

1. We interrupt Jesus' traveling road show for a question and answer session. It is as if the author Luke is building a bridge between the last ten chapters that focused on Jesus going from place to place explaining who He is and why He came into the world, with the last four chapters that will focus the key events of the cross and the resurrection. It's kind of like saying, "OK, Jesus if you're who you claim to be, what about this issue or that issue?" Some questions ponder, what happens to people who don't believe you? Another question is about what heaven is like. Another one is about paying taxes versus using our money to make a difference for God. We get Jesus Himself asking His doubters about how King David who lived a thousand years earlier could refer to the Messiah as his Lord if that Messiah is to be his descendant? We get that question to understand how someone not yet born can be greater than already living. To sum all this up, Chapter 20 is a good source to consider when we ponder eternal issues. Even if we already believe Jesus is God, the answers given here are helpful to understand what that means for us here and now.
 - a) Before I start, let me address those of us who do trust in Jesus as God and don't have any major doubts at the moment. If we've been Christians long enough, we know that times do come when doubts arise. The questions and answers given in this chapter I find help in such times. Even if these questions aren't "itching where we're scratching", consider the questions listed here as reminders of who Jesus is when those periods of doubts come.
 - b) Also remember that a God big enough to handle the tough questions as presented in this chapter is also big enough to deal with whatever fears or issues we are facing currently. I am a big believer that God loves to work us through our doubts. Bring issues to Him that we're currently dealing with. Ask Him to help you through those issues. It's a wonderful way to prove of God's existence as He guides us through whatever we are dealing with at the present moment. With that positive thought stated, let me go through the questions and answers in this chapter and we'll see if they're itching where we're scratching.
2. The first "Q&A" of this chapter has to deal with Jesus' authority do what He's doing. Remember that the last chapter ended with Jesus riding into Jerusalem claiming to be the Messiah and then He overturned the tables of the religious leaders who were taking advantage of all the tourists in town for a holiday. Jesus' response was effectively, did you believe John the Baptist? The reason Jesus answered with a question was not to duck their question, but to offer proof of who He was claiming to be. Let me put it this way: the pro-Roman Jewish historian Josephus who lived at that time wrote that John the Baptist was very popular in Israel before Herod put him to death. If the Jewish religious leaders claimed John wasn't from God, then the Israelites wouldn't look to them as their religious leaders. If they said John was a prophet, why didn't you believe him, since John said Jesus is the Messiah? Jesus question to a question, was an answer since John the Baptist was the second witness to His deity.
3. Then Jesus tells a parable about a farm owner leasing out his farm to others. When the owner of the land sent messengers to collect the rent, the workers at the farm beat up the messengers. The farm owner then sent his son to collect the rent, and the farm workers killed the son. As probably expected, Jesus said the workers of that farm had to be put to death for their crime. That leads to the punch line of the parable where He implies that farm is the nation of Israel. The point here is that Jesus is teaching those who reject Him or just ignore Him will be just as eternally separated from God as those farm workers were for killing the son of the farm owner.
 - a) The moral here is there is no getting around the idea that Jesus is God and He's in charge of our lives whether we like it or not. If we choose to reject or ignore Him, we'll eternally suffer for that choice. For those of us who do consider Jesus Lord of our lives, this parable is a reminder to stick close to Him or suffer the eternal consequences when He desires to use our lives to make a difference for Him in this world.

4. It may help at this point to remember that Jesus said after "Palm Sunday" it is effectively too late for the Jewish nation to collectively accept Him. However He's still preaching salvation knowing that some in that crowd may get it after He is crucified. I state that because the religious leaders were so set against Him at this point, in effect they were beyond convincing. That same group is now desperately trying to make Jesus less popular by making Him say something anti-Roman so that they wouldn't have to be the bad guy to have Jesus arrested. That thought leads to the next question and answer session: The question they asked Him was, "Is it lawful to pay Rome their taxes?" If Jesus said yes, he'd lose popularity with the Jewish people, as they hate Rome. If He said no to paying those taxes, the religious leaders could have Jesus arrested for being anti-Rome.
 - a) The response is that Jesus asks to borrow a Roman coin. Jesus points out Caesar's image is on that coin. Then Jesus effectively says, "Give to God what belongs to Him and give to Caesar what belongs to him." With that statement, Jesus is condoning the idea of human government no matter how popular or unpopular it may be over them. He's also teaching us that as Christians it's our duty to obey both God and our government. If we are being told by our civil leaders to say steal, or murder or not worship God, then we have to be willing to stand up to that government. Are there other things we're forced to do by our government that we don't like? That's been true throughout history. My point is God has called us to obey both and that's what Jesus is preaching by that question and answer.
5. The last question Jesus gets asked in this chapter is about how marriage works in heaven. Jesus gets asked a tough question about seven men marrying the same woman and all of them died as her husband. The question is who'd be her wife in the next life? Jesus teaches us that in heaven, there is no continuation of marriage. There is no need to repopulate heaven so a desire for sexual intercourse doesn't exist in either heaven or hell. I'm convinced we'll still know who our spouses were in heaven, but we'll all see each other as part of the same family. There won't be any more needs for individual spouses, as Jesus becomes the "groom" of all Christians. Bottom line is that there is marriage in heaven, but there is only one marriage: Jesus and His church.
 - a) Jesus ends that parable by using the first five books of the bible that the person asking the question did accept as God's word. Jesus' point is God refers to Himself in those books as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus is saying those three people are still alive and well in heaven, thereby supporting the idea that people do live forever in either heaven or hell based on what is taught in those first five bible books.
6. Jesus then ends this "Question and Answer" session with His own question about who He is. The point of the final question is about one final proof about who Jesus is. He points out in Psalm 110 written by David that he (David) said, "The Lord said to my Lord". Jesus' point of that question is whom is David speaking to? How can he refer to a second Lord as "Lord", which in this psalm is a Messianic reference? For Christians, this is a non-issue. For religious Jewish people the idea of Messiah as God was revolutionary, which is why the religious leaders there in that room couldn't answer Jesus question.
 - a) After Jesus silenced His critics, He then warns those who claimed they pleased God based on how they act in public. His point is people will take advantage of others if the "others" think those religious people are something special.
7. Putting this altogether, the questions focus on Jesus authority as being fully God and fully human and the price we suffer if we fail to honor Him as such. The idea is to honor Jesus as God or we'll suffer the consequences of rejecting Him. If we want to prove our worth to God based on how we act in this life, then we're rejecting what Jesus came to do whether we realize it or not.
 - a) For those of us who do trust in Jesus that way, this "Q&A" session is the reminder of just who Jesus is, and how we should act in His presence. If we accept the idea that Jesus is in charge of every aspect of our lives, then the question becomes "Are we putting our money and our time where our mouth is?" (No don't send me a check. That's not why I'm saying all of this.) My point is this lesson is a reminder of just who Jesus is and what we should be doing about it. With that said, I'm ready to get started on the details:

8. Verse 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?'
- a) It's often best to start a lesson remembering where we left off. The last ten chapters or so were Jesus traveling from place to place in Israel explaining who He is, and performing miracles as proof of His deity. Jesus is now in Jerusalem for the key events of His life. He rode into Jerusalem a day or two prior to Verse 1, in the event we refer to as Palm Sunday. Now He's at the main temple complex teaching to whoever is interesting in hearing about the Gospel Message. To use a sports analogy, Jesus is now performing at the home court of those who oppose Him. That's why the head guys of the religious establishment at the temple come up to Jesus to ask Him questions. Keep in mind that Jesus just overturned the tables where these religious leaders had their "business" of selling official sacrificial lambs at rip-off prices with thousands or millions of tourists in town for a big holiday.
 - b) With all of that occurring over the last day or two, the religious leaders are asking Jesus in effect, "Who gave you the authority to overturn our tables and claim deity for yourself?"
9. Verse 3: He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, ⁴ John's baptism--was it from heaven, or from men?"
- a) One can argue that Jesus is ducking the question by imposing His own question. Instead Jesus is actually answering that question by presenting a witness. There is a bible verse in the Old Testament that says, "A thing shall be established by two or three witnesses". (See Deuteronomy 19:15.) Jesus is using his question to effectively say both He and John the Baptist are the two witnesses in agreement about who He is claiming to be. Therefore you who are asking me this question must decide, was John the Baptist a prophet or not?
 - b) Let me recall a few facts from the earlier chapters of Luke. John the Baptist was the kind of guy who started preaching in the middle of nowhere (the desert). I speculate that some wandering shepherders first spotted him and then told others what he's doing. Before he knew it, John had big crowds come to him by the Jordan River to hear him preach and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. King Herod later had John killed as he called Herod a sinner for sleeping with his sister in law. That event was probably a year or two prior to Jesus' conversation here in Chapter 20. My point is that most Israelites considered John to be a great prophet. That was Jesus' second witness to who He was, which is why He asked the religious leaders if they also accept John as a prophet of God.
10. Verse 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."
- a) If the religious leaders accepted John as a prophet of God, Jesus could answer then, "Why didn't you believe John if you believe he is a prophet?" If they say, as they believe he isn't a prophet of God, they'll lose their power as the vast majority of Israelites are convinced that John the Baptist is a legitimate prophet. That's why the only safe answer they could give is that they don't know if John was a legitimate prophet.
 - b) Let me also state quickly for my newcomers that John the Baptist is a different "John" than the writer of the Gospel of John. That latter was one of the 12 disciples. John the Baptist was not one of the "12". Now that I cleared that up, back to the story.
11. Verse 8: Jesus said, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.'
- a) An underlying point of this opening round of the "Question and Answer" session is that one cannot take a neutral stance with Jesus. Either one believes Jesus is God and worship Him as such, or one doesn't believe in Him as deity and will suffer eternal consequences based on doubt. I'm not talking about moments of doubt, but having a true desire to want to prove our worth to God or not believing in His existence as opposing to trusting in His complete payment for our sins.

- b) The key point of this eight verse exchange is that Jesus refused to answer their question of who He was because even if Jesus just bluntly stated "He is God", they would answer that they don't believe it, or who is your second witness to prove it? Jesus effectively said that John the Baptist is My second witness, but since you refused to believe Him why should I state who I am since you won't believe either John or myself?
 - c) Remember that Jesus was teaching somewhere in the main temple complex to those who were interested in hearing Him teach. I suspect the religious leaders were among those in the audience and they were the one's who asked the opening question of this chapter. As that question is now "settled", Jesus now returns to what He wants to teach here, which is a parable about the Jewish nation, as we'll read in the next set of verses.
12. Verse 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 also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. ¹² He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.
- a) To explain this parable, first remember that Israel was primarily "farm country". Most of the farmers were in Jerusalem for this big annual holiday. My point is that this story of a farm owner, leasing out his land to others was a common idea that they could relate to. In this story when it was time to collect the rent as the crops were being harvested, the farm renters didn't want to pay the rent, so they beat up those who were sent to collect the rent. Those listening to this story knew they were hearing a story about theft and that is what Jesus is trying to get across here in the story.
13. Verse 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.'
- a) Personally, if I was the farm owner and I had a few servants killed, I'd send the police at that point. The fact that the owner sent his son shows the farm owner's desire to keep the status quo. The underlying point of this whole story is about how much God does love the Israelites that despite the fact they have rejected the prophets sent over centuries, God was still willing to send His only son seeing if they would respect Him.
 - b) The idea for you and me is God can't un-love what He loves. Despite our own rebellion against Him and despite our built-in sinful nature, He cares for us and wants to have an eternal relationship with us. Just like these farmers who were harming and killing those who were sent by the legitimate land owner, so we do harmful things to others wanting what is not legally ours (the world we live in that He created). Does that mean we can sin all we want as long as we repent prior to our death? The answer is if we do love God like He loves us, why would we want to do things He doesn't approve of? We serve Him not out of fear of punishment, but out of love for what He has done for us.
 - c) My reason for stating all of this is to understand why God had to send His son in the first place and why the vineyard owner sent his son in this made up story. It might also help to realize that a vineyard was an Old Testament symbol of the nation of Israel (See Isaiah Chapter 5, Verses 1-2 as an example.) The reason God compares the nation to a vineyard is that God wants His people to "produce fruit" for Him by leading others to Him and as we help others grow in their love for Him. My point is the religious leaders and I assume many in the crowd would see right through this parable and realize it is about Israel as a whole nation. My proof that the people got the connection is coming up in Verse 16.
14. Verse 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.' ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 'What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.'
- a) I heard there was a law in Israel where if the rightful landowners don't claim the land in three years, the tenants get to keep the land. Maybe that's why they killed the son.

- b) I know where I live, if a tenant who occupies a property for seven years without an owner coming to claim it, the owner can lose the property to the tenant if that tenant doesn't pay the rent and still pays the property taxes. (That's the appraiser coming out for a moment.)
 - c) The point here is that the tenants in the vineyard may have thought that the rightful landowner is dead as the son who's the legitimate heir to the land would claim it. If they did kill the son, then they could keep the land to themselves. Yes it is both murder and theft and that's why Jesus chose this illustration to make that point clearly.
 - d) With that said, here comes the punch line which is the last half of Verse 16:
15. Verse 16b: When the people heard this, they said, 'May this never be!'
- a) Remember I said earlier, that the crowd got the idea that the vineyard represented Israel as a nation. That's why despite the fact that both murder and theft are part of the parable they gave this answer here in the last part of Verse 16. It's kind of like saying, "Yes I know we're sinful people, but God would never wipe us out as a nation because He loves us too much as a nation to do so"! About four centuries earlier, when the Babylonians wiped out the nation of Israel, they were saying the same thing: "God loves us too much to ever end us as a nation".
 - b) OK then how does God balance out judgment for rejection of Him with His unconditional promise of giving the land of Israel to His people? First the promise of the Israelites living in the land is conditional upon their obedience to Him. One day He'll let them live there in peace when the day comes of the Messiah returning to rule the world from Israel. Until then, the land is conditional based on obedience. Let's face it, the rejection of Jesus as the promise Messiah did cost that nation as a generation later the Romans completely wiped out the Jewish nation the same way the Babylonians did about four hundred years earlier.
 - c) Short version: They understood that "they" were the farmers in that vineyard and that the sins they committed would cost them eternally if they rejected "God's Son" as Messiah.
 - d) Assuming you and I are non-Jewish Christians, how do we apply this to our lives? It's so we understand that God still demands obedience not to earn favor with Him, but because it's the best way to live out our lives for Him. Just as God demands "fruit" from Israelites back then so He demands "fruit" from us as we use our lives to make a difference for Him.
 - e) Jesus will use the next two verses to pound home that point:
16. Verse 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'? ¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.'
- a) In Verse 17, Jesus quotes Psalm 118 with the reference to the rejected stone. My point is Jesus is claiming that reference in that Psalm is about Him. He is the rejected stone by the builders that became the "cornerstone" of a new religion. By the way, Psalm 118 is taught as being about the coming Messiah, so the point hits home with them.
 - b) OK for us non-builders, what is a capstone? Picture building a house out of stones, blocks or bricks. The capstone is the first piece laid as the foundation for the rest of them. That first stone has to be laid at the right angle so others can be added next to it or on top of it.
 - c) Jesus is saying He (Him) who is rejected by the Israelites will be the foundation of a new religion. By the way, this doesn't mean no Jewish people can accept Jesus. Throughout history there have always been Christians from Jewish backgrounds as there was then. It just means the church will be primarily "Non-Jewish" in its numbers.
 - d) All of that leads me to Verse 18. What does all of the "broken and crushed" refer to in that verse? First, let's return to our little construction project. Don't picture a little block, but a huge block of say brick or concrete. The kind that would crush a person if it fell on them. That's the analogy Jesus is going for here. The idea is that the knowledge of who Jesus is, in effect kills people as they either reject who He is or don't care about Him. Either way, a person will be killed as the knowledge of who Jesus is deadly if we refuse to accept it. In other words, the "bad part" of learning about Jesus is that God is we're accountable for it.

17. Verse 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.
- a) Just so we know that the religious leaders "got it" about what Jesus was saying, we have Verse 19 here as proof that they got it.
 - b) So why were they afraid of the people? Because most of Israel at that point believed Jesus was the coming Messiah and John the Baptist was a prophet of God. Remember that the religious leaders were far outnumbered by the masses who were in town for this holiday. To borrow an old song line, "They have the guns, but we have the numbers". Yes most of the people will to change their minds about Jesus once they see Him taken prisoner by the Romans. The point is at this particular moment, the religious leaders knew the masses are turning against their authority based on what Jesus is teaching.
 - c) That is why, the religious leaders at this point, not only wanted to kill Jesus, but also want to figure out a way to make him less popular with the masses. That'll lead us directly to the next question and answer session of this chapter.
18. Verse 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 that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.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.²² Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?'
- a) The way the religious leaders tried to trap Jesus was based on Israel's collective hatred of Rome being over them. They were hoping that Jesus would say something against Rome. Then they could call the Roman soldiers to have Him arrested. The Romans had two key rules as they governed most of the known world. One was pay your taxes, and the other was no rebellion against Rome. If people did that, they could live in peace under Roman authority. That's why the Jewish authorities had spies ask Jesus about whether or not it was right to pay taxes to Rome. If Jesus said yes, He'd lose respect, as the Israelites didn't want Rome to be over them. If Jesus said no, they could have Him arrested for treason.
19. Verse 23: He saw through their duplicity and said to them,²⁴ 'Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?'
- a) First, know that a denarius was a Roman coin that was about a day's wage. It was not a commonly held currency in Israel as they had their own coins for exchange. The Romans put the image of Caesar on their coins, and that is what Jesus is referring to here.
 - b) Notice Jesus didn't even have one of these coins on Him and had to borrow one to answer the question. The point is Jesus is answering the question about whether or not one has to pay taxes in a very public way that the crowd could see.
 - c) Also notice that Jesus saw right through the false flattery of those asking Him a question. He didn't care about any positive statement they made about Him but only focused on the question itself being asked of Him.
20. Verse 25: 'Caesar's,' they replied. He said to them, 'Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'
- a) There are people throughout history who didn't believe Jesus is God, yet were impressed with the answer given in this verse. The underlying point of this verse is that Christians are to honor both God and human government, as both are God ordained. So should we pay our taxes? Yes, as human government is God ordained. Should Christians give to our local churches or other causes that make a difference for Him? Of course, and that's part of the idea being presented in this verse.
 - b) So should Christians ever revolt against the government? Only in cases where we can't be allowed to worship God as we're called to do. That's why the American Revolutionary was fought in the first place. Christianity is never meant as a form of human government but a lifestyle choice for those who are willing to accept Jesus as Lord of their lives. In that sense it differs from Muslim "Sharia law" as it requires how we are live out our lives.

21. Verse 26: They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.
 - a) Bottom line is Jesus' answer quieted the crowd, as they couldn't argue with His answer.
 - b) Remember that the religious leaders were in cahoots with the Roman authorities. What I mean by that is the Romans allowed religion freedom because they figured if people were moral, they were less likely to rebel against Rome. Therefore the religious leaders wanted people to pay their Roman taxes and their Temple taxes so both could keep the status quo of their power. That's why they couldn't argue with Jesus answer.
 - c) Since they couldn't trap Jesus on the issue of loyalty to Rome versus loyalty to God, now we read of another tactic in the next set of verses.
22. Verse 27: Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. 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. ³³ Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?'
 - a) To explain, first I need to explain who are the Sadducees. They were a separate group in Israel from the Pharisees. They didn't believe in the after life. As the old joke goes, that's why "They were sad, you see". They did believe God exists and they did believe the first five books of the bible were "God ordained" as to how to best live out this life. However, once you die, that's it. That's why they used this silly illustration in this paragraph as if to say, "If a bunch of men marry the same woman, there can't be a next life as all of them had the same woman as a wife".
 - b) Before I move on, note that Pharisees believed all of the Old Testament books are inspired by God and did believe in the afterlife. Think of the Sadducees as the religious liberals of that day while the Pharisees were the "orthodox" or conservatives of that day. Both had their faults but right now, some Sadducees had the "microphone" to ask Jesus a question.
23. Verse 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, 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. 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.'
 - a) Jesus answers the question and uses the opportunity to explain a little about what heaven is like for those who are saved. Let me start by answering the Sadducee's question about marriage in heaven. Jesus' is saying that earthly marriages will not continue into heaven. The point is if heaven is eternal, there is no need to repopulate, so marriage isn't needed as a means of repopulation. What is implied is the desire for sexual acts is not needed in the next life and therefore, there is no continuation of marriage into the next life.
 - b) Years ago I had a conversation with the wife of a Mormon pastor (if that's the right word) that they believe one's marriage does continue into the next life. It didn't dawn on me back then that marriage for the purpose of having children isn't necessary in heaven and Jesus confirms this fact here in these verses.
 - c) In a sense, there still is marriage in heaven as the Christian church as a whole is referred to as the "Bride of Christ" (Revelation 19:7) and our eternal relationship with Jesus begins with a marriage feast to commence that relationship. There is no sexual relationship with Jesus (to state the obvious) , but an eternal relationship where we look to Jesus as being in charge of our lives eternally just as a wife must see her husband as being in charge of their relationship. If you don't like it, take it up with Him, as I didn't make up that rule.

- d) Stop and consider for the moment that Jesus is confirming that heaven is a real place. To say that our earthly marriages don't continue into heaven also means that heaven is a real place that we'll exist for all of eternity. Throughout human history, most cultures believe in a next life and many cultural burial rituals are designed to prepare people for that life. Jesus is teaching effectively that heaven is based on the belief in the existence of an eternal God who demands obedience to Him. For those who've never had an opportunity to ever hear of Jesus, I suspect God will judge them fairly based on how they lived based on our human instinctive knowledge of His existence. For those who've heard of Jesus, salvation is based on what we did with that knowledge. I also hold the view that children who die before an age of accountability are also saved. However, I can't focus too much on what I don't know, only on what can be learned from studying the scripture. Speaking of which:
- e) The verses say that when we die, we are like angels. I don't think it is meant to be taken literal as much as it means that most of us realize that angels don't reproduce nor can they die or be killed. Angels have eternal lives and so do we, and that's Jesus' point. Consider that angels have free will as many choose to join Satan in his rebellion against God. All I am saying is angels will be eternally judged and people will be eternally judged based on how they've acted. Paul said in 1st Corinthians 6:3 that Christians will judge angels. My point is that passage implies that not all angels are perfect creatures and one of the things we do in heaven is judge the angels.
- f) I also believe we'll recognize each other in heaven. A few chapters back when Jesus told the story of the beggar named Lazarus in heaven and a rich man who died, that rich man knew who Lazarus was. If that is a true story, which I believe it is, that means we retain our memories in the next life and recall our memories of those we love in heaven. I'll say that we recognize our departed relatives in heaven. My point is our bodies will change for whatever atmosphere exists in heaven, but not change to a point where we can't tell who is who in heaven. In other words, we still have memory retention in heaven. So do we have wings in eternity? I can't recall a passage that says that, so I'd argue no, but we will have see for ourselves one day when we get there.
- g) One last thing and then back to Jesus "Q&A" session. What if we truly love our spouses? Why can't marriage continue in the next life if we're truly happy with who we love? As one pastor put it to a man who's wife just died, "I know you. You're not that great. She's better off in heaven with Jesus than here with you." (A paraphrase of what I heard David Hocking preach one time.) To put it another way, I'm convinced there is so much joy in heaven, that the need of the love of our spouses on earth isn't necessary as we get to enjoy our love relationship with God and fellow believers eternally in heaven.
- h) Meanwhile, there is still one more thing I need to say about the text before I move on to the next set of verses. Remember that the Sadducee's did believe the first five books of the bible were God ordained. Notice that Jesus quotes from those books to answer their question about heaven. Also remember that the bible didn't have chapter numbers and verse numbers back then. That's why He refers to the "burning bush" passage (Exodus Chapter 3) so that those asking Jesus the question could know what it is He's referring to.
 - i) Jesus point is in that passage, God refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Joseph when He was talking to Moses in that passage. At the time of Moses, those three men had lived over 400 years earlier. The point is God refers to them in the present tense, not the past tense. Realize that Jesus is given a very technical bible study to those who believe the first five books are written by Moses and are God inspired. To say it another way, God is saying in that passage, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead, but they are still living. It is Jesus way of saying that there is a next life based on what is taught in the first five books of the bible.
 - ii) To sum this up, Jesus is saying heaven is real, we live forever there, our marriages on earth don't continue in heaven and all humans live forever in heaven or hell.

- i) Before I move on, there's one other thing I'd like to point out about these verses. There are many liberal bible scholars who like to argue that Moses wasn't the author of the first five bible books. There are theories that came from German writers a few centuries back that argue for separate writers of those books. What I respond to that argument is Jesus says in the New Testament that Moses is the author of those books. As the classic joke goes, if you don't believe Jesus is God, you have much bigger problems than wondering who did write the first five books of the bible.
 - i) That point about Moses being the author also helps in other debate issues. As an example, Jesus never condemned homosexuality in the Gospels. As I like to state, Jesus never condemned rape either, but that doesn't mean He endorsed the idea. My point here is that in this passage Jesus acknowledges Moses as the writer of the first five books of the bible and elsewhere in the Gospels Jesus refers to Moses as a prophet of God. (Luke 16:31 is an example). Since Moses definitely taught against homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22) as Jesus also believed those laws are God ordained as Jesus Himself is saying those Old Testament books are God ordained.
 - ii) While I'm on that topic, let me comment on the idea that some Old Testament laws don't apply today such as the food laws, while others such as murder and theft do apply today. The verse before the one about homosexuality forbids the sacrificing our children to a false god called Molek to honor that false god. The verse after it is about having sex with animals. My point is if those two other things are wrong so is the verse in between those two. We can debate if our society should or not allow homosexual marriages, but one cannot argue that the bible considers it a sin.
 - iii) Meanwhile, I've wandered away from the text.
24. Verse 39: Some of the teachers of the law responded, 'Well said, teacher!' ⁴⁰ And no one dared to ask him any more questions.
- a) In a political debate, if a person you don't like puts down the other side, you may cheer even though you don't like the person speaking. That's what we have here. The teachers of the law were Pharisee's who were political rivals of the Sadducee's. The Pharisee's do not believe Jesus is the Messiah, but were cheering because Jesus just used the first five books of the bible to put down their competition.
 - b) Meanwhile, I said this chapter is one big "Question and Answer" session. Note that Verse 40 says that after Verse 39, no one asked Jesus any more questions. In fact, if one looks at the time line through all the Gospels, it appears that this is it for "Q&A" other than Jesus trial itself. The point is no one can stop Jesus by questions. It was only by an illegal trial on His life that they were able to crucify Him. More on the crucifixion in later lessons.
 - c) However, just because the crowd here couldn't think of any more questions to test to see if Jesus is who He claims to be, we still get Jesus asking the crowd one more question as we'll see in the next few verses.
25. Verse 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?'
- a) Before I get into the question itself asked by Jesus in Verse 41, notice for the second time in this chapter, Jesus ignores the flattery paid to Him in the last verse and just focuses on what He wants to accomplish. Jesus doesn't say, "Thank You, I know I was right as I am God, or yes, that is a good point" but just focuses on His mission.
 - b) As to the question itself, the purpose of the question is to get the audience to think of the Messiah as more than just a man who'll rule from Jerusalem like King David. Remember the expectations of the Messiah is that He'll be a man sent from God to overthrow those nations who don't want Him to rule over the world from Jerusalem. Jesus still wants to convince individuals of who He is and what is His purpose.

- c) The point is it is now too late for the nation of Israel to collectively turn to Him as that is what "Palm Sunday" proved. Still, Jesus is still trying to reach out to any individual who's willing to trust in Him. Jesus is still sticking to His plan of trying to reach out to anyone to trust Him as the Messiah. With that said, time for the question itself.
- d) If one goes through the book of Psalms, most of them have a one or two line introduction that says who is the author and/or the purpose of that Psalm. My point is Psalm 110 says King David wrote it, which was roughly 1,000 years earlier than this time period. Keep in mind that the Sadducee's didn't believe the Psalms were God-inspired but the people who just said, "Good point Jesus" right before His question were Pharisee's who do believe the Psalms are inspired by God.
- e) Here Jesus is quoting Psalm 110, which is attributed to David. In that Psalm David wrote, "The Lord said to my Lord" to open that Psalm. Remember the word Lord means respect. It is a way of saying I honor that person or entity. If the first "Lord" refers to God Himself then the question is whom does the second "Lord" refer to? Who is God talking to in this Psalm? What's interesting historically is before the time Jesus asked this question, scribes would argue that it refers to the Messiah. After the time period Jesus asked this question, they changed their mind and said it applies to Abraham or other people as they refuse to accept the idea of Jesus as God as He's implying by this psalm.
 - i) Let me approach it another way: Remember that King David wrote this psalm a thousand years prior to Jesus asking this question. Who would David consider to be Lord over his (David's) life besides God Himself? That's why one can't say it is Abraham or any other Old Testament patriarch. To state what's obvious to those of us who believe Jesus is God, David is referring to the Messiah as the second use of "Lord" in that psalm.
- f) The point of the Psalm is that David worshipped the Messiah a thousand years before He came into the world. David also knew that the Messiah would be a descendant of His as stated by God in 2nd Samuel Chapter 7. In fact, the text implies that the religious leaders knew that the descendant would be a direct descendant of David. They also knew Jesus is one of many people who were such a descendant.
- g) The purpose of Jesus asking this question out loud isn't that Jesus didn't know the answer. It is that He wanted the crowd to think of the Messiah as more than just a man who'd rule over Israel and the world as a king. It is that the Messiah is an eternal entity as David did say in Psalm 110. That's why the question was asked in these verses. Also notice that the question silenced the crowd as no one could answer Jesus' question other than to get the idea that the Messiah is an eternal entity like God the Father. Once again, Jesus silenced His critics just with a question.
- h) Before I move on, let me also comment on Verses 42b-43, that reads "'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" Does that mean that Jesus just "sat there until God the Father said it's time to come into the world?" First, if Jesus was and is an eternal entity before He became a human, I don't picture Him as someone sitting in a chair next to the chair of God the Father. This phrase is a word picture to get the that He's to wait until God the Father says it's time for Him to come into the world He created. But if Jesus didn't come to rule at that time, how are God's enemies' a "footstool at His feet"?
 - i) To state the obvious, this reference refers to a group that is conquered. Yes I do believe it is literal in the future sense of the return of Jesus to judge and rule. It is also present tense, in that accepting Jesus payment for our sins means that when we die we don't have to face the judgment of those who reject Him as being Lord over their lives. The idea is that those who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as being God will still have to acknowledge Him as God by force as He's in charge whether we like it or not. Paul later alludes to the same idea in Philippians 2:11. The point is God the Father will make everyone acknowledge Jesus by free will or by force.

26. Verse 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 marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.' ⁴⁷ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.'
- a) The first thing I want you to notice about these last set of verses in this chapter, is that no one answered Jesus question about who is the "Second Lord". I sort of picture this crowd sitting in stunned silence considering that question. Jesus then breaks the silence to bring up a different point in the last few verses of this chapter. If you read the parallel account in Matthew's Gospel, (Chapter 23) a whole chapter is written condemning the Pharisee's as abbreviated here in these three verses. My point here is simply that I want you to think about why Jesus goes into this anti-scribe and anti-Pharisee rant to end this chapter. If the chapter is a Q&A about who Jesus is, why stop to condemn the religious leaders?
 - b) Before I answer that question, let me give a little historical background. Remember how I said that Jesus avoided responding to any flattery paid to Him in this chapter? He points out that in effect the religious leaders loved flattery. They loved to look like they are very religious and be seen as someone special because of who they are. They would also take advantage of elderly widows by requiring high fees for the service of helping them make out their wills. The underling point is about the danger of flattery. People do things to be seen by others. Stop and consider why we may talk to strangers. In effect we want to say that our life has meaning by engaging in conversation to explain our views on things or to give a response to a question.
 - i) The point is our ego is a dangerous thing. It constantly wants to build our self up as something special. Whether we realize it or not, we are constantly saying, look at me at what I'm doing or what I'm saying here. Remember to be a Christian is all about God being the center of our lives and getting out of the way. As the classic expression goes, the hard part about giving our lives to God is we are constantly crawling off the "sacrificial altar" as we want to live our way and not His way.
 - ii) That in essence is what Jesus is warning about here at the end of the chapter. If we really want to put God first in our life, we don't make a big show about it. That is what the religious leaders were doing: Making a big show of how special they are in front of other people. If we really want to make a difference for God we should always try to do it in a way as the expression goes, "Where our right hand doesn't know what our left hand is doing." (See Matthew 6:3.) In other words, we live to serve God, but do it in a way where we avoid the publicity for that action as much as possible.
 - iii) While all of us (myself included) are now wallowing in guilt over our ego's, first of all, let go of the guilt. Jesus died for all our sins and remember that serving God is about getting ourselves out of the way so we can make a difference for Him.
 - c) Now notice the last line of this chapter. It says in effect that the religious leaders who do make a big show of their religion will get a greater condemnation than others. Obviously Jesus is referring to false teachers and not believers who do things for the flattery. What I want you to notice is that there are different levels of punishment in hell. To steal another old joke, I want to know those in hell for murder get a greater punishment than those who say, have an unpaid speeding ticket. No I'm not being literal, I'm just pointing out some in hell will suffer more than others for eternity. OK, how does that work? No idea. I accept the idea that a fair God can figure out a way to have some people suffer more for eternity than others will.
 - i) To give another reference to the same idea, realize that when Jesus was on trial in front of Pontius Pilate, Jesus said that the people who brought Jesus to him would have a more severe judgment than Pilate. (See John 19:11.)

27. OK, enough of all of that. I want to end this lesson by thinking about the chapter another way: Why did Jesus engage in this question and answer session in the first place? Why did Luke want to include this dialogue in his book? If we already accept Jesus as God, why is all of this here? Is it just to say, help us understand who Jesus is and what is His purpose of coming into the world? Yes, that's a start. Way back in the beginning of this book, Luke stated he wrote it so that the one who would read it (originally written for a government official named Theophilus) would have a good understanding of who Jesus is and why He came into the world.
- a) For those of us who already believe Jesus is God think of this question and answer session as a reminder of how we're to see ourselves before God. The first question dealt with how we should use our time as believers (using our "mina's" to get a return for God). Then we get a question about how we should think of others in this life (how we should view our spouses in this life versus eternal life). Then we get Jesus reminder of His deity so we can focus on who it is we serve and why we serve Him. Finally we get a short lecture to keep our ego's in check as we make a difference for Him.
 - b) The short version is "Obey Jesus as He is God, as we get eternal rewards for doing so and do it humbly to avoid getting our ego's in the way". That in one thought is the purpose of this lesson. The only other thing to add to it is pray for God's Spirit to work through us in order to live that way as it is impossible with His spirit working within us. With that said I'll close in prayer.
28. Heavenly Father, help us to remember that the greatest purpose we can have for this life is to use it to make a difference for You. Guide us so that we can do it humbly and earn a great return on the "mina's" (opportunities) you give us to make a difference for You. Help us to recognize both our "mina's" when they show up as well as help us to get our ego's out of the way so that by Your Spirit we can make a difference for You in the world. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.