

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told how the Jews challenged Jesus' authority (1-8).
1. The challenge (1-3).
    - a) The time: One of the days when He was teaching in the temple and preaching the gospel.
    - b) The challengers: The chief priests, scribes and elders.
    - c) The questions: By what authority do you do these things? Who gave you this authority?
  2. The answer: Jesus asked them a question to force them to answer their own question: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" (3-4).
  3. The reaction to His question (5-7).
    - a) Their first reaction: "If we say that it was from heaven, He will ask why we didn't believe him."
    - b) Their second thought: "If we say it was from men, the people will stone us, for they were convinced that John was a prophet."
    - c) Their conclusion: "Teacher, we don't know."
  4. The response of Jesus: "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things" (8).
- B. Luke recorded Jesus' parable of The Husbandmen (9-18).
1. The facts of the parable (9-15a).
    - a) A man planted a vineyard, let it out to husbandmen, and went to a far country (9).
    - b) The husbandmen mistreated those sent to receive the owner's share of the crop (10-12).
      - (1) They sent the first away empty.
      - (2) They beat and shamefully treated another, sending him away empty also.
      - (3) They wounded a third and sent him away.
    - c) The owner finally decided to send his son (13-15a).
      - (1) He said, "They will respect him."
      - (2) Since he was the heir, they decided to kill him and take over the vineyard.
  2. Jesus applied the lesson of the parable (15b-18).
    - a) The owner's reaction.
      - (1) Jesus asked, "What will he do?"

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- (2) They said, "He will destroy them and give the vineyard to others." They said, "God forbid."
- b) The meaning of the Scripture.
  - (1) "The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner."
  - (2) Jesus explained: "Everyone who falls on the stone will be broken in pieces, and on whomsoever it falls it will grind him to powder."
- C. Luke told of the search for an excuse to hand Jesus over to the governor (19-47).
  - 1. Their reasons (19).
    - a) They feared the people.
    - b) They knew the parable referred to them.
  - 2. Their strategy (20-40).
    - a) Spies sent to listen to Him (20).
    - b) Their first thrust: The question of tribute to Caesar (21-26).
      - (1) Their flattering approach.
      - (2) The subtle question: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?"
      - (3) Jesus' answer:
        - (a) The denarius with Caesar's image on it.
        - (b) "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's."
      - (4) Their defeat.
        - (a) They couldn't use it against Him before the people.
        - (b) They kept still.
    - c) The Sadducees took up the battle (27-40).
      - (1) Their question was about the resurrection and the Law of Moses.
      - (2) Their hypothetical case: A woman married to seven brothers; whose wife will she be in the resurrection?
      - (3) Jesus demolished their argument.
        - (a) The marriage vow does not extend to the resurrection.
        - (b) The case of the Burning Bush proves there is life after death.
        - (c) God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

- (4) The scribes admit their defeat, "Teacher, you have spoken well." They did not dare risk another question.
3. Jesus' counterattack (41-47).
- a) His two-fold question about the Christ (41-44).
- (1) How can they say that He is David's son?
- (2) How can David call him Lord, since he is his son?
- b) His warning to the disciples (45-47).
- (1) In the hearing of all the people, He warned against the scribes.
- (2) He lashed out against their hypocrisy.
- (a) They loved long robes, salutations in the market places, chief seats at feasts.
- (b) For a pretence they made long prayers.
- (c) They will receive greater condemnation.

### *The Authority of Jesus Challenged*

#### *Scripture*

20:1-8 And it came to pass, on one of the days, as he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, there came upon him the chief priests and the scribes with the elders; 2 and they spake, saying unto him, Tell us: By what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3 And he answered and said unto them, I also will ask you a question; and tell me: 4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? 5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why did ye not believe him? 6 But if we shall say, From men; all the people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. 7 And they answered, that they knew not whence it was. 8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

#### *Comments*

*as He was teaching the people.*—Jesus' authority was challenged on one of those days when He was teaching in the temple. His whole ministry consisted in teaching, preaching, and performing signs to prove that He spoke the message of the heavenly Father. Jesus taught the people. It is one thing to teach a lesson where the concern is primarily with the content, but another thing to teach

a lesson to people. People were always in the mind of the Master as He taught them the lessons about repentance and righteous living. He taught them how to escape from Satan's clutches and how to serve God—lessons that also need to be taught today.

*and preaching the gospel.*—It is probably wrong to make too great a distinction between teaching and preaching. Jesus was a Preacher who taught the people. He taught crowds and He taught small groups; when He had the opportunity, He took time to teach one person. Teaching was the process by which He sought to get people to turn back to God.

The expression "preaching the gospel"—one word in Greek—gives us our word "Evangelize." It was the process of making people aware of the good news of salvation through Christ. It takes the whole story of the Bible to do this, not just a part of it.

The term "proclaim" or "preach" is used many times in the New Testament. It had to do with the spreading of the good news (Lk. 4:18). It does not suggest a difference in content, but the manner in which the good news was heralded by the gospel preacher.

All of these terms are brought together in one verse (Matt. 9:35) which tells of Jesus teaching in the synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of disease.

*there came unto him the chief priests.*—The enemy was always present, seeking to find an excuse to condemn Jesus. Priests, scribes, elders—all these should have been helping Jesus in His mission of teaching the people—were doing everything within their power to destroy Him.

*By what authority.*—They had two questions: (1) By what right are you doing these things and (2) Who gave you this right? Matthew says that He had just been cleansing the temple and healing a blind man (Matt. 21:4). It was difficult to condemn Him before the people for such work as that. Once before they had tried to discredit His miracles by saying that He performed them by the power of Beelzebub, but their effort was a miserable failure. Now they ask about "these things," vaguely suggesting that He had done something wrong. They couldn't bring themselves to join the people who praised God for the glorious things He was doing for them.

*I also will ask you a question.*—They had expected Him to answer as He had done on many occasions that God had given Him the right to perform miracles and teach the people. They could have twisted such an answer and brought the charge of blasphemy as they had so often done (John 5:17-18). But He saw through their

hypocrisy. He asked them a question that forced them to answer their own.

*The baptism of John.*—Was John's authority to baptize from heaven or from men? They discussed it and saw that if they should say from heaven, He would say, "Why, then, didn't you believe him?" John had declared that Jesus was the Lamb of God; that He was the Son of God; and that He was the one to baptize in the Holy Spirit (John 1:19-34). Why didn't they believe him? For a possible answer, see John 11:48.

On the other hand, if they should say that John baptized on human authority, they would have to answer to the people who believed that John was a prophet. They were not willing to risk being stoned by the people. "No, they couldn't say about John's authority."

*And Jesus said to them.*—Neither am I telling you by what right I am doing these things." There was no need to, for they had been forced by their own reasoning to admit that His authority was from God, just as John's was.

### *The Parable of the Husbandmen*

#### *Scripture*

20:9-18 And he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country for a long time. 10 And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. 11 And he sent yet another servant: and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty. 12 And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded, and cast him forth. 13 And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will reverence him. 14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir; let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16 He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. 17 But he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written,

The stone which the builders rejected,

The same was made the head of the corner?

18 Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.

### Comments

*And he began to speak unto the people.*—He was teaching the people when the priests and elders interrupted Him with their question about His "right to do these things." He silenced them by the question He asked and, according to Matthew, followed up His victory with the parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32). Then, according to Matthew; He introduced the parable of The Husbandmen by saying, "Hear another parable, (Matt. 21:33). The parable was spoken to the people, but the scribes and priests also heard it and were aware of the fact that He was talking about them.

*vineyard . . . husbandmen.*—The vineyard represents God's people, Israel. The husbandmen are the leaders—elders, priests, scribes. They were responsible for the harvest—fruit of righteousness in the lives of the people.

*And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant.*—The first was sent away empty; a second was beaten and shamefully treated and sent away empty also; a third was wounded and thrown out of the vineyard.

All this represents God's efforts throughout the years from the beginning of the kingdom at Sinai to the days of Jesus to get the leaders of the Jews to direct the people of the nation in the ways of righteousness.

*I will send my beloved son.*—This is such a clear reference to Jesus the Son of God that comment is unnecessary. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and many others had tried to get the nation to "do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8). John the Baptist had warned them of the necessity of producing the fruits of repentance. Then the Father sent His Son into the world, but "they that were his own received him not" (John 1:11; 20:21; Gal. 4:4).

*This is the heir; let us kill him.*—Jesus was aware of their murderous plot, and they knew it. But that didn't stop them for they were determined to destroy Him and take over completely. They were acting as if the vineyard was theirs and that Jesus was an intruder who was threatening their position and nation (John 11:48).

Jesus had foretold His death at the hands of the leaders of the

Jews on several occasions. In this parable, He represents it as an accomplished fact. His question was, "What therefore will the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?"

*He will come and destroy these husbandmen.*—The answer came from the people, since it is unlikely that the priests and scribes would give such an answer. According to Matthew, Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it" (Matt. 21: 43). So the vineyard represents the kingdom of God, the nation of Israel. Some assume that the nation to which it is to be given will be made up of Gentiles. But it will be composed of believers in Christ whether Jews or Gentiles (Eph. 2:16; Gal. 3:26-28; Col. 3:10-11). That nation is the spiritual kingdom of Christ, the church (Col. 1:13).

Are we producing the fruits of it? See Col. 1:6-12.

*And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.*—Perhaps this was the reaction of the people to the whole story: "God forbid that the beloved Son should be killed and that the deed lead to the destruction of the husbandmen." The whole senseless plot of the priests and scribes was abhorrent to the people. How strange that in a short time they could be led to cry out, "Let Him be crucified," and become parties to this awful deed (Acts 2:23)!

*What then is this that is written.*—The quotation is from Psa. 118: 22-23. To those who were saying that this thing was too awful to be true, Jesus asked, "What then is the meaning of this which is written in the Psalms?" The builders rejected the stone that is made the head of the corner. See also Isa. 28:16; Acts 4:11 and I Pet. 2:7.

*Everyone that falleth on that stone.*—Christ is that stone. To those who oppose Him, He is a stone in their pathway over which they stumble. When that Stone falls on them they will be pulverized and blown away like dust.

### *The Search For An Excuse*

#### *Scripture*

20:19-47 And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him in that very hour; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he spake this parable against them. 20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, who feigned themselves to be righteous,

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that they might take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the rule and to the authority of the governor. 21 And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the person of any, but of a truth teachest the way of God: 22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, 24 Show me a denarius. Whose image and superscription hath it? And they said, Caesar's. 25 And he said unto them, Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. 26 And they were not able to take hold of the saying before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 And there came to him certain of the Sadducees, they that say that there is no resurrection; 28 and they asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote unto us, that if a man's brother die, having a wife, and he be childless, his brother should take the wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died childless; 30 and the second: 31 and the third took her; and likewise the seven also left no children, and died. 32 Afterward the woman also died. 33 In the resurrection therefore whose wife of them shall she be? for the seven had her to wife. 34 And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: 35 but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: 36 for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the place concerning the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. 39 And certain of the scribes answering said, Teacher, thou hast well said. 40 For they durst not any more ask him any question.

41 And he said unto them, How say they that the Christ is David's son? 42 For David himself saith in the books of Psalms,

The Lord said unto my Lord,

Sit thou on my right hand,

43 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, and how is he his son?

45 And in the hearing of all the people he said unto his disciples, 46 Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love



salutations in the marketplaces, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; 47 who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater condemnation.

### *Comments*

*sought to lay hands on him.*—The scribes and priests knew that Jesus had been speaking of them in the parable of The Husbandmen, but they completely rejected His warning. They were ready at that very hour to arrest Him. All that kept them from it was their fear of the people who were still glorifying God for all that He had done for them. But they kept close watch on Him and sent spies to listen to Him as He taught the people, hoping that He might say something that would give them the excuse to turn Him over to the governor. They even attempted to flatter Him, hoping to throw Him off guard.

*Teacher, we know.*—According to Matthew, it was the Pharisees who sent the Herodians to set a trap for Jesus. The Herodians were a party of the Jews that supported the rule of the Herods whose power was derived from Rome. The Pharisees were, in their way, upholding the Law of Moses and submitting to the authority of Rome only because they had to. But these two opposing parties joined forces in an attempt to find an excuse to destroy Jesus.

What the Herodians said to Jesus was true: What He taught was right; He taught the way of God; He was impartial in dealing with men. They asked, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not?" This could have been a real problem to conscientious Jews, but the hypocrisy of the Herodians was poorly disguised.

*But he perceived their craftiness.*—They expected Him to answer "Yes" or "No." They were prepared to pounce on Him for whichever answer He would give. If He should say "yes," they were prepared to accuse Him of disloyalty to His people, the Jews. One of the favorite accusations against the early church was their supposed opposition to the Law of Moses (Acts 6:11; 26:22-23). If He should say "no," they were ready to report Him to the Roman authorities for disloyalty to the government under which He lived.

*Show me a denarius.*—It was a small coin with the image of Caesar on it. The superscription was Caesar's too. They had planned for two possible answers to their question, but there was only one possible answer to His question, "Whose image and superscription are on the denarius?" But He had two things to say to them that were

unexpected: "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

They had intended to catch Him on one or the other of the two issues involved in their question. He, however, caught them on both issues involved in His answer. Had they paid their taxes honestly? Were they giving to God the lives they owed Him?

*not able to take hold of the saying.*—He was more than a match for them; they couldn't twist His answer so as to use it against Him. They knew that the people were with Him. They marvelled at His answer, but kept still.

*And there came unto him certain Sadducees.*—Jesus had so completely routed the enemy in the first encounter that one wonders how the Sadducees found the courage to try their favorite question on Him. But people who hold to views like theirs usually keep on trying them out on everyone who will listen. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection or in angels or spirits (Acts 23:8). While the Herodians had been silenced, these Sadducees seemed confident that their question could not be answered by anyone holding to the doctrine of the resurrection.

*Teacher, Moses wrote unto us.*—Jesus frequently appealed to the Scriptures as He taught. They must have felt that they were on safe ground when they referred to Moses. They did quote accurately from Deut. 25:5 which said that if a man's brother died leaving a childless wife, he was to take the wife and raise up children for his brother. Their hypothetical case: One woman was married to seven brothers before she died. All this was perfectly legal according to Moses! Then the question: "In the resurrection—supposing there is such a thing—whose wife will she be, for they all had her for a wife?"

As things like this usually go, it is not too much to suppose that the Sadducees broke out laughing at their clever question, being certain that He couldn't answer it. Undoubtedly, they had tried it on many a man, and no one had ever been able to give a satisfactory answer. They had the only solution: There simply couldn't be such a thing as a resurrection!

*The sons of the world.*—Jesus' answer begins with a contrast between this world and the heavenly state of righteousness. Those who belong to this world marry and are given in marriage, but those who attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are they given in marriage. Marriage is for this age, but in the resurrection they are equal—in this respect—to the angels.

They are called sons of God because they have been raised from the dead.

*they that are accounted worthy to attain unto that world.*—Jesus does not imply that some will not be raised. He plainly stated that "all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29).

Paul also speaks of the "resurrection both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:22).

*But that the dead are raised.*—Jesus then proceeded to show—and from the Scriptures, too—that there is a life beyond the grave. Moses spoke of God, when he told of His appearing in the burning Bush, as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. But these men had long since been dead. Jesus explained: "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him." That is, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were living in the world beyond the grave where the eternal living God—the Lord—was their God.

*Teacher, thou hast well said.*—Some of the scribes were willing to admit that He had given the correct answer, a more gracious attitude than that of the Herodians who chose to remain silent. But there were no more questions of this kind for the Teacher!

*And he said unto them.*—It was His turn; they had asked Him two questions—according to Matthew, three—and now He had one for them: "How can they say that Christ is David's son?" The question seemed elementary, for all the Jews who knew anything about the Scriptures knew that Messiah was to be from the line of David. But the problem was greater than that. Jesus quoted Psalm 110:8, a Psalm of David, which said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet." Then Jesus asked the hard one: "Since David calls him Lord, how is he his son?"

The answer is perfectly clear to those who know and believe the Word of God. Paul gives it in Rom. 1:3-4. Luke had already explained it to Theophilus in his account of the conception and birth of Jesus. Jesus was the son of David "according to flesh," but He was demonstrated to be the Son of God "according to the spirit of holiness"—a reference to the eternal One whom John calls "The Word"—by the resurrection from the dead.

*And in the hearing of all the people.*—They could have answered

the question about David's son being Lord, but that would have compelled them to confess that Jesus was the Christ.

Now before all the people, He warned His disciples against these hypocrits. They walked in long robes and publically received the adulation of the people; they sought out the chief seats in the synagogues and at the feasts; they devoured widows' houses and for a pretense at being righteous, made long prayers. These were they who had sought to discredit the Lord Jesus Christ.

### *Summary*

It seems strange that the One to whom all authority in heaven and on earth had been should be challenged by men. But the chief priests and the scribes with the elders had the audacity in Jesus' day to say, "By what authority do you do these things? Who gave you this authority?" Their vague reference to "these things" that He was doing included not only the cleansing of the temple but also the healing of a blind man. What authority, indeed?

But Jesus asked them a question that forced them to answer their own, although they were not big enough to admit that His authority was from God, just as John the Baptist's was.

The parable of The Husbandmen shows just what the attitude of the Jews toward Jesus was. They were waiting for their opportunity to kill Him and take over the kingdom of God. They did put Him to death, but the kingdom was given to those who produce the fruit of righteousness—the believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Those who rejected their Messiah have already suffered one devastating blow—the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Another act of judgment awaits all who persist in rejecting Him as King. Like the stone that grinds to powder the one on whom it falls, the judgment of Christ will scatter those who oppose Him.

But the Jews persisted in their search for an excuse to destroy Him. They sent spies to listen in as He was teaching. They hoped to hear something on which to condemn Him; but He answered their questions and silenced them before the multitudes. They refused to answer His question about David's calling Christ "Lord" since He is David's son. Their hypocrisy was so evident that Jesus took occasion to warn the disciples against them.

### *Questions*

1. What was Jesus doing when His authority was challenged by the chief priests and scribes?

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2. Why were they not more specific in their charge?
3. What, if any, is the difference between preaching and teaching?
4. How did Jesus force the priests to answer their own question about His authority?
5. Why didn't Jesus tell them that He had all authority in heaven and on earth?
6. Why did He tell the parable of The Husbandmen?
7. How did He show that He was aware of the thing the Jews were planning to do to Him?
8. What did the sending of the various servants suggest as to the treatment the Jews had given the prophets?
9. Who is represented by the son in the parable?
10. What did they intend to do after killing the son?
11. What is suggested by the fact that the Lord of the vineyard was to destroy those wicked men?
12. To whom was the kingdom to be given?
13. Is the church as the kingdom of Christ producing the fruits of it?
14. Why did Jesus quote the prophecy about the rejected stone?
15. What was to happen to those on whom the stone fell?
16. Why were the scribes and priests searching for an excuse to kill Jesus?
17. What question did the Herodians ask?
18. What answer did they evidently expect Him to give?
19. How did His answer prevent them from accusing Him of wrongdoing?
20. Who had joined the Herodians in this attempt to trap Jesus?
21. How did the Herodians react to His answer?
22. Why did the Sadducees take up the issue?
23. What was their peculiar belief and how did it differ from that of the Pharisees?
24. What was the foundation of the story they told?
25. Wherein had they erred in applying the Law of Moses to the issue of the resurrection?
26. How did Jesus show them their mistake?
27. How did He describe the state of those in the resurrection?
28. What did Jesus mean by saying that God is not the God of the dead, but the living?
29. What question did Jesus ask them about David's son?
30. Why couldn't they answer it?