

The Day of Questions (20:1-8)

1 Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him 2 and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"

- Jesus is now teaching in the temple courts, proclaiming the Good News.
- These groups of leaders might have been a delegation from the Sanhedrin.
- This begins what has been called *The Day of Questions*. The Wisdom of God would enable Jesus to defeat all their attempts at entrapment.
- Presumably they wish to know by what authority He has cleansed the Temple. Jesus' actions were outrageous to them, but public opinion (and God's Providence) was keeping them from seizing Him for the time being.

3 But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: 4 The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?" 5 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 6 But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where it was from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

- Remember that teaching was done by people posing each other questions.
- Jesus' question disarms them on several levels.
 - If John's baptism were from God, they should have believed him.
 - They feared the people's reaction if they said his teaching was from men.
 - Most important, if John's baptism were from Heaven, they then had to believe that Jesus was really the Messiah. To accept John's ministry would also mean accepting what he had said about Jesus. "He catches the wise in their own craftiness..." (Job 5:13a).

The Wicked Vinedressers (20:9-19)

9 Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. 12 And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out.

13 "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.' 14 But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' 15 So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"

16 “He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.” And when they heard it they said, “Certainly not!” 17 Then He looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone’? 18 Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” 19 And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people—for they knew He had spoken this parable against them.

- Another parable about the coming loss of privilege by Israel.
 - The vineyard is Israel, and a long time had passed since God had planted them there.
 - The Jews had a history of abusing or even killing the prophets – and the vinedressers would now kill the owner’s son.
 - God would judge them, and end their stewardship.
- The people cannot imagine that God will bring judgment.
- Jesus refers to Himself here as the rejected stone, the chief cornerstone of Psalm 118, a critical Messianic psalm. Jesus became the most important stone!
- Later, before the council, Peter used Psalm 118 to refer to Jesus: “This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (see Acts 4).

Render Unto Caesar (20:20-26)

20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. 21 Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: 22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

23 But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me? 24 Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's." 25 And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 26 But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.

- The religious leaders were now trying to have the Romans notice Jesus and punish Him. Some Jews found the head tax offensive. In Matthew's Gospel, the Lord also called them hypocrites. It was obvious that Caesar was their king.
- "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.... But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.... because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:1ff).

Jesus Challenged Concerning the Resurrection (20:27-40)

27 Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, 28 saying: “Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. 31 Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. 32 Last of all the woman died also. 33 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.”

34 Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37 But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ 38 For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.”

39 Then some of the scribes answered and said, “Teacher, You have spoken well.” 40 But after that they dared not question Him anymore.

- The Sadducees didn’t believe in the authority of any books of the Bible outside of the Torah, the five books of Moses. They denied the resurrection because they didn’t think it could be found there.

- Many cultures had **levirate marriage**, in which a man was obligated to take his relative’s widow as a wife. In Israel, to refuse this duty was disgraceful.
 - It was important that no family line be extinguished.
 - Widows could then be supported rather than have to rely on charity.

- Matthew gives us the additional detail that Jesus told them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).
 - People can teach false doctrine because they fail to understand the full teaching of the Word.
 - People can teach bad doctrine due to a lack of faith in what God can do.

- In the resurrection, our relationships will be different. We will no longer engage in marriage or in marital relations, and we will be immortal.
- Jesus proves the truth of the resurrection from the Torah (Exodus 3:6). There, God calls Himself the God of the three patriarchs, as if they were still living.
- Even some of the scribes acknowledged the wisdom in Jesus’ answer! This ended their questions and their attempts to entrap Him.

How is Messiah David’s son? (20:41-44)

41 And He said to them, “How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? 42 Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, 43 till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’ 44 Therefore David calls Him ‘Lord’; how is He then his Son?”

- Jesus now teaches **them**, questioning them about a critical Messianic prophecy in Psalm 110. He points out that Messiah is both David's **son** and David's **Lord**. This riddle can only be solved if Messiah is something more than just a man.
- Messiah is also invited to sit on the right hand of God, and share God's authority. How can Messiah do this?
- Also, note how David is prophesying two comings of the same Messiah. At His first coming, He is promoted to the throne, and at His second coming, He returns to reign.
- Psalm 110 is the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament.

Beware of the Scribes (20:45-47)

45 Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 46 “Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 47 who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

- Long robes indicated wealth or a life of ease.
- Jesus promises a stricter judgment for those who defraud the widows.

The Widow's Mites (21:1-4)

1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2 and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. 3 So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; 4 for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

- This is the last of seven widows in Luke.
- This poor widow was dropping in the smallest coins that were used. God's scales are very different from our scales!

Judgments and the Coming of the Son of Man (21:5-28)

5 Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 6 "These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

- Some people see this section as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD; others see it as being mostly about the Second Coming.
- The Temple was known as the most beautiful building in the world, built of white marble and decorated in extreme opulence. But Jesus shocks them with a prophecy of the complete destruction of the Temple.
- So completely did the Romans destroy the Temple that even the foundation stones were ordered to be dug up.

7 So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"

- The confused disciples do not understand the Lord's two comings.

8 And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them. 9 But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately." 10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."

- An initial sign of danger is the appearance of false messiahs. Many would claim that they were the Messiah and that the end was near.

12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13 But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers,

relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls."

- Jesus never "sugar-coated" the truth of what His followers could expect. Even before Jesus' death, believers were being expelled from the synagogues.
- Persecution served to create a greater platform for the Gospel to spread.
- The Lord warns of betrayal even by those closest to us.
- Those who endure and do not fall away will possess their souls like a prize.

20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25 "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

27 *“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”*

- This description of end-times events does seem to line up with Matthew’s account, in Matthew 24.
- The events of 70 AD were horrendous, with Jewish casualties being perhaps as high as 1,300,000. Additionally, perhaps 100,000 were taken to Rome as slaves.
- It was not until 1967 AD that a Jewish government took control of all Jerusalem for the first time since 63 BC. But Jesus’ language appears to have the Great Tribulation in mind, and not 1967 AD.
- When we see all these things coming to pass, we can know that the return of the Son of Man in glory is at the door. When you see these things beginning to happen, He says to lift up your head, because your redemption is drawing near!
