

Luke 20:20-21:4

Jesus is heading towards the cross at a high rate of speed now.

1. He has triumphantly entered Jerusalem to the dismay of the Pharisees.
2. He has cleansed the temple and declared His zeal for the nations to the dismay of the Jews
3. He has pointed His finger in their face with a plain parable that even they couldn't miss
4. And now, with an unquenchable desire to destroy Him, three different groups approach Him in an effort to trap Him somehow.

## 1. Spies

*20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor.*

1. Isn't that interesting? The Jewish religious leaders were watching from a distance.
2. They found some "spies" who "pretended" to be righteous.
3. These spies weren't really righteous...they were just pretenders.

*21 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth.*

1. Let's try to get Him to drop His guard with some flattery.
2. Psalm 12:3 *May the LORD cut off all flattering lips,*
3. They were about to get their lips cut off.

*22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"*

1. If we can get him to rebel against Rome we will have him!
2. This was actually one of their first accusations against Him in Luke 23:1-2!
3. Luke 23:1-2 *Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar*

*23 But He detected their trickery and said to them, 24 "Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." 25 And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

1. He totally shut them down with His response!
2. He cut the lips of the flatterers off before they knew what was happening.

*26 And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent.*

This encounter would be good for us to understand in our current cultural climate.

1. The Government's inscription is on \$...temporal, pitiful, earthly, perishing money!

2. God's likeness and inscription is on us...we are made in His image and for His glory...eternal, wonderfully made, and heavenly.
3. Render to the government what is theirs and render to God ALL of you!
4. Romans 12:1 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*
  - a. The Canadian church had their building fenced off by the government
  - b. In essence the Canadian government stole their building in the name of Covid.
  - c. Some protesters, unaffiliated with the church, showed up and tore part of the fence down
  - d. The church members put the fence back up...and rendered to Caesars what was Caesars...land, buildings, and property.
  - e. But it did not stop them from rendering to God what is God's: worship! They continued meeting...all several 100 of them...in an undisclosed location and are still doing so today!
5. What a lesson for us on July 4, not to let our loyalties mutate: our God and our country... because what happens when our country becomes anti-our-God? We get a cross breed of Christianity which is no Christianity.
  - a. Render to Caesar what is Caesars.
  - b. Render to God all that is His!

## 2. Sadducees

*27 Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection), 28 and they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that IF A MAN'S BROTHER DIES, having a wife, AND HE IS CHILDLESS, HIS BROTHER SHOULD MARRY THE WIFE AND RAISE UP CHILDREN TO HIS BROTHER. 29 Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless; 30 and the second 31 and the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children. 32 Finally the woman died also. 33 In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her."*

1. It's interesting that the Sadducees differed from the Pharisees in 2 main areas.
  - a. They did not believe in the resurrection
  - b. They did not believe in angels or spiritual beings.
2. And they give Jesus a hypothetical situation about the resurrection thinking they are going to trip him up over the issue of the resurrection.
3. Jesus decides to push both of the Sadducees' buttons.

*34 Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;*

1. There is button one: Jesus assumes there is a resurrection
2. He doesn't even argue with them over what they want to argue over...but he goes farther to push their second button.

36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

1. There it is...angels!
2. Not only does Jesus make clear to them that the resurrection is true and that angels do exist.

37 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord *THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB*. 38 Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him." 39 Some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." 40 For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.

1. Interestingly, Mark's gospel tells the story of the same interaction...with one important addition.
2. Mark 12:18-27
  - a. Jesus reminds them that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (who were all long dead), is the God of the living, not the dead.
  - b. He is letting the Sadducees know without a doubt that there would indeed be a future resurrection and life eternal!
3. He ends his dialogue in verse 27 by saying, "You have made a serious error."
  - a. This isn't just a misunderstanding that the Sadducees had...a grey area we can agree to disagree on.
  - b. This was not just an error. It was a serious error.
  - c. Missing the truth of the future resurrection is a serious error!
4. What slow learners these Sadducees were, right?
  - a. When we live our lives in a way that says, I am consumed with temporal things, and earthly life instead of eternal things and heavenly life, we are saying we don't really believe in a future resurrection either.
  - b. **When we focus our entire Christian life on the past resurrection of Jesus without orienting our present life to the future resurrection of the dead, we are saying we don't really believe in a future resurrection.**

With our pre-occupation with this life evidenced by our obsession with money, material possession, social media, politics, our freedom and rights, and our comforts here on this earth we show that the future resurrection is really just a talking point.

1. If we look at our lives do they testify to our belief in a future resurrection?
2. 1 Corinthians 15:19 *If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*
3. In the words of John Piper, "*What Paul is saying here is that the life Paul has chosen to live, based on his deep and confident hope for his own resurrection, would be a pitiable, foolish life, if in fact there is no resurrection. If the dead are not raised – if this life of risk and sacrifice is my only life – I am a fool. A pitiable fool!*"

The opposite viewpoint of the resurrection is seen in 1 Corinthians 15:32 *If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.*

1. This verse is giving us the alternative to a life focused on the future resurrection and the hope of eternity...a life focused on the temporal and earthly: eating, drinking, and living our best life now!.
2. Without the conviction and hope of a future resurrection we will inevitably treat this life as our source of pleasure, more literally as one big playground, because there is really nothing else.
3. If we were to look at our lives today from outside and let our words, our social media posts, our wallets, our actions, our investments, our priorities give testimony would we say that our focus is this life or the life to come?

If we are living for this life, we are practical Sadducees who don't really believe in a future resurrection, and in the words of Jesus, "we have made a serious error."

### 3. Scribes

*41 Then He said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is David's son? 42 For David himself says 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 Therefore David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?" 45 And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples, 46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, 47 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."*

These are the Biblical scholars of the day. They should know the answer!

1. Everyone knew that the Christ would be David's son. No question.
2. Then Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1

Psalm 110:1 *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."*

1. The first Lord is YHWH, the Father
2. The second Lord is Jesus Christ, the Son
3. David calls them both Lord...so how can David be greater (the father of) His LORD!!?
4. And if he is dead and gone, and Christ was yet to come, how could he call Him anything?

The scholars are stumped because they don't understand the very Scriptures they profess to know and believe.

### 4. Surrender

*21:1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. 2 And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. 3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; 4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."*

The widow is the summary.

1. She has rendered everything, her very self, to God in worship
  - a. Is the Temple a worthy cause? Are the Jewish leaders worthy men? NO
  - b. But she is not giving to them...she is giving to the Lord
  - c. They will answer for their abuse of her offering, and she will answer for the heart behind her offering.
2. She is looking to the future resurrection as she totally released her grip on her earthly security in faith towards God.
3. She gives 100% to her Lord...to David's Lord!

Here is the essence of Christianity: Total 100% surrender.

1. She surrendered all...even though it was less than the others, it was her all, which amounted to so much more than those who released their grip on a larger amount.
  - a. The size of what you release does not give evidence of surrender.
  - b. The size of what is left in your hand after you release gives evidence of surrender.
2. She opened her hand and released her grip on everything she had: she surrendered all.
  - a. "I Surrender All"
  - b. In all 5 stanzas "all" is sung 43 times and "surrender" is sung 30 times.
  - c. *Christians don't tell lies. We sing them.* A.W. Tozer
3. Do we? Do you? GOSPEL: deny yourself, die daily, follow Christ... open your hand and surrender your all to Him today.