LUKE 20

The Stone the Builders Rejected

four questions in the temple — authority, a vineyard, a coin, a resurrection — and the question only Jesus could ask

> *"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 20:17

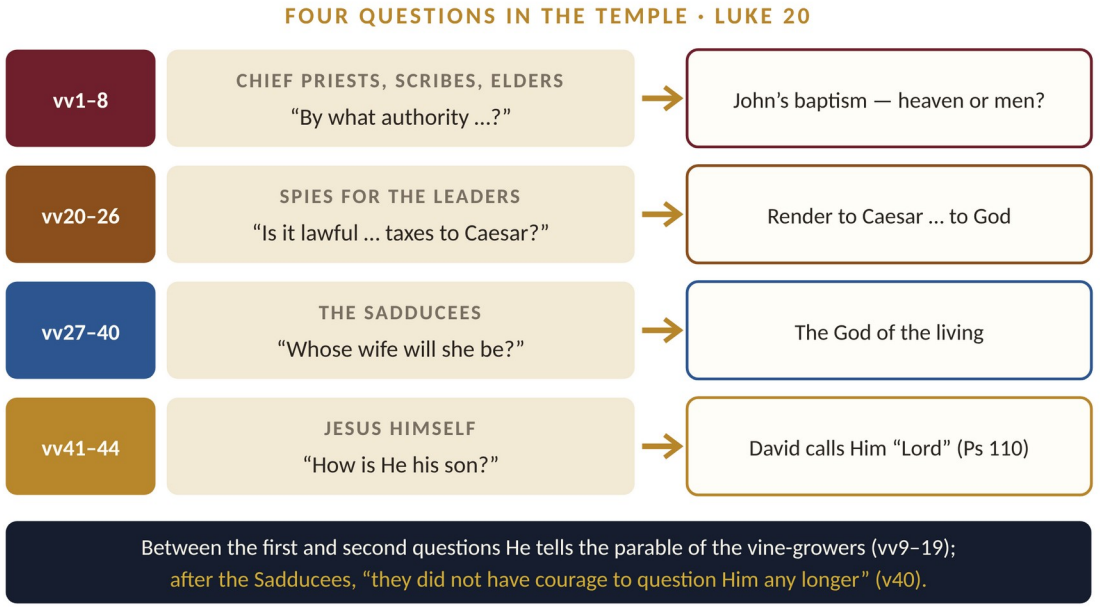
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where we are in Luke

1. Luke 19 ended with Jesus in the temple after driving out the sellers: “He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to”…

2. The questioners are the whole Jewish leadership.

3. The tax question was a live wire.



By What Authority?

The Sanhedrin demands His credentials, and Jesus asks about John

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?"

DAVID GUZIK

Not sincere seekers; more about winning than truth.

R.C. SPROUL

He turned the tables; diplomacy over valor — but they knew.

MATTHEW HENRY

Bury the knowledge you have and you are denied more.

ἐξουσία

EXOUSIA · "AUTHORITY"

The right and power to act — not raw strength (dynamis) but lawful authority.

The Beloved Son and the Rejected Stone

A vineyard, beaten slaves, a murdered heir, and the cornerstone that crushes

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'?

DAVID GUZIK

They didn't buy it or make it; "This could never be us."

R.C. SPROUL

Isaiah 5's vineyard; trip over Jesus and He will crush you.

C.H. SPURGEON

Bolder and more wicked; yield the fruit to Him who has the right.

MATTHEW HENRY

A guilty conscience needs no accuser.

ἀγαπητός
AGAPĒTOS · "BELOVED"

Dearly loved, the only and treasured one.

The parable's parts

THE PARABLE'S PARTS · LUKE 20:9–18 · ISAIAH 5:1–7

the owner	vv9, 13, 15	God, the LORD of the vineyard
the vineyard	v9	Israel — "the house of Israel" (Isa 5:7)
the vine-growers	vv9–16	Israel's leaders (v19: "against them")
the slaves, beaten	vv10–12	the prophets sent again and again
"my beloved son"	vv13–15	Jesus — thrown out and killed
"others"	v16	new stewards: Jesus' apostles and church
the stone	vv17–18	the rejected Son made cornerstone

"they understood that He spoke this parable against them" (v19)

Match each piece of the story on the left to what it stands for on the right; the gold bar is the beloved son, the turning point of the parable.

Render to Caesar, Render to God

Spies, flattery, a denarius, and the image on the coin

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.

DAVID GUZIK

Citizens of heaven and earth; God's image on everyone.

R.C. SPROUL

Due taxes, but not worship; God alone is worshiped.

MATTHEW HENRY

Not bound to Caesar's religion; in sacred things God is King.

πανουργία
PANOURGIA · "TRICKERY"

Literally "all-working" — readiness to do anything, and so cunning, craftiness.

Whose likeness?

WHOSE LIKENESS? · LUKE 20:24–25



a denarius — "Caesar's" (v24)

about a day's wage · Tiberius

TO CAESAR

what bears his image: taxes, honor, obedience under God (Rom 13:7)

TO GOD

what bears His image: you — "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27); worship belongs to Him alone

"He's due taxes, but not worship." — Sproul

The coin bears Caesar's image, so give it back to him; you bear God's image, so give yourself to God.

The God of the Living

Sadducees, seven brothers, one widow, and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

LUKE 20:27

Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection),

DAVID GUZIK

The departed in the Lord live; we know where they are.

R.C. SPROUL

Sadducees and the Torah; better than we can imagine.

C.H. SPURGEON

A living God of living men; Abraham is Abraham still.

MATTHEW HENRY

Take away the resurrection and religion falls.

ἀνάστασις

ANASTASIS · "RESURRECTION"

From ana (up) and histēmi (to stand): a standing up again.

David’s Son and David’s Lord

Psalm 110, the Messiah’s true identity, and a warning about religious show

LUKE 20:47

who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

DAVID GUZIK

Do you really know who I am? Reality, not image.

R.C. SPROUL

Psalm 110 most quoted; Adonai is reserved for God.

MATTHEW HENRY

Dissembled piety is double iniquity.

κύριος
KYRIOS · “LORD”

Master, owner, lord — and in the Greek Old Testament the word that stands for the divine name, the LORD.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Honest questions get answers; traps get questions.

Guzik: “Jesus had great care and compassion for the sincere seeker, but not for cynical critics and manipulators.”

2

They reckoned instead of repenting.

Syllogizomai (v5) — they calculated.

3

The vineyard was never theirs.

Guzik: “The vinedressers didn’t buy the vineyard, and they did not make it.”

4

The Son knew He would be killed.

“I will send my beloved son” (v13) echoes the Father at the baptism (3:22).

More to carry

5

One stone, two outcomes.

Fall on it and be broken; let it fall on you and be winnowed to dust (v18; likmaō).

6

“Others” is not “never again.”

The vineyard goes to others (v16) — new stewards under Christ.

7

Give back to God what bears His image.

Caesar’s face on the coin, God’s image on the man (Gen 1:27).

8

Present tense, living saints.

“I am the God of Abraham” (Exod 3:6) — not “was.”

Talk it through

1. The leaders asked what answer would cost them least, not what was true. Where am I tempted to calculate rather than simply obey what I already know?

2. The vineyard belonged to the owner; the tenants only worked it. What part of my life am I treating as mine that really belongs to God?

3. Jesus is a stone you either fall on and are broken, or one that falls on you. What does it look like for me to be broken on Him rather than crushed by Him?

4. I bear God's image the way the coin bore Caesar's. What would it mean this week to "render to God" what is His — my time, body, money, worship?

5. God is the God of the living, and those who die in the Lord live. How does the resurrection change how I grieve, and how I face my own death?

CLOSING

Luke 20 is a chapter of traps, and every one closes on the men who set it. The Son the builders rejected is the cornerstone; the coin goes to Caesar and the man goes to God; the God of Abraham is the God of the living; and David's son is David's Lord. Fall on the stone and be broken, give Him what bears His image, and beware the religion that looks long and prays long but loves little.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Luke study page.