

Jesus' Authority, Warnings, and the Coming Judgment

Jesus' Authority Challenged (Luke 20:1–8)

During one of the days Jesus was teaching the crowds in the temple and preaching the good news, a group of chief priests, scribes, and elders approached Him.

"Tell us," they demanded, "By what authority are You doing these things? Who gave You this authority?" (Luke 20:2 NKJV)

They were angry because Jesus had cleansed the temple, driving out the moneychangers who corrupted worship. But Jesus, knowing their motives, answered them with a question:

"I also will ask you one thing, and you answer Me: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?" (Luke 20:3–4 NKJV)

They huddled, realizing they were trapped. If they admitted John's ministry was from heaven, Jesus would ask why they didn't believe him. But if they said it was just from men, the crowd—who revered John as a prophet—might stone them. So they pleaded ignorance.

Then Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." (Luke 20:8 NKJV)

Reflection:

Jesus' authority is divine, not conferred by human systems. Men often refuse to acknowledge God's authority because admitting it would mean submitting to it.

Personal Application:

When God challenges you, don't dodge the question. Acknowledge His rightful authority over your life. True faith means surrendering to His rule.

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (Luke 20:9–19)

Jesus then told a pointed parable:

A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenants, and went to a distant country. At harvest time, he sent a servant to collect some fruit, but the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent another servant—they abused him too. A third servant—same treatment.

Finally, the owner said, *"I will send my beloved son. Surely they will respect him."*

But when the tenants saw the son, they plotted, *"This is the heir. Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!"* And they murdered him.

Jesus asked, *"What will the owner of the vineyard do?"*

Answer: *"He will come and destroy those wicked tenants and give the vineyard to others."* (Luke 20:16 NKJV)

The people recoiled, *"God forbid!"*

Jesus then quoted Psalm 118:

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." (Luke 20:17 NKJV)

"Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."
(Luke 20:18 NKJV)

The religious leaders realized He was speaking about them—and they began plotting even harder to arrest Him.

Reflection:

Israel had been entrusted with God's truth but rejected the prophets—and now, the Son Himself. Jesus is the rejected Stone who has become the foundation of God's kingdom.

Personal Application:

You must decide how you will relate to Jesus: either humbly fall on Him in surrender, or resist and be crushed by judgment. Don't stumble over Christ—build your life on Him.

Attempts to Trap Jesus (Luke 20:20–40)

Question About Taxes (Luke 20:20–26)

Spies came, pretending to be sincere, hoping to catch Jesus in His words.

"Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" they asked.

If Jesus said yes, He could lose favor with the people. If no, He could be arrested for insurrection.

But Jesus, perceiving their craftiness, said, *"Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?"*

"Caesar's," they answered.

Jesus replied, *"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."* (Luke 20:25 NKJV)

A perfect answer—they marveled and fell silent.

Reflection:

Jesus taught us to respect legitimate government authority without compromising our greater allegiance to God.

Personal Application:

Fulfill your earthly responsibilities, but never forget—you belong to God. His image is stamped on your heart.

Question About the Resurrection (Luke 20:27–40)

Next came the Sadducees, who didn't believe in resurrection. They posed a ridiculous hypothetical: Seven brothers married the same woman (one after another, each dying without children). *"In the resurrection, whose wife will she be?"*

Jesus replied:

"The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage." (Luke 20:34–35 NKJV)

In the resurrection, we will be like the angels (not literal angels)—eternal, never dying.

To prove the resurrection, Jesus quoted Moses, whom the Sadducees respected:

"At the burning bush, God called Himself 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him." (Luke 20:37–38 NKJV)

The scribes responded, *"Teacher, You have spoken well!"* (Luke 20:39 NKJV)

And no one dared ask Him another question.

Reflection:

Eternal life is real. Death does not end existence; it simply opens the door to the life that truly matters.

Personal Application:

Live today with eternity in mind. The resurrection is not a theory—it's your future in Christ.

Jesus Questions the Religious Leaders (Luke 20:41–44)

Jesus now turned the tables:

"How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand...'" (Luke 20:41–43 NKJV)

If David called the Messiah "Lord," how could He merely be David's son?

Reflection:

Jesus is not just David's descendant—He is David's Lord. He is both fully man and fully God.

Personal Application:

Don't put Jesus in a human box. He is infinitely greater than our categories or assumptions.

Warning Against Religious Hypocrisy (Luke 20:45–47)

In full view of the crowds, Jesus warned His disciples:

"Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation." (Luke 20:46–47 NKJV)

Reflection:

Religious pride is dangerous. Outward spirituality means nothing to God if the heart is corrupt.

Personal Application:

Beware of practicing a faith that is for show. God sees the heart. Seek humility, authenticity, and compassion.

Summary:

- Submit to Jesus' authority—He is the cornerstone of your life.
- Be faithful stewards of both earthly and heavenly responsibilities.
- Live with a heart set on the resurrection and eternal life.
- See Jesus for who He truly is—both David's Son and David's Lord.
- Reject religious pride; embrace genuine humility before God.