showed them that He knew about their plan to kill Him, and (3) revealed the judgment that awaited them for rejecting their Messiah."

R Alan Cole introduces this parable with these comments - The parable of the wicked tenant farmers follows very naturally upon the final refusal by the Pharisees to consider seriously the source of the authority of Jesus. In so doing, they refused to admit the obvious fact that they knew its source already. This next parable is, in consequence, a parable of judgment. It is more properly the parable of the rejection of the landlord's son, than the parable of the wicked tenant farmers, although his rejection is at once the logical result and the supreme proof of their wickedness. (See [The Gospel According to Mark](#))

Kenneth Wuest - Our Lord's teaching changed its manner of presentation to that of parables....Our Lord was accusing the spiritual

leaders of Israel of being the future murderers of the Messiah, and this in the presence of the crowd. His purpose was to expose the true character of the hostility of the Sanhedrin. The vineyard was a recognized symbol of Israel itself as the covenant people, and both the members of the Sanhedrin and the better-taught among the crowd, could not but understand the symbolism. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Steven Cole - A few years ago, a family living in a beautiful home in West Palm Beach, Florida, told a film crew that it was okay to use the front lawn as a set for filming an episode of a TV show. They knew that cars would be crashing violently in front of the house. While the front yard was being destroyed, the owner of the home was tipped off and called from New York, demanding to know what was happening to his house. It seems that the people living in the house were only tenants who had no right to allow the property to be destroyed while the cameras rolled. Some awful mistakes can happen when those who are tenants begin acting as if they were owners. The more valuable the property they occupy, the more responsibility they have to treat it carefully. Can you imagine tenants in a beautiful mansion who refuse to pay rent and who threaten or beat up those whom the owner sends to collect rent? They argue, "We live here; it's our house now." No one making that claim would stand a chance in a court of law. The owner has the right to receive rent and to have his property treated rightly. **To follow up the challenge of the Jewish leaders to Jesus about the source of His authority, He tells a parable about some wicked tenants of a vineyard, who had wrongfully assumed ownership of that which was not their own. It is one of only three parables that occur in all three synoptic gospels (the sower and the mustard seed are the other two). The parable answers the question that the leaders had just asked Jesus: "By what authority are you doing these things?" If God owns the vineyard and Jesus is the Son and rightful heir to it, then He is acting under God's authority.** The Jewish leaders have wrongfully usurped the authority of God, the rightful owner. Thus the fundamental question that not only these Jewish leaders, but also all who hear the parable, need to answer is, **"Who owns the vineyard?"** Keeping in mind the answer to that question will determine how we live. ([Who Owns the Vineyard?](#))

And - Notice this connecting copulative, which clearly links the following parable with the prior confrontation regarding Jesus' authority.

He began to tell the people this parable([parable](#)) - (Mt 21:33 begins "**Listen** - aorist imperative = listen so as to heed) This parable is a story about Israel and her Messiah, looking back through Israel's history and forward to Messiah's crucifixion and then to the future history of the nation of Israel (this latter may surprise you). The people are the huge crowd of Jews (recall it is Passover and Jerusalem could have swollen to as many as 2 million people) who had exuberantly celebrated what they interpreted as the coming of their King, their Messiah, to overthrow Rome. Presumably this story is told in the largest Temple venue, the Court of the Gentiles (up to 10 football fields in size) as Lk 20:1 says Jesus was teaching and preaching during the day. In addition to the Jewish laity, undoubtedly the chief priests and the scribes with the elders were also in the crowd. And indeed this story is about the religious leaders of Israel, so it is a story they needed to hear!

The ESV Study Bible note makes a good point that "This parable, while spoken to the people (Lk 20:1, 9, cf Mk 12:1, 12), is directed to Jesus' opponents (Lk 19:47; 20:1, 19) and is intended as an analogy (with many referents) to show that God (the "owner," Lk 20:13) is taking away the kingdom from Israel (see note on Mark 12:1-12)....The story draws on everyday life. Disputes between absentee landlords, their representatives (in this case, a servant), and tenants were common." ([ESV Study Bible](#) - this resource can be borrowed)

Parable (3850)([parabole](#) from **para** = beside, near + **ballo** = throw, cast; English "parable") is literally a throwing beside or placing of one thing by the side of another (juxtaposition as of ships in battle in classic Greek). A parable is an illustration thrown in alongside of a truth to make the latter easier to understand the truth. In this case Jesus chose to illustrate His truth with a vineyard, an agrarian or agricultural metaphor which would be familiar to all Jews.

A man ("landowner" [oikodespotes](#) - head of house - Mt 21:33)**planted a vineyard** ([ampelon](#)) - Israel is hilly and [vineyards](#) were planted on the hillsides which were terraced. They would surround the vineyard with a hedge or wall for protection. The vineyard would usually have a [winepress](#) ([picture and description of ancient wine press](#)) as well as a tower for protection. As an aside there are only 4 uses of the Greek word ([lenos](#)) for **wine press**, a literal use in Matthew's parallel parable (Mt 21:33) and three uses in the Revelation all speaking of God's righteous wrath using the metaphor of a **wine press**. (Rev. 14:19-20+; Rev. 19:15+).

Wiersbe on **planted a vineyard** - This parable is based on Isaiah 5:1-7, and in it Jesus reminded the Jews of God's goodness to them as a nation. God delivered them from Egypt and planted them in a rich land of milk and honey. He gave them material and spiritual blessings and asked only that they bear fruit for His glory. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

God is the "landowner" (Mt 21:33) who planted the "vineyard" of Israel, even as in the story in Isa 5:7- "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress." Israel is God's chosen people formed out of the loins of Abraham, this

lineage carried through the patriarchs Isaac and Jacob, with the 12 tribes flourishing into a full nation and being redeemed from slavery in Egypt. When one redeems a slave, that slave belongs to the one who provided the redemption price. In this case God provided the redemption price (blemish-free lamb Ex 12:5) and thus the nation belonged to Him not only by His planting (Isaiah 5:1-7+) but even by His redemption provided by the blood of the lamb (pointing of course to the Lamb of God Jn 1:29, 36, to Christ our Passover 1 Cor 5:7+).

Isaiah 5:1-7+ summarizes God's planting, provision and protection to maximize production...

Let me sing now for my [well-beloved](#) (Lxx = agapao in perfect tense = speaks of Jehovah's enduring unconditional love in spite of Israel's unfaithful, rebellious hearts! Woe!) a song of my [beloved](#) concerning **His vineyard** (Lxx = ampelon). My [well-beloved](#) had a **vineyard** on a fertile hill (THE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN - A FERTILE LAND OF "MILK AND HONEY"!). 2 He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the [choicest](#) vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it and also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only **worthless ones** ([beushim](#) = stinking, derived from [beosh](#) = stench as from corpses in Amos 4:10!). 3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard. 4 **"What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?** Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce **worthless ones** ([beushim](#) = stinking)? 5 "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will (THIS IS GOD'S JUDICIAL DECREE) remove its hedge and it will be consumed. I will (GOD INITIATES THIS!) break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. 6 "I will lay it waste (FULFILLED IN 586 BC WHEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR RAZED JERUSALEM); It will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it." 7 For **the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel And the men of Judah His delightful plant.** Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

Comment: Matthew and Mark's versions of this parable begin with a direct quote from the Septuagint (not the Hebrew) of Isaiah 5:2. Notice the words in ALL CAPS in Mark 12:1 "And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey." The NASB is one of the few translations that puts direct OT quotes in ALL CAPS which is very helpful in identifying these references from the OT. Sadly other modern versions lack this helpful feature. Another feature absent in most modern versions but found in the NAS is that it ITALICIZES words that have been added to the English translation but are not in the original Greek or Hebrew text. E.g., compare Mark 12:10NASB with the popular version Mark 12:10ESV and note that "*stone*" is in italics in the NAS but not in the ESV. "Stone" is not present in the Greek text in this verse.

We see another description of Israel depicted as a **VINE** in Psalm 80...

You removed a **VINE** from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. 9 You cleared the ground before it, And it took deep root and filled the land. 10 The mountains were covered with its shadow, And the cedars of God with its boughs. 11 It was sending out its branches to the sea And its shoots to the River. 12 Why have You broken down its hedges, So that all who pass that way pick its fruit? 13 A boar from the forest eats it away And whatever moves in the field feeds on it. 14 O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine (THIS PRAYER WILL BE ANSWERED IN THE END TIMES - Zech 12:10-note, Zech 13:1-note, Zech 13:8-9-note, Ro 11:26-27-note), 15 Even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, And on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. 16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. (Ps 80:8-16)

In Jeremiah we read another description of Israel as a **VINE**...

"Yet I planted you a choice vine, A completely faithful seed. How then have you turned yourself before Me Into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine? (Jer 2:21)

In Ezekiel we see a description of Judah (southern kingdom) as a **VINE**

'Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard, Planted by the waters; It was fruitful and full of branches Because of abundant waters. 11 'And it had strong branches fit for scepters of rulers, And its height was raised above the clouds So that it was seen in its height with the mass of its branches. 12 'But it was plucked up in fury; It was cast down to the ground; And the east wind dried up its fruit. Its strong branch was torn off So that it withered; The fire consumed it. 13 'And now it is planted in the wilderness, In a dry and thirsty land. 14 'And fire has gone out from its branch; It has consumed its shoots and fruit, So that there is not in it a strong branch,

A scepter to rule.” This is a lamentation, and has become a lamentation. (Ezekiel 19:10-14)

MacArthur adds that Isaiah 5 describes "God's planting of Israel in detail (see verse by verse commentary). God planted them "on a fertile hill," the wonderful land of Canaan. God planted "a choice vine," that is to say the genetics of Jews is among the noblest of all humanity. God hedged them, protected them, put a moat around them, a hedge around them, built a wine-press, (this could be the symbol of the sacrificial system), and a tower of protection. God did everything He could do and had every right to expect good grapes, Isaiah writes. But He received *beushim*, sour berries....(THIS PRESENT PARABLE IS) very reminiscent of Isaiah 5, and Jesus is saying, "Nothing has changed."

Vineyard (290) (ampelon) was a plot of land where grapes were grown on grapevines. Used figuratively in Matt. 21:28, 33, 39-41; Mark 12:1, 2, 9; Luke 13:6; 20:9, 10, 13, 15, 16.

Ampelon - 23x in 21v - Matt. 20:1; Matt. 20:2; Matt. 20:4; Matt. 20:7; Matt. 20:8; Matt. 21:28; Matt. 21:33; Matt. 21:39; Matt. 21:40; Matt. 21:41; Mk. 12:1; Mk. 12:2; Mk. 12:8; Mk. 12:9; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 20:9; Lk. 20:10; Lk. 20:13; Lk. 20:15; Lk. 20:16; 1 Co. 9:7

Ampelon - 101x in 90v - Gen. 9:20; Exod. 22:5; Exod. 23:11; Lev. 19:10; Lev. 19:19; Num. 16:14; Num. 20:17; Num. 21:22; Deut. 6:11; Deut. 20:6; Deut. 22:9; Deut. 23:24; Deut. 24:21; Deut. 28:30; Deut. 28:39; Jos. 24:13; Jdg. 9:27; Jdg. 11:33; Jdg. 14:5; Jdg. 15:5; Jdg. 21:20; Jdg. 21:21; 1 Sam. 8:14; 1 Sam. 8:15; 1 Sam. 15:9; 1 Sam. 22:7; 1 Ki. 21:1; 1 Ki. 21:2; 1 Ki. 21:6; 1 Ki. 21:7; 1 Ki. 21:15; 1 Ki. 21:16; 1 Ki. 21:18; 2 Ki. 5:26; 2 Ki. 18:32; 2 Ki. 19:29; Neh. 5:3; Neh. 5:4; Neh. 5:5; Neh. 5:11; Neh. 9:25; Job 24:6; Ps. 107:37; Prov. 9:12; Prov. 24:30; Eccl. 2:4; Cant. 1:6; Cant. 1:14; Cant. 2:15; Cant. 7:12; Cant. 8:11; Cant. 8:12; Isa. 1:8; Isa. 3:14; Isa. 5:1; Isa. 5:3; Isa. 5:4; Isa. 5:5; Isa. 5:6; Isa. 5:7; Isa. 16:10; Isa. 27:2; Isa. 36:17; Isa. 37:30; Isa. 65:21; Jer. 5:17; Jer. 12:10; Jer. 31:5; Jer. 32:15; Jer. 35:7; Jer. 35:9; Ezek. 28:26; Amos 4:9; Amos 5:11; Amos 9:14; Mic. 1:6; Zeph. 1:13;

Vine-grower (1092) *georgos* from **ge** = the earth + **ergo** = to work) describes one who tills or works the soil or the ground. A husbandman (one that plows and cultivates land).

Matthew 21:33 adds that the landowner "PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT a trough into which the juice ran after having been crushed from the grapes), AND BUILT A TOWER." Matthew speaking to Jewish readers (Luke more to Gentile readers) includes a quote from the parabolic story in Isaiah 5:1-2-note, adding the details of a wall around the vineyard, a wine press and a tower.

Brooks rightly emphasizes that "No attempt should be made, however, to identify the wall, the pit, or the tower as the law, the altar, and the temple, respectively, as did the medieval church in its excessive allegorical interpretations....In Isaiah the problem is a fruitless vineyard, i.e., a nation that failed to produce the fruits of righteousness. In the present parable the emphasis is on the wickedness (greed, dishonesty, violence, murder) of the tenants, who seem to represent the leaders of the nation." (Ibid)

Lenski - A vineyard is naturally planted for the sake of the fruit it will yield. But this parable does not center our attention on the productivity or unproductivity of the vineyard or of its vines as does the parable recorded in Isa. 5 but on the vicious actions of these vine-growers, to whom the vineyard had been leased, and who were now to meet the terms of the lease.

And rented it out to vine-growers - In other words the vineyard was rented out by the "absentee landlord," the owner who was not present. The ones who cultivated the vineyards were in effect tenant farmers who rented the owner's land, produced a crop and gave the owner his share of the proceeds when the crop was sold. A vine-grower was a "contract laborer" who was given the benefit of working the owner's land, which was a wonderful opportunity for those too poor to own their own land.

Who are the **vine-growers**? These are the religious leaders (cf "the chief priests and the scribes with the elders" who confronted Jesus in Lk 20:1[±]) These men are those who God had put in charge of caring for His vineyard, the nation of Israel, especially providing for their spiritual nourishment, in the true way of God. Notice that these leaders are never called "owners" but serve only as stewards (including all their previous leaders - kings, priests and prophets) who were given responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the people of Israel.

And went on a journey for a long time - This would have been true in ancient times as without cars, trains or planes every journey of any distance would have been a "long" journey. And this was not uncommon in Palestine, for the owner of the land to live at a considerable distance, sometimes even in another country. But in the context of the meaning of the parable to what does **a long time** refer? The "vine-growers" were in a lineage that went back some 2000 years (from Jesus' day) to the loins of Abraham. So for 2000 years (**a long time**) God was looking for a "bumper (spiritual) crop" from His vineyard, Israel. **Long** is actually *hikanos* which means sufficient, adequate - they had plenty of time to bring forth (spiritual) fruit. And so what Jesus' phrase **a long time** summarizes is the entire Old Testament history of Israel from Genesis 12:1 through Malachi 4:6 (including the intervening 400 silent inter-testament years and including the ministry of John the Baptist)!

Steven Cole - These things apply not only to ancient Israel, but also to us, whom God has graciously grafted into His vine (see Rom. 11:17-24).

Spurgeon - It is a long time since Jesus left us, and he has not yet returned. Many say that he is coming back very soon; others say, "The Lord delayeth his coming."

James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - RENT DEFAULTERS LUKE 20:9-18

Before the Great War we frequently heard of "moonlight flitters"—families so deeply in debt, and so hopeless so far as payment of debts was concerned, that some night they removed their goods, quietly and secretly, to another town or entirely strange neighbourhood, beginning life afresh. So scarce have houses been since the war, that insolvent householders have had to resort to other stratagems. In Luke 20:9 to 18, we have rent defaulters, who resorted to murder as a way out of debt.

The householder in the parable was more than owner of this vineyard, for he had planted it, and thus stood in a close and personal association to it. In the East there is no property so valuable, nor which yields returns so large, as vineyards. This man planted the vineyard, protected it by a wall, ornamented it by a tower, then let it out to husbandmen on the understanding that part of its proceeds would be handed over as rent.

For three years the fruit was, according to ancient custom, ungathered; in the fourth year it was all holy unto the Lord; in the fifth year the tenants and owners could eat and begin to benefit by its growth (Lev. 19:23 to 25).

During that long period the husbandmen contrived to forget that they were tenants and not owners. And when the owner sent his servants for his just due, ill-treated them, driving them empty away. The patience of the owner is wonderful—a representation of the wonderful and infinite patience and longsuffering of God. At last we have his dilemma, enshrined in those four simple words, "What shall I do?" But even his beloved son was rejected, and his murder decided upon.

The history of Israel is summed up in this dark picture. The One who planted the vineyard was God; the vineyard, the land of Israel; the husbandmen, Israel, particularly the leaders of the nations; the servants, the prophets; the son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

THOUGHT - But there is an application of this parable to you and me. What we have belongs to God—our very life, possessions, time, friends, all. There is no time when God does not demand of us His rightful dues. He sends us His servants—more, His Son, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Have we sent them empty away? Be warned, there is a limit to His patience, when judgment will fall.

James Smith - PARABLE OF THE HUSBANDMEN Luke 20:9-19

"Dare I trust my heart and voice against the voice of the whole? Yet should the roar of the crowd ever drown the true voice of the soul?"—W. SMITH.

It is not only Scotch-like, but it may at times be Christ-like, to answer one question by asking another. The chief priests and scribes asked, "Who gave Thee this authority?" Jesus answered by asking, "The baptism of John, was it from Heaven or of men?" They "could not tell," or rather, they would not say, lest they should commit themselves. Neither would He tell them. It is so still. Those who refuse to accept the testimony of His servants shall not know the secret of Christ's authority and power. There must be faith in His Word if we would have revelations of Himself. This parable, like that of the "pounds," has a decided dispensational character.

I. The Vineyard. "A certain man planted a vineyard" (v. 9). This nameless man is intended to represent Jehovah, the Eternal One; the vineyard is the whole house of Israel, whom He hath redeemed for Himself (Jer. 2:21); the planting refers to their settlement in the land of promise, where they were carefully nurtured and guarded by the presence of God.

II. The Faithless Husbandmen. These were the proud rulers of the people, who "entreated shamefully" those sent by God to assert His claims upon them as His professing people. They persecuted and slew those servants of God who testified against them (Neh. 9:26). Did not the Spirit-filled Stephen fling the same charge in their teeth when he said, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" These wicked husbandmen, like many in our own day, were willing to take all they could get from God that would enrich themselves, but refused to give Him anything in return.

III. The Divine Dilemma. "What shall I do?" (v. 13). His thankless people have transgressed and rebelled; His warnings and entreaties, through His servants, have been neglected and despised. "What shall I do?" Something new must be done if the Lord of the vineyard is to maintain His rights to the fruits thereof. Shall it be vengeance or mercy? Shall it be instant judgment or a further manifestation of His infinite grace? Shall it be the sacrifice of man for his sins, or a sacrifice from God for the sins of man? "Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom."

IV. The Gracious Purpose. "I will send My beloved Son" (v. 13). It may be that when they see Him they will turn away their faces from shame, and confess their sins (v. 13). Instead of opening the flood-gates of wrath against those offenders, He opens the treasures of His heart, and sends forth His only Son. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10).

V. The Fond Expectation. "It may be they will reverence Him when they see Him" (v. 13). What did they see when they saw HIM? They saw the invisible yet frequently insulted God, manifest in mortal flesh, as a loving, sin-forgiving Saviour, the wisdom and the power of God. Surely when they behold such an exhibition of His condescension and forbearance they will feel rebuked for their pride and arrogance. It would seem as if the Lord of the vineyard hoped to kill their enmity with His kindness. The mission of the Son of the Highest was to save us from our sins, and to reconcile us to God. "He that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father." To refuse Him reverence is to dishonour the Father who sent Him.

VI. The Deliberate Refusal. "They cast Him out of the vineyard and killed Him" (v. 14, 15). They would not have this Man to reign over them. Although they knew him to be "the Heir," yet, in the pride of their hearts, they refused to submit to Him. What better are we than they, in acknowledging Christ to be the Son of God, if we have not yielded ourselves unto Him? Is our guilt not greater in that we are casting Him out of our hearts and homes; out of our businesses and pleasures daily. To cast Him out of our lives is to cast our lives into eternal bankruptcy and ruin (v. 18).

VII. The Terrible Results. The husbandmen shall be destroyed, and the vineyard given to others (v. 16). Neglected opportunities will bring corresponding judgments. The Word of God was first spoken to the Jews as His people, but they put it far from them, and now the vineyard is given to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). The blessed privileges offered us now will soon have gone to others. Are we laying hold of them for our eternal profit, or shall they pass, leaving us in the deeper condemnation through our pride and unbelief? "When they heard it they said, "God forbid." But all such "God forbids" from the lips of self-righteous rebels will never in any degree avert the just judgments of an insulted God.

QUESTION - [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Vineyard?](#)

ANSWER - 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 (Mt 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 (Mt 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 (Mt 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 Mt 21:43, 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 Mt 21:41, "other tenants"). This will be more than they can tolerate, as we will see in Mt 21:45, 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. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resource:

- [Discussion of Vineyards in the Holy Land](#) with several nice black and white pictures

Luke 20:10 "At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed."

Luke 20:10KJV 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.

- **At the harvest time** Ps 1:3; Jer 5:24; Mt 21:34-36; Mark 12:2-5
- **he sent a slave to the vine-growers** Judges 6:8-10; 2 Kings 17:13; 2 Chronicles 36:15,16; Nehemiah 9:30; Jer 25:3-7; 26:2-6; Jer 35:15; 44:4,5; Hosea 6:4-6; Zechariah 1:3-6; 7:9-13; John 15:16; Ro 7:4
- **the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed** Lk 11:47-50; 13:34; 1 Kings 22:24; 2 Chronicles 16:10; 24:19-21; Nehemiah 9:26; Jer 2:30; Jer 20:2; 26:20-24; 29:26,27; 37:15,16; 38:4-6
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

At the harvest time ([kairos](#) - at the prescribed time, at the appropriate time, at the opportune time)- "**Harvest**" is added in the translation for clarity. ESV has "When the time came." **Time** is the great Greek word [kairos](#) meaning season or opportunity. When the opportunity passes, it is too late. So if harvest was not done at the opportune time, the crop would be ruined and lost.

THOUGHT - [Kairos](#) is the same word Paul uses in Ephesians 5:16 calling on all of us "vine-growers" to Redeem the Time (see [youtube video](#)).

James A Brooks notes that "Absentee landlords of huge estates and landless tenant farmers were quite common in Galilee in Jesus' day. The tenants usually were required to turn over between one-fourth and one-half of the produce to the owner's agents. As a result they were barely able to survive—a situation that produced much discontent." (New American Commentary – Volume 23: Mark)

Time (2540) ([kairos](#)) means a point of time or period of time, time, period, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It means a moment or period as especially appropriate the right, proper, favorable time (at the right time). A season. Kairos describes something that lasts only for a season, for a specific period of time.

Kairos in Luke and Acts - Lk. 1:20; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 12:42; Lk. 12:56; Lk. 13:1; Lk. 18:30; Lk. 19:44; Lk. 20:10; Lk. 21:8; Lk. 21:24; Lk. 21:36; Acts 1:7; Acts 3:19; Acts 7:20; Acts 12:1; Acts 13:11; Acts 14:17; Acts 17:26; Acts 19:23; Acts 24:25

He sent a slave ([doulos](#)) **to the vine-growers so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard**- The slave was the land owner's representative who came with the owner's full authority and in his place. He comes to receive the owner's share of the crop. Matthew adds the phrase "to receive **his** produce ([karpos](#))." (Mt 21:34) It belonged to the landowner not the **vine-growers**! This recalls the words of the two productive slaves in the Parable of the Minas who used the mina to gain "fruit" but still emphasized that they were but stewards describing it as "**your** (the master's) mina" (Lk 19:16, 18-note)

Who do the **slaves** ([doulos](#)) represent? These **slaves** are the true Old Testament prophets who were often referred to as God's servants in the Old Testament (Jer 7:25; Ezek 38:17; Da 9:6, 10; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6). God sent these men in His great lovingkindness to the nation of Israel to warn the Jews people to return to God's Law, to obedience and to true righteousness. The prophet Micah gives us a memorable summary of the objective sought by God in sending the prophets

Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:7-8-note)

The prophets came to call the nation to repent from their sin, to turn to the true and living God and to produce spiritual fruit in keeping with repentance, supernatural fruit that would bring honor and glory to God in Heaven.

The slaves who were sent on this mission are the prophets, and Mark and Luke indicate the intervals at which God sent them to the leaders of Israel. When God sent them he expected fruit, contrition, faith, true obedience. Sadly, their rejection, abuse, and even murder was so common as to be proverbial. (cf Mt 23:29-32). "Every generation can always see the spiritual blindness of its

forebears, but never its own." (Cole)

Slave (1401)(**doulos** from **deo** = to bind) was an individual bound to another in servitude conveying the idea of the slave's close ties with his master, belonging to him, obligated to and desiring to do his will and in a permanent relation of servitude. In sum, the will of the **doulos** is consumed in the will of the master.

Doulos in Luke - Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:48; Lk. 2:29; Lk. 7:2; Lk. 7:3; Lk. 7:8; Lk. 7:10; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 12:43; Lk. 12:45; Lk. 12:46; Lk. 12:47; Lk. 14:17; Lk. 14:21; Lk. 14:22; Lk. 14:23; Lk. 15:22; Lk. 17:7; Lk. 17:9; Lk. 17:10; Lk. 19:13; Lk. 19:15; Lk. 19:17; Lk. 19:22; Lk. 20:10; Lk. 20:11; Lk. 22:50

Produce (2590)(**karpōs**) is used literally here of the fruit of the vineyard, but is used many times in the NT as a metaphor describing spiritual fruit. In Matthew 7:20+ Jesus used **karpōs** figuratively stating "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?" How apropos is that to these tenants of the landowner's vines!

Karpōs - 56v - benefit(2), crop(5), crops(2), descendants*(1), fruit(43), fruitful(1), fruits(4), grain(1), harvest(1), proceeds(1), produce(4), profit(1). Matt. 3:8; Matt. 3:10; Matt. 7:16; Matt. 7:17; Matt. 7:18; Matt. 7:19; Matt. 7:20; Matt. 12:33; Matt. 13:8; Matt. 13:26; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:34; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 21:43; Mk. 4:7; Mk. 4:8; Mk. 4:29; Mk. 11:14; Mk. 12:2; Lk. 1:42; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 3:9; Lk. 6:43; Lk. 6:44; Lk. 8:8; Lk. 12:17; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:9; Lk. 20:10; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 15:2; Jn. 15:4; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 15:16; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:13; Rom. 6:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 15:28; 1 Co. 9:7; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11; Phil. 1:22; Phil. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 12:11; Heb. 13:15; Jas. 3:17; Jas. 3:18; Jas. 5:7; Jas. 5:18; Rev. 22:2

Bruce - The husbandmen treat the messengers in the most barbarous and truculent manner: beating, killing, stoning to death; highly improbable in the natural sphere, but another instance in which parables have to violate the natural probability in order to describe truly men's conduct in the spiritual sphere.

The vine-growers (georgos) beat (derō) him and sent him away empty-handed (kenos) - The verb Jesus uses means they **flay** him or "beat him bloody." This is not just a kick in the pants but descriptive of a vicious lashing or flogging, reflecting the depth of the **depravity** of the hearts of the vine-growers. This would have been shocking to the ears of all those in the crowd. Such treatment would be viewed as outrageous, shameful, even criminal. They added insult (not paying) to injury (beating)!

Alfred Plummer - The uniform hostility of kings, priests, and people to the Prophets is one of the most remarkable features in history of the Jews. The amount of hostility varied, and it expressed itself in different ways, on the whole increasing in intensity; but it was always there. Deeply as the Jews lamented the cessation of Prophets after the death of Malachi, they generally opposed them, as long as they were granted to them. Till the gift was withdrawn, they seemed to have had little pride in this exceptional grace shown to the nation, and little appreciation of it or thankfulness for it. (Scroll down to page 297 - [An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St Matthew](#))

Here is a representative sample of warnings to Judah from the prophet Jeremiah

But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.'....25 "Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them.25:4 "And the LORD has sent to you all His servants (Lxx = **doulos** = SAME WORD JESUS USES IN THIS PARABLE) the prophets again and again, but **you have not listened** (Hebrew = shama as in Dt 6:4; Lxx = eisakouo = literally listen to = listen attentively to - also used in Lxx of Dt 1:43, Dt 9:23) nor inclined your ear to hear,. 5 saying, 'Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the LORD has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever; 6 and do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands, and I will do you no harm.' 7 "**Yet you have not listened** (Hebrew = shama as in Dt 6:4; Lxx = akouo - not just "listened" but with a view to obeying!) to Me," declares the LORD, "in order that you might provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm. 8 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, 9 behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. 10 'Moreover, I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11 'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (Jer 7:23, 25, Jer 25:4-11)

Beat (flogged, gave lashes) (1194)(**dero**) literally meant to remove the skin (flay = strip off skin) and in the NT is used to depict the action of whipping, beating, thrashing or scourging in a manner calculated to take off the skin (Mt. 21:35; Mk 12:3, 5; Lk 20:10, 11; Ac 16:37; 22:19). **Dero** is used with its literal meaning once in the Septuagint (2 Chr 29:34). **Wuest** adds that **dero** meant "originally "to flay," but in the NT, "to beat severely, to scourge."

Matthew 21:35 adds that "The vine-growers took his slaves and **beat** (**dero**) one, and **killed another**, and **stoned a third**."

Empty-handed (2756)(**kenos**) means literally to be without something material and thus means empty or without content. It is used here with its literal meaning (as in Mk 12:3). More often **kenos** is used figuratively referring to things that lack effectiveness. In Luke's first use he says "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich **empty-handed**." (Lk 1:53-note)

Wuest - The failure to receive fruit points to the failure of Israel to heed the preaching of the prophets.

The image of the tenants beating up the owner's slave pictures the nation's rejection of the prophets and their message.

Lenski - The imagery is astounding. No man ever did what the owner of this vineyard did. After his first messenger had received such treatment and came back bloody and empty-handed, any other owner would forthwith have called in the police, ousted those vicious vine-growers, and brought them to justice. The hearers might well exclaim: "Why, we never heard of such an owner who would send slave after slave to have these atrocities repeated, and finally send his own son to be killed!" They had, of course, never heard of anything like this. But that is the very point Jesus wants to make. It takes **unheard-of** imagery to picture the **unheard-of** wickedness of these Jewish leaders, who murdered not only the prophets whom God sent them but were now about to murder also God's own Son. It is disappointing to observe that the commentators fail to note these features of the parable and other similar features in other parables. Read Mt. 23:34; Acts 7:52; Heb. 11:37, 38. According to tradition Jeremiah was stoned in exile in Egypt, and Isaiah was sawed asunder by King Manasseh (cf Hebrews 11:37+). (See [The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel](#))

THOUGHT - Steve Cole applies this parable to the Christian life noting that we as believers like Israel have been given a great privilege and position and God expects production - We are greatly privileged in that God has given us His Word and has supplied us with everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3+). He wants us to bear the fruit of Christ-like lives (cf Jn 15:8) so that the hungry people who do not know Him will taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps 34:8). We who live in America are perhaps the most spiritually privileged people in all of history. We have God's Word in our language. We have an almost endless supply of helpful, readily available spiritual resources. We have more leisure time than any other nation in history to pursue spiritual things. We are blessed with adequate financial resources to support God's work here and around the world. With these great privileges comes the responsibility of bearing fruit for the owner of the vineyard (Jn 15:16, cf Lk 8:15+). All of us are either living for ourselves and our own gratification or we are living to bear fruit for the Lord Jesus Christ. We're either laboring for what we can get out of the vineyard or for what we can produce for the owner. Clearly, these wicked tenant farmers in the parable were not working for the owner, but for themselves. The irony is, we always find the most pleasure when we live to bear fruit for Christ, not when we live for ourselves. (**ILLUSTRATION**) I read of a young man who always found excuses to turn down his pastor's request that he teach a class of teenage boys. Finally, he admitted that he was afraid that it would cut into his time on the golf course. He realized how self-centered that was and agreed to take the class. He worked hard at it and within a few months, he had led six young men to Christ. On the Sunday that the sixth boy professed his faith in Christ, the pastor asked the teacher, "Has giving up golf on Sunday been worth it?" With tears in his eyes, the young man said, "My only regret is that I've waited so long to put others ahead of myself." The joy that he found in teaching that class of 13 boys, six of whom he had personally led to Christ, far exceeded any pleasure that he had experienced on the golf course (in "Our Daily Bread," Nov., 1983). God, the owner of the vineyard, expects fruit from His people. [Who Owns the Vineyard?](#)

Luke 20:11 "And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed

Luke 20:11KJV And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

- **treated him shamefully** Mt 23:30-37; Acts 7:52; 1 Th 2:2; Heb 11:36,37
- **treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed** Hosea 10:1
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12

- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

A SECOND SLAVE MISERABLY MISTREATED

And he proceeded ([prostithemi](#)) **to send another slave** ([doulos](#)) - **Proceeded** means "added" so to the previous slave, the owner "added" another! This is a manifestation of the owner's mercy considering what happened to his first slave! **Another** ([heteros](#)) means a different one, even a different kind. The other Gospel versions state that some of the slaves were not just beaten but were actually killed by the vine-growers! At this point, the parable is not at all like real life. This is a story and Jesus is using it to dramatically make a point about the tenants of His "vineyard."

Matthew adds that "Again he sent **another group of slaves larger than the first**; and they did the same thing to them." (Mt 21:36)

Mark adds "Again he sent them another slave, and they **wounded him in the head**, and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and that one they **killed**; **and so with many others, beating some and killing others.**" (Mark 12:4-5)

Jesus comments on the killing of God's prophets in Mt 23:29-30, 33-37 - Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous (**PURE HYPOCRISY TO PRETEND TO REVERE THE OT PROPHETS!**), and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets (**LIAR, LIAR, PANTS ON FIRE!**)....33 (JESUS CONFRONTS THEIR BLATANT LYING AND HYPOCRISY DECLARING) "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? 34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes (SPEAKING OF THE APOSTLES WHO WOULD SOON GO OUT AND PREACH THE GOSPEL) **some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city**, 35 so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. 37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

Earlier in his Gospel Luke had encouraged us to take heart when we are persecuted for the Gospel...

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. **For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.** (Luke 6:22-23+)

Jesus described the lot of prophets and apostles who would spread the Gospel after His ascension

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. 48 "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; **because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs.** For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and **some of them they will kill and some they will persecute** (Luke 11:47-49+)

And in Luke 13 Jesus lamented

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!** How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! (Luke 13:34+)

And they beat ([dero](#)) **him also treated him shamefully** ([atimazo](#)) **and sent him away empty-handed** ([kenos](#)) - In addition to beating ([dero](#)), now they add shameful treatment. Another reason they may have been sent away empty-handed is that they vineyard produced no fruit.

Spurgeon - They grow bolder, and more wicked, you see; first beating, and then adding shameful treatment to their former cruelty. Men do not come to ridicule religion, and persecute its advocates, all at once; this is an art which Satan teaches by degrees.

Lenski - Another feature should not be overlooked: as Jesus recites these points in the parable he is looking these very vine-growers squarely in the eye, and they know that Jesus has them in mind. The situation is dramatic in the extreme. The fact that no human lessor of a vineyard ever did a thing such as that which is depicted here brings out the full enormity of the reality of which these Sanhedrists were guilty. The patience of God toward Israel's rulers is without parallel in all human history—an illustration must be invented to picture it, and that illustration must be unreal. The second slave is treated worse than the first; insults are added to the blows. (See [The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel](#))

Proceeded (4369)([prostithemi](#) from from **prós** = to or besides + **títhēmi** = to put) means to set, add, put, lay unto or with something. It involves increasing the substance rather than adding a new substance.

Treated shamefully (818)([atimazo](#) from **a** = without + **time** = honor) means to be treated with indignity or to cause to be disgraced or degraded. This verb describes what God judicially allows to occur to the bodies of those who reject His revelation (Ro 1:24).

Luke 20:12 "And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out."

- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

A THIRD SLAVE WOUNDED

And he proceeded to send a third - (Literally "he added to send a third" - see Lenski's note below) This reflects the owner's continued "over the top" mercy. But not only is he merciful, he is also patient! He would have been entirely justified to being righteous retribution on the **vine growers**.

And this one also they wounded and cast out - The vine growers reject another opportunity by the owner.

Cast out (1544)([ekbállō](#) from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). **Ekballo** is the verb used to describe casting out demons (Mt 7:22-note)

Spurgeon - They are more violent this time; it comes to actual wounding, and to casting out the servant.

Lenski - The third is treated still worse. He is thrown out, covered with bleeding wounds. "He added to send" is a Hebraism (R. 1078) which uses the verb instead of an adverb: "he sent again." Luke mentions only three slaves, Matthew and Mark speak of many and record stoning and actual killing. The way in which Jesus spoke the parable included all these features, the evangelists abbreviated, and each did so in his own way.

As **Steven Cole** says "Any sensible businessman immediately would have thrown these bums out, prosecuted them legally for their negligence and abuse, and replaced them with tenants who would be more faithful in managing his vineyard. But I'm glad to say that this owner, who represents God, was not acting like a "good businessman." (but like a kind, merciful, benevolent, forgiving Father). Jesus is showing us the unreasonable, illogical, supra-human patience of our gracious God. He sent His prophets to Israel over and over again, looking for fruit. But the disobedient nation ignored, mistreated, and even killed some of these faithful servants. Yet in spite of this, God kept sending them, over and over again, as a demonstration of His abundant patience and grace. The history of Israel reveals the tragic wickedness of the human heart. No people were as privileged by God as that covenant nation, and yet repeatedly they turned away from God. While Moses was on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments, Israel was in the valley below carousing in front of the golden calf. Time and again they grumbled against God in the wilderness. When they moved into the promised land, instead of living separately from the pagan nations around them, they imitated their idolatry and immorality. Yet where sin abounded, God's grace super-abounded (Ro 5:20+). Far beyond any human expectations, God patiently sent prophet after prophet to warn His people to turn from their sins. If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you should be able to look back at God's extravagant patience and grace in His dealings with you and it ought to motivate you to serve Him more zealously. How many times I have been self-centered, living for my own aims, not to bear fruit for the Lord! And yet He always keeps sending His messengers to get me back on track! God sends us preachers who proclaim the truth of His Word. He gives us the Bible, which we can read for ourselves. We see many other messengers in His church-friends and others who warn us by their lives

and words of the need to live fruitful lives. God graciously sends us health problems to show us that we are frail and dependent on Him; signs of aging-gray hair, loss of hair, loss of youthful strength, and the death of loved ones and friends, to remind us that the eternal is what matters. All of these gracious messengers, given over and over again, remind us that eternity is near and we must give an account. God's great patience in His dealings with us should motivate us to live [accountably](#) to Him, bearing fruit with our lives. But the greatest motivation to fruitful, accountable living is not the many prophets God sent. It is His final messenger: God's great love, seen in sending His beloved Son, should motivate us to live [accountably](#) to Him. ([Who Owns the Vineyard?](#))

Luke 20:13 "The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'

Luke 20:13KJV 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.

- **What shall I do** Isaiah 5:4; Hosea 6:4; 11:8
- **I will send my beloved son** Lk 9:35; Mt 3:17; 17:5; John 1:34; 3:16,17,35,36; Ro 8:3; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:9-15
- **perhaps they will respect him** Jer 36:3,7
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
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THE PARABLE BECOMES PROPHETIC

Up to this point the parable has been **historic** (speaking of the treatment of God's prophets sent to Israel in the OT and including John the Baptist who was beheaded in the NT - Mt 14:10, Mk 6:16, 27, Lk 9:9+), but now turns the corner to open the door to a **prophetic** pronouncement. Jesus is telling the people, but especially the religious leaders what they will do with Him on "Good Friday!"

The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do?' - This would cause the hearers to surely side with the mistreated owner and would see vengeance as totally appropriate. Of course while the "owner" represents God, this question is not true to reality. God does not wonder about what will happen if He sends His own Son. The Father knew exactly what would happen when He sent His Son and was not surprised when they killed Him. Of course, what Jesus is doing in the parable is emphasizing the incredible contrast between God's amazing love and the intractable depravity of the human heart.

Wiersbe - What should the **owner** do? He could have sent his armies to destroy these wicked men. But instead he sent his own son to them. The reference, of course, is to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is "the Heir" (Heb. 1:2+ = "in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, Whom He appointed **heir** of all things"). (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

I will send my beloved son - First **slaves**, now the **son**. Just as the slaves were sent, now the son is sent, the son of course being Jesus Christ Who resembles the prophets in the sense that He too was sent! **Lenski** says "In the one case the mission makes the man, in the other the man makes the mission." **Beloved son** are the very words used in Luke 3:22+ (cf "My Chosen One" in Luke 9:35, "Beloved Son" in Mt 3:17, 17:5, Mk 1:11, 9:7, 12:6).

Perhaps they will respect (entrepo) him - Young's Literal has "they will reverence my son." The owner's patience continues. On course this portrays God's only begotten Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Ponder this for a moment - Where is an earthly father who would send his beloved son to men who had mistreated and killed his previous representatives? Indeed, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16). How great, how vast, how immeasurable is the love of God for those so unlovely! This reminds me of Paul's great prayer in Ephesians...

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.** 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in

Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21+)

Wikipedia's definition of **respect** - Respect is a positive feeling or action shown towards someone or something considered important, or held in high esteem or regard; it conveys a sense of admiration for good or valuable qualities; and it is also the process of honoring someone by exhibiting care, concern, or consideration for their needs or feelings.

Lenski adds "This imagery (REGARDING **"PERHAPS..."**) goes far deeper as regards God. On the one hand we have the incomprehensible love and patience of God that are exhibited in all these sendings; on the other hand we have the justice of God which lets the Jewish leaders fill the measure of their guilt to the very brim, yea, to overflowing, by the killing of even God's son." (Ibid)

MacArthur comments "After all the shameful things they've done, up to this point, surely one could expect some kind of righteous, civil treatment of my own beloved son. Maybe they had a low view of people who were slaves. Maybe they saw slaves the way a lot of people in the secular and Gentile world saw slaves, as animals. So the owner expresses a reasonable thought that they will show respect to a son, if not a slave." ([The Murder of God's Son: A Prophetic Parable](#))

Perhaps means in English "by chance," possibly, maybe, it may happen. Of course God knew what would happen, but as Lenski says "**Perhaps**" in the parable is no mere part of this humanly impossible imagery but is inserted to show how far God was willing to go with the leaders of the Jews, i. e., send his Son on a mere "**perhaps**."

Respect (1788)([entrepo](#)) means to turn at or to turn back or about. In the active sense it means put to shame, make ashamed, reprove (1Cor 4.14). In the passive it means to be put to shame, be ashamed (Titus 2.8). In the passive with the middle sense, it means strictly to turn oneself toward someone; hence respect, reverence, have regard for (Mt 21.37). In this context the idea is of turning with respect at the approach of someone. In the present usage the vine growers would in effect be shamed into respecting the son.

Mark 12:6 adds "**He had one more to send**, a beloved son;**he sent him last** ([eschatos](#)) **of all to them**, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

Comment: The word "**last**" is significant for indeed Jesus is God's "last" word of warning and of hope to Israel and to all mankind. God can (so to speak) do no more that give His best, His only begotten Son. to reject Him is to reject one's only hope of deliverance from eternal destruction.

Wuest - The Greek text reads, "**Yet he had one**," that is, one person to send, after all his bondslaves were either maltreated or killed. He reasons that the vineyard men would not dare to harm his son. Swete says of this: "But to the owner any other result was inconceivable, and the parable sets forth the improbability from the human point of view, of such an issue as the incarnation actually had." All of which means that mankind does not have any proper conception of [the utter and complete depravity of the fallen race](#), nor to what lengths it will go to hold on to its sin.

Mt 21:37 "But afterward (KJV has "LAST OF ALL", YOUNG'S LITERAL has "AND AT LAST")) he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.

Spurgeon - A strange thing happens when the Lord himself comes to pass, and says, "What shall I do?" Here is infinite wisdom, as it were, at a non-plus; and in that extremity this is the Lord's last expedient

Luke 20:14 "But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.'

Luke 20:14KJV 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.

- **they reasoned with one another** Lk 20:5; Mt 16:7; 21:25
- **This is the heir** Ps 2:1-6,8; 89:27; Mt 2:2-16; Ro 8:17; Hebrews 1:2
- **let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours** Lk 20:19; 19:47; 22:2; Genesis 37:18-20; Mt 27:21-25; John 11:47-50; Acts 2:23; Acts 3:15
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur

THE PARABLE COMES TO A SHOCKING CLIMAX!

But when the vine-growers ([georgos](#)) saw him, they reasoned ([dialogizomai](#)) with one another - Notice that they reacted just at sight of him. There is no record of him even speaking a word. The implication is that they recognized him as the owner's son! Here Jesus is prophesying to His murderers, the religious leaders, exactly what they are about to do! They may be keeping their evil plan under cover (Mt 26:4, Mk 14:1, Jn 5:18, Jn 7:1, 25, Jn 11:53), but Jesus exposes them openly before the assembled Jewish crowd.

John MacArthur comments on **when the vine-growers saw Him** - Jesus' whole life was marked with endless evidences that He was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah. It was unmistakably clear. And the vine-growers say, **"This is the heir."** What an indictment. **"This is the heir."** They knew what His claims were. They knew He substantiated them by power over disease, power over death, power over demons. They knew His miracle power. They knew there was no explanation for Him other than that He was divine. **Why didn't they believe?** Listen to John 12:42. "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." It never was a question of evidences. Never. They even say, "We know that You speak the true words of God." They never argued about His miracles. They never denied one miracle. It just was not acceptable to them to believe in Him because they loved their own religion and the praise that it brought them more than they loved God. It was not a head issue, it was a heart issue. He is the Messiah. He is the only and beloved Son of God. ([Sermon](#))

Reasoned (1260) ([dialogizomai](#) from **dia** = intensifies meaning + **logizomai** - to reason, reckon, consider. Related to our English word "[dialogue](#)" a conversation between two or more people) means to consider, reason or reckon thoroughly, to think through, to [deliberate](#) by reflection. "To bring together different reasons." (Vine) To hold a discussion.

Lenski - The parable is exceedingly exact at this point. This reasoning with each other does not picture only the secret thoughts of the Sanhedrists; John 11:47-53 states that this is exactly how they did reason. They killed Jesus because they feared to lose their position and their power over the nation. Their blind unbelief hid the spiritual nature of the Kingdom from them; and thus the fact that they could never retain the outward rule when its inwardness was foreign to them remained hidden from them. "Let us kill him" is the hortative subjunctive. The murder of Jesus was deliberately planned as Jesus tells the very men who planned it. After Jesus was out of the way, who was there to dispute the religious rule of the nation with the Sanhedrists? After he was dead, the inheritance was theirs (**ED: OR SO THEY THOUGHT - DECEIVED AS THEY WERE TO THE TRUTH OF GOD!**) (See [The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel](#))

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS RECOGNIZED THE SON!!!

This is the heir ([Kleronomos](#)) - This is amazing and answers a question I have had for more 38 years as a follower of Christ. And the question is did the Jewish leaders recognize Who Jesus was given all of the supernatural events that they personally witnessed? This parable answers the question -- Just as the tenants recognized the son as the heir, it is clear that the Jewish religious leaders recognized Jesus as the Son of God.

Cole adds that "It was not through their failure to recognize the Son that they killed him; that would have been pardonable. It was, as in the parable, precisely because they recognized Him for who he was!...We reject the claims of Christ not because we *misunderstand* them, but because we *understand them only too well*, in spite of all our protestations to the contrary. (See [The Gospel According to Mark](#):)

They did not kill Him because they thought He was a counterfeit Messiah but because they knew He was the Messiah Does this not blow your mind! What it demonstrates is the depth of depravity of the human heart that rejects every offer of grace from God because it does not want to submit to the authority of the **"Owner"** but wants the **"Vineyard"** for itself! Are not these evil **vine-growers** in so many ways a picture of all of us before we were saved by grace through faith, for we were all "formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds" (Col 1:21+), "we were enemies" before "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." (Ro 5:10+)! And yet in spite of this rejection "of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience" (Ro 2:4+), what does God do? "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Ro 5:8+) We can only sing out John Newton's great words ["Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see!"](#)

Wuest adds **"The Sanhedrin recognized our Lord for what He was, the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel.**The Lord had come

to claim the vineyard, Israel, for Himself. He had received friendly recognition from the people. This had aroused the jealousy of their spiritual leaders. They tried in desperation to recover their waning power over the people by giving Him over to the Gentiles for crucifixion." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

It is fascinating that the attitude of the tenants toward the beloved son and heir reflects the same attitude of Joseph's jealous brothers who when they saw him in his coat of many colors, the sign of heirship conspired together and said "**come and let us kill him.**" (Ge 37:20)

Martin Luther once exclaimed, "If I were God and the world had treated me as it treated Him, I would kick the wretched thing to pieces!" We can all identify with his feelings!

[And can it be that I should gain](#)

An int'rest in the Savior's blood?

Died He for me, who caused His pain—

For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! How can it be,

That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

- Charles Wesley

Let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours- "Under Jewish law, any man could lay claim to ownerless property. The tenants may have concluded that the owner was dead; otherwise he would have come himself. If they killed the son, then they could claim the vineyard for themselves. *This is exactly the way the religious leaders were thinking as they stood there before Jesus!* (see John 11:47-54)" (Wiersbe Borrow [Be courageous](#))

Spurgeon - They caught him in the garden of Gethsemane; they cast him out in their Council in the hall of Caiaphas, and when he was led without the gate of Jerusalem; they slew him at Calvary.

Steven Cole adds "When the son showed up the tenant farmers assumed that the owner was dead. Under Jewish law, property not claimed by an heir within a specified time could be claimed by the first party to do so. Thus they greedily assume that if they get rid of the son, the property will be theirs. They didn't kill the son because of mistaken identity, but precisely because they recognized who he was and they wanted his inheritance for themselves. The issue was, "Who owns the vineyard?" They did not want to submit themselves to God's rightful ownership. They wanted to rule the vineyard." ([Who Owns the Vineyard?](#))

MacArthur comments "Thoughtful planning. **Full knowledge of who he is.** The renters premeditate his murder so they can control and possess everything. They don't want him encroaching. They don't want him taking anything that they now believe is theirs. And the way to get that is to kill him...According to the Talmud, if three years went by and no one laid claim to land, it reverted to those who were working the land. So if they got rid of the son, assuming that the son had come because the father may have been dead, it would belong to them. They wanted the inheritance to be theirs completely. They didn't want the son exercising any control, having any authority, or exacting anything from them."

Lenski - The lessons in killing that were taught these Jewish leaders by all former persecutors of the prophets they are putting into final practice for the killing of God's own Son.

Matthew phrases it this way "let us kill him and seize his inheritance (NLT = "and get the estate for ourselves!")." (Mt 21:38)**Mark** has "let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!" (Mk 12:7)

Luke 20:15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

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

- **So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him** Hebrews 13:12
- **What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them** Mt 21:37-40; Mark 12:6-9
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE SON SUFFERED OUT OF THE VINEYARD

So they threw him out ([ekballo](#)) of the vineyard and killed ([apokteino](#)) him - If you were in the audience the day Jesus spoke this parable, you would have been shocked at this turn of events! This is designed to make the audience feel outrage against those tenant farmers.

Wuest - The "casting out" speaks of the act of Israel's leaders excommunicating our Lord. He was treated as excommunicate when He was condemned as a blasphemer and handed over to the Romans for punishment. Our Lord's crucifixion outside of the walls of Jerusalem symbolized this expulsion from the community of Israel. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing](#) used [by permission](#) - or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

This parabolic detail (**threw him out of the vineyard**) was fulfilled in the murder of Jesus, for He was crucified **outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem...**

They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own Cross (the cross-member or horizontal bar which condemned carried on their shoulders to the place of execution), to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha ([see excellent diagram of proposed site of Golgotha outside the city gates](#)). (Jn 19:17, cf Stephen being stoned outside the city - Acts 7:58+)

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, **suffered outside the gate (OF THE CITY)**. So, **let us go out to Him outside the camp**, bearing His reproach. (Heb. 13:12, 13+)

Lenski on the **owner of the vineyard** - It does not need to be said that these vine-growers will not be able to escape justice and retain the vineyard as their own. Justice must strike them at last. There is still the lord of the vineyard to deal with. He will come, but not as the slaves and as the son came. He will not seek fruit, he will come to do something with these vine-growers.

What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? - The rabbinical method of teaching was to ask the students questions calculated to engage them in a deeper level in the topic under discussion. In this case, the implication first of all is that the **owner** is alive. Jesus is in a sense asking His audience to fill in the blanks and finish the parable! As discussed in the notes on Lk 20:16, in Mark's and Luke's versions Jesus "fills in the blank," but in Matthew's version the listeners actually "fill in the blanks" (see [discussion below](#) on Mt 21:40-41)

Owner is the Greek word [kurios](#) used over 665 times in the NT and translated most often as **Lord** (with a capital "L" - 626v). So in a sense Jesus is giving an interpretation of the passage, for His use of [kurios](#) implies that the owner is God.

Spurgeon - The Son was the final messenger. There would be no other. Either they would accept the message of the Son or face certain judgment. "If you do not hear the wellbeloved Son of God, you have refused your last hope. He is God's ultimatum. Nothing remains when Christ is refused. No one else can be sent; heaven itself contains no further messenger. If Christ be rejected, hope is rejected."

Killed (put to death) ([615](#)) [apokteino](#) from apó = intensifies meaning + kteíno = slay) means to kill outright or to put to death in any manner. To kill someone results in a state of separation. To kill physically (Mt. 10:28; Mt. 14:5; Jn 18:31; often of Christ's death; in Rev. 2:13, Rev. 9:15, Rev. 11:13).

Luke 20:16 "He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"

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

- **He will come and destroy these vine-growers** Lk 19:27; Ps 2:8,9; 21:8-10; Mt 21:41; 22:7; Acts 13:46
- **will give the vineyard to others** Nehemiah 9:36,37
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
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PROPHETIC PRONOUNCEMENT!

At this point the reader needs to be aware that there is a slight difference in Luke's version and Matthew's version of Jesus' story. In Luke's version Jesus ends the parable with a question **"What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"** (Lk 20:15) But then Jesus Himself answers His own question - **"He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others."** **When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"** (Lk 20:16).

In Matthew's version Jesus asks the question **"Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?"** (Mt 21:40+) But in contrast to Luke's version, Matthew records that it is not Jesus Who answers the question but either the religious leaders or the Jewish crowd who respond (I favor the religious leaders because that is who had challenged Jesus' authority) - **"They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end ([apollumi](#)), and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."** (Mt 21:41+)

Comment: Note that it is uncertain who the **"they"** is (**"They said to Him..."**) who gives this response to Jesus' question in Mt 21:40. Some (like John MacArthur and John Heading below) favor that this is the response of the self-righteous religious leaders.

Others favor that this is the response of the Jewish crowd who heard the parable. We know that every Bible translation is also in a sense an "interpretation" of the original Hebrew or Greek text and so it should not surprise us that some versions "interpret" the "they" for us (saving us work, but sometimes not accurate). And so the **NET** renders the Greek "When the PEOPLE heard this" reasoning that this is the "referent" because it is the "people" who are addressed in Lk 20:9." However the overall context would seem to favor that Jesus is addressing the religious leaders primarily. And in Mt 21:45 it is clear that Jesus' primary "target" was the religious leaders.

MacArthur explains that in Matthew's version (Mt 21:40+) "In typical rabbinical fashion, Jesus led His hearers to finish the story themselves, asking, **"What will he do to those vine-growers?"** (Mt 21:40b+) "The chief priests and elders readily replied with moral indignation, **"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."** (Mt 21:41+) " They no doubt were highly pleased with this unusual opportunity to parade their self-righteousness before Jesus. They rightly assessed the proper ending of the parable, that the irate owner would first severely punish the wicked growers and then replace them with others who were reliable. They were completely unaware that, as they fed their pride on Jesus' baited question, they sprang the trap of their own condemnation." (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

James Brooks (commenting on the parallel passage in Mark 12:9) writes that "The origin of this verse has been denied to Jesus because elsewhere He did not answer His own questions. He may not have done so in the present instance, as Mt 21:41 indicates. Mark simply was not concerned to identify who gave the answer. (New American Commentary – Volume 23: Mark)

John Heading - A suitable question by the Lord, "what will he do unto those husbandmen?", provoked the Pharisees to condemn themselves out of their own mouths; such wicked men would be miserably destroyed. Men see sin in others, but not in themselves; see Luke 18:11, and compare David, who, concerning a parable relating to his own sin, had said, "the man that hath done this thing shall surely die" (2 Sam 12:5). The Pharisees were constrained to speak the truth, as Caiaphas also had to do (John 11:51). But at least it appears that the Pharisees at that point in the parable did not realise that the Lord was speaking against them. They realised this when the Lord said "you" in Mt 21:43. (What the Bible teaches – Matthew and Mark)

He will come and destroy ([apollumi](#)) these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others - Here Jesus issues in effect a prophetic promise of divine judgment similar to the warnings in Luke 13:34–35+ and Luke 19:41–44+. In Luke's version Jesus affirms the conclusion of the audience in Mt 21:40-41 (as discussed in the preceding notes).

Here is the NLT paraphrase - "I'll tell you-- he will come and kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others." "How terrible that such a thing should ever happen," his listeners protested." (Lk 20:16NLT)

MacArthur on **destroy ([apollumi](#)) these vine-growers** that "This is prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans. Hundreds of thousands, of Jews were slaughtered and the city and the Temple were leveled to the ground. From that moment on, no priesthood has ever existed in Israel, no Temple, no sacrifices, no ceremonies, no Sadducees, no Pharisees, no chief priests, no high priests, the whole system ended, never again has it been restored."

Stein agrees writing "This judgment occurs within history, for it is associated with the giving of the vineyard to others. Luke wanted his readers to understand that this was fulfilled in Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 (cf. Lk 13:35; Lk 19:43–44; Lk 21:20–24; Lk 23:29–31). (NAC)

ESV Study Bible note on **destroy** ([apollumi](#)) **these vine-growers** - In a preliminary sense this happened during the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70, but in a fuller sense it refers to the final judgment. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

And will give the vineyard to others - As noted above in Matthew 21:41 says it in a slightly different way declaring he (the owner - God) "**will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.**"

Who are the **others**? Most commentaries say the "**others**" are the Gentiles which sounds reasonable considering the fact that the church is now predominantly Gentile. But as discussed below by John MacArthur, one should not overlook that the first individuals who received charge over God's "Gospel seed" were all Jewish - 12 Jewish apostles and then one additional Jewish apostle Paul. It was through their ministry that the Gospel of the Kingdom was spread throughout the known world. So MacArthur makes an interesting point that the "others" may not be Gentiles as normally interpreted but actually be the believing Jewish apostles who replace the evil "vine-growers," the unbelieving Jewish religious leaders.

NET Note thinks the "**others**" refers "to Gentile inclusion; see Eph 2:11–22."

Robert Stein interprets "**others**" - Compare Acts 13:45–47; 18:6; 28:25–28. Here the vineyard refers to God's kingdom, which would be offered to the Gentiles, whose time had now come (Lk 21:24). Matthew 21:43 elaborates on this, "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruits." (NAC)

John MacArthur as alluded to above has a somewhat different explanation for the "**others**" writing "It is not just a simple shift from Jew to Gentile, although obviously the people of God in the past were predominantly Jewish and now are predominantly Gentile. It is a shift in leadership. That's what our Lord is talking about. And of all people, the new leadership are the despised apostles and disciples of Jesus." **MacArthur** devotes almost an entire sermon to explaining who the "**others**" are and if you are interested in a more detailed discussion read or listen to [The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) It is certainly food for thought and something I have never heretofore considered. It is notable that others is not [heteros](#) (different kind which would favor others as Gentiles) but [allos](#) (others of the same kind which would favor Jews), which does support MacArthur's premise the **other vine-growers** are of the same kind are also Jews. And of course the early church was almost entirely Jewish at its inception. Interesting!

Spurgeon - What a warning is this to our own country! We, too, are seeing the sacrifice and deity of our Lord questioned, and his Sacred Word assailed by those who should have been its advocates. Unless there is speedy amendment, the Lord may take away the candlestick out of its place and find another race which will prove more faithful to him and his Gospel than our own has been.

Kenneth Wuest explains that "Here we have the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the world-wide dispersion of the Jews A.D. 70, the call of the Gentiles, and the Church of Jesus Christ, the latter being the channel through which God is **operating temporarily** (cf Ro 11:17-18) while Israel is in dispersion (See [Jewish Diaspora](#)), and until Israel will be regathered at the second Advent (cf Isa 11:12-note, Isa 43:1,5, Ezek 34:13, see excursus below), and restored to fellowship with and usefulness to God." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Excursus - The key passages dealing with the future restoration of Israel - Mic 2:12-13; 4:1-8; Isa 11:10-16; Jer 23:1-8; 29:10-14; 31:1-34; 32:37-44; Ezek 11:16-20; 20:33-44; 28:25-26; 34:11-31; 36:22-38; 37:11-28; 39:25-29.

James Brooks writes that "The story primarily justifies the church's replacement of Israel as God's favored people. It also functions in the book as preparation for the passion narrative....The "**others**" to whom the vineyard was given were, of course, the Gentile church. The church is the inheritor of the position formerly held by Israel, the recipient of many of the promises (**ED**: MANY YES, BUT NOT ALL OF THEM!) originally made to Israel." (New American Commentary – Volume 23: Mark)

Comment: Brooks is correct that the Church is God's replacement of Israel in this age, which is commonly referred to as the "Church Age." But this does not warrant the radical interpretation that God is forever finished with ethnic Israel in His grand plan of redemption. Paul could not have been much clearer than he was in Romans 11 where he wrote such things as "Now if their (ISRAEL) transgression is riches for the world (THE GENTILES) and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will **their fulfillment** be (WHOSE FULFILLMENT? DOES THIS SOUND LIKE GOD IS FINISHED WITH ISRAEL?) (Ro 11:12+) Even the ESV Study Bible comments **their fulfillment** "looks forward to the fulfillment of God's saving promises to ethnic Israel." In other words, Israel means literal nation of Israel and not the Church as sadly is falsely taught in so-called [replacement theology or supersessionism](#) (cf "[Israel of God](#)")!

Destroy (622) ([apollumi](#) from **apo** = away from or wholly) means to destroy utterly but not to cause to cease to exist. The idea is not the loss of being, but is more the loss of well-being. It means to be ruined so that one can no longer serve the use for which they were designed.

Luke's uses of **apollumi** - Lk. 4:34; Lk. 5:37; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 8:24; Lk. 9:24; Lk. 9:25; Lk. 9:56; Lk. 11:51; Lk. 13:3; Lk. 13:5; Lk. 13:33; Lk. 15:4; Lk. 15:6; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 15:9; Lk. 15:17; Lk. 15:24; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 17:27; Lk. 17:29; Lk. 17:33; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:16; Lk. 21:18; Acts 5:37; Acts 27:34

When they heard it, - "**Heard**" in this context indicates that this time they "Got it!" They did not just hear the sound of His words, but they deduced the substance of His words. It is one thing to simply hear someone speak and to really listen to them with understanding. How many times has someone spoken to us and we heard their voice, but did not truly pay attention to what they were saying? All of us are guilty of this selfish response! But this time Jesus' words have them come in one ear but did not go out the other. In this case they **heard** and understood and thus they responded with a what amounts to a strong negative protest.

They said, "May it never be!" - They were horrified at the implications of Jesus' condemning conclusion to the parable as emphasized by use of the unusual Greek phrase *me genoito* which is found in no other place in the Gospels. Some of the other translations give you a sense of their reaction of shock and negative response to the truth of Jesus' words - "such a thing should ever happen," (NLT), "No-- never!" (CSB) "God forbid!," (KJV and RSV) "May this never happen" (NET). Note that *me genoito* is the strongest way in the Greek language they could express their negative response.

As an aside the only other uses of "me genoito," (May it never be!) are by the apostle Paul who has 14 of the 15 NT occurrences, with most in the book of Romans...Lk. 20:16; Rom. 3:4; Rom. 3:6; Rom. 3:31; Rom. 6:2; Rom. 6:15; Rom. 7:7; Rom. 7:13; Rom. 9:14; Rom. 11:1; Rom. 11:11; 1 Co. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; Gal. 3:21; Gal. 6:14

Some writers propose that this negative reaction "**May it never be!**" is spoken by the religious leaders, others think this represents the response of those in the crowd. Lk 20:19 would seem to favor that this parable is directed at the religious leaders -- "The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them." (cf Lk 20:1 where it is not the people but " the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him."). Of course, the crowd was also guilty of rejecting Jesus

They (these comments would be apropos to both religious leaders and the crowd) understood that Jesus story was referring to the judgment of their nation, Israel, and for this reason they strongly protested that such a thing should ever occur. But as the old saying goes, it was "too little, too late!" They had received countless opportunities to respond to Jesus' miracles which authenticated His Gospel proclamation the way of truth. God the Father, through the words and actions of His Son Jesus had offered amazing grace (and mercy) to the Chosen People, and especially to the Jewish religious leaders. The religious leaders were the most responsible because they were the ones who were called to teach the nation spiritual truth, especially the way of righteousness. But instead of receiving Jesus' teaching about the true way of righteousness, they chose to present a false way of obtaining (self) righteousness. They were guilty as charged. The only thing left for them as leaders and sadly for the entire nation was condemnation and just punishment for rejecting the way of truth. And so from the beginning of Jesus' ministry to the end, they continued to be stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, steadfastly resisting the Holy Spirit, just as their fathers had done (cf Acts 7:51).

As **Steven Cole** says that the Jews "lost their place of privilege as God's covenant nation. God grafted in the Gentiles to accomplish His purpose "until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in" (Ro 11:25-note). As Paul points out, we should not boast, but fear, or God could remove us and use some other group to fulfill His purpose (Ro 11:17-22-note). **The point is, if we who profess to be God's people live selfishly and do not bear fruit in His vineyard, He will set us aside and raise up others.** (cf 1 Cor 9:24-27-note) We need to apply this not just to the church "out there," but also to ourselves. We miss the point if we think that this parable was given to pagans. It was given to men who professed to know God, the religious leaders of Israel. But these religious leaders wrongly thought that they owned the **vineyard**. They thought that it was their ministry. They were using it for their own selfish purposes. As a result, they rejected Jesus' rightful place as the Owner of the **vineyard**. This church is not my church. It is not the elders' church. It is not your church. It is the Lord's church. He's the owner of the vineyard. If He allows us to work in His vineyard, we are blessed. Any work that we do in the vineyard is not for us; it is for the owner (cf Mt 5:16-note, 1 Cor 10:31, cf Jn 15:5)....God expects fruit from His people. His great patience and grace, seen in the many messengers He sends to us when we get off track should motivate us to bear fruit (cf Jn 15:8, 16). His great love, seen in His sending of His beloved Son, should motivate us to live [accountably](#) before Him. His righteous judgment on those who reject His Son and usurp ownership of the vineyard should motivate us to live [accountably](#) to Him." ([Who Owns the Vineyard?](#))

To follow up on Steven Cole's emphasis on **accountability**, every individual believer indeed will have a future day of accountability

For we must all appear (INDIVIDUALLY) before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one (INDIVIDUALLY) may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (NOT REFERRING TO SIN BUT TO DEEDS NOT DONE BY ABIDING IN THE VINE - Jn 15:5). (2 Cor 5:10-note)

So because we each have a specific time of individual accountability before the Lord Jesus Christ we should follow Paul's steps (cf 1 Cor 11:1-note)...

Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. (2 Cor 5:9-note)

Steven Cole applies this section of the parable to our lives - God's righteous judgment on those who reject His Son should motivate us to live [accountably](#) to Him. This parable illustrates what Paul exclaims in Romans 11:22, "Behold then the **kindness** and **severity** of God." God's **kindness** is seen in His sending far more servants to rebellious Israel than she deserved. His **severity** is seen when these wicked tenant farmers killed the son. Jesus is God's final messenger, the sum of His revelation to sinful man. If we reject Him, there is no further remedy. Only judgment lies ahead. ([Who Owns the Vineyard?](#))

The phrase "**they heard**" is the verb **akouo**, which is one of the most common verbs in the Bible and therefore one that is important to understand as it has several important nuances, depending on the context. In the present context **akouo** signifies hearing with understanding. The following discussion will give you a better sense of the various meanings of more than 400 uses of **akouo** in the New Testament.

Heard (191)(**akouo**) primarily means physical hearing of sounds and the apprehension of the sounds with one's mind. **Akouo** gives us our English [acoustics](#) which is the science of designs that helps one hear (We need "*spiritual acoustics*" to help us hear spiritual truth!).

Akouo is a very common verb in the NT and the Septuagint (Over 1400 uses total) and has several important nuances - to hear sound (Mt 9:12; 11:5; Mk 10:41; 14:64; Lk 7:3, 9; Jn 3:8; Lxx = Ge 3:8, 10), to hear so as to obey ([see below](#)), to hear with understanding ([see below](#)), to hear with attention (to listen attentively so as to perceive what is being said), to hear prayer (Jn 9:31; 11:41, 42; 1 Jn 5:15; Lxx = Ps. 10:17), to hear a case at court (Acts 25:22; Jn 7:51), to learn by hearing, to be informed, to know (Mt. 2:3, 22; 4:12; 5:21, 27; 11:2; Mt 20:30; Mk 2:1; 10:47, 5:27; 6:14; Acts 14:14; 15:24; Jn 14:28; Lxx = Ge 41:15; 42:2), hearing related to instruction or doctrine (Jn 8:40; 15:15; Acts 1:4; 4:20; Ro 10:14, 18; Heb 2:1; 1 Jn 2:7, 24.), to hear a report (Mt 28:14; Mk 2:1; Lk 12:3; Acts 11:22; 1 Cor 5:1; Lxx = 2 Chr 26:15). In John 6:60 the phrase "who can **listen** to it?" has the nuance of who can accept it or who can receive it and believe it. There is often overlap in these various nuances. Clearly, to arrive at the most accurate definition of **akouo** in a given verse will require careful observation of the use in context.

Louw-Nida summary of **akouo** -

- (1). hear (Rev 18:22; Mk 16:11 v.r.; Jn 8:9 v.r.);
- (2). be able to hear, as opposed to being deaf (Mt 11:5);
- (3). receive news, normally by word of mouth (Mk 6:29);
- (4). pay attention to, to believe and respond (Mt 18:15);
- (5). obey, listen and conform to what was heard (Mt 17:5);
- (6). understand, comprehend (Mk 4:33);
- (7). hear legal case (Jn 7:51);
- (8). akoē akouō, listen carefully (Mt 13:14; Ac 28:26);
- (9). akouō eis to ous, hear in secret, formally, hear into the ear (Mt 10:27; Ac 11:22)
- (10). tois ōsin bareōs akouō, be slow to comprehend and respond to a spiritual truth (Mt 13:15; Ac 28:27)

NOTE: Because this discussion on **akouo** is so lengthy, [CLICK HERE for the full discussion at the bottom of this page](#)

Luke 20:17 But Jesus looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone'?"

Luke 20:17KJV 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?

- **But Jesus looked at them and said** Lk 19:41; 22:61; Mark 3:5; 10:23
- **What then is this that is written** Lk 22:37; 24:44; John 15:25

- **THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED** Ps 118:22; Isa 28:16; Zech 3:9; Mt 21:42; Mark 12:10; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7,8
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS CHANGES METAPHORS FROM A VINEYARD TO A BUILDING

What Jesus is doing in Lk 20:17-18 is changing metaphors from a **VINEYARD** and a **REJECTED SON** to a **BUILDING** and a **REJECTED STONE**! It is interesting that in Hebrew **SON** is "ben" and **STONE** is "eben."

Warren Wiersbe - The Servant-Judge (JESUS) announced a double verdict: they had not only rejected the Son, but they had also refused the Stone! There could be only one consequence—judgment (Mt. 22:1-14). (Borrow [Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Diligent](#)).

A closer look at this parable in combination with the present passage (Lk 20:17) presents us an overview of God's plan of redemption, for in these passages we see Jesus in His Sonship, in His mission (as Messiah sent to Israel, the "Vineyard"), and in His death (His crucifixion). While the parable does not specifically describe His resurrection, Lk 20:17 indicates that Jesus has "become the Chief Cornerstone." This indicates that He has been exalted (cf Php 2:8-10+), which implies His resurrection and ascension (He could hardly be exalted if He were still in the Tomb) to the right hand of the Father and finally describes His return as the Stone Who at His Second Coming, will crush all opposition, Jewish and Gentile (Da 2:44-45+). In summary in this parable and the quote from Ps 118:22, we see Jesus First Coming, His role today between His two comings as the "foundation (Eph 2:20-note) of the Church and finally His Second Coming to crush all opposition. How wonderful is the Word of God!

R C H Lenski - The parable is dropped, its possibilities have been exhausted since its imagery could not picture the resurrection of Jesus. The Sanhedrists have heard their verdict in the language of the parable. They are now to hear that this verdict has been recorded in their own Scriptures. Jesus quotes Ps. 118:22, 23, the very psalm from which the Hosanna shouts were taken on Palm Sunday; and after quoting it Jesus restates in his own words what this quotation means for his present hearers.

John Heading adds "The parable provides a wide panorama of the purposes of God relating both to the Jews (Lk 20:9 alludes to events that took place prior to the first advent, for the vineyard was "planted" in the OT!) and to the church, as well as to Christ, the exalted Stone. The parable is a summary of the whole Bible! (What the Bible teaches – Matthew)

R T France - on Ps 118:22-23 - The psalm referred originally to the deliverance of Israel from a situation where it seemed their enemies had triumphed, a deliverance which could be ascribed only to the miraculous intervention of God on behalf of his chosen people. Jesus, and other New Testament writers following his lead (Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:4, 7), saw in this a prefiguring of His own rejection (CRUCIFIXION) and subsequent vindication when God **raised him from the dead** and **set him at his right hand**. The quotation here serves to round off the parable by providing the missing element in its presentation of the Jews' **rejection of Jesus, i.e. his subsequent vindication in the resurrection**. (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – Matthew) (Bolding added)

But Jesus looked at ([emblepo](#)) them and said - He "fixed His gaze on them." He is addressing the protests from the Jewish crowd. Don't miss the intent of Luke's words - Jesus is "mano on mano," eyeball to eyeball as we might say and He is seeking to capture their full attention for His next critical commentary, in which He in effect interprets an Old Testament passage from Psalm 118:22 for His Jewish hearers.

Excursus on "mana on mano" = Mano-a-mano is a Spanish construction meaning "hand to hand". It was used originally for bullfights where two matadors alternate competing for the admiration of the audience. Current Spanish usage describes any kind of competition between two people where they both compete trying to outdo each other. How apropos to the current confrontation!

Lenski on "but Jesus looked" - There is a pause. Jesus looks at all the people who are packed closely before him, all intent on every word that comes from his lips. The pause and the look add to the tension.

Looked at ("looked straight at them" = NET)([1689](#))([emblepo](#) from **en** = in or on + **blépo** = to look) means to look in the face, fix the eyes upon and so to stare at. It speaks of an attentive looking as when the Lord "turned and looked at Peter" after his denial (Lk 22:61-note). **Emblepo** can signify a look of love, concern, or interest, as in the account of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21).

As **Constable** explains "By looking at His hearers Jesus captivated their attention for a very important statement. Jesus' response corrected the crowd's resistance to the idea that God would judge Israel's present leaders and allow Israel to fall under other presumably Gentile leadership."

In Mt 21:42 Jesus asked the religious leaders a question " "Did you never read in the Scriptures." Imagine their reaction! This must have angered them. After all these are the leading theologians of Israel and He asks them if they have ever read their Scriptures! You probably don't want to ask this question of your pastor!

What then is this that is written - Written is perfect tense which means that this passage was written down in the past and stands forever written! In Matthew Jesus introduces His OT quote with "**Did you never read in the Scriptures (NOTE: THE WORD SCRIPTURE IN THE NT VIRTUALLY ALWAYS REFERS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES)**" (Mt 21:42) In Matthew Jesus raises this question in order to make all these people think and try to understand what, of course, they had read. The answer to Jesus' question is of course they had read these texts, for they used them yearly in the [Hallel](#) (referring to Ps 113-118 still used as a chant of praise at Passover, Shabuoth, Sukkoth, Hanukkah, and Rosh Hodesh), but sadly the hearing of these Holy Words was not understood (and still is not by modern Jews) and so is like the old saying [in one ear and out the other!](#)

Lenski - The psalm, which was known to all, was, most likely, composed in order to express the joy of the people after the return from the Babylonian captivity, at the time of the laying of the cornerstone of their new Temple or at the time of the dedication of the completed structure.

Written ([1125](#))([grapho](#) from root **graph-** = primarily means to engrave) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen letters on a surface. The [perfect tense](#) signifies the permanence of the written word of God.

Now Jesus quotes from Psalm 118, the very Psalm the Jews had quoted when Jesus entered Jerusalem in His "Triumphal Entry" and the Jewish crowds hailed Him as their **Messiah** and conquering (they thought) **King** crying "shouting: "BLESSED IS THE **KING** WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Lk 19:38 [note](#), quoting Ps 118:26). The **bitter irony** is that the very psalm used to hail Him as Messiah and King of Israel, Jesus uses to foretell Israel's rejection of Him! He predicts the Jewish people will experience an amazing turn-around in just five days! There is one other **irony** in that Ps 118:22-23 in the OT spoke of Israel as the one rejected (or perhaps her king) by the Gentiles, but in the NT it is Jesus Who is rejected by Israel.

Psalm 118:22 is clearly an important passage to God, for the Spirit quotes from it five times in the New Testament:

- Mt 21:42
- Mark 12:10
- Luke 20:17
- Acts 4:11
- 1 Peter 2:7

The parallel passage in Matthew 21 has some additional information not found in Luke's version (note that the **text below in red bold** is found only in Matthew and not in Luke or Mark). Matthew quotes not just from Ps 118:22 (as does Luke) but like Mark (Mk 12:10-11) quotes from Ps 118:22 and Ps 118:23. Note also that Matthew's version describes God's pronouncement of judgment on Israel.

Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures (QUOTING Ps 118:22), 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER [*stone*]; (FOLLOWING QUOTE FROM Ps 118:23 AND IS NOT FOUND IN LUKE) **THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?** "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you (ISRAEL) and given to a people (BELIEVING GENTILES), **producing the fruit of it.**" 44 "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust (VERB USED OF WINNOWING OUT CHAFF AND THEN GRINDING TO POWDER = THE VERY FATE OF THOSE WHO REJECT THE STONE!)." (Mt 21:42-44)

A T Robertson writes that Psalm 118:22 is "A most telling quotation. These experts in building God's temple had rejected the Corner Stone chosen by God for his own house. But God has the last word and sets aside the building experts and puts his Son as the Head of the corner. It was a withering indictment...It was the [death-knell](#) of the Jewish nation with their hopes of political and religious world leadership. (**ED COMMENT:** THE "[DEATH KNELL](#)" SOUNDS DURING THE CHURCH AGE BUT WILL ONE DAY TOLL A VICTORIOUS SOUND BECAUSE CONTRARY TO [MUCH TEACHING IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH](#) GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH THE NATION OF ISRAEL HER TIME WILL COME AT THE END OF THIS AGE WHEN MESSIAH RETURNS AT HIS TRUE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

[Rev 19:11-21-[note](#)] AND IS FINALLY RECOGNIZED FOR WHO HE ALWAYS WAS BEEN AND FOREVER WILL BE, THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD [John 1:29, 36]. AND AT THAT TIME ONE-THIRD OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL WILL BELIEVE IN JESUS AND ENTER INTO THE GOLDEN MESSIANIC AGE WHEN GOD WILL RESTORE ISRAEL TO WORLD PROMINENCE. BUT FOR THE TIME BEING ISRAEL IS SET ASIDE, ALBEIT CLEARLY STILL PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE IN END TIME PROPHETIC EVENTS [cf Daniel 7:21-22-note where "saints" = the Jews]. See Zechariah 12:10-14-note, Zechariah 13:1-note, Zechariah 13:8-9-note, Romans 11:26-29-note, Isaiah 2:1-4-note, etc, etc)

John MacArthur explains that "In the first half of Mt 21:43 and in Mt 21:44, the Lord reiterated the judgment on unbelieving Israel and her ungodly leaders; in the second half of Mt 21:43 He reiterated their replacement by believing Gentiles."

James Brooks - The Jews understood the stone (IN Ps 118:22) to be their own nation, which was rejected by other nations but which would be restored by the Lord. The early Christians understood it to be Jesus Christ (note especially Eph 2:20). Other "stone" passages are Rom 9:33 and 1 Pet 2:8, which quote Isa 8:14, and 1 Pet 2:6, which quotes Isa 28:16. (Ibid)

JESUS THE PROPHESED CHIEF CORNER STONE

THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED ([apodokimazo](#)), **THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone** - Jesus appeals to a seemingly insignificant statement in this Psalm which describes a stone which was thrown aside by the stone masons. But Jesus interpreted this prophecy in light of the New Testament revelation and thus He teaches that He Himself is the **Stone** Who was examined and then rejected by the **builders**! The **builders** are the Jewish religious leaders who saw His miracles, who witnessed His sinless life, who saw His power of the natural and supernatural world (demons), and yet still chose to reject Him. Like the stone masons, they made an examination of the **"Stone"** and refused to accept Him and instead killed Him. This **Stone** which was rejected was in fact the most important stone in the building! Jesus' point was that He was the most important **"Stone"** in the "Building" of the Jewish nation, and even though this Stone was rejected, ultimately it would be the supreme Stone! This reminds me of an old Gospel song by [Leon Patillo entitled Cornerstone](#). If you like songs with a little beat, give [Cornerstone](#) a listen.

Lenski - The climax of the parable, the death of the son himself, is repeated in the first line of the psalm: "A stone which those building rejected,"

The phrase **chief corner**, in Greek *kephale gonias*, is a [Hebraism](#) which refers to the final stone in the building (according to the TDNT). The unique stone of the pinnacle corner is Christ Himself, Who is also the temple's foundation. He is both underneath all, upholding us, and above all, crowning us as our glorious Head. All glory to our Chief Corner Stone, the Messiah!

Stone ([3037](#)) (**lithos**; English - [lithograph](#); [monolith](#)) is a mass of hard consolidated mineral matter ([English definition](#)) which in Scripture refers both to a

Literal stone - God can raise up children of Abraham from the stones - Mt 3:9, Lk 3:8; temptation of Christ - Mt 4:3, 6, Lk 4:3,11; stones of the Holy Temple - Mt 24:2, 13:1-2, Lk 19:44, 21:5-6; stone that sealed Christ's tomb - Mt 27:60, 28:2, Mk 15:46, 16:3-4, Lk 24:2, Jn 20:1; stone on Lazarus' tomb - Jn 11:38-39, 41; demon possessed man gnashing himself with stones - Mk 5:5; millstone around one's neck - Lk 17:2; Stones will cry out - Lk 19:40; "a stone's throw" - Lk 22:41; throw stone to kill - Jn 8:7, 8:59, 10:31; stone tablets with 10 commandments - 2 Cor 3:7; jewels - Rev 17:12, 18:12; God's throne - Rev 4:3; a stone to destroy future Babylon - Rev. 18:21

Figurative stone - Used to depict Christ - Mt 21:44, Mk 12:10, Lk 20:17-18, Acts 4:11, Ro 9:32-33, 1 Pet. 2:7-8; spiritual building - 1 Cor 3:12; of believers as living stones - 1 Pe 2:4; Jerusalem like a costly stone - Rev 21:11; foundation stones of the Holy City - Rev 21:19 (See also [Discussion of the image of a stone](#) - from [The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#))

Friberg - (1) literally; (a) stone, piece of rock as used for various purposes: building material (Mt 24.2), sealing graves (Mt 27.60), millstones for processing food (Rev 18.21), flat stones for engraved writing (2 Cor 3.7), etc.; (b) of precious stones jewels (Rev 4.3); (c) of idols stone image (Acts 17.29); (2) metaphorically, of Christ as the keystone in God's spiritual temple (Mt 21.42); of Christians as living stones in God's spiritual temple (1 Pet 2.5) (Analytical Lexicon)

Lithos - 59x in 53v - another(4), millstone*(1), stone(38), stone's(1), stones(15). Matt. 3:9; Matt. 4:3; Matt.

4:6; Matt. 7:9; Matt. 21:42; Matt. 21:44; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 27:60; Matt. 27:66; Matt. 28:2; Mk. 5:5; Mk. 12:10; Mk. 13:1; Mk. 13:2; Mk. 15:46; Mk. 16:3; Mk. 16:4; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 4:3; Lk. 4:11; Lk. 17:2; Lk. 19:40; Lk. 19:44; Lk. 20:17; Lk. 20:18; Lk. 21:5; Lk. 21:6; Lk. 22:41; Lk. 24:2; Jn. 8:7; Jn. 8:59; Jn. 10:31; Jn. 11:38; Jn. 11:39; Jn. 11:41; Jn. 20:1; Acts 4:11; Acts 17:29; Rom. 9:32; Rom. 9:33; 1 Co. 3:12; 2 Co. 3:7; 1 Pet. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:6; 1 Pet. 2:7-8; Rev. 4:3; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 18:12; Rev. 18:16; Rev. 18:21; Rev. 21:11; Rev. 21:19

Lithos - 370x in 346v in the Septuagint. Gen. 2:12; 11:3; 28:11,18,22; 29:2-3,8,10; 31:45-46; Exod. 7:19; 15:5; 17:12; 19:13; 20:25; 21:18,28; 24:4; 25:7; 28:9-12,17,21; 35:9,12,27,33; 39:6-7,10,14; Lev. 14:40,42-43,45; 20:2,27; 24:16,23; 26:1; Num. 14:10; 15:35-36; 35:17,23; Deut. 4:28; 8:9; 13:10; 17:5; 21:21; 22:21,24; 27:2ff,8; 28:36,64; 29:17; Jos. 4:3,5ff,11,20-21; 7:25-26; 8:29-30; 10:11,18,27; 15:6; 18:17; 24:26-27; Jdg. 9:5,18; 20:16; 1 Sam. 6:14-15,18; 7:12; 14:33; 17:40,43,49; 25:37; 2 Sam. 5:11; 12:30; 16:6,13; 17:13; 18:17; 20:8; 1 Ki. 1:9; 5:17-18; 6:7; 7:9-10; 9:15; 10:2,10-11,27; 12:18; 15:22; 18:30-31,38; 21:13; 2 Ki. 3:19,25; 12:12; 19:18; 22:6; 23:15; 1 Chr. 12:2; 20:2; 22:2,14-15; 29:2,8; 2 Chr. 1:15; 2:14; 3:6; 9:1,9-10,27; 10:18; 16:6; 26:14-15; 32:27; 34:11; Ezr. 5:8; Neh. 4:3; 9:11; Est. 1:6; 5:1; Job 6:12; 8:17; 14:19; 28:2-3,6; 31:24; 38:6,38; 41:15,24; Ps. 19:10; 21:3; 91:12; 102:14; 118:22; Prov. 3:15; 8:11,19; 24:31; 26:8,27; 27:3; 31:10; Eccl. 3:5; 10:9; Cant. 5:14; Isa. 8:14; 9:10; 13:12; 27:9; 28:16; 37:19; 54:11-12; 60:17; 62:10; Jer. 2:27; 3:9; 18:3; 31:39; 43:9-10; 51:26,63; 52:4; Lam. 3:53; 4:1,7; Ezek. 1:26; 10:1,9; 13:11,13; 16:40; 20:32; 23:47; 26:12; 27:22; 28:13-14,16; 38:22; Dan. 2:34-35,45; 6:16-17; 11:38; Mic. 1:6; Hab. 2:11,19; Hag. 2:15; Zech. 3:9; 4:7,10; 5:4,8; 9:15-16; 12:3

Chief (2776) (**kephale**; English - **cephalic**) refers to a **LITERAL** head (as of a human) (Mt 5:36; 8:20; 27:29f; Mk 6:24f, 27f; 15:29; Lk 21:28; J n13:9; Ac 21:24; Ro 12:20; 1 Cor 11:4f, 7, 10; Rev 10:1; 17:3, 7, 9; 18:19; 19:12).

FIGURATIVE: Kephale also refers to a figurative head as noting as denoting one of superior rank (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:10) or the head as chief part (cornerstone) (Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pt 2:7); the leading (head) city (Acts 16:12). The first use in the Septuagint is in the so-called **proto-evangelium**, the first glimpse of the truth of the Gospel - "And I will put enmity Between you (SATAN) and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He (MESSIAH) shall bruise you on the **head**, And you shall bruise him on the heel (EXACTLY WHAT CRUCIFIXION DID TO ONE'S HEEL!)." (Ge 3:15-note).

Friberg - head; (1) literally, of a human or animal head (Mt 6:17); (2) figuratively; (a) metaphorically, of Christ as the head of which the church is the body (Eph 1:22); (b) of persons, designating first or superior rank head (1Cor 11.3); (c) of things uppermost part, extremity, end point; of buildings keystone, capstone (Mt 21.42); (d) leading city, capital (Acts 16.12) (Analytical Lexicon)

Gilbrant - Classical Greek - Besides its ordinary definition, "head," kephalē also functions metaphorically in classical Greek for that which is superior and which has authority. At times it is employed in a way similar to psuchē (5425), "soul." **Septuagint Usage** Kephale stands for the Hebrew rō'sh in the Septuagint; however, once it is equated with nephesh, "soul." Further, rō'sh can be translated by many other Greek terms. Just like its Greek substitute kephalē, the Hebrew rō'sh represents both a physical "head" (e.g., Isaiah 1:6) as well as "authority" (Deuteronomy 28:13). **New Testament Usage** - Kephale appears more than 70 times in the New Testament. In addition to the natural meaning of the word (e.g., Matthew 6:17; 1 Corinthians 11:5; Revelation 1:14), it is also used metaphorically of "authority" (1 Corinthians 11:3,4; Ephesians 1:22) or of one's "person" (e.g., Acts 18:6). Just as in secular Greek and in the Septuagint, kephalē is used as a symbol of authority, strength, and leadership. God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of man; and the man is the head of his wife (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23). Frequently Christ is stated to be the head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19). He is in charge of angelic powers and authorities too (Colossians 2:10). Head is used symbolically in Revelation for governmental realms of kings (Revelation 17:9-11). The beast's heads equal the heads of the dragon (12:3; cf. 13:1). These are demonic spirits which empower and motivate the godless rulers of nations. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Zodhiates on kephale - (I) Particularly of man (Matt. 6:17; 8:20; 27:30; Luke 7:38); as cut off (Matt. 14:11; Mark 6:27); of animals (Rev. 9:17, 19; 12:3; Sept.: Gen. 3:15; 40:19); as the principal part, but emphatically for the whole person (Acts 18:6, "Your blood be upon your own heads," meaning the guilt for your destruction rests upon yourselves; Rom. 12:20 quoted from Prov. 25:22; Sept.: 2 Sam. 1:16; 1 Kgs. 2:33, 37). Metaphorically of things, the head, top, summit, e.g., the head of the corner, meaning the chief

stone of the corner, the cornerstone (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7, all quoted from Ps. 118:22), the same as akrogōniafos (204), belonging to the extreme corner, chief corner (Sept.: Gen. 8:5; 11:4). **(II) Metaphorically of persons**, i.e., the head, chief, one to whom others are subordinate, e.g., the husband in relation to his wife (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23) insofar as they are one body (Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:8), and one body can have only one head to direct it; of Christ in relation to His Church which is His body, and its members are His members (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10, 19); of God in relation to Christ (1 Cor. 11:3). In Col. 2:10 & Eph. 1:22, God the Father is designated as the head of Christ. Generally, of a leader or ruler (Sept.: Judg. 11:11). (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

Related Resource: [Article by Wayne Grudem - The Meaning of Kephalē \("Head"\) - A Response to Recent Studies](#) - page 424-468 in the PDF - This is an exhaustive study (that's an understatement! 82 references in the bibliography!) - and here is **Dr Grudem's Conclusion** (but one must read the entire article for context)...

V. Conclusion The meaning **“ruler, authority over”** is still found quite clearly in forty-one ancient texts from both Biblical and extra-Biblical literature, and is possible in two or more other texts. In addition, there are six texts where *kephalē* refers to the literal head of a person's body and is said to be the part that rules or governs the rest of the body, and there are two texts which are similes where a ruler or leader is said to be like a head. But four of the examples I previously adduced were shown to be illegitimate by subsequent studies, and those should no longer be counted as valid examples. In addition, all the lexicons that specialize in the New Testament period, including two very recent ones, list the meaning **“ruler, authority over”** for *kephalē*—it appears to be a well-established and valid meaning during the New Testament period.

On the other hand, the evidence for the meaning **“source”** is far weaker, and it is fair to say that the meaning has not yet been established. There are some texts which indicate that the physical head was thought of as the source of energy or life for the body, and therefore the possibility exists that the word *kephalē* might have come to be used as a metaphor for **“source”** or **“source of life.”** There are two texts in Philo and one in the Orphic Fragments where such a meaning is possible, but it is not certain, and the meaning **“leader, ruler”** would fit these texts as well. There are still no unambiguous examples before or during the time of the New Testament in which *kephalē* has the metaphorical sense **“source,”** and no lexicon specializing in the New Testament period lists such a meaning, nor does the Liddell and Scott lexicon list such a meaning as applied to persons or as applied to things that are not also the end point of something else. In fact, we may well ask those who advocate the meaning **“source”** an important question: Where is even one clear example of *kephalē* used of a person to mean **“source”** in all of Greek literature before or during the time of the New Testament? Is there even one example that is unambiguous?

Moreover, even if the meaning **“source”** or (as Cervin and Liefeld propose) **“prominent part”** were adopted for some examples of the word *kephalē*, we would still have no examples of **“source”** or **“prominent part”** without the additional nuance of authority or rule. Even in the texts where **“source”** or **“prominent part”** is alleged as the correct meaning, the person who is called **“head”** is always a person in leadership or authority. Therefore there is no linguistic basis for proposing that the New Testament texts which speak of Christ as the head of the church or the husband as the head of the wife can rightly be read apart from the attribution of authority to the one designated as **“head.”**

Kephalē - 75x in 67v - chief(4), hair(1), head(50), heads(19), very(1). Matt. 5:36; Matt. 6:17; Matt. 8:20; Matt. 10:30; Matt. 14:8; Matt. 14:11; Matt. 21:42; Matt. 26:7; Matt. 27:29; Matt. 27:30; Matt. 27:37; Matt. 27:39; Mk. 6:24; Mk. 6:25; Mk. 6:27; Mk. 6:28; Mk. 12:10; Mk. 14:3; Mk. 15:19; Mk. 15:29; Lk. 7:38; Lk. 7:46; Lk. 9:58; Lk. 12:7; Lk. 20:17; Lk. 21:18; Lk. 21:28; Jn. 13:9; Jn. 19:2; Jn. 19:30; Jn. 20:7; Jn. 20:12; Acts 4:11; Acts 18:6; Acts 18:18; Acts 21:24; Acts 27:34; Rom. 12:20; 1 Co. 11:3; 1 Co. 11:4; 1 Co. 11:5; 1 Co. 11:7; 1 Co. 11:10; 1 Co. 12:21; Eph. 1:22; Eph. 4:15; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; Col. 2:10; Col. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:7; Rev. 1:14; Rev. 4:4; Rev. 9:7; Rev. 9:17; Rev. 9:19; Rev. 10:1; Rev. 12:1; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 13:1; Rev. 13:3; Rev. 14:14; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 17:7; Rev. 17:9; Rev. 18:19; Rev. 19:12

Kephalē - 429x in 399v in the Septuagint. Ge 3:15; 8:5; 11:4; 28:11-12,18; 40:16-17,19; 48:14,17-18; 49:26; Exod. 12:9; 16:16; 29:6-7,10,15,17,19; 38:26; Lev. 1:4,8,10,12,15; 3:2,8,13; 4:4,11,15,24,29,33; 5:8; 8:9,12,14,18,20,22; 9:13; 10:6; 13:12,29-30,40-41,44-45; 14:9,18,29; 16:21; 19:27; 21:5,10; 24:14; Num. 1:2,18,20,22,24,26,28,30,32,34,36,38,40,42; 3:47; 5:18; 6:5,7,9,11-12,18; 8:12; Deut. 21:6,12;

28:13,23,44; 32:42; 33:16; Jos. 7:6; Jdg. 5:26,30; 7:25; 8:28; 9:25,36,53,57; 10:18; 11:8-9,11; 13:5; 16:13-14,17,19,22; 1 Sam. 1:11; 4:12; 5:4; 10:1; 14:45; 17:5,38,46,51,54; 19:13,16; 25:39; 26:7,11-12,16; 29:4; 2 Sam. 1:2,10,16; 2:16,25; 3:8,29; 4:7-8,12; 12:30; 13:19; 14:26; 15:30,32; 16:9; 18:9; 20:21-22; 22:44; 1 Ki. 2:32-33,37,44; 7:16,19,35,41; 8:8,32; 19:6; 20:31-32; 2 Ki. 2:3,5; 4:19; 6:25,31-32; 9:3,6,30; 10:6-8; 19:21; 25:27; 1 Chr. 10:9-10; 12:19; 20:2; 23:3,24; 25:1; 2 Chr. 3:15-16; 4:12; 5:9; 6:23; Ezr. 9:3,6; Neh. 4:4; Est. 4:17; 5:1; 6:12; Job 1:17,20; 2:7; 16:4; 19:9; 29:3; 41:7; Ps. 3:3; 7:16; 18:43; 21:3; 22:7; 23:5; 27:6; 38:4; 40:12; 44:14; 60:7; 66:12; 68:21; 69:4; 74:13-14; 83:2; 108:8; 109:25; 110:6-7; 118:22; 133:2; 140:7,9; 141:5; Prov. 4:9; 10:6,22; 11:26; 25:22; Eccl. 2:14; 9:8; Cant. 2:6; 4:8; 5:2,11; 7:5; 8:3; Isa. 1:5-6; 3:24; 7:8-9,20; 8:8; 9:14; 15:2; 19:15; 35:10; 37:22; 43:4; 51:11; 59:17; 61:7; Jer. 2:37; 7:29; 9:1; 13:18; 14:4; 18:16; 31:7; 48:37; 52:31; Lam. 1:5; 2:10,15; 3:5,54; 5:16; Ezek. 1:22,25; 5:1; 7:18; 9:10; 10:1; 11:21; 13:18; 16:12,43; 17:19; 22:31; 23:15,42; 24:23; 26:16; 27:30; 29:18; 32:27; 33:4; 44:18,20; Dan. 1:10; 2:28,32,38; 3:21,27; 4:5,19; 7:1,6,9,15,20; Joel 3:4,7; Amos 2:7; 8:10; 9:1; Obad. 1:15; Jon. 2:5; 4:6,8; Hab. 3:13-14; Zech. 1:21; 3:5; 6:11;

Corner (1137) (**gonia** from **gonu** = the knee) means literally corner (of street Mt 6:5); figuratively of the "corners" or extremities of the earth (Rev 7:1); of a building the chief corner stone (Mt 21:42, Mk 12:10; Acts 4:11; 1 Pt 2:7); of something done obscurely or in a corner (Acts 26:26)

Gonia - 9x in 9v - corner(6), corners(3). Mt. 6:5; 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 26:26; 1 Pet. 2:7; Rev. 7:1; 20:8

Gonia - 32x in 30v in the Septuagint- Exod. 26:23-24; 27:2; 1 Sam. 14:38; 1 Ki. 7:34; 2 Ki. 14:13; 2 Chr. 4:10; 25:23; 26:9,15; 28:24; Neh. 3:19-20,24-25; Job 1:19; Ps. 118:22; Prov. 7:8,12; 21:9; 25:24; Jer. 31:38,40; 51:26; Ezek. 41:15; 43:20; 45:19; Zeph. 1:16; 3:6; Zech. 14:10; where it is used most often literally to describe a corner of a building or the Corner Gate of the Temple complex. For example in Job we read the following...

and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four **corners** of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died; and I alone have escaped to tell you. (Job 1:19)

As a side note, **Job** has another allusion to a **corner stone** although the Greek is slightly different

On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its **cornerstone**, (**lithos** = stone + **goniaion** = on or at the angle angle, related to **gonia**) (Job 38:6) (**Comment**: Here Job describes God as the Creator laying a cornerstone upon which to 'construct' the world.)

The rejection of the Stone is tantamount to the crucifixion of Jesus. But He would not stay rejected, but would be resurrected! His death did not eliminate Him but make Him fit to be what the new structure needed, a Cornerstone.

The living Cornerstone is the first stone laid. All other stones are placed after it. It is the preeminent stone in time. (He 2:10, 6:19, 20, 12:2 - see **notes** [He 2:10](#), [6:19](#), [20](#), [12:2](#), etc). The Cornerstone is the supportive stone. All other stones are placed upon Him (1 Cor 3:11, Ep 2:20-note) and held together by Him (Col 2:19-note). They all rest upon Him. The cornerstone is the preeminent stone in position and power. So it is with Christ Who is our support and our power.

Lenski - In Eph. 2:20 He is distinguished from the foundation, He is the cornerstone. As such He is set at the chief corner and thus governs every angle in the foundation and in the building itself.

[The Church's one foundation](#)

Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.
- Samuel J Stone

Rejected (593) (**apodokimazo** from **apo** = off, away from, pictures separation of one thing from another + **dokimazo** = to test, examine, scrutinize to see whether a thing is genuine or not) means to reject or refuse to accept after testing, scrutiny or examination. The preposition **apo** speaks of separation and thus conveys the picture of rejecting completely. In this context this verb means that the Jewish religious leaders examined

Jesus and deemed as useless in their "building program" and thus rejected Him. What a vivid, tragic picture this verb **apodokimazo** presents!

Apodokimazo - 9v - Matt. 21:42; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 17:25; Lk. 20:17; Heb. 12:17; 1Pet. 2:4; 1Pet. 2:7

Luke 9:22+ saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and **be rejected** by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day."

Luke 17:25+ "But first He must suffer many things and **be rejected** by this generation.

Wuest comments that "The simple verb ([dokimazo](#)) means "to put to the test for the purpose of approving." The prefixed preposition (apo-) means "off, away from." This tells us the story of Messiah's rejection by Israel. Israel was looking for its Messiah. Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be Messiah. The leaders of Israel investigated His claims, found them to be true, substantiated by the miracles He performed (John 3:2), yet with all this evidence, rejected Him as Messiah because He did not meet their specifications. They were looking for a Messiah who would deliver Israel from the despotism of Rome, not from the dominion of sin. But this Messiah will some day become the King of kings and Lord of lords over the earth as the Head of the Millennial empire, the Headstone of the Corner. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

In 1 Peter 2:6+ Peter quotes from Isaiah 28:16 (also quoted by Paul in Ro 9:33).

For this is contained in Scripture (TESTIFIES TO THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF ISAIAH):
"BEHOLD (PAY ATTENTION! DON'T MISS THIS!), I LAY IN ZION (CITY OF JERUSALEM) A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Here is the original passage in Isaiah 28:16 - Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, '**Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone** for the foundation, firmly placed. **He who believes in it will not be disturbed.**

This passage is the prophetic promise that Jesus Christ would be the **Corner Stone** of God's new spiritual house, which is made up of believers (See Eph. 2:19-22+ where verse 20 = "Christ Jesus Himself being the **corner**" [*stone*]).

Peter uses a different Greek word for **Corner Stone** ([204](#)) ([akrogoniaios](#) from **akron** = end, extremity + **gonia** = corner) a word which means literally lying at the extreme corner and thus describes the **capstone** (top stone in a building or wall sometimes used to tie two intersecting walls together but as the top stone it was the crowning point (JESUS)! Amen!

THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone - Note that "stone" is added to the translation. "**This**" refers to the stone which the stone masons examined and then rejected in Psalm 118:22. But what the Psalmist says is that this rejected stone would be the **chief cornerstone** (some interpret it as "[capstone](#)" a stone at the top of the wall binding the whole together and consummating the work).

Cornerstone in its literal usage most often referred to the large stone placed in the foundation at the main corner of a building. In biblical times, buildings were often made of cut, squared stone. By uniting two intersecting walls, a **cornerstone** helped align the whole building and tie it together. In addition the **cornerstone** occasionally referred to the top or final stone of a building (capstone).

THOUGHT - Regardless of which meaning one prefers, the important point is that Jesus is both the Foundation Stone and the Capstone! Anyone who believes in Jesus will come to experience that He is the Solid Rock on which they can build their life in this present age and the one to come and forever. Amen!

[My Hope Is Built](#)

-- Edward Mote

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

Refrain

*On Christ the Solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand*

[Wikipedia](#) says "The **cornerstone** (or foundation stone or setting stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. Over time a cornerstone became a ceremonial masonry stone, or replica, set in a prominent location on the outside of a building, with an inscription on the stone indicating the construction dates of the building and the names of architect, builder, and other significant individuals. The rite of laying a cornerstone is an important cultural component of eastern architecture and metaphorically in sacred architecture generally. Some cornerstones include time capsules from, or engravings commemorating, the time a particular building was built."

Nelson's New Christian Dictionary has an interesting note writing that **cornerstone** also referred to "The capital letter or gammadion **L** in the Latin alphabet, used as the symbol of Christ as the cornerstone. It was first used in the Roman catacombs in the fourth century, and the practice continued into the Middle Ages." (Kurian, G. T. Nelson's New Christian Dictionary. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Pubs)

Unger writes that "The term "**cornerstone**" is sometimes used to denote any principal person, such as the princes of Egypt (Isa. 19:13). Christ is called the "corner stone" in reference to His being the foundation of the Christian faith (Eph. 2:20-[note](#)) and the importance and conspicuousness of the place He occupies (Matt. 21:42; 1Pe 2:6-[note](#)). ([The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

ISBE has an interesting note on **cornerstone** writing that "No doubt the original meaning was some important stone, which was laid at the foundation of a building. With the Canaanites, who preceded Israel in the possession of Palestine, cornerstone-laying seems to have been a most sacred and impressive ceremony. Under this important stone of temples or other great structures bodies of children or older persons would be laid, consecrating the building by such human sacrifice. This was one of many rites and practices that Israel was to extirpate. ([Bromiley, G. W. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised. Wm. B. Eerdmans](#))

Erdman's Dictionary summarizes **cornerstone** as follows - (1) the stone in a new building laid first with great care and ceremony so as to ensure a straight and level foundation; (2) the interlocking cornerstones that join and strengthen two connecting walls; (3) the capstone at the top corner of a wall; or (4) the keystone of an arched door or gateway, the center and topmost stone that joins the two sides and supports the arch itself (the most important stone in which the name of the city, the ruler, and builder were often carved). (Freedman, D. N., Myers, A. C., & Beck, A. B. Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible Grand Rapids, Mich. W. B. Eerdmans)

Leon Morris on **Chief Corner** - Jesus is saying that, though people might reject Him, He is accepted by God whose acceptance is what counts. Even though the Jews make the same kind of mistake as the builders (in the OT made) and reject Him, God's purposes will be fulfilled. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

Bock writes that the "**chief corner**" (stone is added) "refers to a foundation stone, not a capstone...In the ancient world this stone bore the weight of two intersecting walls and was crucial to the building's stability."

MacArthur explains "The **chief corner stone** was the most important part of a stone building, because it properly set every angle for construction. Builders knew that without an absolutely perfect cornerstone, the entire building would drift [out of plumb](#). In the historical context of Psalm 118, the stone rejected by the builders represented Israel, ignored and assaulted by the nations and empires of the world. But that rejected nation will yet become God's cornerstone nation, and the rejected Messiah will be the redeemer and the **cornerstone**....the chief corner stone, specifically refers to Jesus Christ, as Peter boldly declared to the Sanhedrin, " *Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. He is the **stone** which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the **chief corner stone**.*" (Acts 4:10–11+) The **stone** (JESUS CHRIST) rejected by the Jewish leadership and the nation became the most important **stone** (JESUS CHRIST) in the eternal kingdom of God, supporting the whole structure and symmetry of God's glorious kingdom of salvation." (See [LukeCommentary](#))

Wiersbe - Often in the Old Testament, God is referred to as a Rock or a Stone (Deut. 32:4, 18, 30-31; Ps. 18:2, 31, 46). The Stone is also a messianic title. To Israel, Jesus was a **stumbling stone** (Isa. 8:14-15; Rom. 9:32-33; 1 Cor. 1:23). Israel rejected the Messiah, but in His death and resurrection He created the church. To the church, Jesus is the **foundation stone**, the head of the corner (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5). At the end of the age, Jesus will come as the **smiting stone** (Da 2:34-note), destroy Gentile kingdoms, and establish His own glorious kingdom. (Borrow [Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Loyal](#)).

QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone?](#)

ANSWER - Since ancient times, builders have used cornerstones in their construction projects. A cornerstone was the principal stone, usually placed at the corner of an edifice, to guide the workers in their course. The cornerstone was usually one of the largest, the most solid, and the most carefully constructed of any in the edifice. The Bible describes Jesus as the cornerstone that His church

would be built upon. He is foundational. Once the cornerstone was set, it became the basis for determining every measurement in the remaining construction; everything was aligned to it. As the cornerstone of the building of the church, Jesus is our standard of measure and alignment.

The book of Isaiah has many references to the Messiah to come. In several places the Messiah is referred to as “the cornerstone,” such as in this prophecy: “So this is what the sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line’” (Isaiah 28:16–17). In context, God speaks to the scoffers and boasters of Judah, and He promises to send the cornerstone—His precious Son—who will provide the firm foundation for their lives, if they would but trust in Him.

In the New Testament, the cornerstone metaphor is continued. The apostle Paul desires for the Ephesian Christians to know Christ better: “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:19–21). Furthermore, in 1 Peter 2:6, what Isaiah said centuries before is affirmed in exactly the same words.

Peter says that Jesus, as our cornerstone, is “chosen by God and precious to him” (1 Peter 2:4). The Cornerstone is also reliable, and “the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame” (verse 6).

Unfortunately, not everyone aligns with the cornerstone. Some accept Christ; some reject Him. Jesus is the “stone the builders rejected” (Mark 12:10; cf. Psalm 118:22). When news of the Messiah’s arrival came to the magi in the East, they determined to bring Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But when that same news came to King Herod in Jerusalem, his response was to attempt to kill Him. From the very beginning, Jesus was “a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall” (1 Peter 2:8).

How can people reject God’s chosen, precious cornerstone? Simply put, they want to build something different from what God is building. Just as the people building the [tower of Babel](#) rebelled against God and pursued their own project, those who reject Christ disregard God’s plan in favor of their own. Judgment is promised to all those who reject Christ: “Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed” (Matthew 21:44). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resource:

- [What is the significance of a capstone in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How is Jesus a rock of offense \(1 Peter 2:8\)? | GotQuestions.org](#) (cf. “Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” - Lk 20:18)

CHRIST THE STONE AND THE ROCK

CORNER STONE - In this **context** the **STONE metaphor** clearly symbolizes Christ. This picture of Christ as a **Stone** or **Rock** is intimately woven by the Spirit throughout both the Old and New Testaments and makes for a fascinating and encouraging study

THOUGHT: This study would make an edifying series in a Sunday School class and would be very enlightening to those who are not that familiar with the Old Testament. Remember to carefully **observe** the **context** to arrive at the most accurate **interpretation**, interrogating each each “base” verse with questions such as... **When** does this take place? **Where** does this take place? **What** are the circumstances surrounding the use of this **metaphor**? **Who** are the “cast of characters”? **Who** used the name Rock? **What** attributes do you discover about the Rock or Stone? **How** should we **apply** this truth to our life today -- not **Can we?** - it is God’s Word of Truth and it is **ALWAYS applicable** to our life. The more relevant question is “Will we allow the Spirit to speak the Word of Truth to our innermost being and respond with unhesitating obedience?”... here are the Scriptures...

Genesis 49:24 > Exodus 17:6 > Exodus 33:21 > Numbers 20:11 > Deut 32:4 > 2Samuel 23:3 > Psalm 18:2 > Psalm 18:31 > Psalm 18:46 > Psalm 19:14 > Psalm 27:5 > Psalm 28:1 > Psalm 31:2-3 > Psalm 40:2 > Psalm 42:9 > Psalm 61:2 > Psalm 62:2 > Psalm 62:6-7 > Psalm 71:3 > Psalm 78:16 > Psalm 78:20 > Psalm 78:35 > Psalm 81:16 > Psalm 89:26 > Psalm 92:15 > Psalm 94:22 > Psalm 95:1 > Psalm 105:41 > Psalm 114:8 > Psalm 118:22 > Psalm 144:1 > Isaiah 8:14 > Isaiah 17:10 > Isaiah 26:4 > Isaiah 28:16 > Isaiah 30:29 > Isaiah 32:2 > Isaiah 33:16 > Isaiah 44:8 > Isaiah 48:21 > Isaiah 51:1 > Da 2:34 > Da 2:35, 44-46 > Hab 1:12 > Zech 4:7 > Mt 7:24,25 > Mt 16:18 > Mt 21:42 > Mk 12:10 > Luke 20:17 > Acts 4:11

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: A ROCK AND A STONE

(1) To God Jesus is...

Smitten Stone

Exodus 17:6, 1 Corinthians 10:4,
cf John 4:13, John 4:14

(2) To Israel Messiah is...

Stumbling Stone

1 Peter 2:8 note, Ro 9:32 note
Romans 9:33 note; 1 Corinthians 1:23

(3) To the Church the Lord Jesus is...

Cornerstone

1 Peter 2:6 note, Ephesians 2:20 note
1 Corinthians 3:10, 11, 12 (foundation)

(4) To all the Gentile world powers Jesus the King of kings is the...

Stone cut without hands

Daniel 2:34-note

Stone that fills the earth

Daniel 2:35-note
Daniel 2:44, 45-note

(5) To Israel at Second coming Messiah is...

Capstone of the corner

Zechariah 4:7

(6) To unbelievers the Lord Jesus Christ is the...

Crushing Stone of judgment

Matthew 21:44

Luke 20:18 "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

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

- **Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces** Isaiah 8:14,15; Daniel 2:34,35,44,45; Zechariah 12:3; Mt 21:34;

- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 20:9-18 The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

THE CORNERSTONE BECOMES A JUDGMENT STONE

Everyone who falls on that stone ([lithos](#)) will be broken to pieces ([sunthlao](#)); but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust ([likmao](#)) - Note **everyone** means that there are no exceptions, unless one repents and believes in Christ as their Rock of Salvation! If the Cornerstone is not one's Building Stone, by default it will surely be their Judgment Stone! **But** normally introduces a contrast but in this case the only contrast is related to the nature of the fall - either one falls on the stone or is fallen upon by the stone. Note whether one falls on the Stone or the Stone falls on them, the result is the same - utter, complete, and terrifying destruction! Different "modes" but same horrible, eternal outcome! **Broken to pieces** and **like dust** are both vivid metaphors, not describing annihilation, but describing the completeness of judgment on the soul of an unrepentant sinner!

Luke earlier quoted a prophecy from Simeon that Jesus would be the "Determiner" of the destiny of every Jew

And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, **"Behold**, this Child is appointed for the **fall** (FALL INTO JUDGMENT AND ETERNAL PUNISHMENT TO THOSE WHO REJECT HIM - THEY FALL BECAUSE THEY STUMBLE OVER JESUS - 1 Peter 2:8+) and **rise** of many (BELIEVING JEWISH REMNANT WILL BE RAISED UP WITH HIM - Eph 2:6+) in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed (MESSIAH'S REJECTION AND CRUCIFIXION) (Luke 2:34+, cf Lk 12:51+ = "I came to grant...**division**")

J Vernon McGee - Today you and I can fall on that Stone, who is Christ Jesus, and be saved—that is, we have to come to Him as a sinner, broken in spirit, broken in heart. When we do this, we are on the foundation that no man can lay, which is Jesus Christ the Stone. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Daniel tells of that Stone which will fall in judgment someday and "grind to powder" the nations that reject Him (see Da 2:34-35+). What the Lord is saying in this parable is as clear as the noonday sun. It could not have been misunderstood. (Borrow [Luke](#) - or listen to mp3),

Broken to pieces ([4917](#))([sunthlao](#) from [sun/syn](#) = together + [thlao](#) = to crush) means literally to crush together, to dash to pieces. BDAG - to crush in such a way that an object is put in pieces. The only other NT uses is in the parallel passage in Mt 21:44. In the Septuagint used of shattering Sisera's head (Jdg 5:26), of a millstone crushing Abimelech's skull (Jdg 9:53), of God surely shattering the head of His enemies (Ps 68:21), of the Messiah shattering kings in the day of God's wrath (Ps 110:5, cf Ps 110:6 - the same psalm Jesus quotes from in Luke 20:42-[note](#)).

Sunthlao - 8x in 8v in the Septuagint - Jdg. 5:26; Jdg. 9:53; Ps. 58:6; Ps. 68:21; Ps. 74:14; Ps. 110:5; Ps. 110:6; Mic. 3:3; Matt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18

It will scatter him like dust - As one writer says anyone who persists in opposing Christ will be pulverized! To pulverize something means to make it into a powder by breaking it up and/or causing it to become dust. This is a vivid picture of the horrible fate for all who reject the Stone, whether they be Jews or Gentiles!

R Kent Hughes - Our attitude toward Jesus is everything. We will either fall or rise according to our faith or lack of faith in Him. If we fall over Him, He will fall on us, bringing eternal destruction upon our souls. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

Scatter like dust ([3039](#))([likmao](#) from [likmos](#) = a winnowing fan) means to winnow chaff from grain, to blow away like chaff, to sweep out of sight or out of existence (those who reject Christ won't cease to exist, but they will cease to exist in the presence of God's glory!). The only other NT use is Mt 21:44 in the same context as Luke's use.

TDNT ([borrow](#)) - [likmāō](#) means a. "to winnow," b. "to scatter," and c. "to pulverize." In the OT winnowing is a common figure for temporary (Ezek. 36:19ff.) or final (Jer. 15:7) judgment. The only NT instance is in Lk. 20:18 par. Mt. 21:44, where the meaning is "to pulverize" and the point is the ineluctability of the judgment which the rejected stone will bring on unbelief (cf. Dan. 2:34-35; Is. 8:14).

Gilbrant - In the Septuagint [likmāō](#) normally translates the Hebrew word *zārāh*, "to winnow." The winnowing can be literal (Ruth 3:2) or figurative (Amos 9:9). Used figuratively, winnowing almost always refers to

judgment. Judgment is also expressed in another rendering of likmaō, “to blow apart” or “to scatter,” as in Job 27:21 and Ezekiel 36:19. From the idea of scattering that which is worthless (i.e., chaff) comes a final definition for this verb, “to grind to powder” or “to destroy,” as in Daniel 2:44. This translation of likmaō also connotes judgment. Likmaō appears in the New Testament only twice (Matthew 21:44; Luke 20:18), but its translation in these parallel verses is debatable. A reference to winnowing does not seem to fit their overall meaning since the falling stone would be more likely to destroy than to winnow. Both the meaning of the passages and a similar use of likmaō in a post-New Testament text indicate that this verb can be translated “to crush” or “to grind to powder” (cf. Bauer). No matter which rendering is accepted, the New Testament uses of likmaō create a vivid picture of judgment. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Likmao - 18x in 18v in the Septuagint (Lxx) - Ruth 3:2; Job 27:21; Isa. 17:13; Isa. 30:22; Isa. 30:24; Isa. 41:16; Jer. 31:10; Jer. 49:32; Ezek. 26:4; Ezek. 29:12; Ezek. 30:23; Ezek. 30:26; Ezek. 36:19; Dan. 2:44; Amos 9:9;

Ruth 3:2 “Now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maids you were? Behold, he **winnows** (Lxx = likmao) barley at the threshing floor tonight.

Amos 9:9 For behold, I am commanding, And I will shake the house of Israel among all nations As grain is **shaken in a sieve**, But not a kernel will fall to the ground.

Comment - This passage speaks of the time of Jacob's trouble in which the Jews will be shaken in a sieve and a remnant of believing Jews will be preserved when the Stone returns in Daniel 2:44-45-note.

In this section Jesus is clearly appealing to and applying Old Testament Messianic Scriptures. The exact OT source of this text is debated but there is no question that Jesus' statement certainly brings to mind Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great statue that was struck by the Stone. In that passage the emphasis was on the **Stone** striking, not the Jews, but the **Gentile** world powers, an apt description of the "Triumphal Entry" of the Conquering King at His Second Coming when He crushes all opposition and judges all who have rejected Him as the Cornerstone of the salvation (cf Rev 19:11-21+).

“You continued looking until a **STONE** (CHRIST) was cut out without hands (= SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN ~ THE VIRGIN BIRTH), and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and **crushed** them. 35 “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were **crushed** all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the **STONE** that struck the statue became a great mountain (SPEAKS OF A KINGDOM, SPECIFICALLY THE KINGDOM OF GOD OR MESSIANIC KINGDOM) and filled the whole earth (MESSIAH WILL RULE THE WORLD IN THE MILLENNIUM).(Da 2:34-35+)

“In the days of those kings (WHAT KINGS? TOE STAGE = 10 NATION CONFEDERACY - see Da 2:41-note) the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; **it will crush** (Lxx = likmao - "grind to powder") and put an end to all these kingdoms (SPEAKING SPECIFICALLY TO THE GENTILE WORLD KINGDOMS THAT HAVE DOMINATED WORLD HISTORY SINCE BABYLON DESTROYED JERUSALEM AND BROUGHT IN THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES - See note Lk 21:24), but it (THE KINGDOM OF GOD) will itself endure forever. 45 “Inasmuch as you saw that a **STONE** was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.” (Dan 2:44–45+)

Here is another Old Testament passage that relates to Jesus' declaration...

Isaiah 8:14-15+ “Then He shall become a **SANCTUARY**; But to both the houses of Israel, a **STONE** to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 “Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught.”

Comment - Ponder the striking metaphors used to describe Messiah. Either He is your **'Sanctuary'** in which you will be eternally safe and secure or He is the **"Stone"** over which you will stumble into the Lake of fire and eternal punishment?

Paul refers to **Christ as the Stone** that Jews stumbled over in Romans...

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness (TRIED TO ATTAIN RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD BY KEEPING THE LAW), did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. (THE RESULT OF TRYING TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN

RIGHTEOUSNESS RESULTED IN THEM STUMBLING) They stumbled over the stumbling stone (JESUS), just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." (Romans 9:30-33+)

Comment: Paul is quoting from Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 8:14, both passages which allude to Christ as the Stone.

Paul alluded to **Christ as a Stone** of stumbling

but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a **stumbling block** and to Gentiles foolishness,(1 Cor. 1:23+)

In his first epistle **Peter** wrote

For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE **STONE**, A PRECIOUS CORNER [stone], AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE **STONE** WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER [stone]" 8 and, "A **STONE** OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. (1 Peter 2:6-8+)

Comment on a **stone of stumbling** - A stone that people could trip over as they traveled down a road, in the case of rejecters, a "road" which would lead to eternal death, the most horrible aspect of which is separation from the presence of God Himself (2Th 1:7-10+)!

Steven Cole concludes this parable - Jesus told this parable for two main reasons. He wanted to encourage His faithful servants who get beat up and thrown out of the vineyard to keep on being faithful. He owns the vineyard and the main thing is for His servants to bear fruit for Him. Second, He told it to warn those who wrongly think that they own the vineyard that they do not. A day of reckoning is coming! Every first time visitor to the town of Twin Lakes, Colorado hits the brakes when he first drives into town. The reason for that automatic behavior is that there is a police car with a mannequin sitting behind the wheel just as you come over a hill heading into town. Before you realize that it is just a dummy, you hit your brakes because you think that you are accountable. We need to keep in mind that God is not a dummy-He's real! Jesus Christ is the rightful heir and owner of the vineyard. Either we submit to Him and serve Him or we will face His certain judgment. If we wrongly start thinking that we own the vineyard, the stone will fall on us and scatter us like dust. ([Who Owns the Vineyard](#))

John MacArthur writes that this message (the Parable of the Vineyard and Stone) is one "of love and warning, though delivering it brought the Lord not joy, but rather intense sorrow moving Him to tears (cf. Luke 19:41). Predictably, but tragically, the leaders rejected His warning and redoubled their efforts to kill Him (Luke 20:19). That same warning applies to everyone: either submit to Christ as Lord and Savior, or be crushed by Him in judgment. Rejecting Jesus Christ is the most tragic choice anyone can ever make. "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36, cf John 8:24)." (See [Luke Commentary](#))

"If the stone falls on the pot, alas for the pot; if the pot falls on the stone, alas for the pot!"
-- Jewish Proverb (Midrash Esther 3:6).

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge note on this passage - This is an allusion to the Jewish mode of stoning. "The place of stoning was twice as high as a man. From the top of this one of the witnesses struck the culprit on the loins, and felled him to the ground: if he died of this, well; if not, the other witness threw a stone upon his heart," etc. Our Lord seems to refer not only to the dreadful crushing of the Jews by the Ro, but also to their general dispersion to the present day.

What the Bible teaches - We have frequently heard gospel preachers apply this verse to repentance, contrasting those who fall upon the stone and are broken before God with all those who do not repent and will know the grinding judgment of the stone that shall fall on sinners. If a preacher chooses to use such an application, it is wise to explain the meaning of the verse first. Those who "fall upon that stone" are broken to pieces. **Sunthlaō** ("to break") is used only here and in Matt 21:44 with the meaning "to dash to pieces". It is not a word that can be rightly interpreted as **repentance**. The contrast is not between repentance and judgment, but between those who stumbled at the "stumbling stone" and rejected Christ at His first advent and those who will be here to experience His judgment in the second advent. It is also only here and in Matt 21:44 that **likmaō** ("it will grind him to powder") is used. ([What the Bible Teaches – Luke](#))

Life Application Study Bible - The word "**broken**" conjures up uniformly negative images: broken bones, broken hearts, broken toys. You don't want something you value to be broken. Conversely, in God's dictionary, brokenness is not only good but also essential. He uses only people whose hearts, volition, and pride have been broken. Jesus gives a double warning: those who stumble over that stone-himself-"will be broken to pieces," while it will crush anyone it falls on. God offers a choice of

"brokennesses." Those who cast themselves on Jesus, submitting their wills and all that they are to him, will be broken by him of arrogance, hard-heartedness, and self-centeredness. It is not a pleasant process but an absolutely necessary one. For those who do not submit to him, he will ultimately "fall on them," an experience that can only be described as "crushing." ([Luke Application Study Notes](#))

The choice is yours:

Broken before Him or crushed by Him.

Luke 20:19 The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.

Luke 20:19KJV 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.

- **The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour**Lk 20:14; 19:47,48; Mt 21:45,46; 26:3,4; Mark 12:12
- **Parallel parable passages** - Mt. 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:9-19 Who Owns the Vineyard?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:19-26 The Diagnosis of the Christ Rejecters](#) - John MacArthur

THE LEADERS PERCEIVED THE PARABOLIC POINT

The scribes ([grammateus](#)) and the chief priests ([archiereus](#)) tried ([zeteo](#)) to lay hands on Him that very hour- This is "laying on of hands" with an intent to do harm, quite different than the usual purpose of positive sense of laying on of hands elsewhere in the New Testament (where same verb is used - 2 Ti 1:6, Acts 8:17,18 Acts 19:6 1Ti 4:14 Heb 6:2). Is is notable that it is not the Jewish crowd that is seeking to seize Jesus, but the religious leaders, for they understood the parable was directed not so much against the nation as a whole as against its leaders. Sadly, the nation would still suffer the consequences of the the sins of their leaders. The leaders of nations impact the people of the nation more than most people understand! Be careful who you vote into office!

Did Team Sanhedrin get the message? Oh yes!

They recognized a spiritual slam dunk when they saw one.

-- R Kent Hughes

R Kent Hughes - Did Team Sanhedrin get the message? Oh yes! They recognized a spiritual slam dunk when they saw one. They understood the parable/allegory and understood its implications. They knew it threatened the giving of the vineyard/Israel to new leadership. They understood Jesus' application of some famous Old Testament passages. They got it—but tragically they didn't believe it for a second....They set themselves to fulfill the parable to the letter—to throw him "out of the vineyard and kill him" (Lk 20:15). Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified, was outside the city (cf. John 19:17; Hebrews 13:12, 13). (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

Matthew and Mark have.

"When the chief priests and the Pharisees **heard His parables** (MATTHEW INCLUDES the [Parable of the Two Sons](#) = Mt 21:28-32), they understood that He was speaking about them. 46 When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, **because they considered Him to be a prophet.** (Mt 21:45-46)

And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. **And so they left Him and went away.** (Mark 12:12)

And so they left Him and went away - The went away but not to sulk but to plot and ultimately to plot successfully. As **John MacArthur** says "In a remarkable display of diabolical brilliance, they engineered a complete shift in the public attitude toward Jesus. On Friday, the crowd that had enthusiastically shouted, "Hosanna," and hailed Jesus as the Messiah on Monday, changed their shout to "Crucify Him!"

And they feared ([phobeo](#)) the people, for they understood ([ginosko](#)) that He spoke this parable ([parabole](#)) against

them - Matthew explains the reason they **feared the people** - "because they considered Him to be a prophet." (Mt 21:46). **For** explains not why they feared the people, but why they tried to lay hands on Him. **McGee** quips that "The problem is that too many people in our churches today miss the point."

Against them - (pros autous) - Robertson writes "It was a straight shot, this parable of the Rejected Stone (Mk 12:10f.) and the longer one of the Wicked Husbandmen (Vine-Grower). There was no mistaking the application, for he had specifically explained the application (Matt. 21:43-45). The Sanhedrin were so angry that they actually started or sought to seize him, but fear of the populace now more enthusiastic for Jesus than ever held them back. They went off in disgust, but they had to listen to the Parable of the King's Son before going (Matt. 22:1-14)."

Understood (1097)([ginosko](#)) describes intelligent comprehension and thus even these otherwise spiritually blind religious leaders had their eyes opened to fully understand the personal ramifications of Jesus story. It reminds me of the story of the prophet Nathan who confronted David after his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sa 12:1-6) and tells him a story of injustice to which David reacts, at which point Nathan says "**You are the man!**" (2 Sa 12:7). Nathan went on to reveal the consequences of David's sin (2 Sa 12:7-12) David's response to the exposure of His sin was different than the religious leaders, for "David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die." (2 Sa 12:13)

Who told them so, but their own guilty consciences?

-- John Trapp

Warren Wiersbe makes an interesting practical application - When the rulers rejected John the Baptist, they sinned against the **Father** who sent Him. When they crucified Jesus, they sinned against the **Son**. Jesus had told them that they could sin against Him and still be forgiven, but when they sinned against the **Holy Spirit**, there could be no forgiveness (Matt. 12:24-37). Why? Because that was the end of God's witness to the nation. This is the so-called "unpardonable sin," and it was committed by the Jewish leaders when they finally rejected the witness of the Spirit of God through the Apostles. The evidence of their rejection was the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:51-60). Then the Gospel went from the Jews to the Samaritans (Acts 8) and then to the Gentiles (Acts 10). In this parable (Lk 20:9-19), Jesus illustrated the insidious nature of sin: **the more we sin, the worse it becomes**. The tenants started off beating some of the servants and wounding others, but they ended up becoming murderers! The Jewish leaders **permitted** John the Baptist to be killed, they **asked** for Jesus to be crucified, and then **they themselves stoned** Stephen. They sinned against the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that was the end of God's witness to them. It is a serious thing to reject the message of God and the messengers of God (see John 12:35-43; Heb. 2:1-4). (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24).

William Hendriksen adds "The lesson is: *Principiis obsta*: "**Resist the beginnings!**" Watch out for the first misstep. Every further advance into sin will be easier than the previous step." (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

Hughes asks "What is Jesus to you? Is he an impediment? Or is he your Master? Your Lord? Your authority? Are you rising or falling? (Ibid)

Luke 20:20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor.

Luke 20:20KJV 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.

NLT Luke 20:20 Watching for their opportunity, the leaders sent spies pretending to be honest men. They tried to get Jesus to say something that could be reported to the Roman governor so he would arrest Jesus.

NIV Luke 20:20 Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. (Luk 20:20 NIV)

- **So they watched Him** Ps 37:32,33; 38:12; Isaiah 29:20,21; Jer 11:19; 18:18; 20:10; Mt 22:15,18; Mark 12:13,15
- **and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement,** 2 Sa 14:2; 1 Kings 14:2-6; Ps 66:3; 81:15; 2 Peter 2:3
- **so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor** Mt 27:2; John 18:28-32
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17
- **Luke 20 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

- [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:19-26 The Diagnosis of the Christ Rejecters](#) - John MacArthur

SURREPTITIOUS PLAN TO PRESENT JESUS TO PILATE

Luke and Mark do not have the [parable of the marriage feast](#) which is found in Matthew 22:1-14 and follows the same events described in Luke 20:17-19 (= Mt 21:42-46).

So (kai) - In context this conjunction functions as a term of conclusion. What is being concluded by the religious leaders? This brood of vipers hatches their serpentine, satanically inspired scheme to snare the Son of God in a verbal trap. These religious snakes had made deceit an art form!

They watched ([paratereo](#)) **Him, and sent spies** ([egkathetos](#)) - In context "**they**" is clearly the Jewish religious leaders who saw their "power base" threatened by Jesus. And so they were intently watching Him, hoping for a slip of tongue or a other mistake which they could use this to turn the crowd against Him and to convince the Romans to arrest Him.

Watched (NET = "watched Him carefully")([3906](#))([paratereo](#) from **para** = beside + **tereo** = to watch) to watch closely, observe carefully watch (maliciously) as in Lk 6:7+ (and Mk 3:2) where we read "The scribes and the Pharisees were **watching** Him **closely** to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him." In Lk 14:1 we read "It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were **watching** Him **closely**." In short, Jesus was always on the "radar screen" of the evil religious leaders in Israel. All 6 uses of [paratereo](#) - Mk. 3:2; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 14:1; Lk. 20:20; Acts 9:24; Gal. 4:10

[H. J. Wilmot-Buxton](#) applies the watching of Jesus by His enemies to us as His followers - The chief priests and rulers of the Jews watched Jesus, but not to learn the way of salvation. They watched Him with the evil eyes of malice and hatred, desiring to take hold of His words, to entangle Him in His talk, that they might accuse Him, and deliver Him up to die. He loved all men, yet He was hated and rejected of men; He went about doing good, yet they tried to do Him harm. **The enemies of Christ are ever watching for our fall, eager to hear or to tell any evil thing about us, ready to cast the stone of slander against us. You know that the whitest robe first shows the stain, let us remember whose purity we wear if we have put on Christ. Let us strive "to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."** (Eph 5:15-16-note) **If we are tempted to say or do something which is equivocal, though the way of the world, let us pause and ask ourselves whether it will bring discredit on our faith, whether it will dishonour our Master.**

Let our cry ever be, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."(Ps 119:117KJV) Spurgeon - Hold thou me up: as a nurse holds up a little child. "And I shall be safe," and not else, for unless Thou hold me up I shall be falling about like an infant that is weak upon its knees. We are **saved by past grace**, but we are not safe unless we receive **present grace**. The Psalmist had vowed to keep the Lord's commands, but here he pleads with the Lord to keep him: a very sensible course of procedure. **Our version reads the word "uphold," and then "hold up;" and truly we need this blessing in every shape in which it can come, for in all manner of ways our adversaries seek to cast us down.** To be safe is a happy condition; there is only one door to it, and that is to be held up by God Himself; thank God, that door is open to the least among us.

Spies ([1455](#))([egkathetos](#) from from **en** = in + **kathíēmi** = to let down, set in ambush) means literally one sitting in ambush, lying in wait (Sept.: Job 31:9 and Job 19:12). An agent, someone hired to trap one by crafty words, one who is hired to lie in wait Used metaphorically of an insidious person, spy (Only NT use = Luke 20:20 - [Hapax Legomenon](#)). Matthew calls them "**disciples**" of the Pharisees but Luke minces no words in labeling them outright as **spies** ("secret watchers")!

Who pretended ([hupokrinomai](#)) **to be righteous** ([dikaios](#))(ESV = sincere) - This is one of the sadder phrases in the New Testament. They were not even subtle about their hypocrisy. These unrighteous men put on a pretense of personal righteousness.

THOUGHT- Now before we are too hard on these "righteous" men, the question comes to mind, do I ever pretend to be righteous before others, especially if I have known, unconfessed sin? Woe! I'll let you answer that one for yourself.

Pretended (used only here)([5271](#))([hupokrinomai](#) from **hupo** = under in sense of secrecy + [krino](#) = to judge)

means to make believe, to make believe with the intent to deceive (as in the present passage the only NT use). To give a false appearance of being, possessing, or performing. To [dissemble](#) meaning to hide under a false appearance. To [dissimulate](#) means to deceive by concealing the truth or in the case of half-truths, concealing parts of the truth, like inconvenient or secret information. Not found in the non-apocryphal Septuagint. Clearly this verb is related to the word from which we get "hypocrite," regarding which these men have to go down as one of the [consummate](#) examples in all of world history!

Vine says **hupokrinomai** "denotes to give an answer; then, to answer on the stage, play a part and so ... to feign, pretend."

Gilbrant on **hupokrinomai** - Hupokrinomai appears in classical literature as early as Homer (Eighth Century B.C.). Its early uses included "to explain, interpret." As well, it could mean "to answer" ("hupokrinomai," Kittel, 8:559). In Attic Greek **hupokrinomai** also means "to play a part" on the stage (here it is connected with the hupokritēs, the actor introduced into Athenian tragedy by Thespis in 536 B.C.). Occasionally it could mean "to deliver a speech, to represent dramatically," or "to exaggerate" (Liddell-Scott). In the Septuagint **hupokrinomai** assumes a negative sense absent in classical literature. In Sirach 1:29 the RSV translates this word as "hypocrite": "Be not a hypocrite" in men's sight. In 2 Maccabees 5:25 it describes a man who pretended to be favorable toward the Jews (cf. 2 Maccabees 6:21). In 4 Maccabees 6:15 certain followers of the king exhorted Eleazer to "pretend" to eat pork. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

In order that - This phrase usually identifies a [term of purpose or result](#) and so begs the question "for what purpose or result?" The answer is straightforward in this passage! To catch Jesus like one would trap an animal!

They might catch ([epilambano](#)) **Him in some statement** ([logos](#)) - They were like "malicious" hunters trying to trap Jesus like one would ensnare a bird or hook a fish. They will "bait the trap" in the following verses.

It is interesting that the NT uses three different verbs to describe the [nefarious](#) attempts of the religious leaders to ensnare or entrap Jesus. And so in Matthew and Mark we read the following...

Matthew 22:15 adds "Then the **Pharisees** went and plotted together how they **might trap** (pagideuo used only in Mt 22:15 - means to lay snares for Jesus - see discussion of root word [pagis](#) = a trap used by bird catchers. Satan sets a snare or pagis for men and holds them captive in 2 Ti 2:26-note and undoubtedly he is behind the scenes urging on these evil men to trap) Him in what He said."

Mark 12:13 adds another detail about the identity of the evil plotters - "Then they sent some of the **Pharisees and Herodians** to Him in order to trap ([agreuo](#) used only in Mk 12:13 = used in hunting and fishing to catch the animal; here trying to catch Jesus in making a wrong statement. Their purpose was to hunt and catch Him like some wild animal.) Him in a statement (ONE THAT WOULD TURN JEWISH SENTIMENT AGAINST HIM OR CAUSE ROMANS TO ARREST HIM).

In Mark 3 after healing on the Sabbath we see a similar [collusion](#) between those who were otherwise enemies, the **Pharisees** and the **Herodians**, Mark recording "The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him." (Mark 3:6) So even early in His ministry these men wanted to kill Jesus!

Herodians - At the time of Jesus, there were certain groups—the **Pharisees**, the **Herodians**, and the **Sadducees**—that held positions of authority and power over the people. Other groups were the Sanhedrin, the **scribes**, and the **lawyers**. Each of these groups held power in either religious or political matters. The Herodians held political power, and most scholars believe that they were a political party that supported King Herod Antipas, the Roman Empire's ruler over much of the land of the Jews from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. The Herodians favored submitting to the Herods, and therefore to Rome, for political expediency. This support of Herod compromised Jewish independence in the minds of the Pharisees, making it difficult for the Herodians and Pharisees to unite and agree on anything. **But one thing did unite them—opposing Jesus.** (see [enemy of my enemy is my friend](#)) Herod himself wanted Jesus dead (Luke 13:31), and the Pharisees had already hatched plots against Him (John 11:53), so they joined efforts to achieve their common goal. (See full article - [Who were the Herodians?](#))

Hughes adds "Two opposite powers can bind people together. One is love, and the other is hatred. Of course, love is to be preferred by far. It is the glue of the Holy Trinity. It is God's ordained adhesive for the Church as well (cf. John 13:34, 35). Nevertheless, hatred, though fragmenting and destructive, serves as a diabolical superglue among otherwise diverse people. Such was the case with the Pharisees and Herodians. There could hardly be two groups with such opposing outlooks. The Pharisees were

nationalistic. They longed for the messianic kingdom and the overthrow of the Romans. The Herodians had sold themselves out to the Romans and served as their well-cared-for stooges. The Pharisees represented conservative Judaism, whereas the Herodians were liberal and syncretistic in their convictions. The Pharisees were (so to speak) right-wingers. The Herodians were left-wingers. The Pharisees represented cautious resistance to Rome, the Herodians wholesale accommodation. But they were cemented together by their mutual hatred for Jesus. The Pharisees hated him because he was disrupting their religious agenda, the Herodians because he threatened their political arrangements. They both wanted him dead." (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

Might catch (1949) ([epilambano](#) from **epi** = upon + **lambano** = take hold of) means to lay hold of, get a good grip on, take possession of. All NT uses are in the [middle voice](#). Figuratively to take any one in one's speech, i.e. to lay hold of something said by Jesus which could be used against him (here and Lk 20:26). "Catch Him in a word." Let's turn this around for believers "Oh that we might seize upon His words! (the right way, not to entrap)." (Bell)

Cowards are like cats. Cats always take their prey by springing suddenly upon it from some concealed station, and, if they miss their aim in the first attack, rarely follow it up (In Luke 20 they make 3 attempts to trap Jesus, but each time by a different religious group). They are all, accordingly, cowardly, sneaking animals, and never willingly face their enemy, unless brought to bay, or wounded, trusting always to their power of surprising their victims by the aid of their stealthy and noiseless movements.

So that (hina) (a [term of purpose or result](#)) begs the simple question "What was their purpose?"

They could deliver ([paradidomi](#)) **Him to the rule** ([arche](#)) **and the authority** ([exousia](#)) **of the governor** - This statement is not found in either Mark or Matthew. The religious leaders had a problem and that problem was the fact that only the Romans could carry out capital punishment. The Jews could not carry out crucifixion. So their goal was to somehow have Jesus arrested by the Romans and then press their case against Him, which is exactly what they did with the **governor** Pilate who was otherwise disposed to release Him. **Governor** was sometimes termed the [prefect](#) (chief magistrate) or [procurator](#) (person authorized to act for another) and here referring to Pilate the imperial provincial officer assigned by Rome over this district. See [Who was Pontius Pilate?](#)

Deliver (3860) ([paradidomi](#) from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. **Paradidomi** is the very verb used to describe the nefarious act of Judas and is translated appropriately as betray (betrayed, betraying) - Lk 22:4, 6, 21, 22, 48. **Luke** uses **paradidomi** to describe the successful "deliverance" of Jesus to Pilate, a feat which was orchestrated by the evil, hypocritical Jewish religious leaders...

Luke 24:7+ saying that the Son of Man must be **delivered** into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

Luke 24:20+ and how the chief priests and our rulers **delivered** Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.

All of **Luke's** uses of **paradidomi** - Lk. 1:2; Lk. 4:6; Lk. 9:44; Lk. 10:22; Lk. 12:58; Lk. 18:32; Lk. 20:20; Lk. 21:12; Lk. 21:16; Lk. 22:4; Lk. 22:6; Lk. 22:21; Lk. 22:22; Lk. 22:48; Lk. 23:25; Lk. 24:7; Lk. 24:20; Acts 3:13; Acts 6:14; Acts 7:42; Acts 8:3; Acts 12:4; Acts 14:26; Acts 15:26; Acts 15:40; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:11; Acts 22:4; Acts 27:1; Acts 28:17 = Luke's last use describes Paul's being "**delivered** as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans" who by tradition executed him even as they had His Lord, which was the ultimate "imitation" of Christ Paul called all believers to follow in 1 Cor 11:1-note (but of course Paul's death nor that of any Christian martyr has no atoning value as did the Lord Jesus Christ's substitutionary sacrifice!)

Rule (746) ([arche](#)) strictly means [primacy](#), the state of being first in importance and here is in the context of rank or position, so that this is the person who has the authority and the power. He is over this domain (the jurisdiction of Jerusalem and Judea).

Authority (1849) ([exousia](#) from **éxesti** = it is permitted or is lawful) means the power to do something, the [authority](#) or right to do it and so it can be summed up as the "right and the might," and from a human perspective refers to attributes which have been granted to the person. In this case the right and the might was granted to Pontius Pilate (for you skeptics [see archaeology find with his name](#)) the "Sixth Roman [procurator](#) of Judea, appointed in Tiberius Caesar in A.D. 25 or 26. The pagan historian Tacitus (Annals 15:44 - I cannot find this exact quote but did find the related [quote below](#)) writes: "Christ, while Tiberius was emperor,

was capitally executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate." The procurator was generally a Roman knight, acting under the governor of a province as collector of the revenue, and judge in cases arising under it. But Pontius Pilate had full military and judicial authority in Judea, as being a small province attached to the larger Syria; he was responsible to the governor of Syria. ([Faussett's Bible Dictionary](#))

Quote from Tacitus ([Annals 15:44 - scroll down to lower half of page](#)) - Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. **Christus**, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, **Pontius Pilatus**, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

James Smith - CHRIST AND THE SCEPTICS Luke 20:20–40

"I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die—
And must I wait till science give
All doubts a full reply?
Nay, rather while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life and death and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at Thy feet,
Take but the lowest seat."

—SHARP.

The man is a fool who would suffer himself to be lifted up or cast down according to the length of his own shadow; but not more so than those who would set themselves, in the pride of their heart, against Christ, who is the wisdom of God. The chief priests and the scribes sought to lay hands on Him because He had spoken a parable against them. The light will always be against those who love the darkness (v. 19). We have here two different attempts to ensnare the Lord through His words; but in vain is the snare spread before Him. There is what we might call—

I. The Tribute Trap. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or no? It was—

1. CUNNINGLY SET. All the craft of hypocrisy and wickedness was employed to catch Him in His words. Other men were easily caught in this fashion. These deceivers "feign themselves just men" that they might more easily accomplish their diabolical business. Notice their buttery words: "Master, we know ... that Thou teachest the way of God truly" (v. 21). The truth was in their lips, but hypocrisy was in their hearts. As no honey was to be put in the meat-offering, so no flattery could move Him who is the Truth and the Life. They expected a "Yes" or "No" to their pressing question. If he said "Yes," then they would rouse the people against Him. If He said "No," then they would speedily report Him to the Roman officials. It was—

2. QUICKLY DETECTED. But He perceived their craftiness, and said, "Why tempt ye Me?" There is no mask thick enough to hide our motives from His all-searching eye. It is a fearful thing to fall as hypocrites into the hands of the Living God. "Show Me a penny," said the penniless Saviour, and as He turned it on His fingers He made that "image and superscription" to bring their wisdom to naught, and to humble their haughty pride. Learn how mighty little things become in His hands. Only a penny, but used of Christ it becomes a witness for Him that all the wisdom of men cannot gainsay. We sometimes say "a penny for your thought," but let us give earnest heed to the thought connected with this penny. "Give to man the things that are man's," and "to God the things that are God's!" If ye are Christ's, then ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price, therefore give to God the things that are His. Then came—

II. The Resurrection Trap (vv. 27–40). It was—

1. SET BY THE SADDUCEES. This sect denies that there could be any resurrection, because to them it was

contrary to reason. These Sadducees are the forefathers of our modern rationalists, who would limit the workings of God to the understanding of sin-blinded mortals. In referring to this woman who had been married seven times, they were presenting their cause in the strongest possible light, but their light was only the blackness of darkness of ignorance.

2. BROKEN BY CHRIST. The truth of God will always escape (like a bird) out of the snare of the fowler. In the world to come the children of God are equal to angels—they don't need marriage to increase their happiness and bliss; they never enter into one another's possessions there, because they "die no more." And as touching the certainty of the resurrection, it is as sure as that the Lord is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. They are living now, for Jehovah is not the God of the dead, but of the living? He who is our life beyond the grave can easily lift our bodies from the tomb and turn the corruptible into incorruption, and this mortal into immortality. "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Have faith in God.

Luke 20:21 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth.

Luke 20:21KJV And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:

- **Teacher** Ps 12:2; 55:21; Jer 42:2,3; Mt 22:16; 26:49,50; Mark 12:14; John 3:2
- **we know that You speak and teach correctly** 2 Cor 2:17; Galatians 1:10; 1 Th 2:4,5
- **You are not partial to any** 2 Chronicles 19:7; Job 34:19; Acts 10:34,35; Galatians 2:6
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:19-26 The Diagnosis of the Christ Rejecters](#) - John MacArthur

THE SETUP: FALSE FLATTERY

Flattery - excessive or insincere praise given especially to further one's own interests ; praise that is not sincere but is intended to get you something that you want ; the act of giving excessive compliments, generally for the purpose of ingratiating oneself with the subject. Historically, flattery has been used as a standard form of discourse when addressing a king or queen.

Note that they make two attempts to set Jesus up: First, by flattery and second by asking Him a double-edged question.

Hughes adds that "Their strategy was perfumed with **flattery**. Flattery is the reverse mirror-image of gossip. Gossip involves saying behind a person's back what you would never say to his face. Flattery is saying to a person's face what you would never say behind his back. How ingratiating their language was—like puffs from a perfume bottle: (squeeze) "Teacher, you're always right." (squeeze) "Preacher, you don't play favorites. You show us the true way." How sweet it seemed!" Like politicians, preachers are peculiarly susceptible to flattery. It is a professional titillation. A preacher, extravagantly flattered by a fawning parishioner, responds, "What you say is very kind, and of course, untrue. But tell me more about your thoughts ..." Of course, Jesus, the Preacher, smelled it for what it was—the stench of duplicity. Jesus well knew the wisdom of the Word: "a flattering mouth works ruin" (Proverbs 26:28). "Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet" (Proverbs 29:5). "May the LORD cut off all flattering lips" (Psalm 12:3). (Ibid)

They questioned Him, saying "teacher ([didaskalos](#)), we know that You speak and teach correctly- They are saying we know Your teaching is "orthodox" ("correctly" = orthos as discussed below). Well, if they knew that, then why didn't they believe it? Of course, the heart of the issue is always an issue of the heart! They had spiritual "heart disease," which is the worst kind, because only a supernatural heart transplant can cure this eternally fatal condition.

Mark 12:14 has "we know that you are truthful" which is [alethes](#) signifying that He was true in the sense that He could not lie. How fascinating since these tricksters are ["lying through their teeth"](#) as we might say today!

Steven Cole - Luke states that these religious leaders sent **spies** who pretended to be **righteous** or sincere, but their secret motive was to catch Jesus in some statement so that they could deliver Him up to the rule and authority of the governor. That way, they could look good to the people ("We didn't do it!") and let the governor dispose of this troublesome teacher. Their **flattery** is ironic, because even though they did not believe what they were saying, it was totally true: Jesus did "speak and teach correctly." He was not "partial to any." He did "teach the way of God in truth." If these hypocrites had believed what they were saying, they would have

submitted themselves to Jesus! ([Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#))

Hendriksen on teacher - As to "Teacher," this form of address was certainly correct. Not only do the evangelists constantly describe Jesus as such, but so do also many others (see Mark 4:38; 5:35; 9:17,38; 10:17,20, 35; John 3:2; etc.). In fact, Jesus himself stated that teaching was one of his main activities (Mark 14:49; cf. Matt. 26:55; Luke 21:37; John 18:20). He was the greatest Teacher ever to walk the earth. Being God's true Prophet he taught men as the Father had taught him (John 1:18; 3:34; 8:28; 12:49). It was a pity that those who now addressed him as "Teacher" did not accept his teaching. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

Teacher (1320) ([didaskalos](#) from [didasko](#) = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp [didaskalía](#)) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth, which certainly is a perfect "job description" of Jesus and should be the same description for all who claim to follow in His steps. When you teach, do you teach systematically? When you preach, do you preach verse by verse (expositionally)? This title reserved for the most respected and honored rabbis.

THE FLATTERY BEGINS

You speak and teach correctly - Jesus saw through their words - true words (about Jesus) from these hypocrites.

Teach (1321) ([didasko](#) from [dáo](#)= know or teach; English = didactic) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. It is the word that is used to refer to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. And so didasko describes the ability to pass on truth in a systematic manner so that one receives it, implements it, and experiences a change of behavior.

Correctly (3723) ([orthós](#) from [orthos](#) 3717 = right, straight, correct; English orthopedics - straight bones; orthodoxy - correct doctrine) means rightly, Rightly, plainly (Mk 7:35 = "he began speaking **plainly**"). Orthos is used most often in the NT in a figurative moral/ethical sense - twice by Jesus and once by His hypocritical enemies (Lk 7:43; Lk 10:28; Lk 20:21).

Orthós - Mk. 7:35; Lk. 7:43; Lk. 10:28; Lk. 20:21 **Orthós** - 18x in 17v in the Septuagint Ge 4:7; Ge 40:16; Ex. 18:17; Nu 27:7; Dt. 5:28; Dt. 18:17; 1 Sa 16:17; Pr. 14:2; Pr. 16:7; Ezek. 22:30;

Genesis 4:7 "If you do **well** (Lxx = orthós), will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do **well** (Lxx = orthós), sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Proverbs 14:2 He who walks in his **uprightness** (Lxx = orthós) fears the LORD, But he who is devious in his ways despises Him.

Stein on not partial - The flattery of Jesus continued. Compare Acts 10:34; Gal 2:6. Jesus was no respecter of persons. Yet this very quality for which Jesus' opponents commended him is why Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners and one of the reasons his opponents sought to kill him. (New American Commentary – Volume 24: Luke)

R M Edgar - They own to His face that He was too brave to make distinctions among men or to accept their persons. In other words, their testimony clearly is that, like God his Father, Jesus was "no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34KJV) No one is fit to be a teacher of truth who panders to men's tastes or respects their persons. Only the impartial mood and mind can deal with truth truthfully. In the hollow flattery of the Pharisees we find rich testimony to the excellency of Jesus.

You are not partial to any - Not partial is two words, lambano (receive) and prosopon (face) so they are say literally You "do not receive a face." (See similar description in Matthew's parallel below). This assessment is accurate, for one of the attributes of God, and Jesus is God, is the attribute of [Impartiality](#) which speaks of God's attribute whereby He treats all men and women equally, not demonstrating favoritism. In short, God does not show prejudice either *towards* or *against* any person.

Hendriksen on not partial - "You do not look on anyone's countenance." They mean, "No matter to whom you speak, what you say is still the same. You do not allow yourself to be swayed by rich or poor, learned or unlearned, master or slave...." (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

MacArthur - The Lord did not adjust His message based on the kind of response He received or who He was talking to. He did not equivocate because of human opinion or possible consequences. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Rienecker on not partial - Used in the expression "to accept the face," which is a Hebraism meaning "to regard w. favor," "to show partiality" (Geldenhuys). Pres. indicates the habitual practice.

Th' eternal law before Him stands;
His justice, with impartial hands,
Divides to all their due reward,
Or by the scepter or the sword.
(Isaac Watts)

Matthew has

And they (PHARISEES - Mt 22:15) **sent their disciples** ([mathetes](#) = cf Mk 2:18 = There were two Pharisaic theological seminaries in Jerusalem - [House of Hillel](#) and [House of Shammai](#)) **to Him**, along with the Herodians ([partisans](#) not family members - [see note above](#). Cp similar [collusion](#) in Mk 3:6), saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for **You are not partial** (two words - blepo = look + prosopon = face - Vivid idiom, literally 'to see into the face' = to judge on the basis of external appearances, render a superficial judgment) to any - same idiom in Mk 12:14 below). (Mt 22:16)

THOUGHT - Beloved, aren't you glad our Jesus is not impressed by external show or lavish appearance! He accepts us as we come to him, beggars in desperate need of a holy handout of grace!

Mark has

They came and said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful ([alethes](#)) and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? (Mark 12:14+)

But teach ([didasko](#)) **the way of God in truth** - Three times in this verse they emphasize Jesus as one who teaches. They said it but did not believe Him when He said "I am the way, and **the truth**, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6). This phrase **way of God in truth** is found in all three Gospels - Mt 22:16, Mk 12:14, Luke 20:21. In addition, Luke uses the phrase **the way of God** in Acts 18:26 where Paul explains the way more fully to Apollos (Mt 18:24-25).

Hendriksen on **the way** - The word **way**, as here used, indicates the manner in which God wants people to think and to live. It is his will for man's heart, mind, and behavior. They are saying, therefore, "You are a teacher on whom people can depend; you faithfully declare the will of God for doctrine and life." (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

NET Note: Teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Very few comments are as deceitful as this one; they did not really believe this at all. The question was specifically designed to trap Jesus.

Swete on the Herodian spies' flattery - The preamble is skillfully arranged with the view of disarming suspicion, and at the same time preventing escape. So independent and fearless a teacher of truth could not from fear of consequences either refuse an answer to honest and perplexed inquiries, or conceal His real opinion ... There is veiled irony in the words. He had shown little consideration for men of learning and hierarchical rank; doubtless He would be equally indifferent to the views of the Procurator and the Emperor himself; when the truth was concerned, His independence would assert itself with fearless impartiality."

Steven Cole - It's easy to scoff at the inconsistency of these religious leaders, but we need to look within and admit that we're all prone toward hypocrisy. It lurks in all of our hearts because we're all disposed to want to look good to others, while we forget about what God sees. We're like the little boy who was bragging to his brother about how he had killed a mouse that he caught. He told him how he clobbered it with a broom and then grabbed it by the tail and smashed it against a rock. Just then, the boy looked up and saw that the preacher was visiting the family and was within earshot. Without missing a beat, the boy added, "And then the good Lord called it home."...But preachers are prone to hypocrisy also. It's easy to want to look more righteous in front of people than you really are. If you're not careful, you can give the impression in sermons that you have it all together spiritually, when you really don't. Sometimes someone will make a comment about my level of piety that goes beyond the truth: "You must spend hours in prayer each week!" No, as a matter of fact, I struggle with prayer just like you do! But if I let the comment go uncorrected, thinking, "What will it hurt?" I fall into hypocrisy.... to avoid hypocrisy, we must not convey false impressions to make ourselves look better to others than we know we really are. ([Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#))

Luke 20:22 "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

Luke 20:22KJV Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?

- Deuteronomy 17:15; Ezra 4:13,19-22; 9:7; Nehemiah 5:4; 9:37; Mt 22:17-21; Mark 12:14-17; Acts 5:37

- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17
- [The Question of Tribute to Caesar](#) - Alfred Edersheim
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:19-26 The Diagnosis of the Christ Rejecters](#) - John MacArthur

A CAPTIOUS QUESTION SEEKS TO CAPTURE JESUS

Captious means tending to find and call attention to faults. Marked by a disposition to find and point out trivial faults. Intended to entrap or confuse, as in an argument. The origin of captious is from late Middle English (also in the sense 'intended to deceive someone'): from Old French captieux or Latin captiosus, from captio (n-) 'seizing,' (figuratively) 'deceiving. So you get the point of their question - to deceive and capture Jesus in a word trap! A set up for [sedition](#)!

In our modern vernacular one would say there question was [quintessentially](#) politically incorrect!

Stevenson gives some background - The Romans had ruled over Jerusalem in one form or another since 63 B.C. Since that time, there had been a gradual increase in taxes, all going to fund the Roman Empire. To be fair, it must be admitted that the Romans also provided certain services such as their system of roads. However, it is always true that government takes away more than it gives and Rome was certainly no exception to this rule. Earlier in this century a rebellion had taken place under the banner of "no tribute to the Romans." It was claimed by these rebels that taxation was tantamount to slavery. There were three taxes which were collected:

1. Ground Tax: Made up of 10% of all the grain and 20% of all the wine and fruit produced.
2. Income Tax: 1% of a man's income.
3. Poll Tax: A flat tax of one denarius (a day's wage) was paid by all men from 14 to 65 years of age and on all women between the ages of 12 to 65.

The Jews were enraged at having to pay taxes to Rome, thus supporting the pagan government and its gods. There were seeking to hang Jesus on the "[on the horns of a dilemma](#)" with either horn capable of inflicting a fatal blow. They were turning the tables for earlier He had asked them "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" (Lk 20:4-[note](#))? If Jesus said it was not lawful to pay Caesar, He would be arrested as an insurrectionist and suffer capital punishment at the hands of Rome. If He said it was appropriate to pay Caesar, the fawning of the Jewish crowd would be stirred to fury and He would be quickly discredited as Messiah.

Is it lawful - Is it allowed? Wuest notes that lawful is "The word is exestin. The English word "lawful" at once suggests government, a system of civil or criminal law. The Greek word does not necessarily refer to that. The word means "it is permissible, it is allowed, permitted." The context indicates whether the restrictions are religious or civil. Here the Jews were not discussing the legality of paying poll tax to Caesar, but whether a Jew should do so in view of his theocratic relationship to God. They pressed for an answer, yes or no, as if there were no other possible answer. They hoped, in view of His Jewish background and teaching, that He would say no. That would involve Him at once with the Roman authorities. Such a reply, considering the present mood of the crowd, might put Him at the head of a rebellion (Acts 5:37) or at least would have made Him liable to a charge of treason (Luke 23:2). Had He given an affirmative answer, He would have incurred the displeasure of the Jewish crowds.

"The baseness of the plot is evident. Their hearts are hostile to Caesar, but they are ready to become "informers" against him for the sake of getting rid of him." (R M Edgar)

Is it lawful ([exesti](#)) for us to pay taxes ([phoros](#)) to Caesar, or not - This tax refers specifically to the "[poll tax](#)" or capitation tax (head money, see *tributum capitis*) "for which silver denaria were struck, with the figure of Caesar and a superscription, e.g. [Tiberiou Kaisaros](#)." (Robertson) This payment made by the people of one nation to another was in a sense a symbol of submission to and dependence on the ruling nation. Imagine how this must have "rubbed the wrong way" ([see pix](#)) in the hearts of the Jews when year after year they had to come up with a silver denarius to drop in the Roman [coffer](#) to support a pagan, idolatrous nation that oppressed them and whom they hated deeply! Indeed, the Jews hated the system that allowed tax collectors to charge exorbitant rates and skim off extra for themselves. It was the Jews' deep seated hatred that these pretenders were hoping to stir up against Jesus. If Jesus said they should pay taxes, they would call Him a false Messiah and a traitor to their nation and their religion. But if he said they should not, the evil spies would report Him to Rome as a traitor of the empire. Jesus' questioners thought they had Him [between a rock and a hard place](#) this time, but He outwitted them yet once again.

John MacArthur comments that "By **lawful** they were referring not to Roman law, but to God's law. They thought they knew that the biblically correct answer was negative, and that that was the answer the people would expect. The people believed that the land of

Israel and all that it produced belonged to God. Consequently, they hated paying taxes to occupying pagan idolaters. And there were diverse taxes imposed by the Romans, including income taxes, land taxes, import taxes, and transport taxes. But the tax the Jewish people hated most was the poll tax everyone paid for living under Rome's authority. They found it especially offensive because it suggested that Caesar owned them, while they passionately viewed both themselves and the nation as solely God's possession. **Taxation was a constant source of friction between the Jews and Rome**, and played a large part in both the [rebellion led by Judas of Galilee](#) (ED: Jewish leader who led resistance to the census imposed for Roman tax purposes by [Quirinius](#) in [Iudaea Provincea](#) around 6 A D) and the [Jewish revolt of a.d. 66-70](#), which ended in the utter destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Wiersbe comments "Governmental authority is instituted by God and must be respected (Pr 8:15; Da 2:21, 37-38; Ro 13:1-7; 1 Pe 2:11-17-note). Yes, our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20-note), and we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, but that does not mean we should ignore our earthly responsibilities. Human government is essential to a safe and orderly society, for man is a sinner and must be kept under control. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24).

Matthew has

Tell (aorist imperative - ordering Jesus!) us then, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax ([kensos](#)) to Caesar, or not? (Mt. 22:17)

Wuest comments on the poll tax - This payment was objectionable to them for two reasons, first, because it was a sign of subjection to a foreign power, and second, because the coin with which it was to be paid, the denarius, bore the Emperor's effigy stamped upon it. And this Emperor, it was Roman law to worship as a god. The compulsory use of the denarius could not but increase the scruples of patriotic and religious Jews. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Lawful ([1832](#))(**exesti** from **ek** = out + **eimi** = to be) means it is lawful, it is permitted, it is possible (referring to moral possibility or propriety meaning). The **lawful** is that which is permissible or permitted by law. Specifically in most uses **exesti** refers to things permitted or not permitted by the Torah (the Law), which had to do with standards of conduct which the Word either required or prohibited. **Exesti** implies and acknowledges the authority of the Word of God or an authority prescribed by what is proper and permitted. And so the Word of God, especially the Torah was the standard that guided the conversation and actions of Jesus and the disciples and was part of many of His disagreements with the religious leaders. So we see that **exesti** had to do with what the Word said about eating (Mt 12:4), Sabbath (Mt 12:2,10), marriage (Mt 19:3-5), taxes (Mt 22:17). Often **exesti** took the form of a question, "**Is it lawful?**" (Mt 12:10, 12, Mt 19:3, 20:15, 22:17, Mk 2:24, 3:4, 10:2, 12:14, Lk 6:9, 14:3, 20:22, Acts 21:37). Paul used it in the phrase "all things are lawful for me" in the sense of "permitted." (1 Cor 6:12, 10:23).

Lawrence Richards comments that "The Pharisees of Jesus' day had developed a vast network of interpretations of OT statutes and commandments. The result was that these "commandments of men" (Mt 15:9KJV) condemned many perfectly neutral actions as unlawful. This is well illustrated in Mt 12:1-14. Jesus rejected Pharisaical legalism and met the issue head on. When those who wanted to accuse Jesus asked Him if it was legal to heal on the Sabbath, Jesus said, "**It is lawful** to do good on the Sabbath" (Mt 12:12), and he healed. The Pharisees hated Jesus for cutting through their convoluted thinking to reestablish the original concern of law: to show people how to love God and others. Paul uses **exesti** in a distinctive way in 1 Co 6:12 and 10:23. He says, "All things are lawful for me, but ..." His point is that while believers are not under the OT law—and thus technically all actions are lawful—there are still criteria by which one must evaluate his or her decisions." (Borrow [Expository Dictionary of Bible Words](#))

Friberg on **exesti** - impersonal verb; (1) as denoting that there are no hindrances to an action or that the opportunity for it occurs it is possible, followed by an infinitive (Acts 2:29); (2) predominately as denoting that an action is not prevented by a higher court or by law it is permitted, it is lawful, it may be done (Mk 10:2) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

Mounce on **exesti** - The term occurs primarily in the Gospels and Acts (26 of 31 times) to signify what is right, what is permitted, or what is proper. The term figures prominently in the disputes between Jesus and the Jewish religious authorities as to what is and is not in keeping with Jewish law (Mt 12:2, 4, 10, 12; 19:3; 22:17; Mk 2:24, 26; Lk 6:2, 4; Jn 5:10). **exesti** is also used with respect to Roman law (Acts 16:21; 22:25). Paul quotes **exesti** as a slogan of libertarian members of the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23). This verb can also denote the idea of something being within the range of possibility (Acts 2:29). (Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament)

Gilbrant on exesti - Exesti depicts both the "opportunity" to do something as well as the "ability." In addition, it also suggests that the action taken is not prohibited by some higher authority or court. Thus in the legal realm it particularly suggests something either required or forbidden by the law (see Foerster, "exesti," *Kittel*, 2:560). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Exesti - 32x in 30v - lawful(26), may(3), permissible(1), permitted(2). Note it occurs primarily in the Gospels and Acts Matt. 12:2; Matt. 12:4; Matt. 12:10; Matt. 12:12; Matt. 14:4; Matt. 19:3; Matt. 20:15; Matt. 22:17; Matt. 27:6; Mk. 2:24; Mk. 2:26; Mk. 3:4; Mk. 6:18; Mk. 10:2; Mk. 12:14; Lk. 6:2; Lk. 6:4; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 14:3; Lk. 20:22; Jn. 5:10; Jn. 18:31; Acts 2:29; Acts 8:37; Acts 16:21; Acts 21:37; Acts 22:25; 1 Co. 6:12; 1 Co. 10:23; 2 Co. 12:4

Exesti - 3x in the Septuagint - Ezr. 4:14; Est. 4:2; Est. 8:12

Taxes (5411) (**phoros** from **phéro** = to bring) describes particularly what is brought and describes taxes or tributes imposed upon persons and property annually, in distinction from **custom** (**télos**) toll, which was usually levied on merchandise and travelers. **Phoros** was a tax that subject people paid to their conqueror. **Phoros** was generally considered a direct tax (eg, property tax or poll tax) and **telos** as an indirect tax such as customs (TLB paraphrases it "import duties"). **Robertson** says that **phoros** refers "to the tribute paid to a subject nation (Lk 20:22), while custom (**telos**) is tax for support of civil government (Mt 17:25)."

Steven Cole - If Jesus answered, "Yes," the Pharisees would accuse Him of being soft towards Rome and certainly not being the Messiah who could deliver the nation from Rome's hated sovereignty. If He answered, "No," the Herodians would report Him to Pilate as being opposed to Caesar's rule, thus guilty of sedition. They thought that they had Him this time. ([Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#))

Alfred Edersheim - Foiled in their endeavor to involve Him with the ecclesiastical, they next attempted the much more dangerous device of bringing Him into collision with the civil authorities. Remembering the ever watchful jealousy of Rome, the reckless tyranny of Pilate, and the low artifices of Herod, who was at that time in Jerusalem, we instinctively feel, how even the slightest compromise on the part of Jesus in regard to the authority of Cæsar would have been absolutely fatal. If it could have been proved, on undeniable testimony, that Jesus had declared Himself on the side of, or even encouraged, the so-called 'Nationalist' party, He would have quickly perished, like Judas of Galilee (Acts. 5:37; Jos. Ant. 18. 1. 1; 20. 5. 2). The Jewish leaders would thus have readily accomplished their object, and its unpopularity have recoiled only on the hated Roman power. How great the danger was which threatened Jesus, may be gathered from this, that, despite His clear answer, the charge that He prevented the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, was actually among those brought against Him before Pilate (Lk 23:2-note = "And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and **forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar**, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.""). ([The Question of Tribute to Caesar](#))

Brian Bell - Questions!!! – Consider this true story about a very successful grocery store in Connecticut. Stu Leonards' grocery store grossed over \$100 million last year. The average grocery store makes \$300 per square foot. Stu's preparation generates an amazing \$3,000 per square foot. The average grocery store stocks 15,000 items; Stu stocks only 700. Stu has profited immensely from the art of listening and asking the right questions. One day Stu asked a lady, "What do you think of our fresh fish?" She says, "I don't think that the fish is fresh." After explaining it is fresh every day from Boston's Pier she still wasn't convinced so he asked two questions:(1) "What do you mean our fish is not fresh?" She said, "Look at it. It just doesn't look fresh to me. You have that filet sitting on a green cardboard container. You have plastic wrap over the filet -- and it's wrinkled. Finally, you have a price sticker over half of the filet." He asked her a second question:(2) "What would fresh fish look like to you?" "I go to Boston all the time," she said. "I like to see the fish on ice." Stu walked across the aisle and laid the fish flat on the ice. Fish sales soared from 15,000 lbs. a week to 30,000 lbs. a week and stayed at that level. - Listening & asking the right questions holds tremendous opportunity for all of us...unless you're not sincere with your questions!!! ([Luke:20:20-47 Render to God That Which is His](#))

Luke 20:23 But He detected their trickery and said to them,

Luke 20:23KJV But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, **Why tempt ye me?** (Only in the KJV)

- **He detected their trickery** Lk 5:22; 6:8; 11:17; John 2:24,25; 1 Cor 3:19; Hebrews 4:13
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:19-26 The Diagnosis of the Christ Rejecters](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS DISCERNs THEIR DUPLICITOUS DESIGNS!

They were certain they had Him trapped this time! And that all changes with one little conjunction, **'but'** a crucial term of contrast which changes the direction of the story, for Jesus detected their duplicity.

Recalling that this chapter began with a question of Jesus' authority, note that now He gives an "authoritative" answer to their trick question.

He detected their trickery ([panourgia](#)) - In His incarnation Jesus emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives but clearly we see glimpses of His omniscience from time to time in the Gospels (as in this case). For example in John 2:24-25+ we read "But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for **He Himself knew what was in man**."

Detected (2657) ([katanoeō](#) from [kata](#) = down or can intensify meaning + [noēō](#) = to perceive or think) means literally to put the mind down on something and so to observe carefully and attentively. The idea is Jesus fixed His eyes and mind upon these pretenders and clearly perceived their [ruse](#). He perceived their pernicious plan! Paul writes of God "For it is written, 'He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS (translated here in Luke as "trickery" or [panourgia](#)).'" (1 Cor 3:19+)

Matthew adds some interesting details...

Mt 22:18 But Jesus **perceived** ([ginosko](#) same verb used to describe religious leaders coming to stark realization in Lk 20:19) their **malice** (= [poneria](#) = active evil with intent to harm related to [poneros](#) = Satan, the Evil One [Jn 17:15; Ep 6:16; 2 Th 3:3; 1 Jn 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18-19] undoubtedly behind the greatest malice of all time!), and said, **"Why are you testing** (tempting - [peirazo](#) - same verb of Satan tempting Jesus. No coincidence! Like father, like son [Jn 8:44]! - Mt 4:1+, Lk 4:2+) **Me, you hypocrites** ([hupokrites](#))?" (THIS PHRASE IS FOUND IN Lk 20:23KJV, BUT NOT NASB).

Comment: While Matthew calls it **malice** ([poneria](#)), Luke calls it **trickery** ([panourgia](#)) both words being associated with the Devil, leaving little doubt that he is in the background shooting fiery missiles (or "flaming arrows" - Eph 6:16+) into these Jewish leaders' minds and hearts, much like he did in using Judas to betray Jesus (Jn 13:27).

Mark alone repeats the question (asked first in Mk 12:14b+)...

"Shall we pay or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their [hypocrisy](#) ([hupokrisis](#)), said to them, "Why are you testing ([peirazo](#)) Me? (Mark 12:15+)

Wuest comments - Mark has "knowing their **hypocrisy**," Matthew, "perceived their **malice**" (Mt 22:18), Luke, "perceived their **trickery**" (Mt 20:23). Thus, the three evangelists give us a rounded picture of the impressions these men made upon our Lord. Why tempt ye Me? The word is [peirazo](#) "to put to the test." The secondary and late meaning of the word is "to tempt in the sense of soliciting to do evil." Here, the Jewish leaders were putting our Lord to the test. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Comment on Mark 12:15+ from **Ralph Earle (Word Meanings in the NT)** - This verse and its two parallels (Mt. 22:18; Luke 20:23+) furnish **an interesting example of how the three Synoptic accounts supplement each other**. Three different verbs and three different nouns are used. Let us look first at the nouns. Matthew has [poneria](#), Luke has [panourgia](#), while Mark has [hupokrisis](#). In his excellent commentary on the Greek text of Mark, Swete writes: "**Malice** ([poneria](#)) lay at the root of their conduct, unscrupulous cunning ([panourgia](#)) supplied them with the means of seeking their end, whilst they sought to screen themselves under the pretence ([hupokrisis](#)) of a desire for guidance and an admiration of fearless truthfulness" (p. 259). **Now to the verbs**. Mark uses **eidōs**, a form of the verb [oida](#) ([eido](#)) (know intuitively). Matthew has **gnōus**, the aorist of [ginosko](#) (know by experience or experimentation). Luke has **katanoesas**. The verb is [katanoeō](#), which means "notice" or "observe" (AG). Swete comments: "**The Lord detected their true character intuitively (eidōs), He knew it by experience (gnōus), and He perceived it by tokens which did not escape His observation (katanoesas).**" He adds: "**Thus each Evangelist contributes to the completeness of the picture.**"

Luke does not mention their hypocrisy, but both **Matthew and Mark** allude to their [hypocrisy](#) in their question, **hypocrisy** signifying

an act of pretending to have beliefs, opinions, virtues, feelings, qualities, or standards that one does not actually have. We never play this game do we? Like the pastor said when he asked his congregation a very convicting question "Now, don't raise your hands!" Why not? Every hand in the auditorium would or should go up! We all from time to time put on masks and play act, pretending to be some "super saint" when we know we ain't! Can I hear an "Amen?" Or at least an "O my!"

Trickery (3834) (**panourgia** from **pas** = all + **ergon** = work) is literally "all working" or capable of all work. It means basically readiness to do anything and speaks of one's skill. In the NT (and clearly in this context) **panourgia** takes on a negative meaning and conveys the idea of trickery involving cunning, cleverness, craftiness or treachery. **Panourgia** speaks of clever manipulation of error to make it look like the truth. ("truth hucksters!") Someone who practiced **panourgia** would be willing to do anything to achieve his goals. **Panourgia** is the unscrupulousness that stops at nothing. Paul's use of **panourgia** in Second Corinthians gives us a "clue" as to who ultimately is behind this trickery designed to destroy Jesus - "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness (**panourgia**), your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:3; see Genesis 3:1+ "Now the serpent was more **crafty** (but Lxx does not use **panourgia**) than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." The point is that the trickery was designed to deceive Jesus, the Sin Bearer, just as it deceived Eve, the sin bringer, so to speak!

Steven Cole on **detected their trickery** - Jesus saw right through their trickery (the word is used of Satan's craftiness in deceiving Eve, 2 Cor. 11:3+). Jesus always sees through hypocrisy! As Hebrews 4:13+ says, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Paul said that he lived, "not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts" (1 Th. 2:4+). Let us learn from the pretense of these religious men that we sometimes can fool others, but we can never fool God. Be on guard against the sin of religious hypocrisy. ([Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#))

And said to them - In typical rabbinical style, Jesus responds to the pretender's question with a question of His own.

T W Hunt in his book **The Mind of Christ** (ED: Our position is that we have the "mind of Christ" - but we must practice our position to partake of that wonderful truth in 1 Cor 2:16+) uses this section of Luke's gospel as an example of "The Readiness Principle" - Hunt writes that "Our third verb-command associated with the mind takes us to the climax of the process: **"Gird your minds for action"** (1 Pet. 1:13+). In the first century, people wore long, flowing robes. To run or move quickly, a person had to turn the robe into a kind of pantaloons by "girding up" the robe. This illustrates the Readiness Principle. Our minds are to remain prepared for action. Jesus remained alert, or ready, as various groups tried to trap Him with trick questions in Luke 20:20-40. The "scribes and the chief priests" asked whether Jews should pay taxes to the foreign Roman government. Their trap failed as He answered that they should satisfy both God and Caesar appropriately. When the Sadducees questioned Him about resurrection, He deftly corrected their erroneous ideas about the nature of the future life. **Readiness is being qualified for service. If our will is set and our mind has grown through constant renewal** (Eph 4:23-24+, Ro 12:1-2+), **we will be qualified for any test God allows to come our way!** (ED: THIS BEGS THE QUESTION, WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO RENEW YOUR MIND? DAILY YOU WILL BE EXPOSED TO THE DEADLY "DUST" OF THIS FALLEN WORLD AND MUST DAILY "WASH" YOURSELF WITH THE PURE WATER OF THE WORD [Eph 5:26+] THAT YOU MIGHT RENEW YOUR MIND! IS YOUR "QUIET TIME" TOO QUIET OR HAVE YOU EVEN QUIT IT?)

Luke 20:24 "Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's."

Luke 20:24 KJV Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's.

- **Show Me a denarius** Mt 18:28; 20:2
- **Whose likeness** This was the head of the emperor; the superscription his titles.
- **Caesar's** Lk 20:22; 2:1; 3:1; 23:2; Acts 11:28; 25:8-12; 26:32; Php 4:22
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
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Marcus Aurelius on Denarius

Jesus' command to **"Show (deiknuo) Me a denarius"** (**denarion**) was a **Master stroke** (pun intended!) As discussed below, the

Jews were revolted (some so much they wanted to revolt - Zealots) by Caesar's head on the denarius for it smacked of idolatry! But Jesus knew that at least one Jew in the throng was carrying an "idol" in his pocket. Imagine the hush that came over this group and the trepidation that began to enter the wicked hearts of the religious leaders who must have thought "He's up to something again!" I am intrigued that none of the Gospel accounts state that Jesus actually touched the denarius or took it in His hand (cf Mt 22:19; Mark 12:15-16).

Wuest suggests a possible different scenario - Our Lord asked for a denarius. Such a coin was not likely to be ready at hand, since only Jewish coins were used in the Temple. It was necessary for them to send for one. During the pause, it is easy to imagine the breathless silence and the fresh interest this wait for the coin caused. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Stein adds that "Jesus may have explicitly asked for **adenarius**, the official coinage in which the poll tax was to be paid, because he knew it contained the emperor's image. On the side with the image were the words "**Tiberius Caesar**, son of the divine Augustus." (New American Commentary – Volume 24: Luke)

Brian Bell - I remember watching a special on Bill Gates and the last question of the interview was "how much money do you carry on you?" Answer: "none". The wealthiest man on earth with no cash on him. (like Jesus) ([Luke:20:20-47 Render to God That Which is His](#))

Show (1166)(**deiknuo**) means to show and has the sense of to draw attention to or to show so as to prove something is true (as in the present context).

Mt 22:19 "**Show** Me the coin used for the poll-tax (kensos)." And they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then **render** (give back) to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (WHAT IS ALREADY CAESAR'S); and to God the things that are God's."

Poll-tax (tribute)(2778)(**kensos** from Latin **census**, which means a counting of the people and valuation of property. Kensos is equivalent to the Greek word apographé (582) which literally means a write-up or an assessment. In the NT, tribute or **poll-tax** paid by each person whose name was taken in the census which the Greeks called epiképhalaion, head tax (found 4x - Mt 17:25, 22:17, 19, Mk 12:14). **Gilbrant** adds "This noun (kensos) is the Greek transliteration of the Latin word **censēre**, meaning "enrollment" (cf. the English word census). It is quoted in Greek literature from the First Century B.C. meaning "poll tax, tribute." The Romans always levied a tax in conjunction with a census, so the two meanings of "enrollment" and "tax" were closely associated. It occurs only four times in the New Testament. In Mt 17:25; 22:17,19; and Mk 12:14, the tax in view is the "census" or "poll tax" paid with a Roman coin on which appeared Caesar's image, such an image being objectionable to the Jews. It is significant that Matthew, a tax collector, should use this term." ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Denarius (1220)(**denarion** from Latin origin) denoted a Roman silver coin equivalent to a laborer's average daily wage. Here the specific name of the coin was retained in the translation, because not all coins in circulation in Palestine at the time carried the image of Caesar. ([Dictionary article](#)). See [ROMAN COINAGE](#) It was the practice of all new emperors to issue new coins with their own likeness stamped on the face. There is a sense in which the coin was considered to be the personal property of the king. It bore testimony to the rule of the king whose likeness it carried. The first thing that a conqueror would do would be to issue new coins with a new face.

Hughes - The silver denarius, weighing 3.8 grams, had been in use in the Roman world since 268 B.C. and continued to be used into the reign of L. Septimius Severus (A.D. 193–211). Denarii bore the head of Tabors and the inscription TI. CAESAR DIVI AVG. F. AVGVSTVS (Tabors Caesar, son of the divine Augustus, Augustus). (Ibid)

Gilbrant - Dēnarion is actually a Greek transliteration of the **Latin denarius**, a silver coin minted by the Romans from 268 B.C. until around A.D. 200. The term is not found in the Septuagint. Gradually, by the time of Diocletian, the Roman denarius replaced the Greek drachma. Diocletian actually reintroduced the denarius as an equivalent to the drachma (Moulton-Milligan). Its value is relative; it equaled approximately 1 day's wage during the New Testament period (Matthew 20:2,9,10,13) and weighed about 3.8 grams ("Denarius," *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible* 1:824). The term itself occurs only in the Gospels and in Revelation (e.g., Mark 6:37; Luke 7:41; 10:35; John 6:7; 12:5; Revelation 6:6), and it always denotes the piece of money. The phrases "a quart of wheat for a denarius, three quarts of barley for a denarius" (RSV, Revelation 6:6) depict the hardship of obtaining the necessities of life. The real value of luxuries like oil

and wine will be exposed then—their price will be unaffected. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

NET Note - The fact that the leaders had such a coin showed that they already operated in the economic world of Rome. The denarius would have had a picture of [Tiberius Caesar](#), the Roman emperor, on it.

Julius Caesar was the first to have his image struck on the Roman coin. [Tiberius](#) was emperor at this time so presumably his image was on the coin. This was a denarius of Caesar, [dinarah kesar-anah] as it is termed in the Talmud; and Jesus' point is that consequently this was respecting the tribute required by the Roman government.

Denarius - 16x in 15v - denarii (7), denarius (9). No uses in the Septuagint. Matt. 18:28; Matt. 20:2; Matt. 20:9; Matt. 20:10; Matt. 20:13; Matt. 22:19; Mk. 6:37; Mk. 12:15; Mk. 14:5; Lk. 7:41; Lk. 10:35; Lk. 20:24; Jn. 6:7; Jn. 12:5; Rev. 6:6

To any Jews (possibly excepting the Herodians) the **denarius** was an [abomination](#) which was in direct conflict with Exodus 20:4 in which God commanded "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any **likeness** (Lxx = [eidolon](#) = idol) of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth." In short, the **denarius** with the imprint of "divine Augustus" on one side and [Pontifex Maximus](#) on the other side was [blasphemous](#) to the Jews!

Likeness (1504)([eikon](#)) properly, "mirror-like representation," i.e. what is very close in resemblance. **Eikon** is an artistic representation, as one might see on a coin in the present context. Colossians 1:15 describes Jesus as "the **image** (eikon) of the invisible God" a living manifestation of the true God which stands in radical contrast to the eikon of the ruling Caesar on the denarius who claimed to be god! **Eikon** is the same Greek word is used in in the Lxx of Gen 1:26 to describe man made in the "image" of God.

NET Note - Jesus is making a subtle yet powerful contrast: Caesar's image is on the denarius, so he can lay claim to money through taxation, but God's image is on humanity, so he can lay claim to each individual life.

Hughes - One side bore the head of Caesar and the abbreviated inscription TI. CAESAR DIVI AVG. F. AVGVSTVS ("Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus, Augustus"). The denarius was the amount that had to be paid into the Roman fiscus (treasury) by all adult men and women just for the privilege of existing. It could only be paid with that coin bearing Caesar's image and inscription. (Ibid)

Inscription (1923)([epigraphe](#) from **epí** = on, upon + **grápho** = write. [Epigraphy](#) = study of inscriptions or epigraphs) means writing upon something and in the NT refers to inscriptions concerning the leader of the world system at that time (Caesar) and the Leader of the Jews (and the world), Jesus.

Mark 15:26 The **inscription** of the charge against Him read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Luke 23:38-note Now there was also an **inscription** above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Epigraphe - Matt. 22:20; Mk. 12:16; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 20:24; Lk. 23:38 Epigraphe is not found in the Septuagint.

Caesar's (2541)([kaisar](#) of Latin origin) refers to the emperor of Rome. It was originally a surname of Julius Caesar, later taken as a title by the chief Roman ruler. **Zodhiates** on **Caesar** - The title taken by each of the Roman emperors, e.g., **Augustus Caesar** who reigned when the Lord Jesus was born (Luke 2:1); his successor [Tiberius Caesar](#), who reigned from a.d. 14-37 (Luke 3:1); **Claudius Caesar**, from a.d. 41-54 (Acts 11:28; 18:2); **Nero**, under whom Peter and Paul were martyred, a.d. 54-68 (Phil. 4:22); **Domitian** was Caesar from a.d. 81-96, and under him John was exiled to Patmos. **Caesar** is mentioned by the Lord Jesus in Luke 20:22-25, both literally as referring to [Tiberius Caesar](#) and figuratively as meaning any earthly ruler. The name Caesar came to be used as a symbol of the state in general and is often used in this sense in the NT (Matt. 22:17, 21; Mark 12:14, 16, 17; Luke 20:22, 24, 25). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

David Guzik has an interesting comment on **Whose image and inscription does it have?** - Essentially, Jesus said "You recognize Caesar's civil authority when you use his coins, therefore you are obliged to pay him the taxes he asks for." "The denarii bore the head of Tiberius and the inscription TI. CAESAR DIVI AVG. F. AVGVSTVS (Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus, Augustus). The image and inscriptions of ancient coins would have been understood as a property seal; the coins belonged to Caesar." (Pate). A spiritual lesson can be learned from what is inscribed on coins issued in the United States, because each phrase has an important association in the Christian life. - (1) In God we Trust (2) Liberty (3) E. Pluribus Unum (Out of Many, One) (Enduring Word Bible Commentary – Luke)

Brian Bell summarizes this section on the trap set by the Herodian spies - It was a perfect trap! To affirm would alienate him from the Jews who were against this tax. To deny the lawfulness of this tax would bring Roman wrath upon him So Jesus hits them right

between the horns of their dilemma. But Jesus did not deal with it as a **political** question. He saw it as a **spiritual** issue! Just as the coin bore the image of Caesar, so man bears the image of God and has a responsibility to Him. But that also means we have a responsibility to human government, because government was instituted by God (Ro 13:1-7) It is not an either/or situation, but a both/and! If you live under a government's rule; If you are protected by your government (police, military, national guard, etc); If you are using your government's money to buy & sell; then you are in debt to the gov under which you live & enjoy its benefits. But whose image & superscription is upon you? The greatest Potentate is stamped upon every human face...God Himself! – We have been made in the image and likeness of God! The superscription on every human life is that God alone is Pontifex Maximus. Thus He said in effect, "As is the coin to Caesar, so are you to God." Give to Caesar what's his, but don't forget to give to God what is His! So what's God's? Everything I have, everything I am! If you live under a God's rule; If you are protected by your God; If you are using God's power and gifts; then you are in debt to God under which you live & enjoy His benefits. Read - Ro 13:7,8 (our debt to Him is love) Christians must accept the state as ordained by God and render respect and obedience to the governments. When a conflict arises between our allegiance to the state & our allegiance to God, we must be true to God (**ED: JESUS SAID IT THIS WAY** -"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." Mt 6:24-+ JESUS ALONE IS OUR LORD AND OUR MASTER). ([Commentary](#))

The Divine Image in the Soul (Bishop Ehrler.)

1. The Divine image ought to be our highest glory.
 2. Let the Divine image which we bear be a constant exhortation to serve God.
 3. Never defile the Divine image by sin.
 4. Endeavour to increase every day the beauty of the Divine image.
 5. Respect the Divine image in your neighbour.
-

F B Meyer - Luke 20:24 Whose image and superscription hath it?

Our Lord more than once compared men to coins. He spoke of the woman who lost one piece of silver, and searched till she had found it. The analogy might be carried out in many particulars; for as the ore passes through the crucible, and many another process, before it is stamped with the image of the sovereign, so do souls experience many fiery trials ere they can receive and keep the impression of heaven's mint, which is the face of Jesus.

Whose image dost thou bear? — Is there a clear-cut outline of the features of Christ, so manifest that those who touch and handle you are irresistibly reminded of Him; or have the features of your King, which were once clear-cut, become effaced?

Whose is thy superscription? Is A. D. there? — the year in which you were born into the kingdom of God, the year of our Lord, the year of your eternal life? Is "Dei gratia" there? (By the grace of God). So that all the while those who know you magnify the exceeding riches of his love as manifested in you. Is "Christus Rex" there? (Christ the King). Are you absolutely Christ's — to serve and to obey? Is "Fid. Def." there? (Defender of the Faith). Do you keep the deposit of Christ's holy Gospel, as you look to Him to keep the deposit which you have committed to Him? Is the lion on the quarterings? — speaking of the strength of the Lion of Judah imparted to your soul. Is the harp amongst them? indicating the subjection of every string of your life to his finger. Is the crown there? — indicating how absolutely you have placed the empire of your nature upon the brow of your Lord. Then weave together the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley as the symbol of his reign

Luke 20:25 And He said to them, "Then **render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."**

Luke 20:25KJV And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

- **Then **render** to Caesar the things that are Caesar's**, Pr 24:21; Mt 17:27; 22:21; Mark 12:17; Ro 13:6,7; 1 Peter 2:13-17
- **and to God the things that are God's** Acts 4:19,20; 5:29; 1 Cor 10:31; 1 Peter 4:11
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:19-26 The Diagnosis of the Christ Rejecters](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS RESPONDS TO THEIR 'EITHER/OR' WITH A MASTERFUL 'BOTH/AND'!

Then - Therefore, draws an inference and a consequence from the preceding.

Render ([apodidomi](#) in aorist imperative) to **Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's**- Jesus takes their "either-or" **QUESTION** and gives a brilliant "**both-and**" **ANSWER**!

NET Note - Jesus' answer to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's was a both/and, not the questioners' either/or. So he slipped out of their trap.

Stein - It has been suggested that since Jesus was arguing that the denarius bore Caesar's inscription, it was therefore "his" money and belonged to him. And since humans bear God's image, they belong to God. The problem with this reasoning is that Jesus was not saying that all money bearing Caesar's image belonged to him. Taxes belonged to him, but not all money. The reasoning behind these words seems to have been: "This coin represents the tribute you are to give. Caesar demands this, and it is a rightful demand. Therefore give the taxes that should be given him." (Ibid)

James Brooke - The coin that was minted by the emperor and had his image stamped on it was considered to be his personal property even while it was in circulation. Therefore it was proper for Jews and (later) Christians to return it to him. By so saying, Jesus acknowledged that God's people have an obligation to the state, although he did not define that obligation. (New American Commentary – Volume 23: Mark)

Stevenson - There is a principle here. It is that the state is ordained by God. The state brings valuable services to the people of God. And as we share in the benefits of the state, so also we are to share in the responsibilities of the state. But what about paying taxes to a government that has set itself up against God? Is it right to pay your good, hard-earned money to a government that wastes it, or puts it to a purpose that you adamantly oppose? Jesus says that it is. He calls us to give to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar. But notice that there is a limit as to what belongs to Caesar. Our ultimate allegiance is to belong to God. Caesar may own our money. But God owns US. This has a direct impact upon the underlying issue in this chapter. That issue is one of **AUTHORITY**. Legal and political authority is real, but it is only of limited scope and duration. Final and lasting authority is in the hands of God. BOTH of these types of authority are ordained by God. Jesus was not advocating an abolition of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem. Neither was He advocating a rebellion against Rome. Rather, He was establishing His claims to a higher authority - one that would be eternal both in scope and in nature.

| Jewish Leaders | Jesus |
|--|---|
| Had a limited and finite authority over the nation of Israel. | Has been given authority over a eternal kingdom. |
| Required to pay taxes to Rome in coins bearing the image of the Emperor. | The recipient of that which is in the image of God. |
| An earthly authority. | A heavenly authority. |
| This authority shall end. | This authority shall never end. |

Render ([591](#))([apodidomi](#) from **apó** = from + **didomi** = give and so to "give off" from one's self) literally means to give back, then to put away by giving and then in a more figurative sense to pay back or recompense. To give what is proper and due.

Steven Cole - Jesus' answer stunned the pretenders. In one succinct sentence, He showed that God and Caesar each have legitimate realms of authority with corresponding responsibilities. But if there is a conflict between realms, God is supreme over Caesar. By asking His critics to produce the Roman coin, Jesus underscored the fact that they were enjoying the benefits of Caesar's government. They used his coinage; they enjoyed many civil improvements and benefits that he provided. Thus they were obligated to give him his due. And yet, by His final statement, "to God the things that are God's," Jesus affirmed that it would be wrong to go along with Caesar's blasphemous claim to deity, which was stamped on each coin. One side read, "**Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus**" ("divine Augustus"? Woel!); the other read, "**Pontifex Maximus**" ("Chief Priest"). Jesus meant that above Caesar is God. We must never go so far in rendering unto Caesar that we violate our obligation to God, the supreme sovereign who rules over all....By His statement, "**render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's**," Jesus acknowledged that God has ordained civil government and given it a proper sphere of authority. God ordained civil government for the good of society. Paul explains this in Romans 13:1-7, where he commands, "Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there

is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God" (Ro 13:1). He goes on to state that the government "is a minister of God to you for good" (Ro 13:4). When Paul wrote this, the godless Nero was emperor. Thus we must conclude that we are not free to disobey or rebel against wicked rulers, unless they command us to violate God's higher law. (See his sermon [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) for more on the role of government and how Christians should interact). ([Guile, Government, and God](#))

THOUGHT - Let's apply the truth in this passage - Who's image do you bear? By creation all men bear the image of God (Ge 1:26-27+). But only by redemption do men bear the image of Christ. So let me ask "Whose image do you bear?" As Paul says if we bear Christ's image, we "are not our own, for we you have been bought with a price: therefore we are to glorify God in our body." (1 Cor 6:19-20+) That is the way we render to God the things that are God's! We "present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service of worship." (Ro 12:1+) Dear Christ follower, are you rendering to God what is due to Him Alone? **Spurgeon** writes on the image of Christ in us "I have heard it said that the good sculptor, whenever he sees a suitable block of marble, firmly believes that there is a statue concealed within it, and that his business is but to take away the superfluous material, and so unveil the "thing of beauty," which shall be "a joy for ever." Believer, you are that block of marble; you have been quarried by divine grace, and set apart for the Master's service, but we cannot see the **image of Christ** in you yet as we could wish; true, there are some traces of it, some dim outlines of what is to be; it is for you, with the chisel and the mallet, with constant endeavour and holy dependence upon God, to work out that **image of Christ** in yourself, till you shall be discovered to be by all men like unto your Lord and Master., "The life of Jesus will be manifested in your bodies that Christ would be formed in you." (cf 2Cor 4:10+)

R M Edgar on rendering to Caesar and to God - Caesar has his domain, as the currency shows. He regulates the outward relations of men, their barter and their citizenship, and by his laws he makes them keep the peace. But beyond this civil sphere, there is the moral and the religious, where God alone is King. Let God get his rights as well as Caesar, and all shall be well. These words of Christ sounded the death-knell of the Jewish theocracy. They point out two mutually independent spheres. They call upon men to be at once loyal citizens and real saints. We may do our duty by the state, while at the same time we are conscious citizens of heaven, and serve our unseen Master in all things.

Charles Ryrie - Christ recognized the distinction between political and spiritual responsibilities. Caesar should be given taxes and all rightful political obedience; God should be given worship, obedience, service, and the dedication of one's whole life. (Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition](#))

Bock adds - Government has the right to exist and function, but its presence does not cancel out one's allegiance to God (Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-17). To what had been posed as an either-or question Jesus gives a both-and answer, avoiding the trap.

What are **the things that are God's**? **MacArthur** writes "Christians are always required to render to **God the things that are God's**. He is the one to whom we belong and whom we serve (Acts 27:23). To Him belong solely our soul's, worship, praise, trust, love, and obedience. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Steven Cole on "**Render ... to God the things that are God's**" - Jesus' statement implies that **just as the Roman coin had Caesar's image stamped on it and thus rightfully fell under his jurisdiction, so every person has God's image stamped on him or her and thus rightfully belongs to God**. Just as Caesar had sole authority to issue coins stamped with his image, so God is the only one who creates human beings stamped with His image. We owe God our very existence. He rightfully owns us, our possessions, our money, and our time. If we are not yielding ourselves completely to His sovereign lordship, we are disobeying the supreme authority of the universe! By challenging Jesus, these Pharisees and Herodians were guilty of not rendering to God the things that are God's. They came to Jesus, not to obey Him, but to trap Him. They acted as if they were sincerely interested in His opinion about a moral issue, but they had no intention of obeying what He said. But the only way you can come to Christ is to come honestly, confessing your sins, being willing to obey Him. If you come to contend with Him in order to get your own way, beware! He knows the secret motives of every heart! One day every knee will bow before Him. So the overarching principle is that we must submit all of our lives to the absolute sovereignty of God, the supreme ruler of the universe. He sets up rulers and takes them down according to His will. As Daniel 4 repeats three times, "The Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes" (Da 4:17, 25, 32+). When God's authority confronts our authority to rule our lives, we must submit to Him or face His judgment. We've all got to do business with God who examines our hearts. Don't risk playing games with Him! It always causes great damage to the cause of Christ when a man who has crusaded against pornography gets caught with a prostitute. We need to judge our hypocrisy and live with integrity before God. A few years ago, the late Senate Chaplain Richard Halverson told about a senator who was speaking at a church men's dinner. The senator asked how many men believed in prayer in the public schools. Almost every hand went up. He then asked, "How many of you pray daily with your children in your home?" Only a few hands were raised. Ouch! Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. But above all, render to God the things that are God's. ([Luke 20:20-26](#))

Related Resource:

- [El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All](#)

Life Application Study Bible - As God's followers, we have legitimate obligations to both God and the government. But it is important to keep our priorities straight. When the two authorities conflict, our duty to God always must come before our duty to the government. (See [Luke Application Study Notes](#))

Lawrence Richards - Throughout the last 2,000 years believer and unbeliever have paused in wonder over the profound simplicity of Jesus' saying. We live in the world, but are not of it. Caesar can require worldly things from us, and we are to give them gladly. But nothing Caesar does can touch that which we owe to God: our love, our worship, and our concern for others for whom Jesus also died.

David Guzik - The coin belonged to Caesar because his image was stamped on it. We should give ourselves to God because His image is stamped on us.. Give the coin to Caesar, but give your life to God. It may be fitting to die for your country, but only God is worth living for.. Jesus' answer tells us that Caesar does not have all authority. There are things that should be rendered to God alone. When the State treads on this ground that belongs to God, we are duty-bound to obey God before the State. It doesn't matter how good an answer you give, wicked people will still pervert your good words—as they did to Jesus. In Luke 23:2, they accused Jesus of forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar—when He actually said just the opposite!

J Vernon McGee - Rome (CAESAR) did provide certain advantages and privileges. Rome maintained law and order by her standards and provided protection ([PAX ROMANA](#)). Rome made and maintained roads and kept the sea lanes open. She had a universal currency system which was an aid to business. The Jews owed Rome something for the use of coins, roads, and law and order. Caesar had something coming to him. God had something coming to Him also. He provided all the utilities: lights, air, water, and the elements from which roads and coins are made. There are two areas of life in which we have a responsibility. Man has both an earthly and an heavenly obligation. He has both a physical and a spiritual responsibility. Citizens of heaven pay taxes down here. Pilgrims down here should deposit eternal wealth in heaven.

Robertson McQuilkin - Christ responded to a trick question from the Herodians. He told them that they should "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mt. 22:21). Whole theologies of cultural integration have been built on that enigmatic statement. However, it is plain from the context that Jesus was giving an answer in kind to those who would trap Him with an insincere question. Research into the cultural background indicates that "secular" money ([ROMAN COINAGE](#)) was not legitimate as an offering in the Temple. That is why there were money changers in the Temple. Temple offerings had to be made in Temple currency, so there were money exchange banks on the premises. The Herodians were trying to trap Jesus into making an unpatriotic statement. Either He would have to oppose the law of the land, the hated Roman taxation, and thus be unlawful; or He would have to favor the taxation and be a traitor to His own people. In the face of that, He sidestepped the question by indicating that if a coin had a man's name and face on it, it must belong to him! Similarly, Temple coins should be put in the Temple offering, not used to pay Roman taxes. By His answer Jesus remained both a law-abiding subject of Rome and a loyal son of Israel. Profound teaching concerning a cultural mandate to be involved in the affairs of this world will have to be sought elsewhere in Scripture. Hence, the cultural background can help considerably in the understanding of a passage. (Borrow [Understanding and Applying The Bible](#))

Glen Spencer - Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. (Romans 13:7+) No matter one's opinion on how the government spends money. No matter who is in office. No matter how much the money is needed for something else. The biblical command is that we pay our taxes

Adrian Rogers on render unto God the things that are God's - Very quickly, let me show you what belongs to God. Turn to 1 Timothy 1:17. See if you don't love this verse: "Now unto the King eternal"—do you like that?—"the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17). Render unto Him the things that are His. What does this verse tell us? It tells us that for Him there can be no rival: He is the King eternal; He is the King immortal; He is the King invisible. Friend, you didn't vote Him in, and you're not going to vote Him out. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. I want to tell you something: I am going to respect and obey the laws of my land until the laws of my land bring me in direct confrontation with the laws of my God. And then, I'm going with the laws of my God, and I hope you will too. Is there a place for civil disobedience? Absolutely, beyond the shadow of any doubt. When the laws of man so directly, so overtly, so openly contradict the laws of our God and His Christ, then we must say, "Choose You." What do you think? Should we obey God or man? We're going to obey God. These early Christians, who were taught to render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's, did not render unto Caesar the things that were God's. And, they told these early Christians, "Say these words: 'Caesar Kurios' "—"Caesar is Lord." They said, "No, we'll pay tribute. We'll pay taxes. We will obey your laws, but we'll not worship that man. We will not do it. We will not say, 'Caesar is Lord.' There's one King immortal, invisible, eternal—our God and our King. And, we're not going to bow the knee to Caesar." And, they put

them to their death—no rights.

At age eighty-six, Polycarp, the second-century bishop of Smyrna and disciple of the apostle John, was brought to the Roman authorities and ordered to confess that Caesar is lord. Though doing so would have saved his life, Polycarp refused and was murdered, inspiring others to remain faithful. Polycarp knew that in this context *kurios* signified divinity when used of the Caesar. And faithful follower of Christ that he was, Polycarp refused to call Caesar lord and violate the most basic tenet of the faith that “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Ex. 20:3). He refused to render to Caesar the thing that belonged solely to God, Lordship! And the result? He soon thereafter saw the God he worshiped, for in the instant he was martyred, he was absent from his body, and present forever at home with his Lord (2 Cor 5:8) And one day Caesar will bow his knee and declare that “Jesus is Lord!” (Php 2:9-11)

QUESTION - [What did Jesus mean when He said, “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s”?](#)

ANSWER - “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s” is a well-known quote that appears in Matthew 22:21 and is part of Jesus’ response to a joint attempt by the Herodians and Pharisees to make Jesus stumble in front of His own people.

The [Herodians](#) were a non-religious Jewish party who supported the dynasty of Herod and the general policy of the Roman government. They perceived that Christ’s pure and spiritual teaching and influence were antagonistic to their interests. The [Pharisees](#), on the other hand, were members of an ancient Jewish sect who believed in the strict observance of oral traditions and the written Law of Moses. They didn’t believe that Christ was the Messiah, despite His many miracles during His earthly ministry. Although Herodians and Pharisees were at opposite ends of the political spectrum, their common hatred of Christ was enough for them to join forces to try to destroy Him.

Here is the context of Jesus’ command to ‘**render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s**’: in [Matthew 22](#) Jesus had just returned to Jerusalem for the final time and recently finished sharing several parables with the crowd. Jesus’ enemies saw an opportunity to put Jesus on the spot in front of His followers. In Mt 22:17, they say to Jesus, “Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” (ESV). It was a trick question, and they knew it. If Jesus answered, “No,” the Herodians would charge Him with treason against Rome. If He said, “Yes,” the Pharisees would accuse Him of disloyalty to the Jewish nation, and He would lose the support of the crowds. To pay taxes or not to pay taxes? The question was designed as a Catch-22.

Jesus’ response is nothing short of brilliant: “But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius” (Matthew 22:18–19ESV).

The denarius was a coin used as the tax money at the time. It was made of silver and featured an image of the emperor with an inscription calling him “divine.” The Jews considered such images idolatry, forbidden by the second commandment. This was another reason why, if Jesus answered, “Yes,” He would be in trouble. His acceptance of the tax as “lawful” could have been seen as a rejection of the second commandment, thus casting doubt on His claim to be the Son of God.

With the coin displayed in front of them, Jesus said, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” The Herodians and Pharisees, stating the obvious, said, “Caesar’s.” Then Jesus brought an end to their foolish tricks: “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21, ESV). Upon hearing this, Jesus’ enemies marveled and went away (verse 22).

When Jesus said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,” He was drawing a sharp distinction between two kingdoms. There is a kingdom of this world, and Caesar holds power over it. But there is another kingdom, not of this world, and Jesus is King of that (John 18:36). Christians are part of both kingdoms, at least temporarily. Under Caesar, we have certain obligations that involve material things. Under Christ, we have other obligations that involve things eternal. If Caesar demands money, give it to him—it’s only [mammon](#). But make sure you also give God what He demands.

Caesar minted coins, as he had a right to do, and he demanded some coins in return, as was his right. After all, his image was stamped on what he had made. God has “minted” the human soul, and He has stamped His image on every one (Genesis 1:27). So give Caesar his due—the temporary stuff of this world—but make sure to give God His due: “Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness” (Romans 6:13). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about government?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about paying taxes?](#)

CIVIL OBEDIENCE

Jesus taught that Christians should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. In this passage, Jesus did not elaborate on all the issues related to a Christian citizen's responsibility to the state, but he did indicate a preference for compliance and civil stability. So . . .

Choose your battle carefully. No state is perfect. If you refuse to live with moments of unfairness or bureaucratic hassle, you'll need to live by yourself on an island.

Cooperate and support the state as far as faith will take you. Fortunately in democratic countries (unlike Judea in Jesus' time), we can work for peaceful change through speeches, publications, assemblies, boycotts, and media campaigns. There is no need to be a hermit or a rebel.

Be wary of radicals on the left and reactionaries on the right. Militia movements have appealed to worried Christians and caused them to become more worried still. Leftist movements have attracted other Christians, who confuse political change with spiritual growth.

When resistance is required, pray a lot and take counsel from Christian friends. Citizenship requires compromise, but Christians should not compromise Christ or do injustice before God. (See [Matthew](#) - LAC)

GOOD TIMING

The Pharisees and Herodians thought they could trap Jesus by forcing him to choose between two responsibilities. He stunned them by choosing both. He demonstrated that behind many of our conflicts lies a failure to recognize priorities. Should we give time and attention to our families or our work? Can we communicate our relationship with God through the work we do or by setting our work aside and engaging our fellow workers in conversation? Should we support our church or other worthy causes? According to Jesus' handling of this situation, these problems are issues of timing and priority, not right and wrong. The real challenge for most of us concerns whether or not we are doing what we should be doing at the appropriate time.

Citizenship in the kingdom of God doesn't lessen commitments. In fact, it often intensifies them! Marriage duties, parental roles, church involvement, earthly citizenship—all take specific place under God's authority. Make sure your commitment to God stays strong, then all your priorities will be under his authority. (See [Matthew](#) - LAC)

Money And Time

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. —Mark 12:17

Today's Scripture: Mark 12:13-17,28-31

During a trip to London, I visited the Bank of England Museum, then made my way to The Clockmakers' Museum. At some point, it struck me that both money and time have been very important commodities as far back as anyone can remember. Yet they present one of the great dilemmas of life. We trade our valuable time working for money, and then we spend our money to make the most of our time off. We seldom possess the two with any degree of balance.

In contrast, our Lord never seemed perplexed by money or time. When asked if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, Jesus answered: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" ([Mark 12:17](#)). With great demands on His time, Jesus spent early mornings and late nights in prayer, seeking to know and do His Father's will.

Hymn writer Frances Havergal wrote:

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

We can properly balance time and money when we offer ourselves without reservation to God. —David McCasland

Spend time and money wisely—they both belong to God.

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Walter Kaiser - Render to Caesar?

For many readers of the Gospels this does not seem to be a particularly hard saying. They pay their taxes to the state and give financial support to the church and various forms of religious and charitable action, and consider that this is very much in line with the intention of Jesus' words. There are others, however, who find in these words material for debate, arguing that their meaning is not at all clear, or else, if it is clear, that it is quite different from what it is usually taken to be. Our first business must be to consider the setting in which the words were spoken. When we have done that, we may realize that some of those who heard them felt that here was a hard saying indeed.

Mark, followed by Matthew (Mt 22:15–22) and Luke (Lk 20:19–26), tells how a deputation of Pharisees and Herodians came to Jesus while he was teaching in the temple precincts during his last visit to Jerusalem and, expressing their confidence that he would give them a straight answer, without fear or favor, asked him if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not. By "lawful" they meant "in accordance with the law of God, the basis of Israel's corporate life." Mark says that the questioners planned "to entrap him in his talk" (Mk 12:13 RSV); Luke spells this out more explicitly: their purpose, he says, was to "take hold of what he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor" (Lk 20:20 RSV). The governor or prefect of Judea was the representative of Caesar, and any discouragement of the payment of taxes to Caesar would incur sharp retribution from him.

It was, indeed, a very delicate question. After Herod the Great, king of the Jews, died in 4 B.C., the Romans divided his kingdom into three parts, giving each to one of his sons. Galilee, where Jesus lived for most of his life, was ruled by Herod Antipas until A.D. 39. Judea, the southern part, with Jerusalem as its capital, was given to Archelaus (compare Mt 2:22). The sons of Herod received taxes from their subjects, as their father Herod had done. The Herods were not popular, but religiously they were Jews, so no religious difficulties stood in the way of paying taxes to them. But Archelaus's rule in Judea proved to be so oppressive that, after nine years, the Roman emperor removed him to forestall a revolt and reorganized Judea as a Roman province, to be governed by a prefect appointed by himself. From now on the people of Judea were required to pay their taxes to the Roman emperor, Caesar. A census was held in A.D. 6 to determine the amount of tribute the new province was to yield.

The Jews had been subject to Gentile overlords for long periods in their history, but no prophet or religious teacher had ever taught in earlier days that there was anything wrong in paying tribute to those overlords. On the contrary, the prophets taught them that if they fell under Gentile domination, this was by God's permission, and they should acknowledge the divine will by paying tribute to their foreign rulers. But around the time of the census in A.D. 6 a new teaching was spread abroad, to the effect that God alone was Israel's king, and therefore it was high treason against him for his people to recognize any Gentile ruler by paying him tribute. The principal teacher of this new doctrine was Judas the Galilean, who led a revolt against the Romans (see Acts 5:37). The revolt was crushed, but its ideals lived on, and the propriety of paying taxes to Caesar continued to be a subject for theological debate. It would be generally agreed that Jews in the lands of the Dispersion, living on Gentile territory, should pay taxes in accordance with the laws of the areas where they lived. But the land of Israel was God's land; this was recognized by its inhabitants when they handed over one-tenth of its produce to the maintenance of his temple in Jerusalem. But the taxes that the Roman emperor demanded were also derived from the produce of God's land. Was it right for God's people, living on God's land, to give a proportion of its produce to a pagan ruler? When the question was framed in those terms, the obvious answer for many was no.

What would Jesus say? While he stayed in Galilee the question did not arise; taxes in that region were paid to a Jewish tetrarch. But when he visited Judea, he came to a place where it was a burning question. However he answered it, it would be almost impossible to avoid giving offense. If he said that it was unlawful to pay taxes to Caesar, the Roman governor would get to hear of it and he could be charged with sedition. If he said that it was lawful, he would offend those who maintained the ideals of Judas the Galilean, and many would think him unpatriotic. This would lose him much of his following in Judea.

"Bring me a denarius," said Jesus; "let me look at it." The denarius was a Roman silver coin; Roman taxes had to be paid in Roman coinage. When a denarius was forthcoming, Jesus asked, "Whose face is this? Whose name is this?" The answer, of course, was "Caesar's." Well, said Jesus, the coin which bears Caesar's face and name is obviously Caesar's coin; let Caesar have it back. The verb translated "render" has the sense of giving back to someone that which belongs to him.

Did he imply that the use of Caesar's coinage was a tacit acknowledgment of Caesar's sovereignty? Perhaps he did. There were some Jews whose orthodoxy was such that they would not look at, let alone handle, a coin which bore a human face. Why? Because it was said to infringe the second commandment of the Decalogue, which forbade the making of "any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Ex 20:4 RSV). Jesus did not necessarily share this attitude—money of any kind was held in little enough regard by him—but there may have been an implication in his words that the Pharisees among his questioners might have appreciated: such coins were unfit for use by people who were so scrupulous about keeping the law of God, and should go back where they came from. Caesar's coins were best used for paying Caesar's tribute. If that was what Caesar wanted, let him have it; the claims of God were not transgressed by such use of Caesar's money. What was really important was to discover what God's claims were, and see to it that they were met. Once again, he laid primary emphasis on seeking God's kingdom and righteousness.

Some interpreters have discerned more subtle ambiguities in Jesus' answer, as though, for example, he included in "the things that are God's" the produce of God's land and meant that none of it should go to Caesar, not even when it was converted into Roman coinage. But this kind of interpretation would render the whole business about producing a denarius pointless. Certainly his answer would not satisfy those who believed that for Judeans to pay tribute to Caesar was wrong. If some of the bystanders had been led by the manner of his entry into Jerusalem a few days before to expect a declaration of independence from him, they must have been disappointed. And indeed, there seems to have been less enthusiasm for him in Jerusalem at the end of Holy Week than there had been at the beginning. On the other hand, if his questioners hoped that he would compromise himself by his reply, they too were disappointed. He not only avoided the dilemma on the horns of which they wished to impale him, but turned it so as to insist afresh on the central theme of his ministry. ([Go to page 407 in Hard Sayings](#))

Atop the Berlin Wall August 20 - Robert Morgan (From this Verse)

In 1963, Rüdiger Knechtel, a 21-year-old border guard on the newly built Berlin Wall, was haunted by the coarse joking of his comrades. They were laughing about those killed trying to escape. Rüdiger made a silent vow to never shoot border jumpers, and he quietly convinced other guards to do the same. But when word reached the authorities, Rüdiger was arrested and sentenced to hard labor in a military prison. His wife meanwhile fell in love with another man, and Rüdiger returned home to a shattered life.

In time, he discovered Christ as Savior and started working with recovering alcoholics. As a livelihood, Rüdiger began collecting and selling antiques and fine art, eventually amassing a fine collection of his own. Still the Stasi kept him under surveillance, sending informants and spies to entrap him.

In the early hours of July 28, 1982, seven men appeared at his door, arrested him, and seized his most valuable paintings. Among numerous charges filed against him, he was accused of not paying a special tax on his paintings. That accusation was true, for Rüdiger had dodged a particular levy on his art works. "You haven't paid your taxes," prosecutors taunted, "yet you claim to be a Christian. What kind of Christian is that?"

The question hurt Rüdiger because he knew Luke 20:25. He should have rendered to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, even though the regime was corrupt. "It was a terrible feeling," he recalls. "It became clear to me how far from real faith I had lived."

Rüdiger Knechtel emerged from his second imprisonment determined to live in renewed moral obedience to God—and this made him all the more dangerous to the Stasi. In 1989, he helped lead the movement to defeat Communism in his country; and still today he is at work, caring for the sick and dying.

The Alice Tax

Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. — 1 Timothy 6:8

Today's Scripture: Mark 12:12-17,41-44

Author Calvin Trillin's wife, Alice, held a unique view of income tax. She believed that "after a certain level of income, the government would simply take everything." She thought there should be a limit on how much money people were allowed to keep for themselves. Writing in *The New Yorker*, Trillin said of his wife, "She believed in the principle of enoughness."

In Mark 12, Jesus avoided a carefully laid trap by telling His questioners to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (v.17). When Jesus watched people making their offerings to the temple treasury, He commended a woman who would have been considered foolish for her extravagance. "This poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood" (vv.43-44).

Jesus placed more importance on wholehearted love for God than on wholesale concern over material needs. His tranquil attitude toward money and possessions was based on trusting His Father to supply each day's needs. "Your Father knows the things you have need of" (Matt. 6:8).

Enoughness. What a concept! By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

He clothes the lilies, feeds the birds;
Would He to you, then, pay less heed?
Look up to Him with prayerful heart,
He will supply your every need. —Renfrow

Contentment is not getting what we want but being satisfied with what we have.

Luke 20:26 And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent.

Luke 20:26KJV And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

- **And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people** Lk 20:20,39,40; Job 5:12,13; Pr 26:4,5; 2 Ti 3:8,9
- **and being amazed at His answer** Lk 13:17; Mt 22:12,22,34; Ro 3:19; Titus 1:10
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:20-26 Guile, Government, and God](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:19-26 The Diagnosis of the Christ Rejecters](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS ADROIT RESPONSE SHUTS THE MOUTHS OF THE HYPOCRITES!

And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people - Notice the phrase **in the presence of the people** - these evil hypocritical religious leaders were attempting to [quell](#) the crowd's Messianic fervor that was still resonating through them from His rousing "triumphal entry." They were still holding fast to their cry of "Hosanna" (**Save us now!**...from Rome!). Without question, many of the Jews were still believing Jesus was the Messiah who would take political control away from Rome.

To catch (1949) ([epilambano](#) from **epi** = upon + **lambano** = take hold of) means to lay hold of, get a good grip on, take possession of, to seize. All NT uses are in the [middle voice](#). The verb is used figuratively here meaning to take or grasp Jesus in His speech, i.e., to lay hold of something said by Jesus which could be used against Him to sway the Jewish crowd against Him.

And being amazed ([thumazo](#)) **at His answer they became silent** ([sigao](#)) - Their amazement caused them to be "[dumbstruck](#)" which means to become so shocked or surprised as to be unable to speak.

Matthew adds "And hearing this, they were amazed, **and leaving Him, they went away.**" (Mt 22:22) The leaders were dazed and confused in amazement at Jesus' [adroit](#) evasion of their subtle (and undoubtedly satanically inspired) trap. Jesus was still in full control of His Father's plan of redemption!

I picture these religious leaders scurrying away like a dog with his tail between his legs! They did not have a clue that God's plan for fallen mankind was in full swing and on time. One contemporary British' writer has commented, "The problem with humanity is this: humanity stands at the crossroads, and all of the signposts have fallen down." This aptly portrays the religious leaders of Israel in one sense, that they were at the crossroads of the the event which would soon determine the fate of every soul ever born -- the crucifixion. However, the "signposts" had not fallen down, but had been clearly shown for three years. Their problem was that their spiritual blindness made them unable to see the "signposts." What about you dear reader - all of the signposts point to Jesus as the Savior and Redeemer of the world. Have you seen that He alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life and that no one comes to the Father but through Him?

Amazed (2296) ([thaumazo](#) from **thauma** [from **thaomai** = to wonder] = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment, incredulous surprise. **Thaumazo** describes the human response when confronted by divine revelation in some form as in Mt 9:33 "After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." Jesus' "father and mother were **amazed** at the things which were being said about Him." (Lk. 2:33) "And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering (with amazement) at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?" (Lk 4:22) This is the same verb describing Pilate's response to Jesus "But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was **amazed.**" (Mk. 15:5) Jesus is AMAZING and may we His followers and intimate friends, never lose that sense of AMAZEMENT in the presence and communion with our Lord!

All **Luke's** uses of **thaumazo** - Lk. 1:21; Lk. 1:63; Lk. 2:18; Lk. 2:33; Lk. 4:22; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 8:25; Lk. 9:43; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:38; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 24:12; Lk. 24:41; Acts 2:7; Acts 3:12; Acts 4:13; Acts 7:31; Acts 13:41

Have you ever asked someone "has the cat got your tongue?" It means to ask a question to someone who is inexplicably silent and it is an apt description these dumbfounded religious leaders who had been foiled once again by the wisdom of Jesus. In the temple Jesus had literally overturned the tables, but now figuratively the tables had been turned on the religious leaders and they did not know what had hit them!

Became silent (4601)([sigao](#) from **signe** = silence) mean to be silent, to "hold one's peace", to keep in silence or keep secret. The idea is to say nothing, keep still, keep silent (eg, Lk 9:36) or to stop speaking (eg, Lk 18:39). Luke's uses of sigao - Lk. 9:36; Lk. 18:39; Lk. 20:26; Acts 12:17; Acts 15:12; Acts 15:13

MacArthur comments that these religious leaders "Instead of marveling at Christ's astonishing wisdom and reexamining their obligation to God, the frustrated leaders were amazed, but rather than admit that to Jesus, they became silent. Their attitude toward Him had not changed. Though they had failed to elicit the incriminating response from Him that they had hoped for, they stubbornly persisted in trying to find another way. When they finally managed to bring Jesus before Pilate, they lied and said, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar" (Luke 23:2). Their sinful stubbornness left them in a hopeless, irremediable, unredeemable situation." (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Luke 20:27 Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection),

Luke 20:27KJV Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,
the Sadducees

- Mt 16:1,6,12; 22:23-33
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

THE SADDUCEES DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE ETERNITY IN THEIR HEART

In Ecclesiastes 3:11 Solomon wrote "He has made everything appropriate in its time. **He has also set eternity** [Heb = [olam](#); Lxx = [aion](#)] **in their heart**, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end." So while the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, they cannot deny what God placed in their heart. They obviously simply refused to believe this divine desire in their heart!

R M Edgar - The Pharisees having been confounded by His subtle power, He is next beset by the rival party, the party of skeptical and worldly tendencies.

Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees - This is the third group of religious leaders (those that made up the priestly party) who sought to trip Jesus with a trick question. First the "the chief priests (some of which were quite likely Sadducees) and the scribes with the elders" (Lk 20:1-8) Following the prophetic parable spoken against the Jewish religious leaders (Lk 20:9-19), we (Lk 20:20-26) we see the Herodians attempt to trip Jesus over a question of paying the poll tax to Rome. Now, we see the third attempt to trap Jesus, but this time it was the Sadducees.

[Stevenson](#) on **Sadducees** - The next question coming to Jesus also follows this theme of **authority**. In this case, it is a question of the **authority** of RATIONALISM. The rationalists of that day were known as the Sadducees. The Sadducees were made up of the aristocracy. They were the advocates of Hellenization. They held the Law of Moses in high regard, but did not hold that the rest of the Scriptures were inspired. They did not believe in angels or miracles. They were not looking for any future Messiah and they rejected any notion of a future bodily resurrection. They tended to represent the upper class, the royalty and the priesthood. They were the philosophically sophisticated. Have you ever noticed that when people achieve a certain social strata, they often stop believing in certain things? Politicians are like that. And so were the Sadducees. They did not believe in the supernatural. They did not believe in miracles. And Jesus had the effrontery to have performed miracles.

The Sadducees were the poster child for **modern rationalists** - A rationalist is someone who emphasizes observable facts and excludes metaphysical speculation about origins or ultimate causes. It is the reliance on one's own reason as the basis for establishment of religious truth. We all know rationalists or have heard of them (Plato, Socrates, Descartes, Spinoza, etc).

[Rationalism](#) is the view that "regards reason as the chief source and test of knowledge" or "any view appealing to reason as a source of knowledge or justification."

Steven Cole writes that "The Sadducees erred because they were [rationalists](#). If something went beyond human reason, such as God's power to raise the dead and give them a whole new existence, they didn't accept it. Rationalism limits knowledge to man and the power of reason. Believing in God and His supernatural power is not irrational, but it is **supra-rational**. It transcends human reason. The way we know the truth of Scripture is first by being born from above by God's power so that we come to know Him and then by submitting our reason and our will to God's revelation in Scripture. We must hold to all that God's Word reveals, even if it doesn't fit with our finite reasoning, or we will fall into serious doctrinal error. **Rationalism undermines God's power; faith in His Word affirms it.**" (**Application** - Have you allowed rationalistic thinking to creep into your mind? The only antidote for this type of "toxic thinking" is the pure milk of the Word, because ONLY by ingestion of the Word of Truth can we grow in respect to salvation. - 1 Peter 2:2-note).

Leon Morris summarizes the **Sadducees** - They were the conservative, aristocratic, high-priestly party, worldly minded and very ready to cooperate with the Romans, which, of course, enabled them to maintain their privileged position. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

WHO WERE THE SADDUCEES?

In Acts 23 Luke records Paul's defense before the Council declaring

But perceiving that one group were **Sadducees** and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!" 7 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and **Sadducees**, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the **Sadducees** say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. (Acts 23:6-8+)

And so we see that the Sadducees scoffed at many of the Pharisees' beliefs in the supernatural. The Sadducees remind me of Thomas Jefferson's so-called "Bible" which "is especially notable for its exclusion of all miracles by Jesus and most mentions of the supernatural, including sections of the four gospels that contain the Resurrection and most other miracles, and passages that portray Jesus as divine!" Amazing! Shocking! ([See Jefferson's Bible](#)). Clearly the Sadducees and Pharisees were bitter rivals, except when it came to opposing Jesus again proving the truth of the ancient proverb that "[The enemy of my enemy is my friend!](#)" (See Jn 11:47 where "chief priests" are the Sadducees) Of the major groups of Jewish religious leaders, the Sadducees were the smallest and yet one of the most influential, because of their wealth, and aristocratic standing in Jewish society. Many of the priests and chief priest were Sadducees as well as most of the Sanhedrin. They held most of the positions of power in the Temple including oversight of the lucrative business operations in the Court of the Gentiles on the Temple grounds, giving them good reason to hate Jesus Who overturned their lucrative business (Lk 19:45-48). Surprisingly they, like the Herodians, were eager to cooperate with the Romans. The Sadducees were religious liberals in their denial of the resurrection, angels, and the age to come. Josephus wrote that the Sadducees believed that the soul and body perish together at death. Since they rejected life after death, the Sadducees focused all their attention on this present life, this world which "is passing away, and also its lusts." (1 Jn 2:17). The Sadducees lived life as if there were no tomorrow. They fastidiously observed the Mosaic Law, but at the same time oppressed the common people, and used their positions of power to indulge themselves at the expense of the common people. If the Sadducees were alive today, their "theme song" might have been the Grassroots "[Let's Live for Today](#)" especially the **refrain** "Sha la la la la la, let's live for today and don't worry about tomorrow"! On the other hand they were fundamentalists who rejected the oral traditions which the Pharisees accepted. The Sadducees only accepted the Torah or Pentateuch as their primary authority and they contended that the resurrection was not taught in the Torah nor in any of the other OT books.

Wuest adds that "The Pharisees were the ritualists, the Herodians, the political party among the Jews allied with the ruling Roman class, the Sadducees, the rationalists. The latter professed a disbelief in angels or spirits, and in a resurrection. They were closely identified with the priestly aristocracy (Acts 5:7), were relatively few in numbers, and were not held in as much esteem by the people as the Pharisees. These approached Jesus with the question which divided them from the Pharisees." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Who say that there is no resurrection([anastasis](#)) - And as you have likely heard, that is why they were '**sad you see!**' (Get it?)

MacArthur writes that "They were so defined by not believing in the resurrection, that they had mastered the art of infuriating the Pharisees and the rest of the people with their arguments. They made a joke out of resurrection."

The **Sadducees** did not accept the OT passages that teach a future resurrection and a quick scan of the passages reveals the most likely reason they did not accept the following passages. Why not? Because none are taken from the Torah which was their primary authoritative source. Jesus would soon crush their absurd argument with Scripture from the Torah!

Job 19:25-27 (probably the oldest book in the Bible indicating belief in resurrection from ancient times) "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

Psalm 16:9-11 (A Messianic Psalm) Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. 11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Comment: Psalm 16:10 is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:27 in his first sermon to the Jews after Pentecost as a prophecy that was fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Peter states clearly that David did not fulfill the promise of this psalm (Acts 2:29).

Psalm 49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah.

Isaiah 26:19 **Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise.** You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Daniel 12:2-note **"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake**, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:13-note "But as for you (DANIEL), go your way to the end;**then you will enter into rest and rise again** for your allotted portion (REWARD SURELY ALLUDED TO IN Da 12:3-note) at the end of the age."

Comment: When will Daniel be resurrected (and the other OT saints)? This passage says at the end of the age ([see timing of resurrections](#)). We are still in that same age now and it will be brought to an abrupt end when Messiah returns at His Second Coming, defeats all opposition (Gentile and Jew) and sets up His Millennial Kingdom.

Resurrection ([386](#)) ([anastasis](#) from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = to cause to stand) literally means "to stand again" or "to cause to stand again" and most NT uses refer to a physical body rising from the dead or coming back to life after having once died. The **resurrection** is distinguished from belief in reincarnation, which usually involves a series of rebirths from which the soul may seek release. Resurrection has primary reference to the body. The resurrection is the central, defining doctrine and claim of the gospel for as Paul wrote "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." (1Cor 15:14)

John MacArthur notes has an interesting compilation of allusions to the afterlife which can be found in various cultures throughout the ages indicating that men of all cultures have had a belief in life after death, which should not surprise us given the truth of Eccl 3:11 where we read that God has set eternity in the heart of all men. -

"It beats in the human heart in every culture, in every era of time. You can go back to The Egyptian Book of the Dead and find there prominent belief in life after death in the most ancient of times of human history. In the tomb of [Pharaoh Cheops](#), sealed over five thousand years ago was found by archaeologists the [solar boat](#) (or [here](#)) which he had built to sail through the heavens in the afterlife. The ancient Greek religion, [a silver coin was often placed in the mouth of a corpse](#) to pay his fare across the mystic river of death into the land of resurrection life. Even [American Indians often placed within the grave of a dead warrior his bow and arrows and sometimes his dead pony](#) so he could have them in the happy hunting ground. [Norsemen were buried also with a dead horse and armor](#) to carry on life in the world to come. In [Greenland, dead native children were buried with a dog](#) to guide them through the cold wasteland to come (from [The Destiny of the Soul: A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life](#) - Alger, 1889). Humanity has always felt the pull of the afterlife, even in the most primitive of cultures....Whether you are in a primitive ancient culture or sophisticated more modern culture, it beats in the human heart to believe in afterlife. " - Eccl 3:11).. ([The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#))

Recommended Resource:

- Don Richardson's incredible book [Eternity in Their Hearts](#). (Related to the truth in Ecclesiastes 3:11)
- [Why is the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ so important? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important? | GotQuestions.org](#)

- [When will the Resurrection take place? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why should I believe in Christ's resurrection? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the first resurrection? What is the second resurrection? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is more important, the death of Christ or His resurrection? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ true? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Can the various resurrection accounts from the four Gospels be harmonized? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" \(John 11:25\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Where do the Hebrew Scriptures prophesy the death and resurrection of the Messiah? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Where was Jesus for the three days between His death and resurrection? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How will our resurrection body be different from our current body? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Akin's excellent summary of the Sadducees - A small sect of the priestly families. - Wealthy aristocrats with significant political/temple influences. They dominated the Sanhedrin (cf. Acts 5:17). - Sympathetic to **Hellenism**, the Herods and Rome. - Considered only the books of Moses (Pentateuch) as authoritative. In a sense this made them theological conservatives. - Had a strong doctrine of human free will. - Did not believe in angels and demons (Acts 23:8). - Were not looking for a Messiah-King from David's line. - Did not believe in the immortality of the soul. - Did not believe in a future bodily resurrection. Josephus said, "The doctrine of the Sadducees is this: souls die with bodies." (**Antiquities, 18:1, 4 - INTERESTING NOTE AS HE DISCUSSES PHARISEES IN 18:3**). - With the total destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, their center of power, and political influence came to an end and they vanished from history.

In Acts 23 Luke records Paul's defense before the Council declaring

But perceiving that one group were **Sadducees** and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!" 7 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and **Sadducees**, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the **Sadducees** say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. (Acts 23:6-8+)

And so we see that the Sadducees scoffed at many of the Pharisees' beliefs in the supernatural. The Sadducees remind me of **Thomas Jefferson's so-called "Bible"** which "is especially notable for its exclusion of all miracles by Jesus and most mentions of the supernatural, including sections of the four gospels that contain the Resurrection and most other miracles, and passages that portray Jesus as divine!" Amazing! Shocking! ([See Jefferson's Bible](#)). Clearly the Sadducees and Pharisees were bitter rivals, except when it came to opposing Jesus again proving the truth of the ancient proverb that "**The enemy of my enemy is my friend!**" (See Jn 11:47 where "chief priests" are the Sadducees) Of the major groups of Jewish religious leaders, the Sadducees were the smallest and yet one of the most influential, because of their wealth, and aristocratic standing in Jewish society. Many of the priests and chief priest were Sadducees as well as most of the Sanhedrin. They held most of the positions of power in the Temple including oversight of the lucrative business operations in the Court of the Gentiles on the Temple grounds, giving them good reason to hate Jesus Who overturned their lucrative business (Lk 19:45-48). Surprisingly they, like the Herodians, were eager to cooperate with the Romans. The Sadducees were religious liberals in their denial of the resurrection, angels, and the age to come. Josephus wrote that the Sadducees believed that the soul and body perish together at death. Since they rejected life after death, the Sadducees focused all their attention on this present life, this world which "is passing away, and also its lusts." (1 Jn 2:17). The Sadducees lived life as if there were no tomorrow. They fastidiously observed the Mosaic Law, but at the same time oppressed the common people, and used their positions of power to indulge themselves at the expense of the common people. If the Sadducees were alive today, their "theme song" might have been the Grassroots "**Let's Live for Today**" especially the **refrain** "Sha la la la la la, let's live for today and don't worry about tomorrow"! On the other hand they were fundamentalists who rejected the oral traditions which the Pharisees accepted. The Sadducees only accepted the Torah or Pentateuch as their primary authority and they contended that the resurrection was not taught in the Torah nor in any of the other OT books.

The **Sadducees** did not accept the OT passages that teach a future resurrection and a quick scan of the passages reveals the most likely reason they did not accept the following passages. Why not? Because none are taken from the Torah which was their primary authoritative source. Jesus would soon crush their absurd argument with Scripture from the Torah!

Job 19:25-27 (probably the oldest book in the Bible indicating belief in resurrection from ancient times) "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

Comment - A site I respect feels this is not a resurrection passage, but I disagree. Daniel Akin agrees that

"The doctrine of resurrection finds Old Testament support in places like Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:9-11; and Daniel 12:2."

Psalm 16:9-11+ ([A Messianic Psalm](#)) Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. 11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Comment: Psalm 16:10 is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:27+ in his first sermon to the Jews after Pentecost as a prophecy that was fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Peter states clearly that David did not fulfill the promise of this psalm (Acts 2:29+). (Read the full context - Acts 2:22-27+ and compare Acts 13:33-35+)

Gotquestions - The resurrection of the Messiah is strongly implied in another Davidic psalm. Again, this is Psalm 22. In verses 19–21, the suffering Savior prays for deliverance “from the lion’s mouth” (a metaphor for Satan). This desperate prayer is then followed immediately in verses 22–24 by a hymn of praise in which the Messiah thanks God for hearing His prayer and delivering Him. The resurrection of the Messiah is clearly implied between the ending of the prayer in verse 21 and the beginning of the praise song in verse 22.

Psalm 49:15+ But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah.

Isaiah 53:10-11+ But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring (CLEARLY IMPLIES HE WOULD LIVE AFTER BEING RENDERED AS A GUILT OFFERING), He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

Comment: And back again to Isaiah 53: after prophesying that the Suffering Servant of God would suffer for the sins of His people, the prophet says He would then be “cut off out of the land of the living.” But Isaiah then states that He (Messiah) “will see His offspring” and that God the Father will “prolong His days” (Isaiah 53:5, 8, 10). Isaiah proceeds to reaffirm the promise of the resurrection in different words: “As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see light and be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:11). ([Scriptures prophesy resurrection of Messiah](#))

Isaiah 26:19 **Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise.** You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Daniel 12:2+ **“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake** these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:13+ “But as for you (DANIEL), go your way to the end; **then you will enter into rest and rise again** for your allotted portion (REWARD SURELY ALLUDED TO IN Da 12:3+) at the end of the age.”

Comment: When will Daniel be resurrected (and the other OT saints)? This passage says at the end of the age ([see timing of resurrections](#)). We are still in that same age now and it will be brought to an abrupt end when Messiah returns at His Second Coming, defeats all opposition (Gentile and Jew) and sets up His Millennial Kingdom.

EXAMPLE OF BELIEF IN THE AFTERLIFE - Benjamin Franklin penned the words on his own epitaph, doing so at the young age of 22 and living to age 84.

The Body of B. Franklin, Printer
Like the Cover of an old Book
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its Lettering and Gilding,
Lies here, Food for Worms,
But the Work shall not be wholly lost:
For it will, as he believ'd,
Appear once more
In a new & more perfect Edition,
Corrected and amended by the Author.

This last line is so sad as the 22 yo Franklin assumed that after he died, he would wake up in the presence of the Author (as he calls God). Franklin epitomizes the tragedy that even the wisest of the wise can be spiritually deceived. Six weeks before his death he penned the following words as to his religious beliefs...

"Here is my Creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe. That He governs it by His Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable Service we render to him, is doing Good to his other Children. That the Soul of Man is immortal, and will be treated with Justice in another Life respecting its Conduct in this ... As for Jesus of Nazareth ... I think the system of Morals and Religion as he left them to us, the best the World ever saw ... but I have ... some Doubts to his Divinity; though' it is a Question I do not dogmatism upon, having never studied it, and think it is needless to busy myself with it now, where I expect soon an Opportunity of knowing the Truth with less Trouble." ([Reference](#))

The narrative is classic Franklin, witty and to the point, but sadly mistaken on the truth about Jesus, unless of course he had a change of heart and mind in the intervening 6 weeks before he died (and that is always a possibility!). So in light of his questioning the divinity of Jesus, despite his hope penned in the last line of his epitaph that he would receive a "new and more perfect Edition (referring to his body) corrected and amended by the Author (His reference to God), he seems to have not believed the critical truth "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12+)

Related Resource:

- [What is deism? What do deists believe? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Luke 20:28 and they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that IF A MAN'S BROTHER DIES, having a wife, AND HE IS CHILDLESS, HIS BROTHER SHOULD MARRY THE WIFE AND RAISE UP CHILDREN TO HIS BROTHER.

Luke 20:28KJV Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

- Genesis 38:8,11,26; Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Ruth 1:11,12
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

THE SADDUCEES' ABSURD EXAMPLE

Absurd is defined in English dictionaries as contrary to reason or propriety; obviously and flatly opposed to manifest truth; inconsistent with the plain dictates of common sense; logically contradictory; nonsensical; ridiculous; silly. Inconsistent with reason, inviting ridicule; manifestly false, ludicrous. In short as discussed in Lk 20:33 ([see note](#)) the Sadducees were using the argument of [Reductio ad absurdum](#), to show belief in the resurrection was absurd! Their intent was to make the idea of a resurrection a joke!

[Stevenson](#) - The question is meant as a trick. It is not a sincere question. It is one of those "can God make a rock so big that He cannot move it" questions. It is a question designed to disprove the doctrine of the resurrection. The question revolves around the laws of the [levirate marriage](#) as set forth in the book of Deuteronomy. Remember, the Sadducees only believed in the books of Moses.

And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher" ([didaskalos](#)) - This is a respectful greeting, but was undoubtedly tinged with [duplicity](#) by these hypocrites. They certainly did not really consider Jesus to be **THEIR** Teacher! As they allude to in their quote, their "Teacher" is Moses (the [Torah](#)). Talk about evil hypocrites! They do not even believe the resurrection but will still attempt to use it to trap Jesus.

Wuest writes that "Their purpose was hostile. They address our Lord as Teacher, but the use of the title is purely formal. They did not come to learn." No, they came to trap Jesus in a "Resurrection Riddle!" ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company](#) used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader page 234](#))

Moses wrote for us that - Since their Scriptural authority is the [Torah](#), they immediately resort to Moses to provide the foundation

for their question which is geared to stump and/or entrap Jesus and make Him look like anything but a respected "**Teacher**" to the Jewish crowd. Remember that it is Tuesday (some think Wednesday) and Jesus is still popular with the crowd as they are still hoping He will be their Messiah and King to bring in His political kingdom and crush the Gentile opposition (Rome). They were correct in their supposition, but were off on their timing, for His crushing would indeed occur when the **Stone** returns the Second Time and strikes Nebuchadnezzar's "statue on its feet of iron and clay (THE REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE) and (CRUSHES) them." (Da 2:34+)

IF A MAN'S BROTHER DIES, having a wife, AND HE IS CHILDLESS, HIS BROTHER SHOULD MARRY THE WIFE AND RAISE UP CHILDREN TO HIS BROTHER (Mk 12:19) - Remember that all caps in the NASB indicates a direct quotation from the Old Testament. As an aside, these men knew the Torah and undoubtedly spoke this passage from memory (cf importance of believers [Memorizing His Word](#); see also [Memory Verses by Topic](#)). Some contend the Sadducees' story was not hypothetical but was an actual occurrence. Whether it was hypothetical or true does not really matter. As a side note several Hollywood stars have each been married eight times - Mickey Rooney, Elizabeth Taylor, and Lana Turner!

Spurgeon - Probably, this was one of the stock stories they were in the habit of telling in order to cast ridicule upon the resurrection.

In this case the **Sadducees** are quoting from the book of Deuteronomy

"When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. It shall be that the firstborn whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel. (Deuteronomy 25:5-6+)

This passage is referring to what is known as the law of [levirate marriage](#) which says if a man died without an heir, any unmarried brother was obliged to marry the man's widow. The purpose of the law is (1) to provide for the widow in a society where a childless widow would be reduced to begging and (2) to preserve the name of the deceased brother, who would be regarded as the legal father of the first son produced from that marriage, and would allow for the deceased brother's property to be kept in his line.

Note the entire section in Dt 25:5-10 deals with this law.

Levirate is from the Latin "**levir**" which means a "husband's brother" (or "brother in law") and thus ["levirate marriage"](#) refers to the Jewish custom which dictated that when a husband died without leaving a surviving son, the dead man's brother (or **nearest male relative**) was allowed to receive (or purchase [cf Ru 4:5-[note](#)]) his deceased brother's (or relative's) property and manage it for the widow, thereby keeping the family property and possessions intact (cp Matt. 22:25; Mark 12:20; Luke 20:29). If the deceased brother left no male children, then the surviving brother was expected to take the deceased's widow in order to provide a male heir (something Judah refused until Tamar tricked him - see Ge 38:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). The firstborn male would be considered the heir of the dead brother's estate and was expected to continue the dead brother's name (Dt 25:5, 25:6-[notes](#), Ru 4:10-[note](#)). If the brother (or the nearest relative) choose not to marry the widow, she subjected him to gross insult (Dt 25:7, 8, 9, 10). The purpose was the perpetuation of the dead brother's name, because if an Israelite died and left his widow without a son, there was the danger that his name might perish and his property pass out of the family.

See also Josephus (bottom half of the page) - [Josephus, Ant. 4.8.23](#)

[Daniel Akin](#) has an interesting (understatement) introduction on the parallel passage in Mark 12:18-27 writing "There is a playful saying that teachers of the Bible will often cite: "If you want to build a big crowd then teach on "sex" or "the end times." And, if you want to build a really big crowd then teach on "sex in the end times!" 2) Interestingly, that very issue was raised by a group of religious leaders who did not even believe in the end times, who rejected outright any doctrine of life after death. They are known in the Bible as the Sadducees. 3) The question of life after death has always fascinated humans, especially the religious. Every religion has some perspective on the issue though they vary widely in what they believe. Recent surveys point out the 80% of Americans believe in some form of life after death, with another 9% saying it may be true but that they were not sure. 4) Christianity has always had a strong doctrine concerning life after death, even if we had to admit to a good bit of mystery on the precise details. There is nothing surprising about this, after all we build our understanding of the future, end times and eternity from the teachings of Jesus, an empty tomb, and a resurrected and living Savior. The Bible tells us a lot but it does not tell us everything. 5) In this passage we will see how Jesus countered the troubling riddle of the Sadducees and demolished their theology and doctrine of annihilation. In the process, we will allow additional scriptures and theological reflection to help us craft a healthy perspective on what we can expect for the future. For those who know and trust Christ for salvation one thing is certain: it is all good!

Luke 20:29 "Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless;

Luke 20:29KJV There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.

- **the first took a wife and died childless** Leviticus 20:20; Jer 22:30
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Mark 12:20+ "There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children.

Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless - This was apparently the "trump card" for the Sadducees against the Pharisees who believed in resurrection and it was one no Pharisee had ever been able to adequately answer. So they knew that now they could throw this curve ball at Jesus and He would be stumped. You can just imagine their sense of "Gotcha Now Jesus" mentality that stirred their prideful hearts as they began this question which takes up six verses (including the Scripture they quoted above) of the inspired Word of God! We know Jesus was filled with the Spirit for He was very patient to let them finish their lengthy question.

Hiebert on having no children - All seven brothers successively fulfilled their duty to marry their brother's wife, but the seven left no seed. This childlessness left none of them with a superior claim to be her husband in the resurrection. ([The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary](#))

Stevenson - The question presupposes a situation in which there are seven brothers. The oldest is married, but before his marriage can produce any children, he dies. According to Jewish Law, it is now the responsibility of the second brother to have a child by that wife and to raise the child as the heir of the first brother (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). And so, he marries her, but dies before there are any children. And so it goes with the third and the fourth and the fifth and the sixth and the seventh. By this time, I think that I would be a bit suspicious of the woman. But she eventually dies, too.

Luke 20:30 and the second

- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

and the second - Matthew lumps all the husbands into one verse "so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh." (Mt 22:26)

Luke 20:31 and the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children.

- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
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THE CONSUMMATE WIDOWMAKER

And the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children - One would have thought that after the third had died, all would have viewed her as a consummate widowmaker and avoided her like the plague! But this is just an absurd story!

Luke 20:32 "Finally the woman died also."

Luke 20:32KJV Last of all the woman died also.

- **the woman died** Judges 2:10; Ecclesiastes 1:4; 9:5; Hebrews 9:27
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

WIDOWMAKER'S DEATH...FINALLY!

Finally the woman died also - And everyone took a deep breath, thanking God that the ["widow maker"](#) has passed!

Luke 20:33 "In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her."

Luke 20:33KJV Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

- Mt 22:24-28; Mark 12:19-23
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

WHO'S WIFE WILL SHE BE?

D A Carson makes a good point that the Sadducees question was based on their presupposition "that resurrection life is an exact counterpart to earthly life; and if so, the resurrected woman must be guilty of incestuous marriages or arbitrarily designated the wife of one of the brothers. And if so, which one? Or—and this is the answer the Sadducees pressed for—the whole notion of resurrection is absurd." (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

[Stevenson](#) - Do you see what the Sadducees are doing? They are not asking this question because they are actually worried about this situation. They are asking it because they think that the question shows a flaw in the whole teaching about the resurrection. They expect Jesus to stutter and stammer and get red in the face so that they can laugh at Him. But he does nothing of the sort.

Of course, Jesus immediately proceeds (Lk 20:34-35) to correct their erroneous presupposition by pointing out that there is a marked distinction between life in **this age** and life in **that age** which is to come (resurrection life).

In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her - The argument that the Sadducees are employing is what is commonly known as [Reductio ad absurdum](#), which is "Latin for **"reduction to absurdity"** "a form of argument which attempts either to disprove a statement by showing it inevitably leads to a ridiculous, absurd, or impractical conclusion, or to prove one by showing that if it were not true, the result would be absurd or impossible." In the present context the goal of the Sadducees is the former, that is, to disprove the resurrection by showing that this belief inevitably would lead one to come to an absurd, even impossible conclusion. In other words they are attempting to show that the resurrection cannot be true because the implications of that belief are absurd or ridiculous in the case of the woman with seven former husbands! Imagine the scene in heaven! Whose wife is she going to be? And remember also that since none of them would die (it's heaven), the scene would be utter [chaos](#) (a state of extreme confusion and disorder in a place that was supposed to be just the opposite! Just imagine all these people wandering around heaven trying to discover who their wife is or who their husband is!). This would be absolutely absurd! It simply could not occur they reason. And then the logical conclusion is that there is not such a thing as the **resurrection** because there was no way the Law of [levirate marriage](#) in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 could be fulfilled! And so the Sadducees thought they had Jesus this time, for this argument had never failed when they had used it to stump their rivals the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection.

As an aside, although the story of the Sadducees seems a bit ridiculous, their question is not merely theoretical for there will be

many in heaven who have had more than one spouse, for any number of reasons. But as Jesus will go on to explain, multiple spouses, bitter divorces, jealousies, etc will (thank God), not be relevant in the life to come! That's good news!

[Daniel Akin](#) has a note on the background of the Sadducee's question - It was grounded in the issue of "levirate (Latin for "brother-in-law") marriage" mentioned in Genesis 38:8-10 and Ruth, and explained in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 which says, "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.'" The gist of the issue is therefore this: **God made a provision for a family to be raised up in name and property rights for a husband who dies with no male heir.** You have to love the way the Bible describes this! The Sadducees took this teaching and created what we call a reductio ad absurdum argument, an argument that reduces things to the absurd or the ridiculous. A man marries a woman and he dies. Fortunately (or "unfortunately") he has 7 brothers who can step in and fulfill the levirate obligation. Tragically, she married each one and each one, all 7, died without bearing a child. Now, since the Pharisees and most rabbis believe the world to come is basically an improved and better one like this world, which therefore would include things like marriage, to whom then will she be married? Assuming monogamy which is a given, which one will have her in marriage with its privileges "in the resurrection" (v. 23), in the world to come? Such a scenario is clearly unthinkable and it shows the foolishness of believing in a future resurrection. Look at all the problems it could potentially cause. No, God is too smart for that and the books of Moses which are the undisputed Word of God make no mention of a future resurrection. Interestingly Jesus has already spoken of his own resurrection 3 times (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). The Sadducees think they have him, but they are headed toward a big disappointment.

Luke 20:34 And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,

Luke 20:34KJV And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

- **sons of this age**, Lk 16:8
- **marry and are given in marriage**, Lk 17:27; 1 Cor 7:2-16; Ephesians 5:31; Hebrews 13:4
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS EXPOSES THE SERIOUS ERRORS OF THE SADDUCEES

And so Jesus first points out that the Sadducees have made a major mistake in assuming that (future)**that age** (Lk 20:35) is simply a continuation of **this age**. He proceeds to describe how they differ, especially regarding marriage. In Luke 20, Jesus deals with their not understanding God's power in verses Lu 20:34-36 and with their not understanding the Scriptures in verses Lu 20:37-38.

And Jesus said to them - Jesus begins by pointing out that life in the resurrection is substantially different from life in **this age** (life on earth as we know it). Life in the **age** of the resurrection is not just a continuation of life in this world but is a completely different "[order of magnitude](#)". However before He describes this obvious difference in **this age** and **that age**, He prefaces His explanation with a pithy barb found in the parallel account in Mark 12:24+....

Jesus said to them (SADDUCEES), "Is this not the reason you are (present tense = continually) mistaken (planao - led astray, misled, deluded, deceived), that (1)**you do not understand the Scriptures** or (2) **the power** ([dunamis](#) = inherent ability to accomplish) **of God**?

Wuest comments - "*Is it **not** (ou) for this cause that you err, namely, that you do not know the scriptures nor even the power of God?*" The Greek negative **ou** (*Is it **not** for this cause*) when used with a question, expects an affirmative answer. This form of question is stronger than a formal direct statement would be

(Like the NLT paraphrase = "*Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God*"). The word **"that"** points to the cause of their ignorance which was two-fold, both inexcusable in members of the priesthood, which most of these Sadducees probably were, (1) ignorance of the Old Testament and (2) ignorance of the power of God. Swete says: "The Sadducees (and the Pharisees also, so far as they connected marriage and the propagation of the race with the future life), showed themselves incapable of conceiving a **power** which could produce an **entirely different order from any within their experience. They assumed either that God could not raise the dead, or that He could raise them only to a life which would be a counterpart of the present, or even more replete with material pleasures.**" ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Steven Cole - Jesus shows us that the source of sound doctrine is not human reason, but Scripture properly interpreted. Both the Sadducees and Jesus held to the authority of Scripture. They begin by quoting Moses and Jesus answers them by quoting Moses. But these men gave undue emphasis to human reason, which led them to disregard certain Scriptures; and they underestimated the power of God to raise the dead and give them a whole different existence in heaven. Mk 12:24 quotes Jesus, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or the power of God?" ([Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#))

In Luke 20, Jesus deals with both of the mistakes of the Sadducees

1. He corrects their misunderstanding God's power = Luke 20:34-36
2. He corrects their misunderstanding of the Scripture = Luke 20:37-38.

So notice that in the mold of the Master Rabbi that Jesus is, He answers their question by **beginning with a question** of His own in Mark's version. And what a question it is! First he flat out tells the Sadducees that they **"are mistaken."** Now pause a moment and imagine you were a fly on the Temple wall. Can you see their faces? Their posturing? Their leaning over to one another? etc. What a question to begin answering what they thought was a "water tight" argument that they could not lose! In effect, from the very beginning, Jesus is saying in essence "You lose!" But His holy irritation of His antagonists doesn't stop there. He follows (to use a basketball metaphor - it's "March Madness" as I write these notes) His "blocked shot" with an "in your face slam dunk!" You Sadducees are sad you see because you don't even understand your own Scriptures. Woe! Are their faces flushed yet? Their nostrils are beginning to flare! And then Jesus tops it off with the accusation that they do not even understand **the power of God!** They must have been thinking "Does God have power to somehow resolve the absurd riddle of one wife and seven husbands in heaven?" They are beginning to worry that their water tight argument is beginning to leak and for good reason. They do not have a clue that they have just confronted the Wisdom of the Cosmos, the One Who is infinitely wise. And He is about to respond with that infinite wisdom which will slam shut their mouths in utter dismay!

THOUGHT - Let's apply this - Jesus is saying you don't understand Who God is and what He is capable of! You haven't been reading your Bibles! Now this is what happens often when people challenge our Christian faith, but often they do so out of ignorance of God and/or ignorance of His Word. Some people do this sincerely. But others are like the Sadducees and are trying to trap us in some obscure Biblical doctrine, some supposed inconsistency of the Scriptures, etc. They have a profession of knowledge of God but as is often the case these individuals know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God! Which means that we as followers of Christ must know our Bibles and be convinced of the power of God. Peter says it this way **"Sanctify** (aorist imperative - This is imperative!) Christ as Lord in your hearts (NOT JUST YOUR HEAD!), always being ready to make a defense ([apologia](#)) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1 Peter 3:15+). If you were confronted today by an individual skeptical about the resurrection from the dead, would you be able to give an accurate, Biblically saturated account for the hope (not hope so, but hope sure) you have firmly founded in the truth of the resurrection (cf Acts 23:6NLT+, Acts 24:15+)?

The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage - So who are **the sons of this age**? This is a Hebraism, in this case a Hebraic idiom which is simply a way to say that someone belongs to this present age, this present world. The fact that He uses **"sons"** does not exclude the wife, because this is a gender neutral idiom so to speak. And so **sons of this age** simply describes all the people living in this world. As alluded to above, what Jesus is beginning to do is emphasize that marriage, reproduction, children, etc, is for this life on earth, not for the next life in heaven. Marrying and giving in marriage is a normal part of the life of **the sons of this age**. So far His opponents would agree with Him.

Marriage In Heaven

When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. —Mark 12:25

Today's Scripture: Mark 12:18-27

When I was a student at a Christian high school, I knew a professor whose wife had died. Later he married the widow of his best friend. One day a student asked him, "Will your first wife know about your second marriage when you see her in heaven, and if so, how do you think she'll react?" The professor smiled and said, "Of course she will, and because she will be perfect she will not be jealous. Even though we will not live as marriage partners, I believe we will know each other. We will all be the best of friends forever."

In Mark 12, we read about some enemies of Jesus who invented a story about a woman whose husband died and left no son. Under Jewish law, the brother of the deceased had to marry the widow for the purpose of having a son (Deuteronomy 25:5). According to their story, this happened with seven brothers. Jesus' detractors asked, "When they rise, whose wife will she be?" He said they neither understood the Scriptures nor God's power to raise the dead to a glorious new existence without marriage.

I believe that in heaven we will have special feelings for one another. We will love perfectly and enjoy complete healing from all the hurts of our earthly relationships. That will be more fulfilling than any marriage. By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The love we've known while here below
In heaven will find its highest joy,
For we will know Christ's perfect love
That memories cannot destroy.
—D. De Haan

The pleasures of earth cannot compare to the joys of heaven.

THOUGHT - Do you really believe this? What difference should it make in your ongoing battle with lust? Be motivated to press on the power of the Spirit, for the glory of the Lamb, by pondering the following quote from one of America's greatest theologians. **Jonathan Edwards** wrote that in heaven "the glorified spiritual bodies of the saints shall be filled with pleasures of the most exquisite kind that such refined bodies are capable of....The sweetness and pleasure that shall be in the mind, shall put the spirits of the body into such a motion as shall cause a sweet sensation throughout the body, infinitely excelling any sensual pleasure here."

Luke 20:35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;

Luke 20:35 KJV But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

- **but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead**, Lk 21:36; Acts 5:41; 2 Th 1:5; Rev 3:4 Daniel 12:2,3; John 5:29; Acts 24:15; Hebrews 11:35
- **neither marry nor are given in marriage** Mt 22:29; Mark 12:24
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

THE STATE OF THE SAVED

But - Look out! Here Jesus uses a term of contrast to turn the argument of the Sadducees 180 degrees!

Steven Cole explains that "The Sadducees' error was based on some wrong assumptions. They wrongly assumed that life after death would necessarily be just like life now. Thus they took the Mosaic allowance for a brother marrying his deceased brother's widow to raise up offspring for him, and wrongly applied it to life in the resurrected state. They wrongly assumed that people will

marry monogamously in heaven, just as they do now. Based on their assumptions, the idea of a woman having seven husbands in heaven was logically absurd. But their assumptions were wrong." ([Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#))

Those who are considered worthy (*kataxioo*) to attain to that age - This is simply another of the manifold ways to describe our glorious salvation! Notice two key qualifying points. **First** and of critical importance is the phrase **those who are considered worthy to attain to that age**. What is **that age**? In context **that age** is the **age** to come, not the present passing age, but the eternal age. **Secondly**, what does Jesus mean by **considered worthy to attain**? One might at first think He is saying one can carry out enough meritorious works and obey the law perfectly enough so that God would look at them and give them a "passing score," marking their test papers with "Worthy of Entrance." As an aside, this is the most common response from folks when you ask them how are you going to get to heaven? Of course this answer is the wrong answer and is not the way that Scripture teaches one can be declared worthy of entrance into heaven! The only way to be **considered worthy** of Heaven is believing by grace (Eph 2:8-9-note) in the One they have just insincerely addressed as "**Teacher**," the One they are attempting to trip up in a *reductio ad absurdum*! Even as Paul said "There is (absolutely) no one righteous. Not even one (not even ONE is worthy)," (Ro 3:10-note) "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Ro 3:23-note). But praise GOD, for there is One worthy, [the Lion of the Tribe of Judah](#) (Rev 5:5-note), the One about Whom [all Heaven declares \(play\)](#) (Rev 5:11-note) with a loud voice "**Worthy is the Lamb** Who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev 5:12-note)

Considered worthy (2661)(*kataxioo* from *kata* = + *axioo* = to think worthy from *axios* = worthy) means to deem worthy, to be regarded as worthy or thought of as deserving. All NT uses are passive voice which is important as this indicates the "worthiness" comes from an outside source. All three uses describe believers and two of the uses are in the context of salvation (Lk 20:35, 2 Th 1:5). As Lewis says in his excellent explanation of *kataxioo* below they are not made worthy, but declared worthy by God and by His grace. Note that this verb has a fourth use (in Textus Receptus) in Lk 21:36KJV-note where the KJV translates it "that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things."

The root adjective *axios* is used for example in Luke 3:8-note - "Therefore bear fruits in keeping (*axios*) with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham." So the **fruit** simply shows the validity of the **root** of genuine repentance. The **fruit** does not save (or merit salvation), but powerfully demonstrates that one's repentance (and salvation) is authentic and not just an empty profession (e.g., of "[remorse](#)").

Kataxioo "does not mean to make worthy; it means to count, reckon, and declare worthy. (Cf Justification Ro 5:1+) A believer is not saved because he remains faithful through the sufferings of this life; he is saved because he believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. However, when he suffers in this world and endures through the suffering, he is counted worthy of God's kingdom (**ED: BUT HE IS ENABLED TO SUFFER BY THE SAME POWER THAT ENABLED HIM TO BE SAVED!** cf Gal 3:3-note). He does not disappoint God. He proves his grit—that he is truly a man or a woman of God. He is worthy to enter heaven, for he has proven his faith." (Practical Word Studies in The New Testament)

Used only 3x in the NT (there are no uses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint). Here in Lk 20:35 and in the following two passages...

Acts 5:41 (CONTEXT Acts 5:40 - AFTER THE DISCIPLES WERE BEATEN FOR THEIR TESTIMONY OF JESUS! TALK ABOUT HOLY SPIRIT POWER!) So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been **considered worthy** to suffer shame for His name.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be **considered worthy** of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

Steve Lewis explains **considered worthy** in 2 Th 1:5 - The Thessalonian believers are **considered worthy** of the kingdom of God because they have kept their faith in Christ, even when faced with severe opposition. The verb **considered worthy** (*kataxioo*) does not mean to **make** one worthy, but to **declare** one is worthy. This verb is an aorist passive infinitive = "to have been declared worthy at a specific point in time." It is unfortunate that many English Bibles have translated this as if it were a future tense (NASB, HCSB, NIV are examples). **They have already been declared worthy**, but in a future sense at the time the millennial kingdom begins they certainly "will be" shown to have been worthy. Their worthiness to participate in the kingdom of God was established well before persecution came upon them -- it was established when they placed their faith and trust in what Christ did on their behalf by dying on the cross. There is no human effort involved in meriting the kingdom of God. These believers had outwardly confirmed the inward truth (BY THEIR SPIRIT ENABLED RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION) that they indeed are Church-age saints who will eventually rule with Christ during His

1000-year kingdom on earth (see 1 Th 2:12-note and 2 Ti 2:12-note = "if we endure, we will reign with Him" - we are enabled to endure ONLY because He gives us the *supernatural* power to endure, to do what we could never do in our *natural* strength!). Their response to life's trials definitely confirmed that they already had a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase **for which** does not mean "in order to gain the kingdom" but "in the name or interest of the kingdom" -- **their suffering was not in order to gain more merit before God. Their suffering was because they had already been declared worthy of the kingdom. You are persecuted because you are a Christian.** (cf, Php 1:29-note, 2 Ti 3:12-note) ([Reference](#))

To attain to that age - "To share in heaven." "To take part in that future age." **Attain** is probably not the best verb to translate the Greek text as the English word **attain** means to gain with effort. We cannot and will not gain heaven by anything meritorious we have done, are doing or will ever do! We "**attain**" Heaven because Jesus' blood has paid for the "admission ticket!" Our part is simply and yet profoundly to take the "Gospel ticket" He offers to every lost sinner! That's how we **attain to that age**! Do you have the "golden Gospel ticket" that allows you to enter the "[Pearly Gates](#)" of Heaven?

Attain (5177)([tugchano/tynchano](#) from **tyche** in Greek = "deity" Fortune personification of luck) properly means to "hit" as of hitting a mark. **Tugchano** generally to what people cannot achieve but may be given, of what is beyond their control and yet not due to mere chance (God is in control and so there is really no such thing as "luck" in this sense that something happens by chance).

The resurrection ([anastasis](#)) from the dead - By using this phrase Jesus is not referring to the "[Second Resurrection](#)" which is the resurrection that will occur at the **Great White Throne** judgment when all unbelievers of all time will be resurrected and will stand before Jesus the Righteous Judge (Rev 20:11-15+). In this passage Jesus is referring to the "**First Resurrection**," the resurrection that will occur in several stages ([as summarized in the table below](#)). How can we be so sure? Because the context makes it clear. Jesus has just described those who would be considered worthy of heaven and then He clearly links those destined for heaven (by using "**and**" = Greek "kai") with the phrase **the resurrection of the dead**. So this is clearly the **FIRST** and NOT the **SECOND** resurrection. Only those who have been declared righteous by grace through faith in Christ (cf Ro 1:16-17+ = those "considered worthy") will participate in the **First Resurrection**.

The phrase **resurrection from the dead** occurs 5x in the NT

Luke 20:35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the **resurrection from the dead**, neither marry nor are given in marriage;

Acts 4:2+ (Acts 4:1 = Sadducees) being greatly disturbed because (NOTE TWO REASONS THE SADDUCEES WERE SORELY TROUBLED) they were (1) teaching the people and (2) proclaiming in Jesus (THE IDEA IS THRU JESUS) the **resurrection from the dead**.

Acts 26:23+ that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His **resurrection from the dead** He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

Romans 1:4+ who was declared the Son of God with power by the **resurrection from the dead**, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Philippians 3:11+ in order that I may attain to the **resurrection from the dead**.

Neither marry nor are given in marriage - **Neither** is the strongest negative one can use in Greek which dogmatically excludes **marriage** in heaven. Jesus is saying **life up there** will be different than **life down here**! And since the Sadducees had focused on **marriage** to make their point, Jesus hones in on this specific difference between life in **this age** and in **that age** to come. He adds some other details about the heavenly existence in the next passage, but first and foremost He directly and definitively refutes the absurd argument of the Sadducees as it relates to **marriage**.

[Stevenson](#) - The resurrection does not constitute a continuation of life as it is on earth. The old physical laws will no longer apply. And the old physical and social relationships will pale to insignificance in the presence of our relationship with the Lord.

Darrell Bock adds that "Since marriage is no longer necessary in the resurrection, the dilemma posed by multiple husbands disappears. The question is an absurdity, not because resurrection is a problem, but because the Sadducean understanding of resurrection is grounded too much in life as it is now. The afterlife is a different and much greater kind of existence. In the next life God the Father is the "parent," so other parental relationships are unnecessary." (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT)

As an aside Jesus gives us the Biblical truth about marital relationships in heaven which is dramatically different from the more sensual depictions of heaven as propounded in [Islamic theology](#) and Mormon theology (cf "[Celestial Marriage](#)").

[David Guzik](#) comments that "This passage has made many wonder if marriage relationships will exist in heaven, or if those who are husband and wife on earth will have no special relationship in heaven. We are not told enough about life in the world beyond to answer in great detail, but we can understand a few principles. Family relationships will still be known in life in the world beyond. The rich man Jesus described in the afterlife was aware of his family relationships (Luke 16:27-28). The glory of heaven will be a relationship and connection with God that surpasses anything else, including present family relationships (Revelation 21:22-23). If it seems that life in the resurrection that Jesus spoke of here does not include some of the pleasures of life we know on earth, it is only because the enjoyments and satisfactions of heaven far surpass what we know on earth. We can't be completely certain what life in glory beyond will be like, but we can know with certainty that no one will be disappointed with the arrangements (Revelation 22:1-5).

Leon Morris adds that "Jesus' questioners had failed to realize that the life to come will be essentially different from this life. Where the doctrine of resurrection was held among the Jews it was usually envisaged as an indefinite prolongation of this life, though no doubt with modifications and improvements. ...Jesus rejects all this. Life in heaven will be significantly different from anything on earth. **Human relationships are largely a matter of place and time: they are bound to be different when neither of these applies.** (ED: HEAVEN IS A DIFFERENT PLACE AND TIME NO LONGER EXISTS AS WE KNOW IT!) (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

QUESTION - [Will there be marriage in heaven?](#) [WATCH VIDEO](#)

ANSWER - 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. [GotQuestions.org](#)

David Thompson: What do other religions say about the afterlife? -

- Mormons: say you go to 1 of 3 kingdoms based on approval of Joseph Smith -
- Hindus: Reincarnated based on your works -
- Muslims, Islam -- Die and go to a pleasure palace; if you die a martyr you get 72 virgins -
- Indians: you need to be buried with your bow and arrows as you go to your Happy and Holy Hunting Ground -
- Egyptians: be buried with things you can take with you into eternity -
- Some Greeks: bury with a coin in mouth so you can pay the fee to cross into the land of the afterlife Religious people just make it up as they go and people believe it; bunch of crazy views
- Important to understand what the Scriptures teach about the afterlife.

Excursus: The Order of Resurrections

There are several resurrection "events" which transpire in history, each of which falls into one of two categories. All but the last resurrection event make up the **FIRST RESURRECTION**. **The point is that you want to participate in the FIRST RESURRECTION!** The **SECOND RESURRECTION** is at the Great White Throne where all will be thrown into the Lake of Fire [Click here for more explanation of this table from Tony Garland](#) See related discussion on [the two Resurrections - "First" and "Second" - charted out](#).

| Order | Which | Timing | Who | Description | Scriptures |
|-------|---------------|--|---------------------|--|--|
| 1 | First | The Third Day | Jesus Christ | The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." | Mt. 28:1-7; Mk 16:1-11; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-18; 1 Cor. 15:20 |
| 2 | First | Shortly after Christ's Resurrection. | A Few OT Saints | At the earthquake attending the crucifixion, graves were opened. Shortly after the resurrection of Christ, these saints were raised | Mt. 27:50-53 |
| 3 | First | Before the Tribulation. | Church | The resurrection of Church-age believers at the Rapture . | Jn 14:3; 1Th. 4:13-18; 1Cor. 15:50-53 |
| 4 | First | Middle of the Tribulation | Two Witnesses | God's two witnesses will be raised after being killed by The Beast . | Rev. 11:11-12 |
| 5 | First | After Jacob's Trouble or Great Tribulation | OT Saints | Old Testament saints will be resurrected to enter the Millennial Kingdom | Da 12:1-2 Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:13-14 |
| 6 | First | Beginning of Millennial Kingdom. | Tribulation Martyrs | The Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected so that they can rule and reign with Christ. | Rev. 20:4-6 |
| 7 | Second | End of Millennial Kingdom | Unbelieving Dead | At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, the final resurrection will consist of all of the unbelieving, wicked dead. They will be found guilty at the Great White Throne Judgment and cast into the Lake of Fire. | Rev. 20:11-15 |

Related Resources:

- [Will there be marriage in heaven? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Will there be sex in heaven? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Will there be such a thing as gender in Heaven? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Luke 20:36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Luke 20:36KJV Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

- **for they cannot even die anymore** Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14; 1 Cor 15:26,42,53,54; Php 3:21; 1 Th 4:13-17; Rev 20:6; 21:4; 22:2-5
- **because they are like angels** Zechariah 3:7; Mt 22:30; Mark 12:25; 1 Cor 15:49,52; Rev 5:6-14; 7:9-12; 22:9
- **and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection** Ro 8:17-23; 1 John 3:2
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

**NO MORE DEATH
FOR SONS OF GOD**

For ([gar](#)) - Term of explanation - What is Jesus explaining?

They cannot even die ([apothnesko](#)) **anymore** - **Cannot** is the strongest negative in the Greek. "Death is swallowed up in victory" forever and ever. Amen. (cf 1 Cor 15:54+). Jesus is explaining why there is no marriage in the resurrection. There is no need for propagation for resurrected, redeemed men and women, the **sons of the resurrection**, will live forever. These words are trustworthy for they come from the One Who say I am the living One; and I was dead, and behold, **I am alive forevermore**, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev 1:18+). Since Jesus is alive forevermore, all believers in Him live forevermore for we are united with Him in the eternal, unbreakable New Covenant in His blood.

Notice that this section of Luke is unique and not found in the parallel versions in Matthew and Mark. Luke alone mentions that the raised do not die and that they are sons of God and resurrection.

Steven Cole explains that the Sadducees "underestimated God's power (cf Mk 12:24b) to raise us from the dead and to give us new bodies that will not be subject to sin and death. Jesus says that in the resurrection, we will be like the angels in two aspects, that we will not marry and that we will not die. Also, like the holy angels, we will not be able to sin. Thus we will come into the full sense of being "**sons of God, being sons of the resurrection**" (Lu 20:36). We are already **children of God** through the new birth, but we can't grasp the full import of that until we receive our new resurrection bodies in heaven."

Die ([599](#))([apothnesko](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation implying a rupture from a former association, separation, departure, cessation + **thnesko** = die) literally means to die off (that is, to die and thus be away from this earthly realm).

Because ([gar](#)) - Term of explanation - What is Jesus explaining?

They are like angels - Angels do not die, but live forever. Notice the term of comparison (like) which indicates resemblance but not identity and in the present context refers specifically to the fact that they will not die and cannot propagate. Now think for a moment to whom is Jesus making this declaration about angels? The Sadducees, the anti-supernaturalists, the ones who do not believe in angels! **Carson** adds that "In fact, Jesus' use of angels contains a double thrust since the Sadducees denied their existence."

Like angels (only here in NT)([2465](#))(**isaggelos** from **isos** = equal + **aggelos** = angel) means like or equal to an angel (knowing neither mortality nor marriage).

Parallel passage in Mark 12:25-27+ -

For (term of explanation - what is Jesus explaining? cf Mk 12:24) **when they rise from the dead**, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26 "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? 27 "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken."

Wuest explains "As to the words "**are like angels**," we note the following: the word '**like**' is *hōs*, an adverb of comparison (contrasted to here in Lk 20:36 = *isaggelos*) meaning, "*in the same manner as, after the fashion of.*" It speaks of similarity and equality. This similarity and equality here is of course, limited to the restrictions of the context which speaks of **marriage** and the **propagation of the race**. Angels were originally created. There are the same number of angels in existence today as when they were created. They do not propagate their kind. **Human beings in the next life will not be angels, but human beings** **They will be like angels in this respect, that they will not propagate their kind.** Thus, the hypothetical case of the Sadducees has no relation to the future life. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

So let's review - What are the arguments Jesus gives to refute the Sadducees' question on the heavenly arrangement of multiple spouses?

- (1) There will be no marriage in heaven
- (2) There will be no death in heaven
- (3) There is no need for procreation (implied)

And are sons of God being sons of the resurrection (earlier "sons of this age" - Lk 20:34) - Jesus has 3 phrases in this section which begin as "**sons of...**" which is a Hebraic way to identify the essential nature or defining quality of something or someone. **Sons of this age** (Lk 20:34) describe those who live in this present passing world. **Sons of God** are those who take on the character or quality of the life of God (which has no sexual overtones). **Sons of the resurrection** are those who are characterized by resurrection from the dead. **Sons of worthless men** (belial) (1 Sa 2:12) can be translated "sons of Belial" indicating their

essential quality was satanic. The essential quality of sons of God is possession of divine life. Sons of resurrection possess resurrection life.

Sons of God - First note "**sons**" includes sons and daughters. Second, note that it is easy to read past this phrase too quickly, but the implications are staggering and will take eternity to even BEGIN to unfold! (See devotionals at bottom of this verse note). To be a **son of God** is to experience the closeness and security of a Father Who loves us, accepts us, and wants to know us personally and intimately.

In Galatians 3:26+ Paul writes "you are all **sons of God** through faith in Christ Jesus." Using a synonymous term **children of God**, John writes "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1+)

As **Guzik** says believers will share "some characteristics of the existence that angels now experience – though they will be even greater, being called **sons of God** and **sons of the resurrection**, titles not given to angelic beings in the New Testament"

MacArthur explains "those who come to the age of resurrection will take on the character of angels who do not procreate, do not have those kinds of relationships, but who take on the character of **sons of God**, that is they will be the possessors of the pure fulfilling life of God. And as **sons of resurrection** they will take on the character of resurrection, newness of life. Marriage is not necessary and thus does not define any aspect of life in the heavenly age to come. ([The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#))

R M Edgar - The complicated earthly relations shall give place to the simplicity of sonship. God's family shall embrace all others. His Fatherhood shall absorb all the descending affections which on earth illustrate feebly his surpassing love, and our sonship to him will embrace all the ascending affection which his descending love demands. The Simplicity of a holy family, in which God is Father and all are brethren, and the angels are our highborn elder brethren, will take the place of those complex relationships which sometimes sweeten and sometimes sadden human love. ([Christ Supreme in Debate](#))

Since there is no death in heaven, there is no need for birth and therefore no need for marriage. The Sadducees' question regarding resurrection had no relevance to reality!

Steven Cole ponders no marriage in heaven! Having been married to the same wonderful woman (Marty) for almost 50 years, Cole's meditation on marriage being absent in heaven resonates deeply in my soul. Pastor Cole writes "I must be honest in saying that the thought of being celibate, like the angels, never used to get me excited about heaven. I've often said to Marla, "How can heaven be heaven if I can't be married to you?" Being married to her is the best thing that's ever happened to me, except for my salvation. I was thinking about this in the context of thinking about Paul's words about marriage. He says with reference to the one flesh aspect of marriage, that he isn't talking about marriage, but rather about Christ and the church (Eph 5:32+). **It dawned on me that he is saying that the marriage relationship, and especially the one flesh aspect of marriage, is the closest earthly picture that we have to our union with Christ, which will be consummated in heaven.** I don't mean to be crude, but rather reverent, when I say that if you think that marriage, and particularly sex in marriage is wonderful, it's just an earthly picture of how much more wonderful it will be to be intimately joined to our heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. You may have to take that by faith, but that's what God's Word promises!" ([Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#))

David Thompson: What do other religions say about the afterlife? -

- Mormons: say you go to 1 of 3 kingdoms based on approval of Joseph Smith -
- Hindus: Reincarnated based on your works -
- Muslims, Islam -- Die and go to a pleasure palace; if you die a martyr you get 72 virgins -
- Indians: you need to be buried with your bow and arrows as you go to your Happy and Holy Hunting Ground -
- Egyptians: be buried with things you can take with you into eternity -
- Some Greeks: bury with a coin in mouth so you can pay the fee to cross into the land of the afterlife Religious people just make it up as they go and people believe it; bunch of crazy views
- Important to understand what the Scriptures teach about the afterlife.

Henrietta Mears - There is an old hymn that says, "[I want to be an angel and with the angels stand.](#)" (Here is the [vocal version](#)) Do you want to be an angel when you die? If you do, I am afraid you are never going to make it. God has something much better for you than being an angel. God's children will reign with Him; angels serve Him. Statements like the words of the hymn quoted above have given a very wrong idea of just what angels are. **People have an idea that those who have died have been given a pair of wings and a harp and now are angels.** This is a common mistake and it is not what the Scriptures teach. It is true that all Christians who die trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are in His presence in heaven, but they are not angels. The Bible teaches that angels are a distinct class of beings who have never been human beings. They are ministering spirits (see Heb. 1:14+). Our Lord said that

human beings after they die and rise from the dead “are like angels of God in heaven” (Mt 22:30) in the matter of marriage and giving in marriage. This shows that human beings in heaven are like angels in this respect, but they are not angels. **Know this: Christians will no more become angels when they die than they will become birds or fish. Believers in Christ are called saints; they are never called angels in the Bible.** (God's Plan: Finding Yourself in His Grand Design)

Adrian Rogers - Often we hear people speak of the universal fatherhood of God. But that is not right. All people are not necessarily brothers. We may be brothers in our humanity, but spiritually we are not brothers until we are born into the family of God and have one common Father. The first thing that must occur if you want your prayers to be answered—if you want your prayers to be powerful—is to become a child of God. And in order to be a child of God, you must receive Jesus as your personal Savior. Have you done that? Does He live in your heart? If so, then you are ready to pray.

Vance Havner - Everything we have by the first Adam is marred and spoiled and subject to decay. But when we become sons of God by faith in the last Adam we are assured a new body incorruptible, beyond the reach of sin, disease, and death. This removes the sense of futility such as torments the aging man without hope in Christ. The best is yet to be! Lovely landscapes may wither, but a new earth looms ahead. Strong bodies may fail, but they only make way for new ones infinitely stronger. Loved ones go, but all who are in Christ are headed for a better reunion. "Christians never meet for the last time." Cheer up, my brother! This body may never die, for Jesus may come first. But at worst it is only sown in corruption for an incorruptible harvest. We can't lose!

A Prestigious Title

If you read an author's bio on the back of any book, you can't help but notice the amount of space given to his education. It seems that the more abbreviations a person has before or after his name, the better his books sell. To most people, achieving a title means everything. They tirelessly work themselves through prep school, college, and graduate school to finally receive that coveted title next to their initials. And once they receive their title, their sights are then set on other designations like CEO, CFO, Director, or Vice-President. As important as earthly titles can be to success, nothing is so lofty as the name given to Christians by God. We are called the **Sons of God**. And the greatest aspect of this position is that it is not the result of hard work and determination, but a gift from God. Everyone, from the poorest to the wealthiest Christians are children of God. Nothing can rob you of this distinction. It was a great act of love on God's part to be willing to share His holy name with undeserving sinners. Because He has given us this lofty title, it is our duty to live up to it. Every time we sin, we are shaming the righteous name of God. Every evil action is an attack on God's character. Ask yourself this important question today: Are you living a life worthy of a **Son or Daughter of God? When we sin, we are not satisfied with being a Child of God.** (Living Water - James Scudder)

Second Adam - For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. I Corinthians 15:22.

We are all children of the first Adam. He fell and to this day we suffer the consequences. Sin, disease, death, all the corruptions and frailties of the body, mind and spirit, we inherit from our father, the first man of the earth, earthy.

But God started a new race with His Son from heaven. To as many as receive Him to them gives He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name. Read Romans 5 for a glorious picture of the two Adams.

Here is the true super race of **sons of God** whose citizenship is in heaven. We still carry the marks of Adam's fall, and our bifocals and bridges and baldness and all our frailties bear witness that we are his offspring. But from the day we believe, we begin a new life which shall discard this shell for a new body at the resurrection. Our New Adam is perfect, and all we need here and hereafter is found in Him. We can reign in life now by Christ Jesus.

The Highest Rank—Galatians 3:26-27

Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. grew up under the shadow of a large man. His father was the hero of San Juan Hill and the President of the United States. The pressure to excel often caused him problems, but Teddy, Jr. went on to be a highly decorated Brigadier General during World War II, receiving the Medal of Honor for heroism. He was also the Governor General of the Philippines, Governor of Puerto Rico, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy. During World War II, while waiting for a flight at an airport, Teddy, Jr. saw a sailor step to a ticket window and ask for a ticket. "I want to see my mother," the sailor explained. "I don't have much time." The indifferent woman at the ticket window was not impressed by the sailor's sense of urgency, "There's a war on, you know," she rudely replied. At this point, Roosevelt, who had overheard the conversation, stepped to the ticket window and told her to give the sailor his seat. A friend of the general spoke in surprise, "Teddy, aren't you in a hurry too?"

"It's a matter of rank," he replied. **"I'm only a general; he's a son!" Sons of God.** What a marvelous name! This is what the Bible calls everyone who trusts in Christ. Do you sometimes forget you have the rank of a son? Today give thanks that you have been bestowed with this high rank.

"Abba, Father, we approach thee in our Savior's precious name. We the children of your mercy bow before your throne today."—James G. Deck (From Generation to Generation - Peter Kennedy)

Spurgeon - Sons of God - "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." Consider who we were, and what we feel ourselves to be even now when corruption is powerful in us, and you will wonder at our adoption. Yet we are called "the sons of God." What a high relationship is that of a son, and what privileges it brings! What care and tenderness the son expects from his father, and what love the father feels towards the son! But all that, and more than that, we now have through Christ. As for the temporary drawback of suffering with the elder brother, this we accept as an honour: "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." We are content to be unknown with him in his humiliation, for we are to be exalted with him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." That is easy to read, but it is not so easy to feel. How is it with your heart this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow? Does corruption rise within your spirit, and grace seem like a poor spark trampled under foot? Does your faith almost fail you? Fear not, it is neither your graces nor feelings on which you are to live: you must live simply by faith on Christ. With all these things against us, now-in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may be-now, as much in the valley as on the mountain, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." "Ah, but," you say, "see how I am arrayed! my graces are not bright; my righteousness does not shine with apparent glory. " But read the next: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. " The Holy Spirit shall purify our minds, and divine power shall refine our bodies, then shall we see him as he is.

Luke 20:37 "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.

Luke 20:37KJV Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

- **But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed** Exodus 3:2-6; Deuteronomy 33:16; Acts 7:30-32
- **where he calls the Lord** Genesis 17:7; 28:13,21; 32:9; Mt 22:3-33; Mark 12:26,27
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURE

There is a remarkable passage in Josephus, which proves that the best informed among the Jews believed in the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and that the souls of righteous men were in the presence of God in a state of happiness. **"They who lose their lives for the sake of God, live unto God, as do Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the patriarchs."** Not less remarkable is a passage in Shemoth Rabba, **"Why doth Moses say, Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? (Ex 32:13)**

Here is another "rabbinical writing" documenting that the Jews believed in resurrection based on writings in the Torah - R. Abin saith, The Lord said unto Moses, I look for ten men from thee, as I looked for that number in Sodom. Find me out ten righteous persons among the people, and I will not destroy thy people. Then saith Moses, Behold, here am I, and Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar, Phinehas, and Caleb, and Joshua; but, saith God, there are but seven: where are the other three? When Moses knew not what to do, he saith, O Eternal God, [hayim hem ha-metim] do those live who are dead? Yes, saith God. Then saith Moses, If those that are dead do live, remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Bock explains that "The argument advances further. Jesus has dealt with the Sadducees' question, but there is still one issue that needs to be addressed. Jesus wants to make sure that the Sadducees understand that resurrection is a scriptural teaching. Though he could have appealed to a prophetic passage like Dan. 12:2, Jesus opts for a text from the Pentateuch because the Sadducees held the Torah in highest regard. A text from that portion of Scripture would be most persuasive for them. Working with their presuppositions he makes his argument. Jesus begins his elaboration with the direct statement that the dead are raised, which he says Moses revealed." (Ibid)

But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed - Matthew 22:31 begins "but regarding the resurrection of the dead." Again in line with this chapter which begins with a question of Jesus' authority, Jesus appeals to the **AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURE**. The Sadducees had based their rejection of the doctrine of the resurrection on their belief that this truth was not found in the Torah (Gen-Deut). The Sadducees had quoted Moses from the Torah, and now Jesus also quotes Moses from the same Torah. They cannot accuse Him of using an invalid source! He is drawing the net tighter and this is the most powerful argument.

Related Resource:

- [Authority of the Scripture](#) - Richard Mayhue - 10 page article - excellent review

In the passage about the burning bush - Why didn't He say "Now turn to Exodus 3:6 (Ex 3:2-6) which is on page 100 of your pew Bibles?" The answer of course is that the Scriptures were not assigned chapter/verse designations until the mid-1500's (See [versification](#)). Jesus choose a Scripture that surely both the Sadducees and the Jews in the crowd were very familiar with, many most likely having committed these great passages to memory. So not only does Jesus quote from Moses, He even uses Moses as a direct example of His point! And in referencing this passage Jesus affirms the inspiration of what Moses wrote when He recorded

He (Jehovah) said also, "I am ([Lxx](#) = "ego eimi" = present tense = continually) the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:6+).

While Luke simply says **"Moses showed"** Matthew and Mark both emphasize the fact that it is God Himself Who is speaking in this passage, not Moses...

Matthew 22:31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, **have you not read what was spoken to you by God.**"

Mark 12:26 "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, **have you not read** in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, **how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'?**

Comment - Jesus issues a pithy "rhetorical rebuke" with the phrase **"have you not read"** which is simply a way of saying, "Do you not even understand what you read in the Scripture?" Answer? No they had not understood!

Where he calls the Lord THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB- How does this passage support the doctrine of the resurrection? Note that God identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the passage IN Exodus 3:6 God says **"I am** the God of...Abraham..." where **"I am"** is the famous **"ego eimi"** in the [Septuagint](#). The verb **eimi** is [present tense active voice indicative mood](#) which signifies God is continually the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He does not say "I was" (past tense) their God. Here is the point -- If God **IS (continually)** the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then it stands to reason that they must still be alive. And if they are alive, then there is life after death and the doctrine of the resurrection is true based on **THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURE**. (See also excellent note by Hiebert on Mark's parallel).

Steven Cole explains the logic of Jesus quoting a passage that speaks of the three patriarchs - These men had all been dead for centuries when God said that to Moses. It would be ridiculous for God to say that He is the God of men who ceased to exist at death! If the patriarchs had died and ceased to exist, then God's promises to them would be null and void. But, as Jesus explains, God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Lk 20:38) Those who have died in faith are actually living with God, awaiting the day when they will receive their resurrection bodies.

Bock adds "In other words, God is the God of promise and covenant (as the use of this verse in Acts 3:13 will also make clear). In the next verse Jesus will make the point that God is the God to the living, not the dead. This implies resurrection, since if the patriarchs are dead, then the God of promise cannot be their God (see the additional note). The point is that the patriarchs are not dead—and neither are God's promises to them. For the promises to the patriarchs to come to pass and for God to still be their God, resurrection must be a reality." (Ibid)

Lawrence Richards - This is a fascinating passage for any who are uncertain about the integrity and full authority of Scripture. It's popular with some scholars to assume that the books attributed to Moses are a much later fiction: the name of a mythical Jewish hero, Moses, was attached in the 600 B.C's to give the editors' invention credibility. With scissors and paste many modern scholars romp through the Old Testament, cut up the Pentateuch and Prophets, and assign this verse to one supposed set of authors, and that to another. How different from the way Jesus viewed the Scriptures. **According to Christ, it was Moses who spoke what is recorded in Exodus, and even a seemingly minor thing like the tense of a verb is authoritative.** Do the dead really live again? They live now! The God of the Old Testament is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, long after their biological deaths. On this issue of Scripture, I suspect it's wiser to trust Jesus' pronouncement than to trust the theories of the self-proclaimed wise men of our day. When we do so, we rejoice in the confidence that we too will live forever with Abraham's and our God. (Borrow [365 Day Devotional Commentary](#) page 750)

Related Resource:

- [The New Testament Use of the Old Testament](#) - Robert Thomas
- [What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?](#)

Luke 20:38 "Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him."

Luke 20:38KJV For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

- **Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living** Ps 16:5-11; 22:23-26; 145:1,2; Hebrews 11:16
- **for all live to Him** John 6:57; 11:25,26; 14:19; Ro 6:10,11,22,23; 14:7-9; 2 Cor 6:16; 13:4; Colossians 3:3,4; Rev 7:15-17; 22:1
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Romans 14:7-8 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; **8for if we live, we live for the Lord**, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that **they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him** who died and rose again on their behalf.

Galatians 2:19-20 "For through the Law I died to the Law, **so that I might live to God**. 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

CONCLUSION: THE GOD OF THE LIVING

Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living- I like Mark's version because he begins and ends by pointing out to the Sadducees that they were mistaken. Mark records "Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are **mistaken...you are greatly mistaken**." (Mk 12:24, 27).

Note that the verb "**IS**" is present tense which corresponds perfectly to the present tense of "ego eimi" in the Septuagint of Ex 3:6. To reiterate, the point the present tense makes is that if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not continue to live, God would not say that He **IS** continually their God, speaking in the present tense. He would have to say that He **WAS** their God, speaking in the past tense.

Darrell Bock adds that "Jesus supplies the explanation: God relates to the living and not the dead. If God speaks of Himself as the God of Abraham, then Abraham still exists. If He is the God of Isaac and Jacob, then they still exist (Ernst 1977: 545; Marshall 1978: 743). If the patriarchs are alive or are to experience the promise, they must be raised or will be raised." (See [Luke : 2 Volumes Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

Steven Cole - Jesus taught that there is such a thing as doctrinal truth and doctrinal error, and that truth matters. He didn't say, "Hey, it really doesn't matter what you guys believe, just as long as you're sincere." He didn't say, "I love you guys! You're my brothers, even if we disagree over this little matter of the resurrection!" He didn't say, "I respect your views. Everyone is entitled to his own opinion." He told them authoritatively that **they were greatly mistaken** and He set forth the reasons why. As Allan Bloom pointed out a few years ago in his best seller, [The Closing of the American Mind](#) ([Simon and Schuster], p. 28), the intellectual community has relegated religion to the realm of opinion as opposed to knowledge. It is simply a matter of one subjective and uncertain opinion versus another. Undergirding this is the view that all truth is relative and that tolerance the chief virtue (pp. 25-27). He said, "**The point is not to correct the mistakes and really be right; rather it is not to think you are right at all**" (p. 26). **The result of this is that you can have two people holding to opposite views in the spiritual realm and they both can be right, since religious "truth" is simply one's subjective ideas or experience of it.** ([Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#))

Jesus held Biblical doctrine firmly and so should we if we are to imitate His pattern. Paul writes that the overseer of the church

should be "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." (Titus 1:9-note) Jesus was refuting those who "profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." (Titus 1:16-note).

For (gar) - Term of explanation - What is Jesus explaining?

All live to Him (only found in Luke) - Note (1 What does Jesus mean with this phrase? **John Calvin** explains, "that believers, after... they have died in this world, lead a heavenly life with God." This deals with believers but does not really address the word "**all**" which would include unbelievers, therefore I believe MacArthur's comment is correct.

MacArthur on all live to Him - All people—whether departed from their earthly bodies or not—are still living, and will live forever. No one is annihilated in death (cf. John 5:28–30). (Borrow [The MacArthur study Bible](#))

Nobody is dead and everybody who has ever lived is still living.
-- Vance Havner

Vance Havner on all live to Him - God did not say, "I WAS the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but **I AM....**" Always the great I AM whose infinitudes never put Him in the past tense, **in His sight nobody WAS but everybody IS**. Nobody is dead and everybody who has ever lived is still living. We are so accustomed to think of the dead as corpses lying in graveyards. But those bodies are only the remains, the temporary vehicles of their earthly stay. They themselves are still in existence somewhere. Moses and Elijah came back to the Mount of Transfiguration and the disciples recognized them. That raises questions as to what we will be like after death and before the resurrection but settles one major issue, we will still be living somewhere. God is not the God of the dead but of the living.

Bock on all live to Him - The additional explanation is that **all live "to Him"** or "before Him" (BDF §192). All life exists in relationship to the living God. The sovereign God is responsible for life (Acts 17:28; Ro 11:36; Col. 1:16; 3:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Pet. 3:18; 4:6). In fact, all life takes place in His power, whether current life or the life to come. In addition, once one knows God, one has everlasting life. Contextually, the reference is to the resurrection, not to the Pauline concept of life "in Christ" (against Ellis 1974: 237, with Marshall 1978: 743). ([Luke : 2 Volumes \(Baker Exegetical Commentary\)](#))

Cole discusses the inherent dangers of the denial of the resurrection - Jesus viewed the doctrine of the resurrection as a core issue. To deny that God raises the dead is to deny the doctrine of future rewards for the righteous and punishment for the wicked, which removes the major incentive for holy living. It is to deny the faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God, whose promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob clearly were not fulfilled in their lifetimes. Thus we make God out to be a liar. It is to deny hope for those who have lost loved ones or for those who suffer terribly in this life. As Paul argues in First Corinthians 15 (Take a moment and read once again Paul's great discussion of our hope of resurrection = 1 Cor 15:12-57, 1 Cor 15:58-note), if we deny the resurrection of the dead, then Jesus is not raised and our faith is utterly worthless. We are still in our sins. Thus Jesus taught that there is such a thing as doctrinal truth and error. ([Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#))

NET Note: Jesus' point was that if God could identify himself as God of the three old patriarchs, then they must still be alive when God spoke to Moses; and so they must be raised.

Swete says: "In quoting that passage (Ex 3:6) the Lord argues thus; In this place, God reveals Himself as standing in a real relation to men who were long dead. But the living God cannot be in relation with any who have ceased to exist; therefore the patriarchs were still living in His sight at the time of the Exodus; dead to the visible world, they were alive unto God... This argument establishes the immortality of the soul, but not, at first sight or directly, the resurrection of the body. But the resurrection of the body follows, when it is understood that the body is a true part of human nature. God would not leave men with whom He maintained relations, in an imperfect condition; the living soul must in due time recover its partner; the death of the body could only be a suspension of vital activities which in some form would be resumed." (From Kenneth Wuest [Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Bock writes that "Jesus endorses the resurrection and thereby sets up the hope that is central to faith in him. Such a teaching is especially important to God's plan and to a Gentile audience, who struggled with the concept of life after death. Jesus' resurrection is neither philosophical sophistry nor wishful thinking. Resurrection into an afterlife where one will face God and be evaluated by Him is not the illusion of a mind that cannot face death's finality. All must be assured that the resurrection is the teaching of Scripture and Jesus. The work associated with resurrection is at the center of Christian belief. Resurrection is a reality, and its presence should affect how we see this world and live in it. As such, the pericope represents an endorsement of a fundamental doctrine of hope (SEE [Believer's Blessed Hope](#)). **The afterlife is different, but it is real. All will answer to God, and only some will be found WORTHY. Sadducean doubt about resurrection will not do. Resurrection is God's promise. It must be faced as a fundamental reality of existence. It is a joyous thing to fall into the hands of the living God, if one knows Him. In the**

afterlife, one need not wrestle with determining spouses, since the afterlife is about knowing God." (See [Luke : 2 Volumes \(Baker Exegetical Commentary\)](#))

Vance Havner - God of the Living

When the Sadducees asked our Lord about the woman who had had seven husbands and wanted to know whose wife would she be in the resurrection, He answered by analyzing their trouble as error born of ignorance—ignorance of the Scriptures and the power of God. He declared that in the resurrection we neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels in heaven. Then He gave them God's own word, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" and ended with the declaration, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (see Matthew 22:32).

God did not say, "I WAS the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but **I AM....**" Always the great I AM whose infinitudes never put Him in the past tense, in His sight nobody WAS but everybody IS. Nobody is dead and everybody who has ever lived is still living. We are so accustomed to think of the dead as corpses lying in graveyards. But those bodies are only the remains, the temporary vehicles of their earthly stay. They themselves are still in existence somewhere. Moses and Elijah came back to the Mount of Transfiguration and the disciples recognized them. That raises questions as to what we will be like after death and before the resurrection but settles one major issue, we will still be living somewhere. God is not the God of the dead but of the living.

I found a dirt road behind the motel where I am staying this week in Michigan. I've been walking in the glorious September sunshine meditating on the God of the living. He does not deal in dead things. My loved ones are all alive on the other side. One of these days the trumpet will sound and their spirits will be joined to their new resurrection bodies and death will be swallowed up in victory. What a big swallow that will be! Corpses and funerals and cemeteries will be a thing of the past and we shall gather around the throne of the living God, the God of the living. He is the Author of life and there never would have been any death had not the devil invaded creation. But on that day Satan and his cohorts will be where they belong and we shall meet at the river of life around the tree of life to enjoy life everlasting.

But I need not wait for that day for my eternal life to begin. It started when I trusted my Saviour and I have it as surely as I will ever have it, though not as completely as when I see my Lord on that "Great Getting-up Morning." But now I have the promise of my inheritance and the foretaste of glory divine and if this be the first installment, what will it be like when I am paid in full! Until then I shall taste the powers of the age to come and work up an appetite for the Supper of the Lamb where the celebration never ends.

I worship the God of the living. My soul is not dwelling in the macabre realm of tombs and ghosts. Everybody past and present is alive. All who died in Christ are more alive than ever, they are but on His other side. We need to "come alive" in our thinking and walk with God in His Everlasting Now. (Though I Walk Through the Valley)

Luke 20:39 Some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well."

Luke 20:39 Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

- **Teacher, You have spoken well** Mt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Acts 23:9
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

"ADMIRATION" FROM THE PHARISEES

Matthew adds "When the crowds heard this, they were astonished (imperfect tense) at His teaching." (Mt 22:33) **Astonished** is the vivid verb [ekplesso](#) which literally means expelled by a blow and figuratively means to drive out of one's senses by a sudden shock or strong feeling, or "to be exceedingly struck in mind". It means to cause to be filled with amazement to the point of being overwhelmed (struck out of one's senses). It encompasses the ideas of wonder, astonishment or amazement. Ekplesso expresses a stunned amazement that leaves the subject unable to grasp what is happening and in this case as described in Lk 20:40 unable to talk!

The ability to silence an opponent in debate was viewed in Greek culture as one of the marks of a wise man and skillful orator

Some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher ([didaskalos](#)), You have spoken well." - What an interesting comment. Notice as far as we can discern, the mouths of the Sadducees have been slammed shut. Jesus' arguments emphasizing the power of God and the Word of God have demolished their errant thinking about the resurrection! But while the Sadducees are silent, the Pharisee are "praising" Jesus, even though they will soon be calling for His punishment on the Cross. Taught about a double standard! They were quite pleased that finally, after all the years of being unable to refute the Sadducees' "Seven brothers, one wife marriage riddle," Jesus had given the answer! Their children could no longer be taunted by the children of the Sadducees with this specious argument that there will be no resurrection.

It is interesting to note that Luke records a similar argument by Paul with a similar result in Acts 23:6-7

But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; **I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead**" 7 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

Scribes ([1122](#))([grammateus](#) from [grapho](#) = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology. In short the **scribes** were the recognized experts in the law of Moses and in traditional laws and regulations. The moniker "experts in the law" comes closer to the meaning for the modern reader.

MacArthur on the relationship between **scribes** and **Pharisees** - **Not all Pharisees were scribes, but the scribes were primarily Pharisees**, who were interpreters and teachers of the law of Moses and the traditional rabbinic writings. Their teaching provided the theological framework for the Pharisees' legalistic system of works-righteousness. The scribes were the dominant force in Judaism, not only theologically, but socially. Their views affected every aspect of life, and they also handled all legal matters, including property, estates, and contracts. They were revered, and given the respectful title of Rabbi (Matt. 23:7). That title was sometimes given to Jesus because He was a teacher (cf. John 1:38, 49; 3:2, 26; 6:25). It was commonly believed that Moses received the law, then gave it to Joshua, who gave it to the elders, who gave it to the prophets, who gave it to the scribes. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Luke 20:40 For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.

Luke 20:40KJV And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.

- Pr 26:5; Mt 22:46; Mark 12:34
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:27-40 Why You Should Care About Doctrine](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:27-40 The Savior Silences the Sadducees](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS SILENCES HIS OPPONENTS

Mark's passage preceding Jesus' discourse on Psalm 110:1...

Mark 12:34+ When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

Matthew has a similar passage but it actually follows Jesus "exposition" of Psalm 110:1 (Mt 22:42-46).

Matthew 22:46 No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything - Their attempt to trip up Jesus and show Him be ignorant had backfired demonstrating that these "Torah experts" were in fact ignorant of the true meaning of their own Scriptures! But the they in this passage is not just a reference to the Sadducees who have just been [quashed](#), but to the entire tribe of religious hypocrites - Sadducees, Pharisees, Scribes, Herodians, elders, and whoever else is left opposing Jesus. They would cease asking questions, but would not cease to find another way to bring Jesus down.

Have courage (boldness)([5111](#))([tolmao](#) from [tólma](#) = courage in turn from [tlao](#) = to sustain, support, endure)

means to have courage, to be bold, to dare to do something. To be so bold as to challenge opposition. They had lost their confidence to confront Christ having failed in all their challenges!

Bock - On the topics of ministry, politics, and theology, Jesus has prevailed. There is nothing else they wish to raise before him publicly. Each encounter has left Jesus in the position of knowledge and authority. Rather than continue to confront him, they must withdraw. Jesus is too much in control of himself and his theology, so they do not dare to ask any more questions. The effect of these encounters is clear: who can guide the people in God's way, the Jewish leadership or Jesus? The wise teacher has confounded the leaders with his answers and has shown himself knowledgeable. (See [Luke Exegetical Commentary](#))

R M Edgar - They are beaten in the field of debate. Jesus is Victor. There is no question now which they can ask him. All is over on the plane of intellectual and moral argument. Not even a Parthian arrow can be shot against him. But treachery and brute force remain, and they can have him betrayed and crucified whom they cannot refute. Resort to weapons like these is always proof of weakness. The weapons of our warfare should always be spiritual; with carnal weapons we only confess defeat and court everlasting shame. ([Luke 20 Pulpit Commentary Homiletics](#))

Jon Courson - Substituting Mark of the Cross for the Question Mark- Lest we are too quick to judge the Jewish leaders for their audacity in questioning Jesus, we would do well to listen to ourselves. Do we put Him on trial every time we wonder why we haven't got the raise we deserve, why our marriage didn't work out as we thought it would, why Mr. Right hasn't yet come along, why we aren't healed of our diseases? And when we don't get the answers we think we are due, do we shake our fist at Him, apathetically shrug our shoulders toward Him, or almost imperceptibly walk away from Him?

The scribes and Pharisees did not dare question Jesus anymore. Why? The words He spoke and the logic He displayed silenced their cynicism. You and I have an even greater proof before us than the words He spoke, for, unlike the scribes and Pharisees, we can look at the Cross.

- You who shrug your shoulders in apathy, look at His shoulder and see it ripped apart by the flagellum and bearing a Cross that should have been yours.
- You who shake your fist because things aren't happening in the way you think they should, see His hand not clenched but open, pierced by a nail.
- You who have walked away from the Lord in anger or drifted away in busyness, look at His feet and see them pinned to a beam of wood, bleeding for you.

The word "crux" meaning "cross," the crux of every matter is indeed the Cross. Does God love me even when the job doesn't work out as I thought it would, even when people don't treat me the way I think they should, even if I'm not healed in the way I hoped I would be, even if I'm not understanding what's happening presently? It is in Cross-examining that which is happening in my life; it is in looking at everything through the lens of Calvary, that I have absolute assurance that, although I may not understand it, everything taking place in my life is for my good. If Jesus loved me enough to die for me, surely He will do what's best concerning me.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, perhaps the greatest of the modern German theologians, said, "The words why, when, where, and how are all words of the faithless. The only word spoken by a man or woman of faith is 'who.' And 'who' will lead you to Him." What gave Bonhoeffer the authority to say this? Living in Germany in the 1940s, he began to publicly call for the overthrow of Hitler. As a result, in 1943, SS officers broke into the church where he was preaching and hauled him off to a concentration camp. Upon his arrival, the commandant said, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the famous preacher and writer, come up here and address the assembly. I will give you two minutes." "I don't need two minutes," Bonhoeffer said, "just two words: Watch me." Although the Nazis beat him mercilessly, every time they lifted a hand or used a club, Bonhoeffer would smile, lift his eyes toward heaven, and say, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." He shared a portion of every meal with either a fellow prisoner or one of the Nazi guards. He was constantly smiling, constantly praying, constantly loving—to the point that revival began to break out in the concentration camp. It wasn't because of a word he said, but because of what he did. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was killed April 9, 1945. He could have asked, "Why," but instead He asked, "who"—and was satisfied.

If I had the power, I would change the punctuation for the language of the believer. I would eradicate the question mark and replace it with the mark of the Cross. Whenever people ask questions, put the mark of the Cross at the end, and you'll have the ultimate answer. If you have been wondering what's happening, consider once more what the Lamb of God did for you—and you will find every question answered conclusively. (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#))

Luke 20:41 Then He said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ (MESSIAH) is David's son?"

Luke 20:41KJV And he said unto them, How say they that **Christ** is David's son?

NLT Then Jesus presented them with a question. "Why is it," he asked, "that the **Messiah** is said to be the son of David?

CSB Then He said to them, "How can they say that the **Messiah** is the Son of David?

NAB Then he said to them, "How do they claim that the **Messiah** is the Son of David?

NRS Then he said to them, "How can they say that the **Messiah** is David's son?

- **How is it that they say** Mt 22:41,42; Mark 12:35-37
- **Christ is David's son** Lk 18:38,39; Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1,2; Jer 23:5,6; 33:15,16,21; Mt 1:1; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; Ro 1:3,4; Rev 22:16
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:41-47 True and False Religion](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:41-44 David's Son and Lord](#) - John MacArthur

Chart From [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#)

IS THE MESSIAH DAVID'S SON? THE QUESTION OF THE AGES!

Luke 20:40-44

For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything. 41 Then He said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is David's son? 42 "For David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 43 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" 44 "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?"

[Gene Brooks](#) - The Jerusalem debates conclude with three episodes in which Jesus challenges and rebukes the religious leaders.

- First, the question about David's son (Luke 20:41-44),
- then a rebuke of the teachers of the law (Luke 20:45-47),
- and the account of the widow's offering (Luke 21:1-4).

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW - What makes Lk 20:40-44 so important? As will be discussed Psalm 110:1 when properly interpreted shows that the Messiah would be a man (David's son) and would also be God (David's Lord). The Jews then believed Messiah would be human but not God. The Jews of Jesus' day believed Messiah would descend from the line of David. However, because all Jewish genealogy records were destroyed in 70 AD, there is no way a Jew today could even determine if a supposed Messiah was actually a descendant of David! So while Jesus was alive the Jews still had the ability to validate that His lineage was from David on both His father's and mother's side. While there is no Biblical record that His lineage was studied by the religious leaders, there is little doubt that they meticulously reviewed the Temple genealogy records. If they could have proven definitively from these records that Jesus did not fulfill the criterion of origin from the line of David, then they would have used that as evidence to demonstrate He could not possibly have been the Messiah. And not only is there no record of their refutation of His origin from the line of David, there is also not one Biblical record that the religious leaders ever questioned the authenticity of any of Jesus' miraculous works. It would have been difficult, for example, for them to question the miraculous resurrection of Lazarus because everywhere he went he was dramatic proof that Jesus had the power to raise the dead from the grave! Keep these background thoughts in mind as you study Jesus "exposition" on Psalm 110:1 which all the Jews of Jesus' day recognized and fully accepted as being a prophecy of the coming Messiah! Also for reference below is a quote from the Jewish website **Judaism 101** which summarizes the belief of modern Jews regarding the idea of the coming Messiah (they do not accept that he has come but that he will come in the future) and note especially that while they mention the Messiah is ""mashiach ben David" (mashiach, son of David)" they have no genealogy records to prove any future Messiah candidate is actually from David's line! And this is not a minor but a major deficiency, because the Old Testament repeatedly testifies that the Messiah MUST COME FROM THE LINE OF DAVID! Thus you can see the major fallacy inherent in modern Jewish thinking regarding the identity of any prospective Messiah!

Quote from Judaism 101 on Identity of the Messiah (this view is apparently generally held by modern orthodox Jews) - The **mashiach** will be a great political leader descended from King David (Jeremiah 23:5). The mashiach is often referred to as "mashiach ben David" (mashiach, son of David). He will be well-versed in

Jewish law, and observant of its commandments (Isaiah 11:2-5-my note). He will be a charismatic leader, inspiring others to follow his example. He will be a great military leader, who will win battles for Israel. He will be a great judge, who makes righteous decisions (Jeremiah 33:15-my note). **But above all, he will be a human being, not a god, demi-god or other supernatural being.** It has been said that in every generation, a person is born with the potential to be the mashiach. If the time is right for the messianic age within that person's lifetime, then that person will be the **mashiach**. But if that person dies before he completes the mission of the **mashiach**, then that person is not the **mashiach**....

Jews do not believe that Jesus was the **mashiach**. Assuming that he existed, and assuming that the Christian scriptures are accurate in describing him (both matters that are debatable), he simply did not fulfill the mission of the **mashiach** as it is described in the biblical passages cited above. **Jesus did not do any of the things that the scriptures said the messiah would do.** (Source: [Judaism 101](#)) (**Bold font added for emphasis**)

Comment: That **last line in bold** above is absolutely amazing! May God's Spirit open the eyes of the blind to see that Yeshua fulfilled **every Messianic prophecy perfectly** including Psalm 110:1 regarding which His first century Jewish hearers made no reply and no refutation (as far as the Biblical record testifies). As an aside, while I am not Jewish, I can personally testify that the Spirit of the Living God used the many truths of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament (I was saved in the BSF study of the Minor Prophets!) to clarify in my mind the identity of the NT Jesus and ultimately to cause me to be born again (cf 1 Peter 1:3+).

Related Resources:

- [The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies](#)
- [Signs and Wonders - The miracles of Jesus](#)
- [The Miracles Of Jesus](#)
- [The Passion Of Christ: Reflecting On History's Darkest Hour](#)
- [The Amazing Names of the Messiah](#)

MacArthur summarizes Jesus descent from the Davidic line - "The genealogy of Matthew 1 establishes that He's in the Davidic line. The genealogy of Luke 3 establishes that He's in the Davidic line. His father Joseph was in the Davidic line. His mother Mary was in the Davidic line. Both lines converge, of course, in Him, by blood through His mother, by right through His father, even though His father was not His father in terms of actual human birth. Nonetheless, He is the Son of David."

NOTE: If you are confused about the two genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke, I would highly recommend taking time to read Dr MacArthur's easy to understand explanation of the differences and the significance of those differences in his sermon [The Messiah's Royal Lineage](#). It will greatly enhance your understanding of a topic which many believers often find puzzling. See also the commentary on Luke 3:23-38 for additional discussion of Jesus' royal line from David.

Also keep in mind that Jesus is using just one of many Old Testament passages that the Jews accepted as Messianic prophecies. Had He used other Messianic prophecies, this chapter would doubtless have taken up the space of an entire book. But the one from Psalm 110:1 was sufficient to make His point that Messiah was fully Man and fully God. With that in mind, you may find it interesting to review some of the Messianic prophecies found at the bottom of the note on this passage. What is fascinating to me is that this quote is not taken from a Christian source but from the online version of Wikipedia. I think you will find the list fascinating. (See [Wikipedia quote on Messiah in Judaism](#) - See also list of [Messianic Prophecies](#)).

Then He said to them - The religious leaders dare not question Jesus any longer. In Luke 20 each of the groups of religious leaders had struck out as each of the three groups had tried to entrap Jesus ([See Outline](#)). They have nothing left they can say and they know it. And Luke 20:40 says they don't have the courage to ask anything else. So now it is Jesus' turn to initiate the questions.

The other two Synopists add some interesting details to this [pericope](#) on Messiah's origin from David's line as it relates to Psalm 110:1.

Mark adds "**as He taught in the temple.**" (Mk 12:35) Amazing! Jesus knows He will soon die in just a few day and yet He is still **TEACHING!** What does that say about how important it is that we continue teaching (and that includes us older guys out there -- If you are 70+ and you are not teaching, let me say it gently "Shame on you!") We must imitate our Lord. We know when we are 70+ that we are in the last part of our race and we should ask God to enable us by His Spirit to be able to quote 2 Ti 4:8 on our deathbed.)

Matthew adds **"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question."**(Mt 22:41)

Comment: So Mark says He was teaching and here are a group of Pharisees, His avowed enemies and He is still teaching them! Not only is He teaching but as we will discuss below, He teaching them truth about Himself which if grasped could set them free from their legalism and eternal death. One might say, "I thought we were not supposed to cast our pearls before swine." True enough. But Jesus sees hearts and has just stated in Mk 12:34 **"You are not far from the kingdom of God."** Jesus knew there were men like Joseph of Arimathea who would eventually believe in Him (Mt 27:57) and provide His burial tomb (Mt 27:59-60). Mark 15:43 describes Joseph of Arimathea as "a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God (cf others "waiting" - Lk 2:38+)." Of course the other side of coin is that for those who reject what amounts to an evangelistic question regarding the meaning of Psalm 110:1 will be held even more accountable for their rejection (this principle of a greater degree of judgment for rejection of greater light is found in Lk 10:12-15+).

Deffinbaugh on resolving how Matthew's passage fits with Luke's passage - In Matthew's account, Jesus is reported as having asked the Pharisees directly about whose son the Christ was (Mt 22:41-42). In Mark and Luke, Jesus seems to be speaking to others about the teaching of the Pharisees. I see no contradiction. Jesus was daily in the temple, teaching the people. It was also here that our Lord was confronted and challenged by the leadership of the nation. I believe that Jesus asked the Pharisees directly, at this time of confrontation, and then referred to it in His subsequent teaching (Lk 20:41). They had all heard the question posed to the Pharisees by Jesus, and the answer that was given (ED: BUT IN FACT NO ANSWER BY JESUS IS ACTUALLY RECORDED IN ALL THREE SYNOPTIC ACCOUNTS!). Now, Jesus would challenge the crowd to think about what they had heard, and to come to their own conclusions.

Mark 12:35 has **"How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?"** So Mark identifies the **"they"** as the **Scribes** ([note](#)), who as noted above are primarily also Pharisees (although not all Pharisees are Scribes).

John MacArthur characterizes Jesus' question regarding Ps 110:1 as His "one final evangelistic effort. Even after all the hatred expressed by these leaders, the superficial interest of the fickle, indecisive crowd, Jesus in spite of all of the rejection is still the compassionate evangelist. He is still (evangelizing) even in His very last conversation, inviting sinners who otherwise are headed to hell, to know Him for Who He truly is, to cease their rejection and indecision....He still manifests enough concern to speak one more time the truth for He as God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. His joy is in the salvation of sinners. His sadness is in their destruction.(cf Lk 19:41-note where Jesus wept over Jerusalem)....So, once more, the Lord Jesus affirms and asserts His divine nature as God, and thus offers Himself even to those who despised Him."

If we compare the parallel passage in Matthew, Matthew 22:42 seems to be where Jesus begins His conversation with the Pharisees (but [see Deffinbaugh's analysis](#)), asking them a direct question **"What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?"** They respond **"David."** (the phrase *"son of"* is added but is not in the Greek) (Mt 22:42) They say Messiah had to be a **son of David**, where **"son of..."** is a Hebraism which simply means a descendant of and in this context a "descendant of David".

MacArthur comments on **David's Son and David's Lord** - No Middle Eastern father would ever under any circumstances call his son **"Lord."** That would be to honor and respect on its head. And yet **David's Son** is also **David's Lord**....This is Jesus' last time to engage the religious leaders of Israel...You would assume that if His conversation with them is the last one, He is going to discuss what is the most important matter, and He does. ([David's Son and Lord](#))

How is it that they say the Christ (the Messiah) is David's son? - Assuming the dialogue in Mt 22:42 precedes the dialogue in Lk 20:41, now we see Jesus probe deeper into their answer that Christ is **David's son**. He knew that they would answer the Messiah is the "Son of David," for virtually any knowledgeable Jew if asked would have given that response. It was a commonly held belief that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David as we saw the Jewish crowds exclaim in Lk 19:38-note at Jesus' "Triumphal Entry." So what point is Jesus emphasizing? Jesus knew that the Jews believed that the Messiah would be a from David's line, but He also knew that they believed the Messiah would be like David, merely a man, yes, a very good, gifted and blessed man, but still a human being, flesh and blood. Were they correct? Yes, in part, for Second Samuel (and many other OT passages) had prophesied the Messiah would come from the Davidic line...

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I (JEHOVAH SPEAKING) will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 "He shall build a house for My name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever** (THIS IS THE PART THE JEWS MISSED - NO HUMAN WOULD HAVE A FOREVER KINGDOM. SOLOMON'S WAS SOON DIVIDED! 1 Kings 11:11-13). 14 "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me (THIS CERTAINTY IS CONSISTENT WITH THE TRINITY); when he commits iniquity (OF COURSE THIS PORTION OF THE PROPHECY DID NOT

APPLY TO JESUS WHO WAS SINLESS), I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men. (2 Samuel 7:12-14)

So the Jews believed the Messiah would be **human**, and they did not believe He would be **divine** ([See previous note](#)). Of course, this cuts to the fundamental question of Christianity which is what is the nature of Jesus Christ? If Jesus is just another man, and not God, Christianity is a dead belief system, for the founder was a liar. Of course He was not a liar, nor a lunatic, but the Lord. Sadly the Jewish leaders did not acknowledge His divinity and were convinced that the Messiah would merely be a man. Jesus is trying one last time to get them to open their eyes to the prophecy in Psalm 110:1 which they all knew, but which they all also misinterpreted! Can we not see the compassion, forbearance, long suffering and kindness of our Lord seeking to lead the religious leaders (and all the hearers in the large crowd) to repentance (cf Ro 2:4-note, Romans 2 being a chapter which Paul under the direction of the Holy Spirit wrote especially toward his Jewish readers in Rome).

[Deffinbaugh](#) explains that the use of the term "**son of David**" by the Jews of Jesus' day (and still today among orthodox Jews) "This seems to have meant two things to the Israelite. (1) Messiah would be of the Davidic line; and (2) Messiah would be a man—human. It was not carried through so as to be consistent with other revelation—that Messiah would also be divine, that Messiah was to be both man and God (cf Isaiah 9:6-7-note). Jesus did not appeal to Isaiah to prove His point, but rather to the 110th psalm, a psalm of David. This psalm does not stress the humanity of Messiah. David did not refer to the Messiah as "his Son," but rather reveals the words of the Father Himself ("**The LORD**," Ps 110:1 = [Jehovah or Yahweh](#)), who speaks to Messiah, His Son and David's Lord ("**my Lord**," Ps 110:1 = [Adonay](#)). It was taught in Scripture that Messiah would be the "**son of David**," and yet David himself refers to Messiah as "**his Lord**." How can this be? There was a clear, simple, but miraculous answer—the incarnation. Jesus Christ was, as the Old Testament Scriptures foretold, and as the New Testament writers attested and confirmed, both God and man, human and divine, through the miracle of the virgin birth. Before the birth of our Lord, the two aspects of His character and nature—the divine and the human—seemed in conflict, but not after His birth. The incarnation was a miracle, but it is the all-powerful God who promised it, and who brought it to pass.

John MacArthur adds "So you have this very direct and important question placed before the Pharisees. I call it a **discerning question**" because it discerns where a person is spiritually. It is followed by a **deficient answer**. Their answer was "**David's**," (Mt 22:42). (Or as the translations have it) "**son of David**." Was that true? Yes...Messiah will come out of the loins of David. (cf Amos 9:11).

So the Pharisees gave Jesus a "**deficient answer**" because it was only partially correct. And one cannot be just "partially correct" regarding the Messiah, for one's eternal destiny hangs on what one believes about the **Son of David**. The Jews believed Messiah was to be a man ("Son of David"), but they did not believe He was to be God and that is the fatal misunderstanding which Jesus lovingly and mercifully sought to correct in this last evangelistic salvo to the Jews just days before He went to the Cross. He knew that to believe on Him as a human Messiah and not a divine Messiah would condemn a person to hell for eternity. His persistence and patience to proclaim the truth to the bitter end is a perfect illustration of Peter's description of God writing that "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9+)

So **son of David** was a title that Jews used to describe the coming Messiah. In Luke 18 the blind beggar Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus acknowledging Him as the Messiah by using the term son of David..."And he called out, saying, "Jesus, **Son of David**, have mercy on me!" Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "**Son of David**, have mercy on me!" (Lk 18:38-39+).

In Matthew we see that **Son of David** clearly used as a title of the Messiah...Then there was brought to Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed, and began to say, "This man cannot be the **Son of David**, can he?" (Mt 12:22-23+)

Son of David - 16x in 16v (10x in Matthew, none in John) - Mt. 1:1; Mt. 1:20; Mt. 9:27; Mt. 12:23; Mt. 15:22; Mt. 20:30; Mt. 20:31; Mt. 21:9; Mt. 21:15; Mt. 22:42; Mk. 10:47; Mk. 10:48; Mk. 12:35; Lk. 3:31; Lk. 18:38; Lk. 18:39.

NET Note: It was a common belief in Judaism that Messiah would be David's son in that he would come from the lineage of David. On this point the Pharisees agreed and were correct. But their understanding was nonetheless incomplete, for Messiah is also David's Lord. With this statement Jesus was affirming that, as the Messiah, he is both God and man

Don Stewart on **Son of David** - David was promised that one of his offspring would rule forever. Jesus was called the "Son of David" while he was here on the earth. He was born in David's city, Bethlehem. The gospel of Matthew records that various people, on six different occasions, acknowledged Jesus as the Son of David. This is a messianic title. Jesus never denied that he was the Son of David.. In fact, on Palm Sunday he received the praise and worship of the people. ([Why Was Jesus Called the Son of](#)

[David?](#)

Christ (5547) (**Christos** from **chrío** = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office) means one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task. **Christ** is the transliteration of **christos**, which means "the Anointed One." As noted below some Bible versions also translate **Christos** as "Messiah" (especially the HCSB and NLT).

Excursus on Bible Translation of Christos - **Christos** is translated in the NAS95 as Christ (516x), Christ's (11x) and Messiah (4x - Mt 1:1, 16, 17, 2:4). The NIV and ESV never translate **Christos** as Messiah, but always as Christ. The Holman Christian Standard Bible translates **Christos** as Messiah many times depending on the context ([see explanatory note](#)) The NLT translates **Christos** as Messiah over 80 times. The NET translates **Christos** as Messiah in Jn 4:29, Acts 3:20, Eph 2:12.

Related Resource:

- [What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?](#)
- See also [Messiah - Anointed One](#).

NEW TESTAMENT USES OF PSALM 110:1 IN A MESSIANIC CONTEXT

Psalm 110 is the most frequently quoted or referenced psalm in the New Testament New Testament authors directly cite Psalm 110:1, regarding **my Lord** sitting at the right hand of **the LORD** in Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; Hebrews 1:13; and they allude to it in Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; and Hebrews 8:1. Also the author of the Book of Hebrews quoted Psalm 110:4 in affirming that is of the priestly order of Melchizedek in Hebrews 5:6; 7:17; and he made general reference to the psalm in Hebrews 5:10; 6:20; and 7:11, 15. A few writers argue that Psalm 110:1 was not Messianic and did not refer to the Messiah ([Ref](#)), but the main refutation of that hypothesis is the fact that Peter (for one) used this verse clearly to explain to his Jewish audience (who would have recognized a quote from Ps 110:1 as messianic) that when they crucified Jesus, they crucified the Messiah (Acts 2:34-36)!

(1) Jesus cited this verse to prove that Messiah is more than a mere physical descendant of David

Matt. 22:41–45

Mark 12:35–37

Luke 20:41–44

(2) Peter quoted Psalm 110:1 on the Day of Pentecost to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah.

Acts 2:34–36 "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: **THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET."**

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

(3) The writer of Hebrews quoted the verse to argue that the Messiah (Who is Jesus) is greater than the angels.

Hebrews 1:13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, **SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET**"?

(4) Ps 110:1 cited in order to show that after Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

Acts 2:33-35 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: '**THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET."**

Hebrews 6:20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (**NB**: This actually refers to Ps 110:4-5)

(5) In addition New Testament writers stated that God places His enemies under Jesus' feet:

1 Corinthians 15:25-28 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For **HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET**. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Ephesians 1:22 And **He put all things in subjection under His feet**, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

Hebrews 10:13 waiting from that time onward **UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET**.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES RELATED TO PSALM 110

For Jesus' premise (in Luke 20:41-44) that Psalm 110:1 was a Messianic prophecy that ultimately spoke of Him, hinged upon the fact that **David** that actually wrote the Psalm. And so it is not surprising that so-called "higher critics" (I call them "lower" critics!) challenge the premise that David wrote the Psalm. If he did not, then Psalm 110:1 does not speak of a "**son of David**" and would not be messianic, because other OT prophecies clearly established the fact that Messiah must descend from the line of David.

Derek Kidner responds to this criticism regarding the opening words of Psalm 110:1 '**A Psalm of David**'. The LORD says to my Lord"...

"Nowhere in the Psalter does so much hang on the familiar title **A Psalm of David** as it does here; nor is the authorship of any other psalm quite so emphatically endorsed in other parts of Scripture. To amputate this opening phrase, or to allow it no reference to the authorship of the psalm, is to be at odds with the New Testament, which finds King David's acknowledgment of his 'Lord' highly significant. For while other psalms share with this one the exalted language which points beyond the reigning king to the Messiah, here alone the king himself does homage to this personage—thereby settling two important questions: whether the perfect king was someone to come, or simply the present ruler idealized; and whether the one to come would be merely man at his best, or more than this. "Our Lord gave full weight to David's authorship and David's words, stressing the former twice by the expression '**David himself**,' and the latter by the comment that he was speaking '**in the Holy Spirit**' (Mk. 12:36f.) and by insisting that his terms presented a challenge to accepted ideas of the Messiah, which must be taken seriously. Peter, too, on the Day of Pentecost, stressed the contrast in the psalm between David 'himself' and his 'Lord', who 'ascended into the heavens' to be 'exalted at the right hand of God' (Acts 2:33-35)." Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), pp. 391-392.

Perowne agrees when he writes,

"This Psalm claims emphatically to be the fruit and record of a Divine revelation. The words of the Poet, though shaped in the Poet's heart, come to him from the very sanctuary of the Most High."

PSALM 110: DAVID'S LORD

■ Excerpt from Bob Deffinbaugh's message - [Psalm 110: David's Lord](#)

Psalm 110:1 is distinct as a directly Messianic psalm. Basically, Messianic psalms are of two types: (1) those which are indirectly (or typically) Messianic, and (2) those which are directly Messianic. In a typically Messianic psalm, the psalmist writes of his own experiences, but in words that go beyond his own circumstances and describe the experience of Messiah as well. Psalm 22 is an example of a typically Messianic psalm. A directly Messianic psalm does not refer to the psalmist's experience at all, but speaks only of the Messiah to come. Such is the case in Psalm 110...

The Messiah to which David referred in Psalm 110 was understood by those of Jesus' day (on the basis of passages such as 2 Sam. 7:11-16) to be David's son (Matt. 22:42). Our Lord pointed out in addition that David referred to his "son" as his "Lord." If David's son was also his Lord, then Messiah must be both divine and human. The very thing which they objected to, namely Jesus'

claim to be equal with God (cf. John 8), is the conclusion to which Psalm 110 leads us. Jesus was the God-man, just as God had indicated through His “prophet” David.

How should you and I respond to the prophecy of Psalm 110? In two words, very seriously. The message of the psalm is even more powerful today than it was in David’s time. In the first place, the final fulfillment of the psalm is still future. We look forward to its fulfillment just as men in that day did. Secondly, the message, to use Peter’s expression, is a “prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention” (2 Pet. 1:18). The message of the Book of Acts and the epistles is that the first part of the prophecy of the psalm has been fulfilled in the resurrection and ascension of our Lord to the right hand of the Father (cf. Acts 2:34-35; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20). If God has faithfully fulfilled the first part of His promise, how much more sure is the completion of God’s purpose as spelled out in this psalm? As Peter said, we do well to pay attention to it.

The revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the person of whom David spoke should cause us to seriously consider our relationship to this One who will soon establish His rule over the earth. We can relate to Him in only one of two ways, both of which are suggested in the psalm itself. We can relate to the Messiah as an enemy. We can reject the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah who died as God’s sacrifice for sinners. If such is the case, the great priest-king will relate to us as God’s avenger, who will come to rule with a rod of iron, “shattering” (that is the word we find in the psalm, cf. vv. 5, 6) His foes. In the New Testament Book of Revelation chapter 19 we find the same destruction described:

And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ... And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God; in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.” And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19:11, 17-21).

The reason for the delay in Messiah’s return is not apathy or disinterest, but mercy. God is giving men time to repent and turn in faith to Messiah as their Savior, rather than to face Him as soldier-king who must destroy the enemies of God (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3-12).

For those who have come to trust in Jesus as their Messiah and who willingly follow Him, they find Him no longer an awesome adversary, but an advocate and friend. In the Book of Hebrews the writer spells out the implications of Christ’s priesthood, now that He has died, risen, and ascended to the right hand of the Father. Christ’s humanity, when added to His deity, makes Him a compassionate advocate, intercessor, and friend:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14-16).

Not only is our Great High Priest our helper, He is our hope:

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:19-20).

With such an advocate, let us press on to the goal, “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). Just as our Lord endured the suffering of the cross, assured of the promise of God contained in Psalm 110, let us likewise persevere in our faith, knowing that our hope is secure in the Messiah, David’s son and David’s sovereign.

Finally, let us learn from our Lord and His apostles how we ought to use this psalm, and, in fact, all prophecy. First, we should always apply prophesy personally. We should respond to prophetic promises as the certain purposes of God and we should live our present lives in the light of these certainties. Second, we should use prophecy to encourage other saints and to evangelize the lost. What is a word of comfort to a Christian is also a word of warning to the unbeliever. Just as Peter warned those of his day to repent before the coming day of divine wrath (Acts 2), so we should use the prophecies of scripture to warn men of God’s impending wrath. (I think Hal Lindsey’s book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, is but one illustration of the evangelistic application of prophecy.) We should employ the fulfilled prophecies of God’s word apologetically, to show the reliability of the Bible. ([Psalm 110 - David's Lord](#))

JEWISH ESCHATOLOGY

[Wikipedia](#)

3/28/2018

- See also list of related resources on [Messianic Prophecies below](#).

In Jewish eschatology the term mashiach, or "Messiah", came to refer to a future Jewish king from the Davidic line, who is expected to be anointed with holy anointing oil and rule the Jewish people during the Messianic Age.^{[1][2][5]} The Messiah is often referred to as "King Messiah", or, in Hebrew, מלך משיח (melekh mashiach), and, in Aramaic, malka meshiḥa.^[6]

Orthodox views have generally held that the Messiah will be descended from his father through the line of King David,^[7] and will gather the Jews back into the Land of Israel, usher in an era of peace, build the Third Temple, father a male heir, re-institute the Sanhedrin, and so on. Jewish tradition alludes to two redeemers, both of whom are called mashiach and are involved in ushering in the Messianic age: Mashiach ben David; and Mashiach ben Yosef. In general, the term Messiah unqualified refers to Mashiach ben David (Messiah, son of David).^{[1][2]} (ED NOTE: SEE [The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs](#))

Scriptural requirements - Many of the scriptural requirements concerning the Messiah, what he will do, and what will be done during his reign are located in the Book of Isaiah, although requirements are mentioned by other prophets as well. Views on whether Hebrew Bible passages are Messianic may vary from and among scholars of ancient Israel looking at their meaning in original context and from and among rabbinical scholars.

- Isaiah 1:26: "And I will restore your judges as at first and your counsellors as in the beginning; afterwards you shall be called City of Righteousness, Faithful City." Some Jews^[8] interpret this to mean that the Sanhedrin will be re-established." (Isaiah 1:26)
- Once he is King, leaders of other nations will look to him for guidance. (Isaiah 2:4)
- The whole world will worship the One God of Israel (Isaiah 2:11–17)
- He will be descended from King David (Isaiah 11:1) via Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:8–10, 2 Chronicles 7:18)
- The "spirit of the Lord" will be upon him, and he will have a "fear of God" (Isaiah 11:2)
- Evil and tyranny will not be able to stand before his leadership (Isaiah 11:4)
- Knowledge of God will fill the world (Isaiah 11:9)
- He will include and attract people from all cultures and nations (Isaiah 11:10)
- All Israelites will be returned to their homeland (Isaiah 11:12)
- Death will be swallowed up forever (Isaiah 25:8)
- There will be no more hunger or illness, and death will cease (Isaiah 25:8)
- All of the dead will rise again (Isaiah 26:19)
- The Jewish people will experience eternal joy and gladness (Isaiah 51:11)
- He will be a messenger of peace (Isaiah 52:7)
- Nations will recognize the wrongs they did to Israel (Isaiah 52:13–53:5)
- The peoples of the world will turn to the Jews for spiritual guidance (Zechariah 8:23)
- The ruined cities of Israel will be restored (Ezekiel 16:55)
- Weapons of war will be destroyed (Ezekiel 39:9)
- The people of Israel will have direct access to the Torah through their minds and Torah study will become the study of the wisdom of the heart (Jeremiah 31:33)^[9]
- He will give you all the worthy desires of your heart (Psalms 37:4)
- He will take the barren land and make it abundant and fruitful (Isaiah 51:3, Amos 9:13–15, Ezekiel 36:29–30, Isaiah 11:6–9)

[Click here for the original article](#) and explanation of the notes appended to the original Wikipedia article.

Illustration of Luke 20:41-44 - THE "45" CHANGED THINGS - from Bob Deffinbaugh - A friend of days gone by used to tell the story of his uncle, who had just purchased a new convertible, and was enjoying a ride in the Ozark Mountains (as I recall the story). He had the top down and the radio up. He did not notice the man in car behind him, eager to pass, and getting more and more irritated. Nor did he hear the man's horn, blaring obnoxiously at him. Finally, the man behind had had enough. He found room to get by the uncle, but instead of going on by, he forced the fellow off the road, jumped out of his car and came alongside in a very hostile mood.

The uncle was quick to apologize. He was sorry, he said. He had been driving too slow and he had not been observant to see that

the man behind wanted to pass him. He had said all that one could say to apologize, but the angry driver was not satisfied. He told him that he was going to yank him from the car and thump on him. Only that would appease his anger. The uncle realized that words would not suffice, and so he reached under the seat and pulled out his service 45 pistol, and pointed it at the enraged driver. It didn't take that fellow very long to have a change of heart. Without hesitation he said, "I accept your apology," turned and drove off.

That 45 changed things considerably. It did not change the hostile motorist's attitude, but it did end the discussion. Jesus did not pull a 45 on His adversaries, but when our Lord drew His opponent's attention to the 110th Psalm, it did end the discussion. Matthew informs us that from this time on no one dared to ask Jesus a question (Matthew 22:46). The debate was over. ([Sermon](#))

Adrian Rogers on Jesus fully Man, fully God - It has wisely been said that "great minds discuss ideals. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people." This, however, is not true when it comes to the person of Jesus Christ. When you discuss Jesus Christ, you can discuss nothing greater. Now, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. Somebody wrote these words, and they sound very noble:

If Jesus Christ is a man
And only a man, I say
That of all mankind I will cleave to Him,
And to Him will cleave away.

If Jesus Christ is a God,
And the only God, I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air.
—RICHARD WATSON GILDER

Those are beautiful words, but I don't agree with them at all. If Jesus Christ is a man, and only a man, I'm not going to cleave to Him. If Jesus Christ is a man, and only a man, I'm going to reject Him as a fake, a fraud, and an impostor. Jesus Christ is more than a man. He is God, a very God. It's very important that you understand what I have to say because it is the story, the cornerstone, of Christianity. And, I want to give you four lines of evidence for the deity of Jesus Christ. I want you to jot these down. I want you to get the Scripture, and I want you to see clearly and plainly that Jesus Christ is the Son of God with power and God in human flesh. Here are the four lines of argument—here are four evidences—for the absolute deity of Jesus Christ.....I want to remind you who Jesus is:

To the artist He's the One Altogether Lovely.
To the architect He's the Chief Cornerstone.
To the baker He's the Living Bread.
To the banker He's the Hidden Treasure.
To the biologist He's the Life.
To the builder He's the Sure Foundation.
To the doctor He's the Great Physician.
To the educator He's the Great Teacher.
To the farmer He's the Lord of the Harvest.
To the florist He's the Rose of Sharon.
To the geologist He's the Rock of Ages.
To the judge He's the Righteous Judge.
To the jeweler He's the Pearl of Great Price.
To the lawyer He is the Advocate.
To the publisher He is Good Tidings of Great Joy.
To the philosopher He is the Wisdom of God.
To the preacher He is the Word of God.
To the sculptor He is the Living Stone.
To the statesman He is the Desire of All Nations.
To the theologian He is the Author and Finisher of Our Faith.
To the traveler He is the New and Living Way.
To the sinner He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.
To the Christian He is forever the Son of the Living God, Savior, Redeemer, Lord, Everlasting Father, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.

Luke 20:42KJV And David himself saith in the book of Ps, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

- **For David himself says in the book of Psalms** Lk 24:44; 2 Sa 23:1,2; Mt 22:43; Mark 12:36,37; Acts 1:20; 13:33-35; Hebrews 3:7
- **THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND** Ps 110:1; Mt 22:44,45; Acts 2:34,35; 1 Cor 15:25; Hebrews 1:13
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:41-47 True and False Religion](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:41-44 David's Son and Lord](#) - John MacArthur

CHRIST IS DAVID'S LORD

Luke 20:40-44

For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything. 41 Then He said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is David's son? 42" For David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 43 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" 44 "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?"

For David himself says in the book of Psalms- In Matthew 22:43 Jesus asks that **"Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord.'" Mark adds "David himself said in the Holy Spirit."** (Mk 12:36) In other words, the synoptic passages underscore the fact that these were not just David's words (which they were), but they were also the words that the Holy Spirit had inspired David to record, "for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:21-note). You might be thinking, "Well, thank you. That is a nice little detail to know, but it is of no real value regarding Jesus' discourse." Wrong! It is of IMMENSE VALUE. Why? For the answer [see Derek Kidner's comment below](#).

THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND- See the original psalm below - notice that they are 4 participants in this psalm - (1) [Jehovah or Yahweh](#) (2) David (3) [Adonay](#) and (4) enemies. David is inspired to record the words of Jehovah which were addressed to Adonay, Who Himself was also David's Lord. To sit at the "right hand" of the king was an honor (see 1 Ki 2:19) The Lord's invitation to the Davidic king to sit down at his right hand reflects the king's position as the Lord's vice-regent. The enemies under Adonay's feet signify that Adonay will conquer and subdue His enemies.

Here is the original Psalm 110:1

"A Psalm of David. The LORD ([Jehovah or Yahweh](#)) says to my (David's) Lord ([Adonay](#)): "Sit at My right hand
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

All glory, laud and honor,
To Thee, Redeemer, King,
To Whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel,
Thou David's royal Son,
Who in the Lord's Name comest,
The King and Blessèd One.

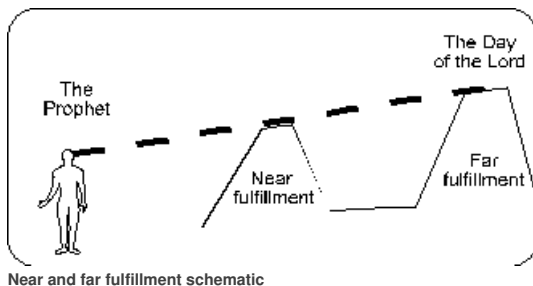
Wuest - Both the scribes and the people believed that the Jewish Messiah would come from the royal line of David. David was human, so would the Messiah be human. Thus, He would be David's son. Our Lord reminds His hearers that David calls the Messiah his Lord (Ps. 110:1). That is, he recognizes Him as Deity, the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The difficulty our Lord puts before His listeners and at the same time tosses into the lap of the Pharisees, is as to how, since Messiah is Jehovah, deity, He can also be human. **At once the incarnation is brought before them.** One of the charges brought against the Lord Jesus was that He called God His (His private, unique) **Father**, making Himself equal with God, thus deity (John 5:18). Thus, the Jewish leaders rejected the teaching of the incarnation, and Jesus' claim to deity. It is well to notice our Lord's testimony to the divine inspiration of David, also the recognition by David of the two other Persons of the Trinity, the Father saying to the Son, "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." **Thus, we have the Trinity mentioned in an Old Testament setting** in Mark 12:36. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#) -- or Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

Luke 20:43KJV Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

- Lk 19:27; Ps 2:1-9; Ps 21:8-12; 72:9; 109:4-20; 110:5,6; Rev 19:14-21
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:41-47 True and False Religion](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:41-44 David's Son and Lord](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Psalm 2:1-9 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His **Anointed** (MESSIAH), saying, 3 "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, 6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." 7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"



UNTIL - See discussion of this important expression of time. The preposition **UNTIL** can indicate the time before an event takes place (Ezek 33:22), the time until it takes place (Ps 104:23), or occasionally the time during which an event takes place (2 Ki 9:22). It can also "mark a relative limit beyond which the activity of the main clause still continues" as it does in Psalm 112:8. In Psalm 110 **UNTIL** signifies the time until an event occurs. Stated another way, **UNTIL** indicates enemies will be active up to a point and then it will not happen. The point that it will not happen is when Jesus reigns over and subjugates all His enemies. **Deffinbaugh** elaborates on another aspect of **UNTIL** - "While the Messiah was to share in the power and prestige of Yahweh's reign, there was a **GAP OF TIME** indicated **between the time of His exaltation ("Sit ...") and His triumph ("UNTIL")**. There is both a present and a future dimension to the prophetic oracle of Yahweh. The enemies of the Messiah will, at a later time, be subjected to Him, but not immediately. To make someone **"the footstool for their feet"** (v. 1c) was to completely subject him (cf. Ps. 8:6; 18:39), an expression probably based upon the practice of military conquerors who placed their feet on the necks of their defeated foes (cf. Josh. 10:24-25). Messiah was elevated to a position of equality with Yahweh, yet the outworking of His power was yet viewed as future." ([Ref](#)) (Bold font added)

I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET - This is the picture (sometimes literally practiced as in Joshua 10:24) that results is when a defeated enemy lies before a person in the dust, so that the conqueror's feet can be placed upon their necks. The picture is that of complete and utter triumph over every foe, in this context this victory being assured *by* "the Lord" *to* "the Lord."

When the Lord made his covenant with David, he promised to subdue the king's enemies

2 Samuel 7:9-11 "I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. 10 "I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, 11 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

Ps 89:22-23 "The enemy will not deceive him, Nor the son of wickedness afflict him. But I shall crush his adversaries before him, And strike those who hate him.

Luke 20:44 "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?"

Luke 20:44KJV David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

- **how is He his son** Lk 1:31-35; 2:11; Isaiah 7:14; Mt 1:23; Ro 9:5; Galatians 4:4; 1 Ti 3:16; Rev 22:16
- **Parallel passages** - Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:41-47 True and False Religion](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:41-44 David's Son and Lord](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS ASKS A RADICAL RIDDLE

Why is this a "radical riddle?" It is radical because the answer is that the son of David is not just a Man but He is God, God in the flesh, the mystery of mysteries which is hidden in David's Spirit inspired words (Mt 22:43, Mk 12:36+) of Psalm 110:1. It is a riddle because it makes no sense to the human mind which tries to reason out how any person could be 100% Man and 100% God. It is a riddle for the natural mind, and its solution can only be provided by the Spirit of Christ opening the eyes of one's heart to see the truth of Messiah, Son of David, fully God and fully Man, and then to receive that incredible truth by grace through faith. Tragically it will remain a "radical riddle" to the natural, unbelieving mind for as Paul explains "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1 Cor 2:14-note)

Here are parallel passages in Mark and Matthew...

Mark 12:37+ "David himself calls Him 'Lord'; so in what sense is He his son?" And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

A T Robertson - Mark alone has this item. The Sanhedrin had begun the formal attack that morning to destroy the influence of Jesus with the crowds whose hero he now was since the Triumphal Entry. It had been a colossal failure. The crowds were drawn closer to him than before.

Comment - Some think the crowd was delighted because He had put the scribes to shame. While one may see the crowd's reaction in a positive light, there is another side to their reaction. It is one thing to enjoying listening to Jesus, but it is quite another think to believe and obey Jesus. Herod enjoyed listening to John the Baptist and then chopped his head off! (Mk 6:20, 27, cf Ezekiel's experience - Ezek 33:31-32, Mt 13:5, 6, 20, 21).

Hendriksen - Undoubtedly among those many people who were "enjoying" what Jesus was saying there must have been at least some who a few days later were going to join their voices to the "Crucify him!" refrain. (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark)

Matthew 22:45 "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" 46 No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

Comment: As noted above, Luke has a similar phrase before the discourse on Psalm 110:1 (Lk 20:40), whereas Matthew has it at the end.

Therefore David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son? - As mentioned, in ancient times it was unheard of for a father to refer to their son as lord. Of course that is the major point that if David spoke of a descendant as his lord, he must have been referring to someone who was more than a physical descendant. What Jesus is trying to draw out of the listeners is the response in His Deity, the Messiah is David's Lord. In His humanity, the Messiah is David's son. Now if you are like me, you read Psalm 110:1 and do not see the word "son" in the passage and so you wonder how can David call Jesus a son? The reason is that Adonay (the Messiah) to whom David referred in Psalm 110:1 was understood by those of Jesus' day on the basis of passages such as 2 Sa 7:11-16 to be David's son. Recall that this is exactly what the religious experts had answered when Jesus asked in Mt. 22:42 - ""What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "The son of David."

MacArthur - Messiah is both David's Son and David's Lord, and therefore He is a man yet to be born, but He must also be God who

was alive at the time David spoke.

Deffinbaugh - Psalm 110 confronts the Israelite with a very perplexing problem, a problem which is central and foundational to the Israelite leaders' rejection of Jesus as the Christ. The Psalm clearly teaches both the **humanity** of Messiah (**a son of David**) and His **deity** (**David's Lord**). This was the fundamental problem which the leaders of Israel had with Jesus. If you could sum up the grievance of the Jewish leaders with Jesus, I believe it would be this: **ALTHOUGH JESUS WAS MERELY A MAN** (in the eyes of the Jews who rejected Him), **HE HAD THE AUDACITY TO ACT LIKE GOD**

Hendriksen on **David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?** - The words do not mean, "the Messiah cannot be David's son," but must mean, "cannot be David's son merely in the sense of his descendant." He is far more than that. He is the root as well as the offspring of David (Rev. 22:16; cf. Isa. 11:1, 10)...It is comforting to know that not only according to Mark 12:10, 11 but also according to the present passage Jesus a few days before his most bitter agony was fully aware that the way of the cross would for him lead home, to the crown! (Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark)

Revelation 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Isaiah 11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (11:10)
Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

Johnson notes that when Jesus posed the questions regarding how Christ can at the same time be David's son and David's Lord writing that the "Jewish leaders could have met the challenge and resolved the dilemma in various ways. They could have denied that Psalm 110:1 referred to Messiah, but they did not. Or they could have rejected Jesus' interpretation of the verse that '**my lord**' meant God, but did not. Had they held the historic reconstruction that '**my lord**' meant someone positioned on David's throne, they could easily have removed the dilemma. For Solomon was both David's son and lord in this sense, but their silence conceded Jesus' point. Thus Jesus' interpretation of Psalm 110:1 confirms the view that David's words are a direct prophecy of the Messiah."

Notice that Luke has not record of an answer to Jesus' question in Luke 20:46 and for good reason -- there was none! Matthew 22:46 says "No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question." Jesus has shut their mouths!

Brian Bell adds that "Jesus is both "the **root** and **offspring** of David" (Rev 22:16-note). As the "root of David," He brought David into existence; but As the "offspring of David," David brought Him into the world. He is David's son, thus affirming his humanity. He is David's Lord, thus affirming his deity. ([Commentary](#))

Gene Brooks summarizes this section - Jesus makes the point that His identity as Messiah exceeds traditional Jewish expectations of an earthly conquering king. Jesus is David's son, affirming His humanity (Luke 20:41). Jesus is David's Lord, affirming his deity (Luke 20:42-44). The title, Son of David, which the blind man already called Jesus (Luke 18:38-39), was a favorite title for the Messiah among the rabbis and a common one in Scripture (Isaiah 9:7; 11:1; Psalm 2, 89, 132). It's roots are in the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:11-16) where God promises David that He will raise up one of his Seed who would reign forever on his throne. Jesus identifies the speaker in Psalm 110 as David, who addresses the Messiah as "my Lord" and speaks of his enthronement at God's right hand. Psalm 110 is one of the most frequently cited OT texts in the NT. Their response? Silence. No one can answer Jesus.

Leon Morris - Jesus rounded off the session of questions by asking one himself. The problem he posed arises from the habit in antiquity of regarding earlier generations as greater and wiser than the present one. David was the ideal king and his descendants by definition were less than he. But he himself referred to the Messiah as Lord (Ps. 110:1). How then could he be David's son, as the scribes said? Luke does not, of course, mean that Jesus is denying his Davidic descent. He has made that descent plain over and over (Lk 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4; 18:38f.) and his story of the virgin birth, from which his readers would see that Christ pre-existed, shows that even on the scribes' premises Jesus was greater than David. But the question arose, 'How did the scribes understand the Psalm?' Jesus is also clearing up a misunderstanding of Messiahship. People who used the title 'Son of David' (Lk 18:38-39; Matt. 21:9) clearly envisaged the Messiah as someone who would defeat all Israel's foes and bring in a new kingdom of David. They thought of David's son as similar to David in being, outlook and achievement. There are not wanting Jewish writings of the period which speak of the Son of David in terms of a narrow nationalism that looked for Israel's triumph over all its foes (e.g. the Psalms of Solomon). Jesus means us to see that the Messiah was not David's son in that petty sense. He was Lord, Lord of people's hearts and lives. To call him Lord meaningfully is to see him as greater by far than merely another David. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

Arnold Fruchtenbaum on Jesus as the **Son** of David and David's **Lord** - Jesus challenges them with a theological question, one which illustrates the God/man concept. This is the crux of what they don't understand about the Messiah, even to this day. He asks them, "Whose son is the Messiah?" and they answer correctly "the son of David." Jesus asks them about Psalm 110:1, and asks

them **"If Messiah is David's son, how does David call him Lord?"** What is Jesus saying here? How can a son be a Lord to his Father? The rabbis are unable to answer. They are completely missing the God/man concept. They do not understand the divine nature of the Messiah, and still do not to this day.

Rod Mattoon - The Messiah was God. Jesus Christ is the Messiah of the world. Do you believe this or not? What conclusion have you made about Christ? Peter said, "Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Martha what do you think? "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:27).

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT JESUS IS? IS HE SON OF DAVID AND DAVID'S LORD TO YOU?

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES RELATED RESOURCES

- Messianic Prophecies - on site
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?](#)
- [Why Was Jesus Called the Son of David?](#)
- [Is Psalm 110 A Messianic Psalm? - Barry C Davis](#)
- [Josh McDowell's classic "More than a Carpenter" - good book to suggest to your skeptical friends!](#)
- [How a Jewish man Michael Goldstone met Messiah - site has multiple similar video testimonies](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies • WebBible Encyclopedia • ChristianAnswers.Net](#)
- [AccordingtotheScriptures.org -- 353 Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ - nice simple chart](#)
- [Jesus and messianic prophecy - Wikipedia](#)
- [Messianic Prophecy](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies - Bible.org](#)
- [Prophecies of Jesus Christ as Messiah](#)
- [Chris Tomlin's song Jesus Messiah](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah - 20 part Series by S Lewis Johnson](#)
- [The Messianic Hope of Israel - Series - Max Reich](#)
- [Messianic Prophecy in the Old Testament - Wil Pounds](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies, Types & Applications in the Old Testament - Wil Pounds](#)
- [Numbers 24:15-19 A Star Will Come out of Jacob - Greg Herrick](#)
- [Numbers 24:17-19 Messianic Prophecies - Allen Ross](#)
- [The Amazing Prophecy Of Names - A study of Isaiah's names for the Savior](#)
- [Commentary on Messianic Predictions \(V1-Gen, Ps, Minor Prophets\) - E W Hengstenberg](#)
- [Commentary on Messianic Predictions \(V2-Isa, Zeph, Jer\) - E W Hengstenberg](#)
- [The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs - RBC](#)
- [Questions Skeptics Ask About Messianic Prophecy - RBC](#)
- [2 Timothy 3:16-17: Study on Authority of God's Word](#)
- [The Power of God's Word - a simple study](#)
- [The Necessity of Scripture \(Pdf\) - William D. Barrick](#)
- [The Sufficiency of Scripture \(Pdf\) - John MacArthur \(also here\)](#)
- [Rationality, Meaningfulness & Precision of Scripture - Robert L. Thomas](#)
- [The Authority of Scripture \(Pdf\) - Richard L. Mayhue](#)
- [The Testimony of Prophecy by Charles Simeon](#)

Luke 20:45 And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples,

Luke 20:45KJV Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

- Mt 15:10; 23:1; Mark 8:34; 12:38; 1 Ti 5:20
- **Parallel Passages** - Matthew 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:37-54

- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:41-47 True and False Religion](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:45-47 Confronting Error with Condemnation, Not Conversation](#) - John MacArthur

JESUS BEGINS TO FOCUS ON TEACHING THE DISCIPLES

In Luke 20 the religious leaders have attempted three times to trap Jesus with "word games" and failed miserably on all three (See [Hannah's outline](#)).

Parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels. Note that Matthew's passage is the "long version" of Lk 20:45-47 (esp Lk 20:46-47) and should be read to get the most complete picture of Jesus' teaching to His disciples about the hypocritical Jewish religious leaders.

Matt. 23:1-36+ - In Mt 23:1-2 we read "Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;

Mark 12:38-40+ In His teaching He was saying: "**Beware** (present imperative) of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, 39 and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, 40 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."

Luke 11:37-54+ - In this earlier passage in Luke, Jesus directly confronted the Pharisees and Scribes. Here is warning His followers.

And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples- Mark 12:37 tells us at the end of the discourse on Psalm 110:1 "the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him." And then Mark tells us that Jesus was still "**teaching**." (Mark 12:38+) This is amazing to me. He must have been exhausted, but He knew He would have only a few hours left with His disciples before He was crucified. The crowd was still present and was listening. But this passage marks a transition, for from now on Jesus focuses on His followers.

MacArthur - He said all there is to say, nothing more can be said. He's answered every question that could be raised. He will turn and give instruction to those who are still following, still showing interest, still wanting to learn from Him, still following Him. The attackers are gone and the crowd fades away. But there's one final message for everybody to hear, disciples and people.

Listening (191)([akouo](#)) means they were physical hearing Jesus words, but as discussed above, akouo has a number of nuances depending on the context. In this context it appears they were listening, enjoying what Jesus had been saying, but most of them were not necessarily listening with a desire to believe in Him or obey Him. Doubtless many who were listening now, would soon be crying out "Crucify! Crucify!" Applying this picture of their listening which was more like "in one ear and out the other," it recalls times when I read His Scripture and I am like those in the crowd, enjoying the words, but only superficially listening. It strikes me that when Jesus is speaking (when we are in His written Word), we need to be listening carefully with a heart ready to heed and obey what He says. Otherwise, we are really wasting our time and sadly we only have a finite amount of time we can spend with Him on earth because life is so short. Father, by Thy Spirit give us ears to hear and hearts to obey and have a desire to be pleasing to Thee, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Disciples (3101)([mathetes](#) from [manthano](#) = to learn) describes one who learns from another by instruction and includes the idea of intentionally learning by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)). "As **followers** of Jesus we are to be, first of all, **learners**. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing." (Ralph Earle)

Luke 20:46 "**Beware** of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

Luke 20:46KJV Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

- **Beware of the scribes** Lk 12:1; Mt 16:6; Mark 8:15; 2 Ti 4:15
- **who like to walk around in long robes** Lk 11:43; 14:7; Pr 29:23; Mt 23:5-7; Mark 12:38,39; Ro 12:10; Php 2:3-5; 3 John 1:9
- **Parallel Passages** - Matthew 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:37-54

- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:41-47 True and False Religion](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:45-47 Confronting Error with Condemnation, Not Conversation](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

Mark 12:38-40+ In His teaching He was saying: "**Beware** of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, 39 and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, 40 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."

LAST WORDS A WARNING

Luke 20:46-47 and the parallel account in Mark 12:38-40 are in a sense a summary of Jesus' in depth denunciation of these hypocritical religious leaders recorded by Matthew in Mt 23:1-36. Given the fact that Scripture is always the best commentary on Scripture, the reader is strongly encouraged to read Jesus' blistering diatribe to give one a fuller sense of what Luke and Mark only summarize, keeping in mind that this is the end of His public ministry. Luke 20:45 says "**And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples.**" The parallel section in Matthew 23:1 has "Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples." After Jesus' scathing rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees (with 8 Woes!), Mt 24:1 says "**Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.**" The point is that these passages mark the end of Jesus' public ministry to the nation of Israel and the beginning of His pronouncement of judgment on the Jewish religious leaders, and the coming desolation of their entire religious system, including the destruction of the symbol of their apostate system, Herod's Temple and the city of Jerusalem some 40 years later. Matthew ends Jesus' 8 woe warning to the religious leaders with His famous lament

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. **Behold**, your house (THE TEMPLE, THE CITY) is being left to you desolate! "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me [UNTIL](#) (NOTICE THIS WORD IS A SMALL RAY OF HOPE) you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (cf Zech 12:10+) (Mt 23:37-39)

Recall that this is a repeat of an almost identical lament earlier in His ministry Luke recording

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! **Behold**, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me [UNTIL](#) the time comes (THIS IS A PROPHECY THAT THIS "TIME" WILL COME - IT WILL BE AT MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING) when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (Lk 13:34-35+)

Luke earlier issued a similar warning regarding the **HYPOCRISY** of the Pharisees...

Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, "**Beware** ([prosecho](#) in present imperative) of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy** ([hupokrisis](#)). (Lk. 12:1+)

Wuest on the Greek word **hypokrisis** - It "is made up of hupo under, and krinō "to judge" and referred originally to "one who **judged** from **under** the cover of a mask," thus, assuming an identity and a character which he was not. This person was the actor on the Greek stage, one who took the part of another. The true identity of the person is covered up. It refers to acts of impersonation or deception. Christianity requires that believers should be open and above-board. They should be themselves. Their lives should be like an open book, easily read. This begs the question beloved - IS YOUR LIFE AN "OPEN BOOK?" IS WHAT PEOPLE SEE REALLY WHO YOU ARE? ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

And so this section of Luke gives us Jesus' final warning. **Last words** should always be carefully heeded especially if they are the words of Jesus! And these words are two-fold - words of warning and condemnation.

A T Robertson comments that Luke "gives a mere summary sketch of this bold and terrific indictment as preserved in Matt. 23:1-39 in words that fairly blister today."

Brian Bell - Jesus denounces the Jewish Leaders (Lk 20:45-47) Jesus moved from doctrine to practice and publicly exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Here is religion at its worst! These leaders were using their religions to advance their own personal ambitions & to feed their pride. ([Commentary](#))

Rod Mattoon - Jesus cautions or warns all the people to beware of the scribes. Guard yourself and watch out for these guys! They were like snakes in the grass or foxes in the chicken coop. He condemns them for their attitudes and actions.

Beware ([prosecho](#)) **of the Scribes** ([grammateus](#)) - Mark 12:38 introduces this warning with the phrase "In His teaching He was saying." Matthew's parallel adds "Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples." (Mt 23:1) Matthew adds that the warning is against "The **scribes** and the **Pharisees**." (Mt 23:2) Jesus is saying to beware of the so-called "Bible experts." Not every "Bible expert" is a believer and certainly these men were not.

THOUGHT - Today believers must be on the lookout for these religious hypocritical false teachers even as in Jesus' day. Paul warned against these types of folks in Acts 20:28-31+ "**Be on guard** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in (SO THEY COME IN FROM WITHOUT THE BODY) among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves (AND THEY COME IN FROM WITHIN THE BODY) men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears." I fear many believers are naive regarding these clear warnings from Jesus and Paul, thinking that such people would surely not arise in our fundamental, Bible based church. Wrong!

Like a commanding General, Jesus issues a present imperative, a command calling on His followers to continually be on guard against the **scribes**. The Bible continually warns us against false teachers and tragically most of them are dressed in religious garb like these scribes.

Beware ([4337](#))([prosecho](#) from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Figuratively the idea is to hold one's mind toward (something) and then to take heed or to pay attention, and even to be in a state of alert or on guard. When used in this manner **prosecho** always warns of some type of usually spiritual danger! **Prosecho** is not a call simply to notice or sense something, but to be on guard against it because it is so harmful (eg, the danger of practicing your righteousness for others to see, the danger of false prophets, false teachers and false teaching, the danger of the Pharisees and Sadducees).

Scribes ([1122](#))([grammateus](#) from [grapho](#) = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology scribe, expert, scholar (Mt 2.4). The Scribes were the experts in the law. They (along with the Pharisees) were the legalistic, self-righteous sect. Most sources consider the **lawyers** (nomikos - meaning one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be **Scribes** specialized in the jurisprudence of the Law of Moses. MacArthur adds that "the Jews had a saying...." "Moses received the law and gave it to Joshua. Joshua received the law and gave it to the elders. The elders received the law and gave it to the prophets. The prophets received the law and gave it to the Pharisees and the Scribes." They were the treasurers of the Law of God. They were the ones given the trust. They were experts. They were the lawyers of Israel. They handled all legal matters: Property, estates, contracts, resolutions....And every adjudication that they rendered, and every position that they took was, in fact, supposed to be a representation of God and what God willed; a stewardship, if you will, from God. Because they then were the agents of God, they carried with them tremendous weight and trust. People had nowhere else to turn because there were no others than the scribes to handle all their matters."

Recall that Not all **Pharisees** were **Scribes**, but the **Scribes** were primarily Pharisees, and were the interpreters and teachers of the law of Moses and the traditional rabbinic writings.

Adam Clarke - Take heed that ye be not seduced by those who **should show** you the way of salvation. (**ED**: INSTEAD THEY SHOW THE WAY TO HELL! See Mt 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, **you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves**.")

The disciples are to continually beware of them because they are ungodly, do not truly know God, have no true spiritual wisdom. As **MacArthur** says "They are agents of Satan sent to fight the purposes of God....False religion never restrains the flesh. So these people operate like the worst of the unregenerate, except that it is not apparent on the surface. But false religion cannot subdue their wretched heart, for that can only be subdued by regeneration by means of the truth of the Gospel. So these men are to be avoided because they are always one thing on the outside and something else on the inside. They have nothing to offer spiritually and are destructive...deadly...dangerous. Do not get near them, because you will get singed, stained."

And believers today should practice a Psalm 1:1+ approach with men like the Scribes and Pharisees. It is interesting that the Psalmist after giving a caution against these ungodly men proceeds to their condemnation in Psalm 1:4-6 much like Jesus does in Lk 20:47.

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

J C Ryle - This was a bold and remarkable warning. It was a public denunciation, we must remember, of men who "sat in Moses' seat," and were the recognized teachers of the Jewish people. It teaches us clearly that there may be times when the sins of people in high places make it a positive duty to protest publicly against them. It shows us that it is possible to speak out, and yet not to "speak evil of dignities."

SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

One word sums up these characteristics - **Hypocrite!** This describes one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be something he is not.

The word **hypocrisy** comes from the Greek theater and referred to the practice of putting on a mask and playing a part on stage. It originally conveyed the idea of playing the playing a part on the stage and described the actor's art. The NT gives hupokrisis only a negative connotation referring to hypocrisy, duplicity (the quality of being double - belying of one's true intentions by deceptive words or action), insincerity, dissimulation (hiding under a false appearance; hiding or disguising one's thoughts or feelings - don't we all do this from time to time?!). The idea is to pretend, to act as something one is not and so to act deceitfully, pretending to manifest traits like piety and love. It means to create a public impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations, and thus is characterized by play-acting, pretense or outward show. It means to give an impression of having certain purposes or motivations, while in reality having quite different ones.

Will Durant - The actor – who is always a male – is not disdained as in Rome, but is much honored; he is exempt from military service, and is allowed safe passage through the lines in time of war. He is called **hypocrites**, but this word means answerer – i.e., to the chorus; only later will the actor's role as an impersonator lead to the use of the word as meaning hypocrite. (The Story of Civilization II, The Life of Greece, by Will Durant, page 380)

Related Word Studies:

- **Hypocrisy** ([5272](#)) [hupokrisis](#)
- **Hypocrite** ([5273](#)) [hupokrites](#)

The pride of the pompous Scribes and Pharisees is now itemized -- Luke gives 6 characteristics of these men but Matthew 23:1-36 gives a list of **8 WOES** regarding the Scribes and Pharisees which should be read to help understand how this group functioned (or better was dysfunctional!) (See Mt 23:1-39, 13, 14, 15, 16, etc).

Hendriksen - To be sure, the descriptions of the enemies of the truth are not mild, but underneath throbs a loving heart! (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

J C Ryle - No sin seems to be regarded by Christ as more sinful than hypocrisy. None certainly drew forth from His lips such frequent, strong, and withering condemnation, during the whole course of His ministry. He was ever full of mercy and compassion for the chief of sinners. "Fury was not in Him" when He saw Zacchæus, the penitent thief, Matthew the Publican, Saul the persecutor, and the woman in Simon's house. But when He saw Scribes and Pharisees wearing a mere cloak of religion, and pretending to great outward sanctity, while their hearts were full of wickedness, His righteous soul seems to have been full of indignation. Eight times in one chapter (Matt. 23) we find Him saying, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." Let us not forget that the Lord Jesus never changes. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Whatever else we are in religion let us be true. However feeble our faith, and hope, and love, and obedience may be, let us see to it that they are real, genuine, and sincere. Let us abhor the very idea of part-acting and mask-wearing in our Christianity. At any rate let us be thorough. It is a striking fact that the very first piece of armor which St. Paul recommends to the Christian soldier is "truth." "Stand therefore," he says, "having your loins girt about with truth." (Eph. 6:10.)

(1) Who like to walk around in long robes ([stole](#)) - We call this "putting on airs" -- you can picture them strutting around like roosters in a barnyard. What a sad sight this must have been the eyes of the humble servant Jesus!

Long robes ([4749](#)) ([stole](#) from **stello** = to prepare, arrange, gather up) means to equipping, fitting out; by

metonymy dress, clothes; in the NT robe, especially long flowing garment or robe worn as an upper or outer garment. A scribe's robe had a long mantle reaching to the feet and was decorated with long fringe. Refers to the robes of believers in Revelation (Rev. 6:11; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 7:13; Rev. 7:14; Rev. 22:14).

Morris - The long robes the scribes wore ('flowing robes', NIV) were a sign of distinction and marked the wearers as gentlemen of leisure, for anyone who worked for his living would not be cumbered with such clothing. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

Zodhiates - stately robe reaching to the feet or a train sweeping the ground. More often worn by women (Mark 12:38; 16:5; Luke 15:22; 20:46; Rev. 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; Sept.: Ex. 28:2f.; 1 Chr. 15:27; 2 Chr. 18:9). (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

Gilbrant - A stolē is a long flowing robe worn as an outer garment. Distinguished from himation (2416) (any ordinary article of clothing, or more explicitly an outer cloak or mantle), a stolē is a stately robe reaching to the feet or sometimes sweeping the ground like a train. It was a fine garment of special solemnity, beauty, or richness commonly associated with priests in their sacerdotal duties in the sanctuary. Such garments were also worn by men who were afforded special dignity or honor (Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, p.175). The joyous father dressed the returned prodigal in a stolē to celebrate the return of his "dead" son to "life" (Luke 15:22). The angel who announced Christ's resurrection was dressed in a stolē, befitting one who delivers a message from deity (Mark 16:5). The glorified believers in Revelation 6:11; 7:9; and 7:13f. are so clothed to signify the glory of their salvation and the splendor of their eschatological reward. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, priests, and scribes who habitually wore such robes, because their intent was to draw attention to their piety or status, gratifying their own inflated egos with the honor and esteem of the common people (Mark 12:38; Luke 20:46). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Stole - 9x in 9v - Mk. 12:38; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 15:22+ (="Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him"); Lk. 20:46; Rev. 6:11; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 7:13; Rev. 7:14; Rev. 22:14

Stole - 96x in 80v in the Septuagint. Gen. 27:15; Gen. 35:2; Gen. 41:14; Gen. 41:42; Gen. 45:22; Gen. 49:11; Exod. 28:2; Exod. 28:3; Exod. 28:4; Exod. 29:5; Exod. 29:20; Exod. 29:29; Exod. 31:10; Exod. 33:5; Exod. 35:19; Exod. 35:21; Exod. 36:8; Exod. 39:1; Exod. 39:33; Exod. 39:41; Exod. 40:13; Lev. 6:11; Lev. 8:2; Lev. 8:30; Lev. 16:23; Lev. 16:24; Lev. 16:32; Num. 20:26; Deut. 22:5; Jdg. 14:12; Jdg. 14:13; Jdg. 14:19; Jdg. 17:10; 2 Sam. 6:14; 2 Ki. 5:5; 2 Ki. 5:22; 2 Ki. 5:23; 1 Chr. 15:27; 2 Chr. 5:12; 2 Chr. 18:9; 2 Chr. 23:13; 2 Chr. 34:22; Est. 5:1; Est. 6:8; Est. 6:11; Est. 8:15; Job 2:12; Job 9:31; Job 30:13; Job 30:18; Job 37:17; Isa. 9:5; Isa. 22:17; Isa. 22:21; Isa. 63:1; Jer. 52:33; Ezek. 10:2; Ezek. 10:6; Ezek. 10:7; Ezek. 44:17; Ezek. 44:19; Jon. 3:6;

MacArthur - Greek word *stolē*, from which the old word "stole" comes, a robe to the ground. And they began to develop robes that were very different than other people's robes. They were robes that had certain little things on them, markings and fancy things. They became unique, and fancy, and expensive robes that would identify them as the holy people. They "lengthened the tassels on their robes," Matthew 23:5 says. And that comes from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, back in Numbers 15:38-40, God had ordained that the Jews could put little tassels on the bottom of the robe, and it was a really wonderful little kind of symbol to remind them of the law of God. Everywhere you go you see that, it reminds you of the law of God. Jesus had them on His robe, according to Matthew 9:20. But the scribes and the Pharisees lengthened the tassels, not for the sake of a better memory device, but for the sake of ostentation, appearance. They weren't trying to bring attention to God and His Word, they were trying to bring attention to themselves as if they were holy. ([Confronting Error with Condemnation, Not Conversation](#))

Wuest - He says they love certain things. The word is philō "to be fond of, to like." They are fond of wearing long clothing. The word is stolē, and is used in the Old Testament of priestly or royal robes, and in the New Testament, of dress worn on festive or solemn occasions. Our Lord does not condemn the use of a dignified costume, but the use of it for the sake of ostentatious display. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used by permission)

Brian Bell - They loved their uniform because it indicated their office wherever they went! ([Commentary](#)) (Are there any parallels today? Rhetorical question of course!)

Kent Hughes - Hearers could sense the disgust in Jesus' voice as he described his antagonists to their faces as gliding about in their resplendent power outfits, receiving the obeisance of the masses in the marketplace, sitting facing the congregation with other-world expressions on their faces, reading the Torah in sonorous Hebrew. Masters of ecclesiastical cant, they were proud lovers of self!....As Joseph Bayly observed, "No person can foster the impression that he/she is great, then exalt a great God." (Ibid)

Ryle - This expression either refers to garments of an extravagantly large size, on which the Scribes prided themselves, or else to the fringes and borders to their garments, which they put on in obedience to the law. (Nu 15:38.) These fringes they made

excessively large, in order to impress on the minds of the common people an opinion of their own holiness, and their great reverence for the law.

In Mt 23:5 Jesus says "they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments."

Ryrie comments that **phylacteries** were square leather boxes containing four strips of parchment on which were written Deut. 11:13-21 and 6:4-9, and Ex. 13:11-16 and 13:1-10. During prayer one was worn on the forehead between the eyebrows and another on the left arm close to the elbow. They were held in place by leather bands, which the Pharisees made broad to attract more attention to themselves. The custom was based on Ex. 13:9, 16; Dt. 6:8; 11:18, though phylacteries had only begun to be used by the ultra-pious in Christ's day. Christ criticizes not the custom itself but the wrong spirit that corrupted it. lengthen the tassels of their garments. A hem or fringe on a garment was placed there in accordance with Nu 15:38, but the Pharisees made theirs unnecessarily wide. (Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition](#))

(2) And love respectful greetings in the market places - they expected to be addressed with titles of dignity.

Bock - Extrabiblical material makes clear that rabbis and other religious authorities received special greetings in the marketplace. In fact, in the Talmud such greetings were required for teachers of the law (y. Ber. 4b [2.1] [= Neusner et al. 1982-93: 1.66]; Windisch, TDNT 1:498; SB 1:382 §f). Jesus had earlier rebuked Pharisees for this practice (Luke 11:43). (Ibid)

Morris quips that "while they liked thus to shine before people, they were careless of how they appeared before God." (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

Jesus elaborates in Matthew 23...

The loved "respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. 8"But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9"Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10"Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. (Mt 23:7-10)

MacArthur - If you were called "rabbi," you were so exalted that in the Talmud, Sanhedrin 88 says that "It is more punishable to act against the words of a scribe than the words of Scripture." They wanted to be called "excellency, elevated one, most knowledgeable one, exalted one." They wanted to be "**leader**." That is the one who determines direction, the one who determines destiny, the one who sets the course.

Wuest - The scribes were also fond of salutations in the market places (the public forums) in the cities or towns, and to be called Rabbi. Our Lord did not refuse such titles, but He did not demand nor desire them, as did the scribes.

Hendriksen - What the men who are here described were always longing for was not a mere token of friendliness but rather a demonstration of respect, a public recognition of their prominence. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

Robertson on greeting in the market places because this is "where the people could see their dignity recognized." Woe are these guys "full of themselves!"

(3) And chief seats in the synagogues - The people on the front row of popular Broadway plays have to pay a fortune to get those choice seats. These arrogant men took it for granted that the choice seats in the synagogue were reserved for them. Talk about religious hypocrisy. They were nearest where the Torah reading would be given, but it was all show and no heart change. "Those were the seats in front of the raised platform on which stood the prayer leader and the reader of the Scriptures. Thus seated, a man had the double advantage of being near the person reading or leading in prayer, and of facing the congregation and thus being able to see everybody. Besides, being ushered to such a seat was regarded as a mark of honor." (Hendriksen - Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

Mattoon - The scribes craved the seats in the synagogues and banquets that were reserved for the most important people. The honored seats in the synagogue were located in front of the box that contained the scrolls. These seats faced the people.

(4) And places of honor at banquets - To sit next to the host was an honor the scribes loved. The typical dinner table of Jesus' day was usually not a classic rectangular table as in most modern kitchens and dining rooms. Instead the ancient tables were often 3 tables (each table a couch for 3 or so-called [triclinium](#)) in somewhat of a U-shape with guests reclining on their left elbows. One can almost picture these hypocrites jostling one another as they seek the "hottest spots" of honor! Do we ever seek man's approval more than God's like these men? Jesus addressed this same problem in Luke 14:7-14-note at the house of a Pharisee.

Mt 23:6 "They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues"

Wuest - They were fond of the chief seats in the synagogues. These were benches up in front facing the congregation, and were reserved for officials and persons of distinction. The scribes claimed the places of honor also at social gatherings. They were fond of the uppermost places at feasts. The word here is *prōtoklisia*, "the first reclining place." This is the place of the most honored guest at a feast. The orientals reclined on couches around the table instead of sitting on chairs as we do.

THOUGHT- Mattoon - Let's stop for a second. Do you find yourself entertaining the same attitudes and desires? Do you insist on titles, positioning, and symbols of authority? Are you more motivated by service or by receiving attention and adulation? Do you dress in a sloppy fashion or immodestly to cause men or women to notice you? Do you crave attention at any cost?

Luke 20:47 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

Luke 20:47KJV Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

- **who devour widows' houses** Isaiah 10:2; Jer 7:6-10; Ezekiel 22:7; Amos 2:7; 8:4-6; Micah 2:2,8; 3:2; Mt 23:14; Mark 12:40; 2 Ti 3:6
- **and for appearance's sake offer long prayers** Lk 12:1; Ezekiel 33:31; Mt 23:26-28; 1 Th 2:5; 2 Ti 3:2-5; Titus 1:16
- **These will receive greater condemnation** Lk 10:12-14; 12:47,48; Mt 11:22-24; James 3:1
- **Parallel Passages** - Matthew 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:37-54
- Luke 20 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 20:41-47 True and False Religion](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 20:45-47 Confronting Error with Condemnation, Not Conversation](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages: (Degrees of Condemnation)

Matthew 11:20-24 Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. 24 "Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."

Luke 10:12-16 "I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. 13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. 15 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! 16 "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

Luke 11:31-32 "The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. 32 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Matthew 12:41-42 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42 "The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Mark 12:38-40 In His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, 39 and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, 40 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."

LAST WORDS

A CONDEMNATION

(5) Who devour ([katesthio](#)) widows' houses - Clearly this is figurative language but it gives a dramatic picture of the depth of depravity of these men's evil hearts, to take advantage of the most helpless members of society. They should have been assisting widow instead of bilking them of much need funds for living!

NET Note: How they were able to devour widows' houses is debated. Did they seek too much for contributions, or take too high a commission for their work, or take homes after debts failed to be paid? There is too little said here to be sure.

Hughes - They did this by taking payment from widows for legal aid even though such payments were prohibited, cheating inexperienced widows of their inheritance, living off the hospitality of lonely women, mismanaging widows' property who had dedicated themselves to service in the temple, and accepting money from the naive elderly in exchange for special prayer. (Ibid)

Wuest - These scribes **devour widows' houses**. People often left their whole fortunes to the Temple, and a good part of the money went finally to the scribes and Pharisees. The scribes were employed to make out wills and conveyances of property. They inveigled widows to give their homes to the Temple, and then took the proceeds of the sale for themselves. In order to do this, they offered long prayers in the homes of these widows and for them. Thus, they bent the widows to their will. Our Lord calls these prayers, a pretence. They could not be true prayers when offered with such an ulterior purpose. Swete says: "Men who rob widows, and use prayer as a means of securing opportunities for committing a crime, shall receive a sentence in excess of that which falls to the lot of the dishonest man who makes no pretence to piety; to the sentence of the robber will be added in their case the sentence on the hypocrite."

Devour (consume, ate) ([2719](#))([katesthio](#) from **kata** = down + **esthio** = to eat) means to eat up, totally consume, devour (Lk 8:5). Figuratively katesthio means to destroy by fire (consume, burn up) (Rev 11.5), by illegal exploitation (rob, take complete advantage of) (Mk 12.40) or by strife within a group which cause great division (destroys division)(Gal 5.15).

John MacArthur - They go after the most defenseless. Like the false teachers of whom Paul writes to Timothy, they go after silly women. They go after the unprotected and the weak. Widows are the easiest ones to get to....Widows were to be protected in the Old Testament, pure religion, says James 1:27, is to care for widows. Ex 22:22, Dt 10:18, Mal 3:5, etc call upon the people of God to care for widows. God cares for widows. These Scribes devour them. How do they do that? Now keep in mind that they were the lawyers of the system. So when a woman who was a widow needed someone to protect her, she would turn to the lawyer with the idea that he would protect her home and her property. There is an interesting study on the kind of behavior that was going on. First, the lawyers would take money for themselves from widows although it was forbidden. Knowledge without price. That was the code of a true rabbi, certainly with regard to widows. They would disobey that and whatever wisdom they would give to widows, they would charge exorbitantly. What could a widow do? Secondly, they would cheat widows of their estate by getting into the legal machinations under the guise that they would provide legal protection, and would literally begin to "eat away" the estate. Thirdly, they would leach on them and abuse their hospitality, taking advantage of room, board, food. There are some stories about gluttony and excessive drinking, taking that from poor widows. Another way, by mismanaging the property of widows, so that out of complete carelessness a widow was absolutely made destitute. One of the popular ones was to take money from older widows with deficient mental powers, taking advantage of those who were unable to defend themselves mentally. And maybe the worst, they would accumulate debts the widow would owe them, and be unable to pay and would take the widow's home as pledge for the debt, and thus "devour" the house. When the widow could not pay, they threw her out. That is why they are characterized in Luke 11:39 as "full of robbery and wickedness." Or Luke 16:14, "The Pharisees....were lovers of money." ([Sermon](#))

(6) And for appearance's sake offer long prayers - Pretense prayers (Pretense means pretending with intention to deceive.)! While there is nothing wrong with a long prayer, it is wrong if one is praying pretense, praying just to be seen and heard. Their words were nothing but [supercilious](#) piety! Their audience may have heard, but God certainly did not hear such shallow praying! Jesus warned against this type of praying in Mt 6:5+ "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full."

For appearance's sake (pretense) ([4392](#))([prophasis](#) from **prophaino** = to cause to shine before, to appear before, be apparent <> **pró** = before, + **phaino** = to appear) is that which is alleged as the cause, an allegation, plea. In other words it denotes something put forward for appearance to conceal what lies behind it. In the NT it is used only in a bad sense and with the idea is That which is put out in front to hide the true state of things."

Jesus alluded to the practice of pretense by the Scribes and Pharisees...

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. 27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 "So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness (Mt 23:25-28)

Brian Bell on long prayers - Samuel Chadwick (minister during the late 1800's & early 1900's) said when he went away from his home, he wrote every day to his wife. And when he was going a short journey their letters were short; and the further away he went, the longer his letters were; & that reminded him of some people. He thought "some people must be a long distance from God because their prayers were so long!" The inspiration of all their activity was self-centered. God is seeking servants, not celebrities; He sees the heart! Listen,...those people who seem "too spiritual to be true"...usually aren't! ([Commentary](#))

Hughes - When pride is paired with greed, prayers will be ostentatious...Prayers like these are not from the heart, regardless of their length. Such intercessory offerings can come from the most eminent sources, like the archbishop who died of surprise when God answered him back!

DEGREES OF CONDEMNATION AND MISERY IN HELL!

Hendriksen - As with a crash of thunder doom is pronounced upon these hypocrites. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

These will receive greater condemnation - Jesus' compassion (cf Lk 19:41, etc) has now become condemnation (not that He was not always compassionate even when He was condemning). Why greater? Because they are "religious."

Greater (4053) (**perissos** from **peri** = over and above) properly means beyond what is anticipated, exceeding the expected limit.

Condemnation (Judgment) (2917) (**krima** from **krino** = to judge, suffix **-ma** = the result of the judging, result of making a decision) describes a judicial sentence from a magistrate (his pronouncement). It describes one deciding a question of legal right or wrong, and thus determining the innocence or guilt of the accused and assigning appropriate punishment. **Krima** is usually the decision which results from an investigation.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DEGREES OF PUNISHMENT is found in a number of NT passages - Mt 10:15 Jn 19:11 Mt 11:20-24 Luke 10:12-16, Luke 11:31-32, Luke 12:47-48 Mt 12:41-42 Mk 12:38-40 Luke 20:45,46,47 , Heb 10:29

Ryle - He says of those who live and die hypocrites, "the same shall receive greater damnation." The subject opened up in these words is a deeply painful one. The reality and eternity of future punishment are among the great foundation truths of revealed religion, which it is hard to think upon without a shudder. But it is well to have all that the Bible teaches about heaven and hell firmly fixed on our minds. The Bible teaches distinctly that there will be degrees of glory in heaven. It teaches with no less distinctness, both here and elsewhere, that there will be degrees of misery in hell. Who, after all, are those who will finally receive condemnation? This is the practical point that concerns us most. All who will not come to Christ,—all who know not God and obey not the Gospel,—all who refuse to repent, and go on still in wickedness, all such will be finally condemned. They will reap according as they have sown. God willeth not their eternal ruin. But if they will not hear His voice, they must die in their sins.

John MacArthur - The idea is clear. If you're in the wrong religion, you're going to be condemned. If you're a purveyor of the wrong religion, you're going to receive a far greater suffering and damnation in hell. They're dangerous. Be warned. They're hypocrites. They're worthy of condemnation. Compassion? Yes. Gospel? Give them the gospel. Pray for their salvation. Have a sad heart. But in the end, we have nothing to learn from false teachers and false religions. And they must know that they are under sentence of divine condemnation. They must know for their sake and the sake of those who need to be protected from them. ([Confronting Error with Condemnation, Not Conversation](#))

Robertson - It was a solemn climax to this last public appearance of Christ in the temple when Jesus poured out the vials of his indignation as he had done before (Matt. 6:12; Luke 11:12; 15–18).

Hughes applies this principle to those who preach and teach (of course not meaning that they will go to hell) -The Apostle James, the Lord's brother, wrote similarly, "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1). If we claim to have a full knowledge of God's Word for his people, and further claim that we are charged to deliver it, we are more responsible to deliver it clearly and obey it. I, by virtue of my professed calling and

study of God's Word and having had the privilege of receiving more knowledge of God's Word than many Christians, will undergo a stricter judgment. Increased responsibility means increased accountability. (ED: IT IS TRUTH LIKE THIS THAT MAKES ME CONSIDER QUITTING WRITING ON THE WEBSITE!) (See [Luke That You May Know the Truth](#))

Here is the principle to which **Hughes** is referring

From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. (Luke 12:48+).

Notice that while Hell is a place of horrible conscious torment for all inhabitants, for some (like the scribes in this context) it will bring even a greater degree of punishment! Woe!

Ryle asks "But who among those who are condemned will receive the heaviest condemnation? It will not fall on heathens who never heard the truth. It will not fall on ignorant and neglected Englishmen, for whose souls, however sunk in profligacy, no man cared. It will fall on those who had great light and knowledge, but made no proper use of it. It will fall on those who professed great sanctity and religiousness, but in reality clung to their sins. In one word, the hypocrite will have the lowest place in hell. These are awful things. But they are true."

CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION OF THE VERB AKOUO

An important nuance of **akouo** is to hear and obey. The Septuagint uses **akouo** to translate the Hebrew verb shama meaning to hear, which takes on some of the nuances of "to understand" or "to obey" as in Dt 6:4 = **Hear** (Lxx = akouo in the present imperative = keep on hearing), O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" In Ps 103:20 we read "Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, **Obeying** (Lxx = akouo) the voice of His word!" Ge 27:43 (cf Ge 28:7) "Now therefore, my son, **obey** (Lxx = akouo) my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban!" Ex 19:5 says "Now then, if you will indeed **obey** (Lxx = akouo) My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine." Ex 23:22 says "But if you truly **obey** (Lxx = akouo) his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries."

To obey (Lk 10:16; 16:29, 31 Jn 5:24; 8:47; 18:37; Acts 3:22, 23; 4:19; 1 Jn 4:5, 6 Lxx = Ge 3:17; Ex. 16:20; Dt. 11:27; 2 Chr 20:14; Isa 48:18). Here belongs the phrase "he who hath ears, let him hear," i.e., give heed, obey (Mt. 11:15; 13:9, 13 [cf. the phrase, "he who has a mind" in Rev. 13:18 {a.t.}; see also 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9; 17:9, "he who has wisdom" {a.t.}]). Given the association of **akouo** with obedience, it is not surprising that akouo is the root of the NT word for obey [hupakouo](#) (literally to hear under).

Thayer's says **hupakouo** is "properly, of one who on a knock at the door comes to listen who it is." Similarly, in secular Greek **hupakouo** spoke of one standing at a door, listening intently, almost eavesdropping. (cf Acts 12:13)

Hughes adds that "Obedience involves conscious listening. If you do not really listen, you cannot really obey. That is why parents are always saying, "Listen to me!" The idea is to listen under with the intent to understand and do it... Much of this is a matter of attitude. We are not to be like the little boy who misbehaved and was told by his teacher to sit in the corner, which he did with grudging obedience, all the while saying to himself, "I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside!" ([Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ. Crossway Books](#))

Another important sense of **akouo** is not just to hear the sound of words, but to **hear with understanding** or to heed. English definitions of the word to **heed** = to consider someone's advice or warning and do what they suggest; to give careful attention to someone's advice or warning; to regard with care; to take notice of; to attend to. There is obviously overlap with the preceding nuance of **hearing and obeying**, for hearing with understanding may call for one to obey (cf Mt 11:15). One of the first uses with this nuance is found in the Septuagint of Ge 11:7 "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not **understand** (Lxx = akouo) one another's speech." Seven times Jesus uses **akouo** in the Revelation saying "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Rev 2:7,11,17,29-note; Rev 3:6,13, 22-note; cp Mt 11:15 = "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" or as the NET translates it "The one who has ears had better listen!") These uses clearly speak of grasping or understanding what the Spirit says, but of course the implication is that the only way to truly understand what one hears is to have a "spiritual mindset," in short to be born again. The "natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1 Cor 2:14-note) Stephen said it this

way (and it got him stoned!) - "You men who are stiff-necked and **uncircumcised** in heart (see excursus on [Circumcision](#)) and **ears** are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did." (Acts 7:51) Men with uncircumcised ears cannot generally hear and understand spiritual truth! And yet in this particular parable in Luke 20, the religious leaders understood that Jesus was speaking about them!

To hear with the additional sense of to **understand or to comprehend** as in the following passages...

Mt. 5:33, 38, 43; 7:24, 26; 8:10; 11:4; 12:24, 42; 13:20, 22, 23, 43; 14:1, 13; 15:10, 12; 17:6; 19:22, 25; 20:24; 21:16, 33, 45; 22:7, 22, 33, 34; 24:6; 26:65; 27:13, 47; Mark 2:17; 3:8, 21; 4:9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24; 5:36; 6:2; 6:29, 55; 7:16; 8:18; 9:7; 11:14, 18; 12:28; 13:7; 14:11, 58; 15:35; 16:11; Luke 1:41, 58, 66; 2:18, 20, 46, 47; 4:23, 28; 5:15; 6:17, 47, 49; 7:22, 29; 8:8, 10, 12-15, 18, 21, 50; 9:7, 9, 35; 10:24; 11:28; 14:15, 35; 15:25; 16:2, 14; 18:6, 22, 23, 26, 36; 19:11; 20:16; 21:9, 38; 22:71; 23:6, 8; John 1:37, 40; 3:29, 32; 4:1, 42, 47; 5:25, 28, 30, 37; 6:45; 7:32, 40; 8:9; 9:27, 32, 35, 40; 10:3, 8, 16, 20, 27; 11:4, 6, 20, 29; 12:12, 18, 34; 14:24; 16:13; 18:21; 19:8, 13; 21:7; Acts 2:6, 8, 11, 33, 37; 4:4, 24; 5:5, 11, 21, 24, 33; 6:11, 14; 7:2, 12, 34, 37, 54; 8:6, 14, 30; 9:4, 7, 13, 21, 38; 10:22, 33, 44, 46; 11:1, 7, 18; 13:7, 16, 44, 48; 14:9; 15:7, 13; 16:14, 38; 17:8, 21, 32; 18:8, 26; 19:2, 5, 10, 26, 28; 21:12, 20, 22; 22:1, 2, 7, 9, 14, 15, 22, 26; 23:16; 24:4, 22, 24; 26:3, 14, 29; 28:15, 22, 26-28; Ro 15:21; 1 Cor. 2:9; 11:18; 2 Cor. 12:4; Gal. 1:13, 23; Eph. 1:13, 15; 3:2; 4:21, 29; Phil. 1:27, 30; 2:26; 4:9; Col. 1:4, 6, 9, 23; 2 Th 3:11; 1 Ti 4:16; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2, 14; 4:17; Phile. 1:5; Heb. 2:3; 3:7, 15, 16; 4:2, 7; 12:19; James 1:19; 2:5; 5:11; 2 Pet. 1:18; 1 John 1:1, 3, 5; 2:18; 3:11; 4:3; 2 John 1:6; 3 John 1:4; Rev. 1:3, 10; 3:3, 20; 4:1; 5:11, 1

To listen (listen(24), listened(1), listeners(1), listening(14), listens(5)) meaning to hear with intention or attention, to concentrate on hearing something, to give attention to a sound (in NT especially something spoken), to pay attention to a sound, to [hearken](#) to.

Mt 17:5 (cf Mk 9:7, Lk 9:35) = This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased; **listen** (pres imperative-keep listening) to Him!

Mt 18:15 = if he **listens** to you, you have won your brother." (cf Mt 18:16, 17)

Mt 21:33 = **Listen** (aorist imperative = Listen now!) to another parable" (Includes the idea of listen with understanding)

Mk 4:3 = **Listen** (present imperative - keep on listening) to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow."

Mk 6:11 = any place that does not receive you or **listen** to you"

Mk 6:20 = when he **heard** (akouo) him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy **listening** to him."

Mk 7:14 = **Listen** (aorist imperative = Listen now!) to Me all of you, and understand (sunieimi)"

Mk 12:29 = **HEAR** (present imperative - keep on hearing), O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD",

Mk 12:37 = the large crowd enjoyed **listening** to Him"

Lk 2:46 = both **listening** to them and asking them questions.

Lk 5:1 = while the crowd was pressing around Him and **listening** to the word of God

Lk 8:18 = So take care how you **listen**

Lk 10:16 = The one who **listens** to you **listens** to Me,

Lk 10:39 = Mary (cf Lydia - Acts 16:14), who was seated at the Lord's feet, **listening** to His word."

Lk 15:1 = Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to **listen** to Him.

Lk 16:31 = 'If they do not **listen** to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead

Lk 19:11 (cf Lk 20:45) = While they were **listening** to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable

Lk 21:38 = And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to **listen** to Him.

Jn 9:27 = I told you already and you did not **listen**; why do you want to **hear** it again?

Acts 2:22 = Men of Israel, **listen** (aorist imperative = Listen closely now!) to these words: Jesus the Nazarene..."

Acts 10:44 = the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were **listening** to the message."

Acts 13:16 = Men of Israel, and you who fear God (Gentile God fearers), **listen** (aorist imperative = Listen closely now!):

Acts 15:12 = All the people kept silent, and they were **listening** to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs

Acts 15:13 = After they had stopped speaking James answered, saying "Brethren **listen** (aorist imperative = Listen closely!) to me.

Acts 16:14 = A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was **listening**;

Acts 16:25 = Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were **listening** to them;

Acts 22:22 = They **listened** to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow...."

Acts 26:3 = therefore I beg you (King Agrippa) to **listen** to me patiently.

Acts 28:28 = Therefore let it be known to you (Jews) that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also **listen**.

Gilbrant - means to hear the sound of something or someone, to hear in the sense of understanding or to hear with the idea of obedience.

In the NT, *akouō* usually refers simply to hearing (e.g., Mt 14:1), but sometimes under the influence of the Septuagint it shows a meaning of "to understand" or "to obey." This sense is conveyed in several uses, including: Jesus' common remark, "He who has ears to hear (*akouō*), let him hear (*akouō*)" (e.g., Matt 11:15; of the Spirit in Rev 2:7, 11, 17, etc.); the voice from heaven at the transfiguration that said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen (*akouō*) to him," (Mark 9:7); and Jesus' sayings in John about the sheep listening (*akouō*) to the shepherd, but not to thieves or robbers (John 10:8; 16). When the Sanhedrin commanded Peter and John to stop teaching about Jesus, they said they had to listen (*akouō*) to God rather than to the Sanhedrin.

Gilbrant notes that "Within the many ancient religions "hearing" played an important role, but there were essential differences between Greco-Roman religions and the Jewish and Christian concept of hearing. The Grecian religions stressed seeing above hearing the divine. The Old and New Testaments, on the other hand, emphasize strongly the necessity of listening to or hearing God. In the Septuagint *akouein* translates the Hebrew *shama'*, which became a virtual trademark of the Jewish religion and was recited throughout the day ("Hear O Israel," Dt 6:4). The word may indicate mere "apprehension of sound" (2 Sa 15:10), but it essentially describes the relationship between God and man. God addresses mankind through words, especially the Word. Therefore it is mandatory "to hear" Him. As noted above, this is verified by "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is One" (Dt 6:4, 5:1; Jer 2:4; 7:2). The familiar formulas of the Old Testament, "Thus says the Lord" (Isa 45:1; 50:1), and "to whom the word of the Lord came" (Jer 1:2; 2:1) imply that "hearing" has taken place. In the Old Testament **hearing and doing** (i.e., obedience) are closely related (Ex 19:5,8; Dt 28:1; 30:11-14). Some hear without understanding (Isa 6:9ff.; Ezek 12:2; cf. Mt 13:14; Acts 29:16). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Wayne Detzler (Borrow [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#)) - The early Greeks used *akouo* to describe four separate things. **First**, it represented the sense of hearing (hearing in contrast with deafness). **Second**, it spoke of the act of hearing (a student was hearing the lecture). **Third**, it was used for the organ of hearing (the ear). Fourth, it spoke of the content of hearing (a court hearing). In the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, the word hearing was almost equal to obedience. It was believed that once a person had really heard the Word of God, obedience would usually follow. In the New Testament the word *akouo* fills several roles. **First**, it speaks of perception. Jesus pronounced a special blessing on those who heard His words (Matt. 13:16; Mark 4:23). In fact, the Lord made deaf people hear and the dumb speak (Mark 7:37), and those miracles served to confirm His claim to deity (Luke 7:22). A **second** aspect of hearing is communication, when a listener hears what is said. Jesus used the illustration of a man who heard the Word and responded immediately, in His Parable of the Sower and the Seed (Matt. 13:20). However, that person gave only superficial response to the Gospel. Jesus issued a strong condemnation of those who refused to hear the Gospel message when the disciples delivered it (10:14). Only spiritually sensitive people hear the communication of God's Word (John 8:47). Relationship defines the **third** aspect of hearing. Those who have a relationship with one another hear in a special way. Because God claimed Jesus Christ as His beloved Son, the disciples who followed Him were commanded to hear what He said (Matt. 17:5; Luke 9:35). Even the dead shall hear the voice of their Redeemer and respond (John 5:25). By the same token Jesus' followers hear His voice, just as sheep hear their shepherd's voice (John 10:1-8). John confirmed, in his first epistle, that the disciples had heard Jesus (1 John 1:3-5). This relationship also holds true for subsequent Christians. At the end of his life on earth Paul wrote his final letter to Timothy, who had been his close companion. Paul reminded Timothy to pass on what he had heard, and to make provision for others to pass it on. **Hearing is the foundation of Christian living and teaching** (2 Tim. 2:2). A fourth feature of hearing is attention, listening carefully to what is said. It is possible to hear casually without listening carefully. The disciples heard the teachings of Jesus Christ and listened attentively, even when they found His words hard to comprehend (Mark 14:58). At Pentecost people from various lands listened carefully and understood the message, because God worked a miracle of communication, enabling the Christians to speak in foreign languages (Acts 2:6). Paul got a careful hearing by two attentive judges when he came to trial (Acts 24:4; 26:3). The emphasis of these passages falls clearly on careful listening to a judicial procedure. The same word was used by Paul in his defense before the people. He recalled how the Lord spoke to him on the Damascus Road. At that time Paul listened carefully, and he comprehended the sense of the divine message (Acts 22:9). In a real sense God communicated with Paul, and he heard what God was saying. **Hearing is therefore an elastic word. It can mean that one simply hears a sound, like a bump in the night. But it can also mean the intensive listening by which we hear exactly what is being said and respond by acting accordingly. At any rate, it is important that we listen to the Lord, as He listens to us when we pray....**It is important for us to hear God when He speaks. E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973), a devoted missionary evangelist to India, put it in these words: "In the pure, strong hours of the morning, when the soul of the day is at its best, lean upon the windowsill of

God and look into His face, and get the orders for the day. Then go out into the day with the sense of a hand upon your shoulder and not a chip." Another great Christian was the Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-43), who also spoke of hearing in an even more meaningful way: "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me." Perhaps the hymn-writer E. Mary Grimes (1868-1927) said it best when she wrote:

Speak, Lord, in the stillness, While I wait on Thee;
Hushed my heart to listen In expectancy.

Speak, O blessed Master,
In this quiet hour;
Let me see Thy face, Lord,
Feel Thy touch of power.

Akouo is the root of several other Greek verbs:

akoé ([189](#)), hearing;
diakoúō ([1251](#)), to hear through, hear fully;
eisakoúō ([1522](#)), to listen to, to hear and obey;
epakoúō ([1873](#)), to listen to, hear with favor on an occasion;
parakoúō ([3878](#)), to overhear or hear amiss;
proakoúō ([4257](#)), to hear before;
hupakoúō ([5219](#)), to obey.

Akouo - 428x in 398v - come to...ears(1), every(1), give heed(2), grant(1), hear(115), heard(216), hearers(1), hearing(24), hears(21), heed(2), listen(24), listened(1), listeners(1), listening(14), listens(5), reached(1), reported(1), understand(1), understands(1).

Mt. 2:3,9,18,22; 4:12; 5:21,27,33,38,43; 7:24,26; 8:10; 9:12; 10:14,27; 11:2,4-5,15; 12:19,24,42; 13:9,13-15,22-23,43; 14:1,13; 15:10,12; 17:5-6; 18:15-16; 19:22,25; 20:24,30; 21:16,33,45; 22:22,33-34; 24:6; 26:65; 27:13,47; 28:14;
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Rom. 10:14,18; 11:8; 15:21; 1 Co. 2:9; 5:1; 11:18; 14:2; 2 Co. 12:4,6; Gal. 1:13,23; 4:21; Eph. 1:13,15; 3:2; 4:21,29; Phil. 1:27,30; 2:26; 4:9; Col. 1:4,6,9,23; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2,14; 4:17; Phlm. 1:5; Heb. 2:1,3; 3:7,15-16; 4:2,7; 12:19; Jas. 1:19; 2:5; 5:11; 2 Pet. 1:18; 1 Jn. 1:1,3,5; 2:7,18,24; 3:11; 4:3,5-6; 5:14-15; 2 Jn. 1:6; 3 Jn. 1:4;
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Akouo - 1060x in 992v in the **Septuagint** -

Gen. 3:8,10,17; 4:23; 11:7; 14:14; 18:10; 21:6,12,26; 23:6,8,10-11,13,15-16; 24:30,52; 27:5-6,8,34,43; 28:7; 29:13,33; 31:1; 34:5,7; 35:22; 37:6,17,21,27; 39:15,18-19; 41:15; 42:2,23; 43:25; 45:2; 47:5; 49:2; Exod. 2:15; 3:7; 15:14,26; 18:1,19,24; 19:5,8-9; 23:13,22; 24:3,7; 32:17-18; 33:4; Lev. 5:1; 10:20; 24:14; Num. 7:89; 9:8; 11:1,10; 12:2,6; 14:13-15,27; 16:4; 20:10; 21:1; 22:36; 23:18; 24:4,16; 30:4-5,7-8,11-12,14-15; 33:40; Deut. 1:17,34; 2:25; 4:1,6,10,12,28,32-33,36; 5:1,23ff; 6:3-4; 7:12; 8:20; 9:1-2; 11:22,27-28; 12:28; 13:3-4,11-12,18; 17:13; 18:14-16,19; 19:9,20; 20:3; 21:21; 27:9; 28:2,13,49; 29:4,19; 30:12; 31:12-13; 32:1; Jos. 1:17-18; 2:10-11; 3:9; 5:1; 6:10,20; 7:9; 9:1,3,9,11,16; 10:1; 11:1; 14:12; 22:2,11,30; 24:24,27; Jdg. 3:4; 5:3,16; 7:11,15; 9:7,30,46; 11:10,17,28; 14:13; 18:25; 19:25; 20:3,13; Ruth 1:6; 2:8; 1 Sam. 1:13; 2:22-25; 3:9-11; 4:6,14,19; 7:7; 8:7,9,19,21-22; 9:27; 11:6; 12:1,14-15; 13:3-4; 14:22,27; 15:1,14,19-20,22,24; 16:2; 17:11; 19:6; 22:1,6-7,12; 23:10-11,25; 24:9; 25:4,7,24,35,39; 26:19; 28:18,21-23; 31:11; 2 Sam. 3:28; 4:1; 5:17,24; 7:22; 8:9; 10:7;

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