

## Luke 20

### *Who Is This Jesus?*

#### Study Summary and Learning Objectives

In this study, we will spend time talking about who Jesus is, the importance of seeking His truth, and the dominion of His authority.

#### Objectives

- Consider the implications for us that Jesus is our Lord.
- Reflect upon the areas in which we do not allow Jesus to fully reign in our lives.

#### Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- Read all of Luke 20 and reflect on the application questions yourself.
- Consider your group dynamics and revise the optional questions accordingly.
- Not all the Scripture passages are provided on this study's handout. If you want to reference them, make sure you have Bibles/remind people to bring theirs.

#### Part 1

**Pray for your group.**

#### Read Out Loud: Luke 20:1-19 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. <sup>2</sup> “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?”

<sup>3</sup> He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me: <sup>4</sup> John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

<sup>5</sup> They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’” <sup>6</sup> But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.”

<sup>7</sup> So they answered, “We don’t know where it was from.”

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup> He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

<sup>13</sup> “Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.’

<sup>14</sup> “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.’ <sup>15</sup> So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? <sup>16</sup> He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

When the people heard this, they said, “God forbid!”

<sup>17</sup> 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 cornerstone’?”

<sup>18</sup> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

<sup>19</sup> 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.

**?** What do you think were the chief priests’ motivations in asking Jesus, “Who gave you this authority?”

*Possible Answers: They were trying to trap Jesus in this question. They didn’t believe that Jesus actually had authority, or they believed that His “authority” came from the devil. In posing the question, they were hoping that Jesus would reveal His Godhood, which would be seen as blasphemous and worthy of death. Jesus’ clever sidestep prevents an early execution.*

**?** The chief priests’ failure to answer Jesus’ question reveals that they weren’t genuinely seeking truth.

Why do you think someone would struggle with accepting that Jesus’ authority actually came from God?

*Possible Answers: It was a challenge to their authority. The chief priests were in charge of much of Jewish daily life, and were respected, and many turned to them for help and counsel. They believed that they understood God and that by following God’s laws perfectly they were achieving rightness with God. Jesus’ teaching challenged all this and –if true—it meant that these priests were not right with their creator.*

**?** Optional: Can you think of any times where you have questioned Jesus’ authority rather than sought His perfect truth? What happened?

*Possible Answer: In their sinful nature there are times when all Christians want to control their own actions instead of consistently relying on Jesus’ authority in their life.*

**?** How can we more humbly approach Jesus and seek His truth?

*Possible Answers: Ask for help from Him and from community. Remember and meditate upon the goodness of His truth.*

### Jesus As Our Cornerstone

The passage that Jesus quotes in verse 17 comes from Psalm 118:22. This verse is a sort of proverb that was applied to Israel’s king. The sense of the psalm is that a stone that is rejected by human hands was used for a greater purpose by God. In ancient building practices, the cornerstone was the principal stone placed at the corner of an edifice. The cornerstone was the first stone set into a foundation and all other stones were set in reference to it. Likewise, Jesus was the first of a new race of people –made righteous before God –and our goal as Christians is to line up with Him.

? In His parable, Jesus communicates a truth to the chief priests and scribes about their eternal salvation. They responded with hard hearts. How can we better respond to hard truths that Jesus reveals to us about the condition of our hearts?

*Possible Answers: We can continue to confess that we have sin so as not to deceive ourselves (1 John 1:8-10). We can rejoice that He is our Father and that He loves us! (Hebrews 12:6)*

## Part 2

Optional Transition: For the sake of time, we'll skip ahead to verse 41. In verses 20-40, Jesus continues to have altercations with the chief priests and the teachers of the law, challenging their assumptions about the law, money, and marriage.

### Read Out Loud: Luke 20:41-47 (NIV)

<sup>41</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Why is it said that the Messiah is the son of David? <sup>42</sup> David himself declares in the Book of Psalms:

"The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

<sup>43</sup> until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet."

<sup>44</sup> David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

<sup>45</sup> While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, <sup>46</sup> "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. <sup>47</sup> They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

**Read to the Group:** In verses 41 and 42, Jesus quotes Psalm 110. This was a royal Psalm written by King David where he alludes to one of his own descendants who will usher in a new era for God's people. It is striking that David would refer to one of his own descendants as lord, as that term was usually used in reference to those who were one's superior or elder. In that day, a king would not usually refer to his sons or descendants as lords.

? Instead of answering their questions, Jesus now poses one to the scribes and priests (vs. 41). How would you answer Jesus' question?

*Possible Answers: Jesus seems to understand the psalm as a direct prophecy concerning Himself. Jesus is saying that David was prophesying that one of his descendants would be even greater than the kings of Israel. Unlike the scribes' questions, which were designed to trap those who answered them, Jesus' question is constructed to help reveal His own Godhood. Jesus is testing the scribes' concepts about the Messiah.*

? The Jews of Jesus' day taught that teachers were to be respected almost as much as God. Looking at verse 46, how had the scribes of the day misused this status?

*Leader's Note: Scribes of the day were often men of leisure who watched while others worked. They demanded recognition for their "standing" with God, and insisted on the privileges their status carried. In that day, a Jewish teacher could not be paid for teaching—but he could receive gifts. Apparently, many scribes used flattery and manipulation to receive extravagant gifts from those who could least afford to give them—such as widows.*

**?** Optional: As we've journeyed through Luke, where else have we seen the Jewish leaders misuse their status?

*Possible Answers: In Luke 5, the Pharisees persecute Jesus for interacting with sinners and people of the lower caste (see also Luke 15). In Luke 6, the Pharisees judge Jesus for healing on the Sabbath (also see, Luke 13:14-16 & Luke 14:4-5). In Luke 11, some Pharisees look down on Jesus for declining to follow traditional cleaning rituals. In Luke 11: 39-54, Jesus describes how the Jewish leaders place the law above human needs, persecute others for failing to follow the law as well, walk all over people, and have even hindered others from seeking God.*

**?** How do these scribes' behaviors contrast with how Christ's disciples should live?

*Possible Answers: The scribes were living for themselves. They were constantly looking out for their own interests and very proud of their accomplishments. Believers, by contrast, should express Christ's humility in everything they do. We recognize that we are sinners and that our only worth comes from Christ, which means there is very little to be proud of. Christ's love for us is so great that we should be encouraged to share that love with others.*

**?** How do we as Christians sometimes behave like modern-day scribes to those who aren't followers of Christ?

*Possible Answers: We convince old widows to give us cars, Victorian houses, and Cheetos. Or... we act self-righteous and feel justified in our blessings. We feel as if we need to correct others' behaviors or confront nonbelievers when they do not hold to our "Christian" moral law.*

**?** In what areas of life do modern Christians sometimes try to suppress truth? How can we better accept Jesus' authority over our lives?

*Possible Answers: We sometimes struggle to believe that Jesus isn't enough, or we wrestle with believing that we have to earn our salvation in some way. Sometimes we think God will favor us more if we behave a certain way. And we consistently idolize things over God, thinking that we need to secure an earthly wealth, happiness, or influence, etc.*

### **For Discussion and Accountability**

**?** What heart issues might Jesus be calling you to address? How can you respond to Him with trust and love?