

CONCERNING THE WAY

May 21, 2012

LESSON 138: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



Chapter 19 (Cont.)

This next section (19:28-21:38) describes the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem. Jesus' will go to Jerusalem to formally present Himself to the nation as the Messiah. After that He will enter the temple and teach there for several days. Everyone who witnessed these events would have clearly understood that He was presenting Himself as the Messiah, who could bring in the kingdom. Up to this time Jesus had not wanted to be openly called Messiah. But now He allowed it and even encouraged it. Everything He did over these several days was designed to call attention to the fact that He is the Messiah. The events described here took place in what is called the Passion Week, starting with Sunday, which we now call Palm Sunday.

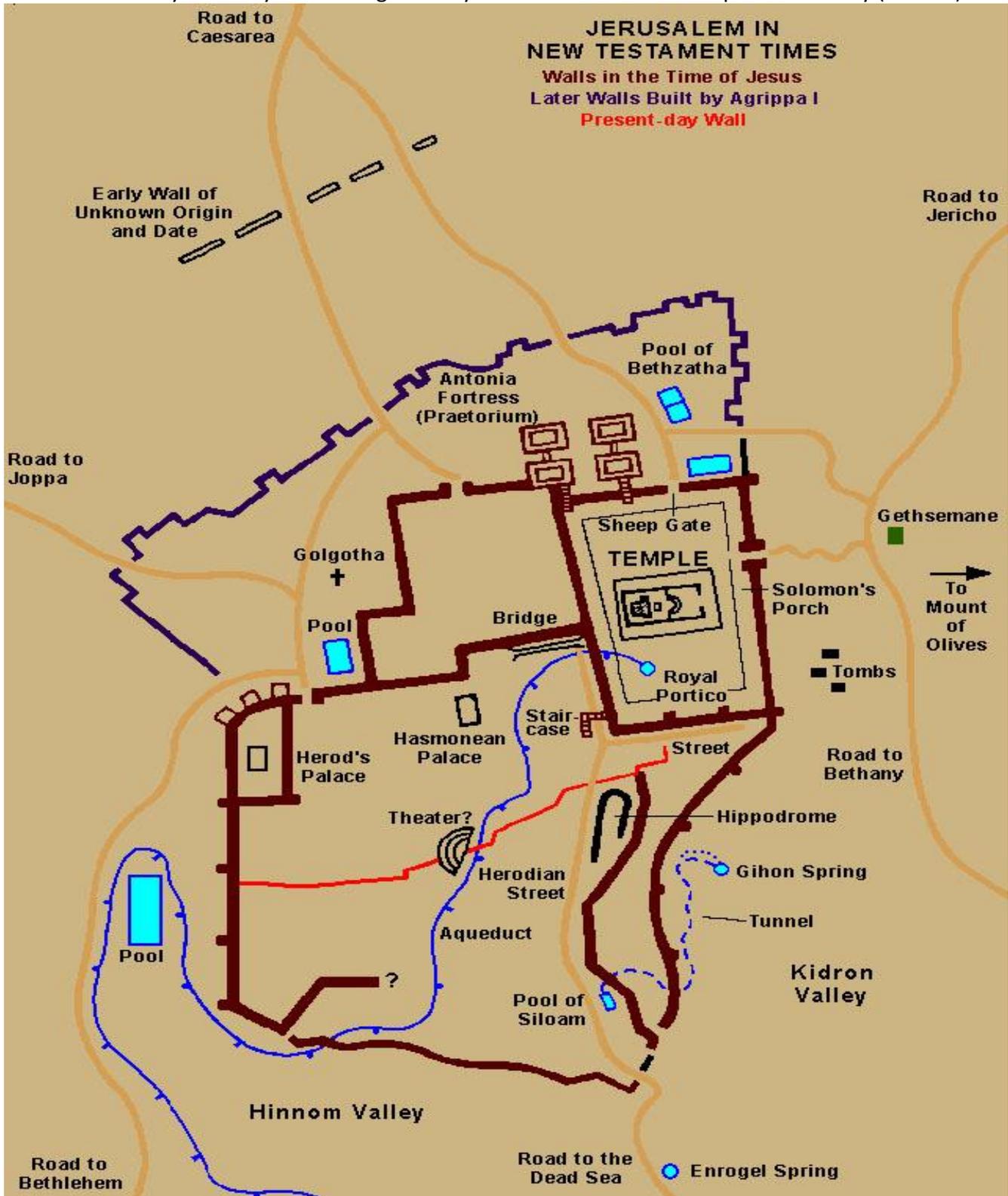
Luke 19:28-35 After Jesus had said this, he traveled on and went up to Jerusalem. (29) When he came near Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples on ahead (30) and said, "Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter, you will find a colt tied up that no one has ever sat on. Untie it, and bring it along. (31) If anyone asks you why you are untying it, say this: 'The Lord needs it.'" (32) So those who were sent went off and found it as he had told them. (33) While they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" (34) The disciples answered, "The Lord needs it." (35) Then they brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it, and Jesus sat upon it.

Here's how Matthew describes this event, and he gives us a little more information:

Matthew 21:1-7 When they came near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples on ahead and (2) said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you. At once you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it. Untie them, and bring them to me. (3) If anyone says anything to you, tell him, 'The Lord needs them,' and that person will send them at once." (4) Now this happened to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet when he said, (5) "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Look, your king is coming to you! He is humble and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt of a donkey.'" (6) So the disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. (7) They brought the donkey and the colt and put their coats on them, and he sat upon them.

- From Jerusalem to Jericho was only seventeen miles, and now Jesus had almost reached his goal. Jerusalem was just ahead. Jesus was about to ride into Jerusalem in a way that would be an obvious claim to be the Messiah, God's Anointed King.
- It was a courageous thing to ride into Jerusalem in such a public way when there was already a price on His head there. He could have slipped into the city unseen in the middle of the night, but He purposely entered the city in a way that put all the attention on Himself.
- This was Jesus' last appeal to the nation. Even though the religious leaders throughout the country had already rejected Him, He gave the leaders in Jerusalem one more chance to accept Him as King and escape judgment.

- Matthew is quoting Zechariah 9:9-10, which predicted the Messiah would ride on a donkey. This was not the normal way that kings arrived in cities; they usually came as conquerors riding on horses. A colt was a symbol of peace.
- Though all four Gospel accounts include the Triumphal Entry, only Matthew mentioned a donkey along with the colt. Some call this a contradiction, but the simple answer is that when Jesus rode the colt, the mother donkey naturally went along. He may have ridden each animal part of the way (verse 7).





Luke 19:36-40 As he was riding along, people kept spreading their coats on the road. (37) He was now approaching the descent from the Mount of Olives. The whole crowd of disciples began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen. (38) They said, "How blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" (39) Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell your disciples to be quiet." (40) He replied, **"I tell you, if they were quiet, the stones would cry out!"**

Matthew 21:8-11 Many people in the crowd spread their own coats on the road, while others began cutting down branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. (9) Both the crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed him kept shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! How blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (10) When he came into Jerusalem, the whole city was trembling with excitement. The people were asking, "Who is this?" (11) The crowds kept saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, the man from Nazareth in Galilee."

- What the crowds were saying fulfilled Psalm 118:25-26, which says "LORD, SAVE US! LORD, please grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD." ("Hosanna" means "save now"). This is a request for the Messiah to come. We have to assume that many of these were true believers in Jesus, because Luke calls them the "crowd of disciples" in verse 37. But the majority only saw Jesus as "the prophet Jesus" (Matthew 21:11), and were expecting Him somehow to defeat the Romans and restore the kingdom to Israel (which He would have done if the religious leaders would have repented and believed in Him). They thought Jesus was the prophet that was said to come by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15).
- But just five days later, these same crowds—probably disappointed by His meek submission to arrest and torture by the Jewish and Roman rulers—were calling for His crucifixion, wanting the zealot Barabbas released instead, who had led a rebellion against the Romans (Matthew 27:21-22).
- As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the entire city saw the crowds with him and heard what they were saying,

and asked, Who is this? Since Jesus had usually avoided the city, the people there did not know Him. Those that were following Jesus from out of town kept answering; this is Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.

- The Pharisees understood the meaning of what was going on, because they told Jesus to make His followers stop calling him Messiah or King. Jesus told them that it had to happen, there had to be a proclamation that He is the Messiah and He has come. If not people, then inanimate objects would be caused by God to testify for Him. All history had pointed toward this single, spectacular event when the Messiah publicly presented Himself to the nation, and God wanted that to be known.



Luke 19:41-44 When he came closer and saw the city, he began to cry over it, (42) saying, "If you had only known today what could have brought you peace! But now it is hidden from your eyes. (43) For the days will come when your enemies will build walls around you, surround you, and close you in on every side. (44) They will level you to the ground-you and your children within you. They will not leave one stone on another within you, because you didn't recognize the time when God came to help you."

- This is Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. Coming from the Mount of Olives you can see the whole city of Jerusalem, a magnificent view (see map). As Jesus came to a turn in the road he stopped and wept over Jerusalem. He knew what was going to happen to the city. This terrible prophecy was fulfilled in a.d. 70, when the Roman army under Titus destroyed the temple completely. The destruction of the city and scattering of its people was completed in a.d. 135. The tragedy was that if only they would have accepted Jesus as their Messiah it never would have happened. So, the tears of Jesus here are the tears of God when he sees the unnecessary pain and suffering that human beings bring on themselves by rebelling against his will.
- Do you see what Jesus said here? He's holding the people of Jerusalem accountable for knowing when He, the Messiah, would come! How could they have known? Because the prophet Daniel was given that precise information over 500 years before, and he wrote it down in his book (Daniel 9:25-26). Daniel and his fellow Jews were in exile in Babylon at this time, after King Nebuchadnezzar had conquered what was left of Israel. Daniel was in prayer, confessing his sin and the sins of Israel, and asking God to forgive and restore Israel and the Temple, and the angel Gabriel appeared to him and said:

Daniel 9:22-26 “Daniel, I’ve come now to give you understanding. At the beginning of your petitions an answer went out, and I have come to give it, for you are treasured by God. So consider the message and understand the vision: Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city— to bring the rebellion to an end, to put a stop to sin, to wipe away injustice, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince will be seven weeks and 62 weeks. It will be rebuilt with a plaza and a moat, but in difficult times. After those 62 weeks the Messiah will be cut off.

- There is more to the prophecy and we won’t go into great detail about this here (see the Daniel study for a comprehensive look at this passage), but understand that the 70 weeks are weeks of years, and some smart men have done the math and proven that the prophecy of the 69 weeks was fulfilled to the day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. God had expected the scribes and scholars of Israel to know and expect when the Messiah was to come! They hadn’t bothered to keep track all those years.

On Monday evening Jesus returned to Bethany, a village close to Jerusalem where He had been staying with Mary and Martha (Mark 1:11). Tuesday He came back to Jerusalem and entered the temple mount (see map).

Luke 19:45-46 Then Jesus went into the temple and began to throw out those who were selling things. (46) He said to them, "It is written, 'My house is to be called a house of prayer,' but you have turned it into a hideout for bandits!"

- Matthew 21:12-13 tells us that He “threw out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and overturned the moneychangers' tables and the chairs of those who sold doves”. As He’s throwing them out, He quotes from Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11.
- In the temple complex there were people who sold animals for sacrifices. If you came from out of town, you didn’t even have to bring your own animals, you could just buy an animal at the temple. This was usually easier than bringing your own, because there were temple inspectors to make sure your animal was perfect, with no defects. So, you could be a pilgrim traveling to Jerusalem and go to the temple, buy an animal and have it offered as a sacrifice without having anything to do with the animal. Having your sins covered over became a very impersonal system, just a formality.
- Also, only local currency was accepted at the temple, so there were money changers there that would take your foreign money and exchange it. But, of course, there was no accountability in making sure it was a fair exchange. The money-changers made a huge profit, and the temple priests got a cut. It was legalized robbery.
- And then, as Jesus said, the temple area was supposed to be a house of prayer, but with the noise of the animals and the loud bartering of the money-changers and animal-sellers, it was certainly not a place conducive to prayer and worship.

Luke 19:47-48 Then he began teaching in the temple every day. The high priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him, (48) but they couldn't find a way to do it, because all the people were eager to hear him.

- We should recognize the courage it took for Jesus to do this. He knew that eventually He would be taken and put to death; in fact, He was goading them to do it. Every time he spoke he took his life in his hands. Our courage should match the courage of our Lord. He left us an example that we should never

be ashamed to show who we belong to and whom we serve.

Chapter 20

The events in this chapter are believed to have taken place on Wednesday of Passion Week.



Luke 20:1-8 One day while he was teaching the people in the temple and telling them the good news, the high priests and the scribes came with the elders (2) and asked him, "Tell us: By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" (3) He answered them, "**I, too, will ask you a question. Tell me: (4) Was John's authority to baptize from heaven or from humans?**" (5) They discussed this among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' (6) But if we say, 'From humans,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." (7) So they answered that they didn't know where it was from. (8) Then Jesus told them, "**Then I won't tell you by what authority I am doing these things.**"

- This chapter describes what is usually called the Day of Questions. It was a day when the Jewish leaders

– high priests, scribes, elders, etc., came to Jesus with question after question designed to trap him, and he answered them in a way that frustrated them and left them speechless.

- The chief priests were the temple officials; the “scribes,” or teachers of the law, were made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees; and the elders may have been laymen who were political leaders. These men were the religious leaders that made up the Sanhedrin, the supreme council and governing body of the Jews. The Sanhedrin was obviously trying to come up with a formal charge against Jesus.
- This was a logical question to ask – after all, to ride into Jerusalem like He did and then to take the law into His own hands and cleanse the Temple – He had upset the normal “religious” atmosphere of the temple, and they wanted an explanation.
- This question of authority was very important to these guys. They always quoted another Rabbi for their authority. Rabbi so and so said this, Rabbi So and So confirmed this teaching, etc. No one would have claimed his own authority for anything he taught. What they wanted Jesus to do was to directly claim that He was the Messiah and the Son of God. Then they could charge Him with blasphemy and could arrest Him on the spot. But He wouldn’t do that because it was not quite time yet.
- Jesus’ reply back to them was clever, because it turned the question back on them, and the answer to Jesus’ question would have answered their question. Everyone knew that John claimed His authority came from God, but they couldn’t say that.

Luke 20:9-18 Then he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and went abroad for a long time. (10) At the right time he sent a servant to the farmers in order that they might give him his share of the produce of the vineyard. But the farmers beat him and sent him back empty-handed. (11) He sent another servant, and they beat him, too, treated him shamefully, and sent him back empty-handed. (12) Then he sent a third, and they wounded him and threw him out, too. (13) "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I'll send my son whom I love. Maybe they'll respect him.' (14) But when the farmers saw him, they talked it over among themselves and said, 'This is the heir. Let's kill him so that the inheritance will be ours!' (15) So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? (16) He will come and destroy those farmers and give the vineyard to others." Those who heard him said, "That must never happen!" (17) But Jesus looked at them and said, "What does this text mean: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'? (18) Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

The meaning of this parable is pretty clear. What does the vineyard stand for (Isaiah 5:1-7)? Who are the tenants of the vineyard? Who is the owner of the vineyard? Who are the servants or messengers sent to the vineyard by the owner? Who is the owner’s son? Who are the others that the vineyard will be given to?

- This parable tells us some important things:
- The tenants did not create the vineyard. The one who created it just leased it to them. In the same way, Israel didn’t create their land, it belonged to God. He created it and is still the owner. He was leasing it to the Jews, expecting them to use it well and return a profit to Him. In the same way, the things that we have been given were given by God and He expects us to put them to good use and glorify Him.
- It tells us about human sin. The sin of the tenants was that they refused to give the owner what He was due and wanted to control what they had no right to control. In the same way, we sin when we do not

give God His proper place and try to take the power and control over our lives and possessions which belong to Him.

- It tells us about human responsibility. The owner left the tenants alone to do as they would with the land, but the day of reckoning eventually came. Someday we will have to answer to God for what He is entrusted to us – our talents, our families, our possessions, etc.
- It tells us about the patience of God. The owner didn't retaliate against the tenants the first time they rebelled against him. He gave them chance after chance to do the right thing. This is one of the most wonderful aspects of God – His patience with us. If any of us were in charge, we would have wiped out the world and started over many times by now.
- It tells us about the judgment of God. The tenants thought they could get away with their rebelliousness indefinitely, that the owner would never retaliate. But someday the patience and longsuffering of God will run out, and judgment will come, just as it did to the tenants of this vineyard.
- It tells us something about Jesus. He knew what was coming – He had no illusions that Israel would accept Him when He went to Jerusalem. He knew He was going there to die. But He also knew that He would ultimately triumph (verses 17-18). Sometimes it seems like evil will eventually conquer the whole world. But God will not let it go on for long, and His victory over evil is a done deal.
- It also tells us that Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God. He wasn't just another prophet, like the servants in the parable; He is the one and only begotten Son.

In verse 17 Jesus quotes from Psalm 118:22-23. It is obviously speaking of Jesus, and the early church saw this clearly (see Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7) He is the stone that was rejected but has become the cornerstone. He, the most important thing to happen to the Jewish nation, was being rejected, but ultimately would be supreme. Because of that rejection, He also was the One who would judge them (verse 18).

This is the last of all of Jesus' messages concerning the fact that Gentiles and outcasts would be added to the kingdom where many from Israel would not be allowed to enter. The crowd responded with a strong statement —That must never happen! They understood what Jesus was saying: the Jewish system was being set aside because the religious leaders were rejecting Him.

- Discuss verse 18. What does this mean to people today?

Luke 20:19-26 When the scribes and the high priests realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to lay their hands on him at that very hour, but they were afraid of the crowd. (20) So they watched him closely and sent spies who pretended to be honest men in order to trap him in what he would say. They wanted to hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. (21) So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and that you don't favor any individual, but teach the way of God truthfully. (22) Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" (23) But he detected their cunning and said to them, (24) **"Show me a denarius. Whose face and name does it have?"** They said, "Caesar's." (25) So he said to them, **"Then give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."** (26) So they couldn't catch him before the people in what he said. Amazed at his answer, they became silent.

- They were hoping to catch Him in some teaching that the crowds would not like, which would allow them to prosecute Him legally. If Jesus gave either a yes or a no answer He would lose support. If He said it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, a foreign ruler, the zealots (who opposed Roman rule and favored Jewish independence) would be offended by His answer. If He answered that it was not proper

to pay taxes (which the religious leaders might have suspected because He had been teaching about the kingdom), then He would be advising the people to break Roman law and the religious leaders would report Him to Pilate and He would be arrested. But again He gave them an answer they didn't expect.

- Jesus was basically saying, if you're going to accept Caesar's currency and use it, then you have to accept Caesar's right to impose taxes. But, Jesus said, there are things that do not belong to Caesar, but belong to God, and on those items you owe your allegiance to God. We are bound to obey the laws of our country because we are citizens. We always want to try to honor our nation and its leaders and honor God at the same time. But God has the last word in our lives, not the government.

Luke 20:27-40 Now some Sadducees, who claim there is no resurrection, came to Jesus (28) and asked him, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no child, the man should marry the widow and have children for his brother. (29) Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died childless. (30) Then the second (31) and the third married her. In the same way, all seven died and left no children. (32) Finally, the woman died, too. (33) Now in the resurrection, whose wife will the woman be, since the seven had married her?" (34) Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are married, (35) but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. (36) Nor can they die anymore, for they are like the angels and, since they share in the resurrection, are God's children. (37) Even Moses demonstrated in the story about the bush that the dead are raised, when he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' (38) He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all people are alive to him." (39) Then some of the scribes replied, "Teacher, you have given a fine answer." (40) For they no longer dared to ask him another question.

- It's important to remember that, despite all of Jesus' harsh words for the Pharisees, they were the religious group that was closest to spiritual truth. They took all the scriptures literally, and took the Laws of God very seriously. The problem with them was their hypocrisy and adding to the Law, imposing a burden on people that God never intended. They were the legalists of the day. But they were shining lights compared to the Sadducees.
- Similar to much of liberal Christianity today, the Sadducees didn't believe what many of the scriptures said, they just threw out what they didn't like. They denied anything supernatural or miraculous. Today liberal Christian denominations deny the authority and inspiration of the Bible, deny the deity of Christ, and deny the supernatural.
- In Matthew, Jesus begins His answer by saying, "You are wrong, you don't understand the Scriptures or the power of God!"
 - The Pharisees were totally a religious group. They had no political ambitions and were content with any government which allowed them to carry out the ceremonial law. The Sadducees were few but very wealthy. The priests and the aristocrats were almost all Sadducees. They were the governing class; and most of them allied themselves with Rome, not wanting to lose their wealth, their comfort and their place.
 - The Pharisees accepted the scriptures plus all the thousand detailed regulations and rules of the oral and ceremonial law, such as the Sabbath law and the laws about hand washing. The Sadducees accepted only the written law of the Old Testament; and in the Old Testament they

stressed only the Law of Moses and did not value any of the other books of the Old Testament.

- The Pharisees believed in the resurrection from the dead and in angels and spirits. The Sadducees held that there was no resurrection from the dead and that there were no angels or spirits.
- The Pharisees believed in fate; and that a man's life was planned and ordered by God. The Sadducees believed in unrestricted free-will.
- The Pharisees believed in and hoped for the coming of the Messiah; the Sadducees did not. For them the coming of the Messiah would have been a disturbance of their comfortable lives.
- The Sadducees claimed to be spiritual leaders of the nation, and yet they rejected the clear teaching in God's Word about the resurrection, and about God's power that can bring people back to life. Here they were trying to make Jesus look foolish and lose credibility by asking Him about something they themselves did not believe in.
- The Sadducee's far-fetched example was based on the Mosaic laws about marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5), which says that if a man died without a child, his brother must marry his widow and have children to carry on the family line. This was probably not often followed by the time of Jesus, but it was still in the Mosaic Law and the Sadducees considered it to be binding. You can see a historical example of this situation in the book of Ruth.
- Jesus then corrected the Sadducees' two false ideas: Heaven, He said, is not just an extension of the pleasures people enjoy on earth. In fact in the eternal state marriage will be unnecessary. Once believers have received their glorified bodies that will never die, there will be no more need for procreation, one of the basic purposes for marriage. Believers in glorified bodies will be like the angels in that way, because angels do not reproduce themselves like humans do. (He did not say people will become angels.) Jesus did not answer all the questions about the eternal state and the eternal relationship of people married in this life. But He did answer the question asked by the Sadducees.
- Jesus' second point is that there will definitely be a resurrection, saying that God is not God of the dead, but God of the living, using Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as examples. In verse 37 He refers to the story of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:6). Those great patriarchs are real people, and they are currently alive, not dead.
- The scribes, probably Pharisees, liked Jesus' answer, because they believed in the resurrection. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were opposed to each other, similar to liberals and conservatives today. But all of them were afraid to ask Jesus any more questions.

Luke 20:41-44 Then he said to them, "How can people say that the Christ is David's son? (42) For David himself in the book of Psalms says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, (43) until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" (44) So David calls him 'Lord.' Then how can he be his son?"

- A common phrase for the Messiah ("the Christ") in those days was "Son of David". Jesus quoted from Psalm 110:1, where David prophesies about a future time when the Father (The Lord) would say to the Messiah ("my Lord") in the heavenly throne room, "Sit at My right hand", which is the place of prominence. The first "Lord" in Hebrew is "Yahweh", and the second "Lord" is "Adonai". Two things we get from this. First, the Son of David is also David's Lord (Luke 20:44) by the power of the resurrection. (In Acts 2:34-35 Peter used the same verse from Ps. 110 to prove that Jesus' superiority is based on His resurrection.) Second, David must have realized that the Son, who was to be the Messiah, would be

divine, for David called Him Lord.

- Notice that Jesus Himself tells us the David was the one who wrote that psalm.

Luke 20:45-47 While all the people were listening, he said to his disciples, (46) **"Beware of the scribes! They like to walk around in long robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. (47) They devour widows' houses and say long prayers to cover it up. They will receive greater condemnation!"**

- Jesus attacks the hypocrisy of the Pharisees again here. Jesus condemned them more than any other group because they should have known better, knowing the scriptures as they did, and having the positions of authority that they did in the nation.
- What's this about "devouring widow's houses"? Well, a Rabbi was legally bound to teach for free. They were supposed to have regular jobs to support themselves, but were not to charge anyone for teaching the scriptures. That sounds great, but it was also taught by them that to support a Rabbi was an act of the highest godliness. They said things like, "Whoever puts part of his income into the purse of the wise is counted worthy of a seat in the heavenly academy." Or, "Whosoever harbors a disciple of the wise in his house is counted as if he offered a daily sacrifice." "Let thy house be a place of resort to wise men." So guess who ended up being the usual victims of this manipulation by some Pharisees? Impressionable women, especially widows. Women who could not afford to support themselves gave most of their money to these unscrupulous, comfort-loving Pharisees. This is the kind of thing that angered Jesus so much.

Next, in chapter 21 – Jesus continues to teach in the temple during the Passion Week, and goes into more detail about the end times.