

The Good News About Jesus as Luke Wrote It

Chapter 20:1-47

HoneyBee base version for oral translation

September 2023 Draft¹

Background

- Jewish religious leaders always sought to suppress popular preachers who might provoke Roman authorities to take military action.
- Many common people believed that John and Jesus were prophets sent by God.
- Many Jews believed that the dead are ruled by a demon who is god over the underworld.
- Wealthy absentee landowners rented land to tenant farmers. Rent could be paid in kind or in silver.
- Vineyard owners planted other kinds of fruit trees besides grape vines in their vineyards.
- If a man died in a vineyard, then this would defile the fruit and no one would eat it.
- Foreign coins bore the emperor's image and the divine status that they claimed.
- Sadducees were wealthy, powerful religious leaders that believed in free will, and denied the resurrection and the final judgment.
- The Jewish Book of Tobit recounts how a demon named Asmodeus killed Sarah's first seven husbands.
- Jews believed that angels do not procreate, because God can create new ones.

History

- Jews living in their own country had to pay taxes to the Roman government.
- A religious community called Sadducees cooperated with the Roman government while ruling over the temple in Jerusalem.
- Everyone remembered the disastrous tax revolt of year 6 CE.

Themes

- God will destroy wicked national leaders.
- Render to God what belongs to him, and to the government what belongs to them.
- King David called the future Messiah his Lord.
- God hates those who perform religious deeds only to be seen by others.
- God keeps the righteous alive and will resurrect them to life again after they die.

Religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority

¹ One day during that week, Jesus was teaching the people in the Temple courtyard and telling them God's good message. As he was doing so, some chief priests, some men who taught Jewish laws, and other Jewish elders came to him. ² They asked Jesus, "Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who authorized you to do things like you did here yesterday *when you chased away the sellers?*"

¹ Licensed for use under Creative Commons. Text in *italics* is implied from historical or cultural context. Superscripted ^(pl) means plural, ^(sg) singular, ^(inc) inclusive, ^(exc) exclusive pronoun.

³ He replied, “Before I answer, I shall also ask you a question. Tell me, ⁴ who authorized John the Baptizer to baptize those who came to him? Was it God? Or was it people?”

⁵ They discussed this among themselves, saying, “If we(inc) reply, ‘It was God, then he will say to us, ‘So, you should believe John’s message/words.’ ⁶ But if we say, ‘It was people,’ then the people here will kill us by throwing stones at us, because they all believe that John was a prophet whom God sent.” ⁷ So they replied, “We(exc) do not know who gave to John his authority.” ⁸ Then Jesus said to them, “Because you did not answer my question, I will not tell you who authorized me to do those things *here yesterday*.”

Parable about wicked farmers²

⁹ Then Jesus told the people this parable to illustrate what God would do to Jews who reject the former prophets and him:

“A certain man owned a vineyard. After he planted it, he rented it to farmers *to care for it and to pay rent to him*. Then he went to another country and stayed there several years. ¹⁰ When the vineyard had produced fruit, the owner sent a servant to the farmers. He expected that they would give to him *some grapes produced from the vineyard*.³ But after the servant arrived, they beat him. Then they sent him away with nothing.

¹¹ Later, the owner sent another servant. But the farmers beat him and mistreated him also. They sent him away without giving him any money to give to the vineyard owner. ¹² Still later, the owner sent another servant. That one they wounded and threw him out from the vineyard. ¹³ So, the vineyard owner thought to himself, ‘What shall I do?’

*Then he had an idea. He thought to himself, ‘I will send my son, whom I love very much. Perhaps they will respect him and pay to him the money that they owe to me.’*⁴¹⁴ So the owner sent his son. But after the farmers found out who he was, they said to each other, ‘This man will someday inherit the vineyard. If we kill him, then this vineyard will be ours!’¹⁵ So the farmers dragged him outside the vineyard, and they killed him.

*So, here is a question: what will the vineyard owner do to those wicked farmers?*¹⁶ The owner will come and kill those farmers. Then he will rent the vineyard to other farmers.” When the people listening to Jesus heard that, they said, “We do not want anything like that to happen here!”⁵

¹⁷ But Jesus looked directly at them and said, “Think about these words that David wrote in the Psalms:

‘The men who were building a house rejected a certain carved/chisled stone.
But other men made that carved stone to be the most important stone and laid it at the main corner in a new temple.

² OR Jesus travels toward Jerusalem.

³ OR give to him some money which they got from selling grapes.

⁴ OR give to him money for my share. OR give to him my share.

⁵ OR “We would not do anything like what those wicked men did!”

¹⁸ This stone will break to pieces everyone who falls on it, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.’⁶

Leaders ask Jesus trick questions, and he responds wisely⁷

¹⁹ The chief priests and the Jewish law teachers realized that Jesus was accusing them, when he told the parable about wicked vineyard farmers. So they immediately tried to find a way to arrest him, but they did not do so, because they feared what the people there would do to them.

²⁰ So, they watched him carefully, because they wanted to turn him over to the Roman government authorities. So, they also hired spies/men who pretended to be sincere. These men asked Jesus questions, trying to make him speak against paying taxes to the Roman government.

²¹ So one spy asked Jesus, “Teacher, we(exc) know that you(sg) speak and teach what is right. You tell the truth even if important people do not like it. You teach truthfully what God wants people to do. ²² So tell us what you think about this: Is it right/good or not good that we Jews pay taxes to the Roman government?” ²³ But Jesus knew that they were trying to trick him, so he said to them, ²⁴ “Show me a Roman coin. Tell me whose picture/image is on it, and tell me whose name is on it.” They showed him a coin and replied, “It has the Roman Emperor Caesar’s picture and name on it.” ²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “In that case, give to the government what belongs to them, and give to God what belongs to him.”^{8 26} While the people were there, the spies were unable to find fault with him for what he said. They were so amazed at his answer, that they could not say anything more.

²⁷ Then some men from the Jewish Sadducee *sect/religious group* came to Jesus. Sadducees do not believe that dead people can become alive again. ²⁸ They wanted to ask Jesus a question in order to discredit the idea that dead people will live again.

One Sadducee said to Jesus, “Teacher, the prophet Moses wrote this law: ‘If a man dies whose wife has no child, then the dead man’s brother must marry her. If they have children together, then those children will be the dead man’s descendants and will inherit his land.’ ²⁹ Once there were seven brothers in one family. The oldest one married, but he and his wife did not bear any children. Later he died. ³⁰ The second brother followed this law and married the widow/woman, but the same thing happened to him.

³¹ Then the third brother married her, but the same thing happened again. All seven brothers, one by one, married that woman, but they had no children, and one by one they died. ³² Afterwards, the woman died, too. ³³ So, if it is true that there will be a time when dead people become alive again,⁹ then whose wife will that woman be?¹⁰ Remember, all seven men had married her.’

⁶ OR That stone represents me, the Messiah, and those who reject me are like people who fall on this stone. Everyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” See Isaiah 8:14-15; 28:16. Here Jesus is explaining one Scripture by quoting other Scriptures which share the same key word or concept, in this case, the divine/Messianic “stone”.

⁷ OR Jesus cleans / purifies the temple.

⁸ OR give to the government what they require, and give to God what he requires.

⁹ OR rise back to life. OR will be resurrected.

¹⁰ OR who will be the (one) husband for that woman?

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³⁴ Jesus replied to them, “People who live in this world¹¹ marry wives or husbands. ³⁵ But the people whom God considers worthy to live in the new world,¹² after they become alive again,¹³ will not be married to wives or to husbands. ³⁶ In the world to come,¹⁴ no one will die. Those who become alive again will *live forever* just as angels do. Those people will be God’s children forever.¹⁵

³⁷ Moses showed that some people will become alive again, when he wrote about hearing the Lord speak from a burning bush. The Lord said to him, ‘I am Abraham’s God, Isaac’s God, and Jacob’s God.’ ³⁸ Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead; they are still alive/living. Therefore, the Lord is God¹⁶ to those who are still alive/living. God considers that all *his people* are *still* living.”

³⁹ Some men who taught Jewish laws replied, “Teacher, you(sg) have answered very well!”
⁴⁰ After that, they no longer dared to ask him more questions to try to trap him.¹⁷

Jesus asks a difficult question about the Messiah

⁴¹ Then Jesus said to them, “You Sadducees say that the Messiah is merely a human descendant from King David! ⁴² But, long before the Messiah was born, David himself wrote this about the Messiah in the Psalms book:

The Lord God said to my *human* lord,
Sit here beside me on my right, where everyone must honor you.
⁴³ Sit here while I completely defeat your enemies.’

⁴⁴ Because King David calls the Messiah ‘my Lord’, can it be that Messiah is only/merely/more than David’s son/descendant?”¹⁸ [*Obviously,*¹⁹ *the Messiah is a human descendant to David, but also he is much greater than David – he is David’s Lord God.*]

⁴⁵ While all the other people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁶ “Do not be like the scribes. They like to put on long robes and walk around to make people think that they are very important. And they like people to greet them respectfully in public places. They also like to sit in the most honorable places in the synagogues, and at feasts/dinner parties. Do not be like them! ⁴⁷ Scribes *misuse God’s law* to steal/seize poor widows’ houses/possessions. Then they say long prayers in places where people will see them. God will certainly punish/condemn them very severely.”

¹¹ OR in the present time/age. OR in the new earth.

¹² OR in the future time/age. OR in the new earth.

¹³ OR rise back to life. OR are resurrected.

¹⁴ OR future time/age. OR future/new earth.

¹⁵ OR will inherit God’s kingdom forever.

¹⁶ OR the Lord continues to be God.

¹⁷ OR to trick him.

¹⁸ OR how can it be that Messiah is only/merely David’s son? OR how is it that Messiah is more than David’s son? (Jesus asks this question to make the people think and realize what was difficult for them to understand – that Messiah is both a human son to King David and also David’s God. Messiah is a God-man. In Luke’s text, Jesus does not answer his own question. But, in your oral translation, if you think that people will not be able to understand the obvious answer, you may pause and then “whisper” the obvious answer that is in brackets, like what you might put in a footnote if your translation was written.)

¹⁹ OR This Psalm shows that. (In your oral translation, if you think that people will not be able to understand the obvious answer, you may pause and then “whisper” the obvious answer that is in brackets, like what you might put in a footnote if your translation was written.)