

## Sunday Morning Message

April 22, 2020

### Text – Luke 20:19 - 47

#### Introduction (vs. 19 – 20)

Last week we examined *the Parable of the Vineyard*, which is the parable referred to in v. 19 that the priests rightly surmised was spoken against them. It is possible that the parable referred to was *the Parable of the Wedding Feast*, which was not recorded at all in Luke's gospel, but was given exclusively in Matthew 22:1 – 14. This parable was also given within this same historical framework, and also brought forth an indictment against the leaders of Israel.

This week, as we continue our study in chapter twenty, we see the attempts of the religious leaders to ensnare the Lord Jesus in His words. The key statement in v. 20 is that these religious leaders and the people that they would hire “feigned themselves just men,” meaning that were not honest men who truly desired to learn. In reality, they were corrupt men who were simply seeking a statement from the Lord that they could use to get Him killed. They come to him with two more questions, and assume that his answer will either get Jesus in trouble with the Roman authorities, or with the people. Note – their first question regarding His authority was given in verse two of this chapter.

#### I. **The Scribes Trap Regarding Rendering Unto Caesar (vs. 21 – 26; Matthew 22:15 – 22; Mark 12:13 - 17)**

This event is also recorded by Matthew and Mark, which both tell us that the “spies” referred to here in Luke included both Pharisees and Herodians. The Herodians (also mentioned in Mark 3:6 in the geographical context of Galilee) were a political group, possibly made up of mostly Sadducees, who were the liberals of the day. The Herodians would be concerned about political matters, and were staunchly pro-Roman government. The Pharisees on the other hand hated the Roman government. The very interesting thing is that both of these groups (Pharisees and Herodians) despised each other, but both were also the bitter enemies of Christ.

Their first question involves the subject of tax money. Should God's people pay taxes? Note - The coin used in this illustration by Jesus that bore Caesar's image was the denarius. *The Parable of the Laborers in the Field* (Matthew 20:2 – 13), the worth of a denarius was equivalent to a day's labor. The particular problem with the denarius was also because it bore the image of Caesar on it, which to the Jew, would be a violation of the second commandment:

*"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;" (Exodus 20:4-5)*

According to Sproul:

Out of deference to their religious beliefs, the Roman occupiers allowed the Jews to mint their own coins without images of people on them. It is still possible to come across coins from ancient Israel decorated with emblems from nature: ears of corn, vine leaves, palm branches and so on. But the one thing they didn't have was portraits because that was considered an offence against the Ten Commandments. However, there were also many Roman coins in circulation, the most basic of which was the silver coin, the common monetary unit called the denarius which bore the likeness of Caesar. This coin indicated the reach and extent of the rule of Rome. Coinage bearing the image of the ruler of a nation was used as a sign of that nation's authority over subject nations, so in a sense the rule of a nation extended as far as their coinage was in circulation. These coins, however, also carried with them the notion of the divinity of the Emperor, something which was utterly repugnant to the Jew.<sup>1</sup>

These religious leaders thought they had Jesus in a secure trap. If He said, "Yes, they should pay taxes," then He ran the risk of angering the people of Israel who hated their Roman oppressors. If, however, He said, "No," then he would be in trouble with the authorities. His answer is very astute, and provides us with our over-riding principle regarding our submission to government, particularly in the area of taxation: We should give the government the things that we owe them, and to God what we owe Him.

## **II. The Sadducees Tale Relating to the Resurrection (vs. 27 – 40)**

In this second question, it is the Sadducees who present an *argumentum ad absurdum*, which is a method of refuting a claim by extending the logic of the opponent's argument to a point of absurdity. The claim that these Sadducees were making involved two truths that were held by their religious opponents, and also an assumption that was not clearly stated in one of the truths.

The first truth that we need to understand is from the Law regarding raising up seed to one's brother, found in Deuteronomy 25:5 – 10, which required that if one brother died and had no

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<sup>1</sup> R. C. Sproul, *A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 363.

children with his wife, then his brother was to marry the wife and “raise up seed” to his brother. The child that resulted from that union would be the heir of the brother that died.

The second truth referred to here in a mocking way was the truth of a coming resurrection. The Pharisees rightly believed in a resurrection: that someday, they would be resurrected and united with their God and loved ones either in Heaven, or in a future earthly messianic kingdom. Keep in mind, the Sadducees don’t believe in a resurrection. They were the liberal theologians of their day. They didn’t believe in miracles or angels, either.

The assumption that the Sadducees made, which was in error, was that in the resurrection, people remain in their marital state. That a wife remains a wife to her earthly husband “in the resurrection.” Jesus corrects them on their misunderstanding of the Scriptures.

Notice in v. 36 – “equal unto the angels” does not mean that believers become angels when they die, but they will be like the angels in that they will not procreate.

Notice in v. 37 – Jesus references Exodus 3:6

Notice in v. 39 - that “certain of the scribes” commended His answer. Either, His argument won them over and they were being sincere in their comment; or, they were just left without an argument and conceded the debate.

### **III. The Son’s Truth Rectifying His Relationship with David (vs. 41 – 44)**

The reference here that Jesus was making was from Psalm 110:1:

*"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Psalm 110:1)*

Jesus makes the point that though He is humanly a son of David (see the genealogical record of Matthew 1 and Luke 3), He is also David’s Lord.

### **Conclusion (vs. 45 – 47)**

The Lord concludes this chapter with a scathing rebuke and a warning to everybody regarding the religious leaders, particularly the Scribes.

Matthews Gospel devotes an entire chapter to rebuking these leaders. Jesus states in Matthew that these Scribes “sit in Moses’ seat,” meaning they are the authorities within Judaism in the interpretation of the Scriptures. They would be the ones that would tell Israel what God would want them to do, or to not do. They had an awesome responsibility, but they abused their privilege, by taking advantage of the people. (See Matthew 23)