



The Gospel of Luke - Chapter Twenty

VI. Luke 19:28-21:38 - The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (continues)

Summary of Chapter Twenty

Jesus is challenged by the religious leaders as to the authority of his teaching. He responded by asking them a question about John the Baptist. They were fearful and would not answer, so neither would Jesus.

Jesus told them the Parable of the Tenants, which represents the treatment of God by the religious leaders. The owner goes away and leaves the tenants to care for the vineyard. The owner first sends some of his servants, i.e. the prophets, to claim his share of the crop but they refused to give any, beating some of the servants and killing others. Finally, the owner sends his only son. When the tenants see this, they say that, if they kill the heir, then they can have it all for themselves, which is what they did. The religious leaders knew Jesus had spoken out against them but did nothing directly about it. Instead, they sent in some spies.

The spies tried to trap Jesus by asking whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Cæsar or not. If he had said 'yes', then the Jewish people would be angry and he would have become unpopular. Had he said 'no', he was in danger of being charged with insurrection by the Romans. He got someone to give him a Denarius and asked, 'Whose inscription is on it?' They confirmed it was Cæsar, so he said they should give to Cæsar what was his and to God what belonged to him.

The Sadducees, who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, asked Jesus a question on marriage and the resurrection to trap him. They told the story of seven brothers. The first married a woman but died leaving no children. Under the Law of Moses, the next brother had to marry her but he too died, leaving no children. This continued until all seven and the woman too, were dead. They then asked whose wife she would be at the resurrection of the dead, as she had been married to all seven brothers, but Jesus corrects their misunderstanding of scripture, and of God's power, in that we will not have the same relationships in heaven; instead will live our lives purely to God.

The chapter concludes with a delightful account, which shows that the Messiah is not the Son of David but the Lord of David. Jesus then warns his disciples about the scribe's hypocrisy and indicates the disciples must not emulate them.

VI.d [Luke 20:1-8 - The authority of Jesus questioned](#)

Jesus spends much of his final week before his crucifixion teaching in the temple. The religious leaders continue to oppose him and to challenge his authority to teach and to make the claims about the Kingdom of God and his Sonship. However, Jesus is more than a match for them in debate.

¹ One day as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. ² Tell us by what authority you are doing these things, they said. Who gave you this authority?

³ He replied, I will also ask you a question. Tell me, ⁴ John's baptism – was it from heaven, or from men?

⁵ They discussed it among themselves and said, If we say, 'From heaven', he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' ⁶ But if we say, 'From men', all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.

⁷ So they answered, We don't know where it was from.

⁸ Jesus said, Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

[Luke 20:1-8](#)

Verse 1 adds to the accounts in Matthew 21:25 and Mark 11:20 by stating he preached the Gospel to all the people. Jesus not only purchased our salvation but he published it as well.

The question concerning Jesus' authority (vv.1-2) is closely associated with his cleansing of the temple, as is recorded in Luke 19:45-48 <<Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. It is written, he said to them, 'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers'. Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words>>. Jesus' counter-question (vv.3-4) confounds his opponents (vv.5-7).

[As he was teaching](#) is confirmed in Luke 19:47; as noted in v.1 and elsewhere in scripture, Jesus spent much of his time teaching the people and the leaders of the church.

[Doing these things](#) describes Jesus' cleansing of the temple, as well as his healing and teaching in the temple, and throughout his ministry. Because he is neither an official priestly authority nor a scribal authority, according to his questioners' sectarian standards, he continued to be resisted and challenged.

[John's baptism](#), i.e. the ministry of John, [was it from heaven](#), i.e. from God, [or from men](#), i.e. did it have a merely human origin?

To avoid the dilemma posed by Jesus' question (v.4), his opponents say they [don't know](#) because they lacked the courage of their convictions and feared the consequences of speaking against John the Baptist, whose divinely authorised ministry was also carried out apart from official Jewish authority. Their confession of ignorance, however, demonstrates that they had no basis upon which to assess Jesus' ministry. If they do not know whether John the Baptist was

from God, they could not know whether Jesus is either. Faced with such hostility, Jesus refuses to answer his opponents' question and exposes their ignorance.

VI.e Luke 20:9-18 - The parable of the tenants

This parable, while spoken to the people (v.1 and v.9), is directed to Jesus' opponents (Luke 19:47, v.1 and v.19), and is intended as an analogy with many referents to show that God, i.e. the owner (v.13), is taking away the kingdom from Israel.

This parable of judgment is addressed primarily to the religious leaders of Israel. The story draws on everyday life. Disputes between absentee landlords, their representatives, in this case a servant, and tenants were common. The attempts to seize the land by killing the rightful heir is bold but plausible. The key to understanding the story lies in v.19; the opponents of Jesus understand his story to be an accusation against them, yet they do not take Jesus' words to heart. The vineyard is a well-known metaphor for Israel. The son of the landlord his beloved son is rejected as the 'messianic stone'. The builders, a metaphor for leaders of Israel, kill the 'messianic stone'. This interpretation corresponds to the current tension between Jesus and his opponents, and the overall saving work of God, despite the rebellion of his people. Jesus' parabolic teaching either instructs or hardens its hearers.

⁹ He went on to tell the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. ¹⁰ At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ He sent another servant, but that one they also beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. ¹² He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

Luke 20:9-12

He sent. The man sent three servants, probably representing the OT prophets, to check on the tenants. The second and third servants, each received greater abuse than the one preceding him. Compare the three servants in Luke 19:15-25 'The Parable of the Ten Minas'.

¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him'.

Luke 20:13

My son whom I love, or my beloved son in some translations, recalls the words spoken by the Father to Jesus at his baptism: <<and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased>> (Luke 3:22), and in Matthew 3:17 <<And a voice from heaven said, This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased>>. Therefore, here it surely alludes to God's sending of Jesus to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom to Israel and their widespread rejection of him, which is stated in John 1:9-11 <<The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him>>.

¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir', they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours'. ^{15a} So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Luke 20:14-15a

Let's kill him was confirmed earlier in Luke 19:47 and later in v.19 <<Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him>>.

They killed him is a clear allusion to Jesus' approaching death.

^{15b} What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

Luke 20:15b

What then will the owner do to them? This introduces Jesus' interpretation of the parable. The owner, literally Lord, represents God the Father.

¹⁶ He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. When the people heard this, they said, May this never be!

Luke 20:16

God will kill or destroy those tenants. In a preliminary sense, this happened during the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70, but in a fuller sense it refers to final judgment.

May this never be! or surely not! The hearers have some sense that the parable applies to the people of Israel, and they are hoping that it does not mean that God will give the land of Israel, or the kingdom, to others. The final exclamation is the only difference offered by Luke to those in Matthew 21:33 and Mark 12:1.

¹⁷ Jesus looked directly at them and asked, Then what is the meaning of that which is written: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone?'

Luke 20:17

Jesus looked directly at them, making eye contact, to ascertain whether their response was genuine or just for show.

The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, which is quoted from Psalm 118:22. The rejected Son will become the head of the church, i.e. the people of God.

At the time of Jesus, Psalm 118:22-23 was already well known as a messianic psalm. Peter confirms this with these words before the Sanhedrin: <<He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone'>> (Acts 4:11). The opponents of Jesus can thus understand what he means:

- Stone refers to the Messiah.
- Builders are the leaders of Israel.
- Rejected echoes the theme of the persecution of the prophets and the Son of God.

The new or faithful Israel will accept the Son as the rightful messenger, heir and cornerstone of the messianic kingdom. For elsewhere we read: <<What are you, O mighty mountain? Before

Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!>> (Zechariah 4:7).

Both Mark 12:9 and 12:10 speak of reversal: <<What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. Haven't you read this scripture: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone>>. In v.9, God transfers responsibility for his people to others, and, in v.10, the rejected messianic stone is divinely vindicated and established as the cornerstone of a new building.

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.

Luke 20:18

Everyone who falls means everyone who stumbles at and rejects Jesus as the Messiah. This is confirmed by: <<and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured>> (Isaiah 8:14-15). Also by: <<and, A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for>> (1 Peter 2:8).

He on whom it falls refers to Christ's judgement on us at his Second Coming.

VI.f Luke 20:19-26 - Paying taxes to Cæsar

Realising that the parable of the wicked tenants (vv.9-18) was spoken against them (v.19), the Jewish leaders try to entrap Jesus in his words.

¹⁹ The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

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 they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.

Luke 20:19-20

They were afraid of the people. This could indicate either that they were afraid that the people would rebel and riot, thus bringing the Roman army against them, which would lead to bloodshed and also the loss of their authority. The latter is a key point for they could lose face with the people and their fear may have been that they would then lose all their privileges that they held so highly as their God-given right.

They sent spies. In Matthew 22:15 and Mark 12:13, they are identified as disciples of the Pharisees and the scribes but are clearly dressed as ordinary citizens in an attempt to trap Jesus into saying something they could then use against him before the Roman authorities. Jesus lived in a generation of vipers and scorpions but we must never forget that Satan can appear as an angel and a Pharisee as a follower of Jesus even today!

They hoped to catch Jesus in the words that, if they had only taken to heart, would have led them to eternal salvation; the very hope that Israel had waited for.

Governor can refer to a procurator or prefect, as we noted in Luke 3:1 <<In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar — when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judæa, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene>>. In this case, it refers to Pontius Pilate.

²¹ So the spies questioned him: Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

Luke 20:21

You teach the way of God is a true statement of fact but meant as an insincere compliment (v.20). They clearly did not know who it was that was among them.

²² Is it right for us to pay taxes to Cæsar or not?

Luke 20:22

Is it right or lawful? Taxes were a volatile issue in Israel. All of Rome's subjects, including the people of Israel, laboured under the empire's heavy taxation. Some Jews believed that paying any tax to pagan rulers contradicted God's lordship over his people. Since Jesus purports to be teaching the way of God, they figure that he must have an opinion on whether it is lawful to pay poll taxes or property taxes to the oppressive Roman emperor. A rejection of paying taxes would seem to entail rebellion against Cæsar and a willingness to pay taxes appears to compromise devotion to God.

By choosing Roman coins for their commerce, and there were other options available, the people had placed themselves under a moral obligation to pay taxes. If the civil authorities protect the civil rights of a people then the people should obey those civil authorities but God alone is our king and he alone is worthy of our praise and honour.

²³ He saw through their duplicity and said to them, ²⁴ Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?

²⁵ Cæsar's, they replied. He said to them, Then give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to God what is God's.

Luke 20:23-25

Give to Cæsar. The denarius has Cæsar's image on it and represents the tribute they should give to him. Jesus adds a more important command: people should give to God that which bears his image and likeness, namely themselves.

Jesus is not establishing a political kingdom in opposition to Cæsar, so his followers should pay taxes and obey civil laws. There are matters that belong to the realm of civil government and there are other matters that belong to God's realm. Jesus does not here specify which matters belong in which realm, but many Christian ethicists today teach that,



A denarius depicting Tiberius Cæsar

in general, civil government should allow freedom in matters of religious doctrine, worship and beliefs about God, and the church should not attempt to use the powers of government to enforce allegiance to any specific religious viewpoint. All forms of the Christian church throughout the world today support some kind of separation between matters of church and matters of state. By contrast, totalitarian governments usually try to suppress the church and subsume everything under the realm of the state. Historically, when the church and state have become too closely aligned, the result most often has been the compromise of the church.

Christians are to give themselves entirely to God because of his saving grace. Sacrificial language from the OT is used to denote the new life of Christians, for both body and soul belong to God. They are a living sacrifice: <<Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship>> (Romans 12:1), meaning that they are alive from the dead since they enjoy a new life with Christ. Living also means that they will not be put to death, as OT animal sacrifices were, for Christ has fulfilled what was predicted by those sacrifices. Whereas OT worship focused on offering animal sacrifices in the temple, Paul says that spiritual worship, in a broad sense, now includes offering one's whole life to God.

²⁶ They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

Luke 20:26

The wisdom of the one 'greater than Solomon', see Luke 11:31, thwarts this attempt to trap him in his speech. Even Christ's opponents were astonished and were reduced to silence. This is similar to Luke 14:4-6 <<But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away. Then he asked them, If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out? And they had nothing to say>>.

VI.g Luke 20:27-40 - The resurrection and marriage

The second and last attempt to entrap Jesus involves a well-crafted hypothetical example that the Sadducees believe refutes the doctrine of the resurrection.

²⁷ Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.

Luke 20:27

This is the only mention of the Sadducees in Luke although he does refer to them in Acts Chapters 4, 5 and 23. This Jewish group were a priestly sect and one view is that they claimed descent from Zadok, the high priest under David and who was mentioned several times in 2 Samuel and in 1 Kings.

It is the Sadducees who say there is no resurrection and this is the main issue in the following discussion. For some, the resurrection is from death to eternal death: <<those who have done evil will rise to be condemned>> (John 5:29). But for others: <<However, as it is written: No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him>> (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The Sadducees, including the high priest Caiaphas (AD18-36), were primarily of wealthy priestly families in Jerusalem. Josephus claims they were unfriendly, even to one another, and were unpopular (Jewish War 2.166; Jewish Antiquities 13.298). They could be cruel judges (Jewish Antiquities 20.199; Mishnah, Sanhedrin 7:2; Makkot 1:6). When Jesus disrupted their financial interests in the temple, he was arrested and condemned. James, the half-brother of the Lord, was later killed by a Sadducean high priest (Jewish Antiquities 20.200).

The Sadducees rejected the extra-biblical traditions of the Pharisees, perhaps embracing only the Pentateuch as being canonical (Jewish Antiquities 13.297; 18.16). This narrow canon may explain why they did not believe in the general resurrection of the dead, since it is not explicitly mentioned in the Pentateuch. Perhaps, for the same reason, they embraced human responsibility, which is emphasised in the Law of Moses in contrast to the determinism of another key group at the time called the Essenes (Jewish War 2.164; Jewish Antiquities 13.173). Jesus, when arguing for the resurrection, meets the Sadducees on their own ground by showing the implications of Exodus 3:6 <<Then he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God>>, instead of appealing to a more straightforward passage, e.g. Daniel 12:2 <<Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt>>.

²⁸ Teacher, they said, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. ³⁰ The second ³¹ and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. ³² Finally, the woman died too.

Luke 20:28-32

Moses wrote. The Sadducees' puzzle is based on the OT command that, if a man dies leaving no children, his brother is to marry the widow and take care of her. The Sadducees cite the OT law, of what is later called 'levirate marriage' from Latin levir, or brother-in-law, in which the surviving brother of a childless deceased man was obligated to marry his sister-in-law in order to provide for her needs and to preserve the deceased brother's family line.

The seven died, leaving no children. The example is carefully worked out so that no brother has a special claim to the woman.

³³ Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?

Luke 20:33

At the resurrection whose wife? Since neither Jesus nor the Pharisees could reply that she would equally be the wife of all seven, the Sadducees believed this illustration refuted belief in the resurrection.

³⁴ Jesus replied, The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,

Luke 20:34-35

Jesus first demonstrates the flaw of equating the coming age with this age. Whereas, the people of this age marry, those considered worthy of taking part in, or to attain to, that age and in the resurrection from the dead, do not marry. People of this age are also referred to as: <<people of this world>> (Luke 16:8).

We should all note the words of Jesus: those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection. Again, this emphasises that it is not about work but about obedience, faith and trust.

Examples of this are seen through these verses: <<They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead>> (Acts 4:2), and: <<Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead>> (1 Peter 1:3).

Neither marry nor be given in marriage. Marriage is not a permanent fixture in God's eternal purpose. The Sadducees were making two errors:

1. They do not know the scriptures well enough to know that scripture teaches the reality of the resurrection.
2. They do not know the power of God, i.e. his power to create a much more wonderful world than anyone can now imagine.

They neither marry nor are given in marriage implies that the present institution of marriage will not continue in heaven. But 'are like angels in heaven' means living without an exclusive lifelong marriage commitment to one person. This teaching might at first seem discouraging to married couples who are deeply in love with each other in this life, but some commentators claim that surely people will know their loved ones in heaven, and the joy and love of close relationships in heaven will be more, rather than less than it is here on earth.

I have no more knowledge than anyone else but I personally struggle to believe that relationships from this life will continue into the next life. If we have memory or knowledge of this life in eternity, surely we will still have memory of sin and that does not seem to fit with our understanding of our eternal life in perfect adoration to God. Conversely, if we don't remember how bad a sinful life was that may detract from our comprehension of just how glorious the new life is. Again, it is one of those issues that need not take up too much of our time, as we won't know until it happens.

Marriage is, in part, a preservative against sin through fornication and will not be needed in a sin free, perfect world. As there is no death in the next world, there appears to be no need for birth either, as there will be no spaces to refill and, therefore, no need for marriage and child-bearing. All of us there will be the children of God.

Jesus' reference to 'the power of God' suggests that God is able to establish relationships of even deeper friendship, joy and love in the life to come. That God has not revealed anything more about this through scripture indicates that the eternal glories awaiting the redeemed will be more splendid than anyone can begin to ask or think.

But as Paul writes: <<However, as it is written: No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him>> (1 Corinthians 2:9), and: <<Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us>> (Ephesians 3:20).

³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

Luke 20:36

Like or equal to the angels explains why resurrected believers no longer die, since angels are immortal. Matthew 22:23, Mark 12:18 and here, in the NIV translation of Luke, it tells us we will be like the angels but in several translations it says we will be equal to them. Although angels are natives of heaven and we will be like strangers, we will be equal in companionship and in our joint praise towards God.

God's children, children of the resurrection. The believer's relationship as a child of God becomes fully realised at the resurrection after Christ's return, as confirmed in Romans 8:23 <<Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies>>, and in 1 Corinthians 15:53-54 <<For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory>>.

³⁷ But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'. ³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.

Luke 20:37-38

In the account of the bush. Since the OT at that time did not have verses or chapters, Jesus refers to the passage in Exodus 3:1-4:17 in this manner. A similar example is a reference by Paul in Romans 11:2 <<God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah – how he appealed to God against Israel>>.

When the Lord calls himself the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob after their death, this indicates that he is still their God, and since only living people can have a God, he is not God of the dead, but of the living; therefore, there must be a resurrection.

The present tense in the quotation from Exodus 3:6 logically implies that when God spoke these words to Moses, God was still in covenant relationship with the patriarchs even though they had been dead for centuries. If the Pentateuch thus implies that the patriarchs are still alive to God, and if the rest of the OT points to the resurrection, as it does, then the Sadducees should recognise God's power to raise the patriarchs and all of God's people to enjoy his eternal covenant in a life beyond this one.

By citing the OT scriptures, Jesus explains the full power of God when it comes to the dead being raised. Exodus 3:6 cannot mean that God makes himself known to Moses as the God of the dead. Rather as the God of the patriarchs, i.e. the faithful covenant-keeping God; he is the God of the living. Abraham, therefore, continues to exist and to enjoy the blessings of God's covenant and hence will also be raised from the dead.

In Romans 8:35-39, Paul powerfully writes: <<Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him

who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord>>.

³⁹ Some of the teachers of the law responded, Well said, teacher! ⁴⁰ And no-one dared to ask him any more questions.

Luke 20:39-40

Jesus' argument is such that even some of the scribes remark Well said, Teacher. Once again, his opponents are silenced, as confirmed in Luke 13:17, 19:48, 20:19 and 20:26.

In Acts 23:6-9, we have: <<Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead. When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all). There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. We find nothing wrong with this man, they said. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?>>.

This is an example of using the facts to your own advantage!

VI.h Luke 20:41-44 - Whose son Is the Christ?

Jesus uses the words of King David to show that the Messiah is both son and Lord of David, with the emphasis on the latter role.

⁴¹ Then Jesus said to them, How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David? ⁴² David himself declares 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 David calls him 'Lord'. How then can he be his son?

Luke 20:41-44

How is it that they say that the Christ is the Son of David? Jesus answers his own question: scripture teaches that Jesus is more than David's son.

Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1 David himself declares, The Lord; that is, the God of Israel, said to my Lord, i.e. the Messiah.

As God, Jesus is David's Lord, but as a man he comes as his son, as we saw in the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3:31. Jesus himself confirms this in Revelation 22:16b <<I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star>>.

While in the temple, Jesus publicly raises a question that he has already discussed in private with his disciples: who is the Messiah of God? Is he essentially the son of David or the Lord of David? Jesus' point is not to deny that the Messiah is a descendant of David. The issue is that, in this passage from Psalm 110:1, there is no mention of the Messiah being the son of David. Rather the Messiah is here the Lord of David. Jesus affirms the divine inspiration of the Psalm through the Holy Spirit. The Lord, that is Yahweh, grants to David's Lord, i.e. 'Adonay, an exclusive place of honour at his right hand and helps David's Lord overcome his enemies. Jesus anticipates being exalted to the right hand of God and thus he far transcends any expectation of a merely political Davidic messiah.

Sit at my right hand. The Lord, i.e. Messiah is given the highest place of honour.

Since David calls the Messiah his Lord, how then can he be his son? That is, how can Jesus be only David's son? The Messiah is, in fact, greater than his father David, and thus David calls him Lord.

So in summary, and having dealt with malicious questions from his adversaries, Jesus now asked them concerning the long-awaited Messiah; that is, the Christ. Whose son is he? Their reply: 'The son of David' reflected the common understanding that the Messiah would be a royal descendant of David. Jesus then quotes from Psalm 110:1, one of the most important messianic texts in the OT, and the one most quoted in the NT. The Pharisees would have recognised this psalm of David as a divinely inspired messianic prophecy. In the psalm, David said that the coming Messiah; that is, David's son, will not be just a special human descendant from David; he will be David's Lord. Because the Pharisees acknowledged the messianic import of the psalm, they did not dare to ask Jesus any more questions. The fact that David's descendant Jesus would have a more prominent role and title than the ancestor David further indicates the uniqueness of the Messiah and, therefore, the greater honour that is due to him as the Son of God.

VI.i Luke 20:45-47 - Beware of the teachers of the law

Teachers of the Law are the Scribes, as we have seen on a number of occasions. Jesus provides a warning that these people do not always fulfil the role they are called to do in teaching the people about God. In fact, they place far more emphasis on their own self-worth than they do in their teaching ministry.

⁴⁵ While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁶ Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the market-places and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. ⁴⁷ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.

Luke 20:45-47

We have a similar account to this in Mark 12:38, but the account is greatly expanded in Matthew Chapter 23. Although they are teachers of the law, many of the scribes have become full of pride, cannot be trusted and must not be emulated in the church.

Luke concludes the preceding debates with a warning about the hypocrisy of the scribes. Although not all scribes deserved the following condemnation, as confirmed in v.39, and by Jesus' comment in Mark 12:34 <<When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to

him, You are not far from the kingdom of God. And from then on no-one dared ask him any more questions>>, the majority of them did deserve it. See Luke 11:45-12:1.

They walk around in flowing, ostentatious robes, and they love to be greeted; they love the places of honour. Jesus opinion of this is: <<Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the market-places>> (Luke 11:43), and: <<When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited>> (Luke14:7-8).

Seating at banquets was assigned to guests based on their rank or status, as were the best seats in the synagogues. Excavations of early Galilæan synagogues indicate that bench seats were built along the sides of the synagogue. In any meeting place, some seats are regarded as better than others.

While doing this, they devour widows' houses, probably while serving as executors of their estates, and for a show or pretence make lengthy prayers. Jesus' opinion is: <<And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you>> (Matthew 6:5-6).

As a consequence, they will be punished most severely or receive the greater condemnation This can be seen in both Matthew 23:13-36 and in Luke 11:37-52.