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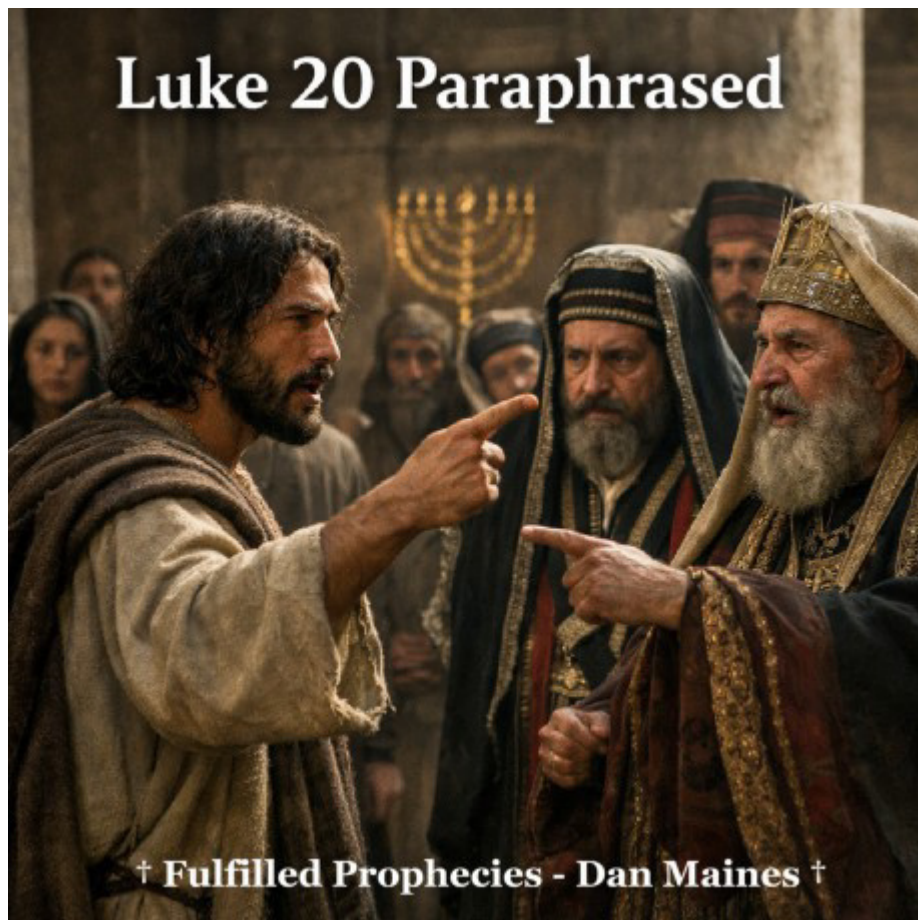
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Luke 20 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Luke 20 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Jesus is in the temple confronting the leaders who had rejected both John and the One John announced.

† This chapter exposes false authority, corrupt stewardship, and the coming judgment on that generation.

† It also shows that the kingdom would not remain in the hands of those who murdered the Son.

Luke 20:1

One day while Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and

announcing the good news, the chief priests, scribes, and elders came up to Him.

† Jesus is openly teaching in the temple, showing that true authority was standing in God's house.

† The leaders approach Him, not to learn, but to challenge and discredit Him.

† This sets the tone for the whole chapter, truth confronting corrupt leadership.

Luke 20:2

They spoke to Him and said, Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority.

† They question His authority because they won't submit to the One sent from heaven.

† Their problem isn't lack of evidence, it's refusal to believe.

† They want credentials from the Son while ignoring the Father's witness.

Luke 20:3

Jesus answered them, I will ask you one thing also, and you answer Me.

† Jesus doesn't dodge the issue, He exposes their dishonesty.

† His question will reveal whether they care about truth or only self-protection.

† The Judge turns the examination back on the accusers.

Luke 20:4

Was John's baptism from heaven or from men.

† If John was from heaven, then they should've believed his testimony about Jesus.

† If they deny John, they expose themselves before the people.

† Their answer to John is tied directly to their answer to Christ.

Luke 20:5

They reasoned among themselves, saying, If we say, From

heaven, He'll say, Why didn't you believe him.

† They aren't searching for the truth, they're calculating damage control.

† Their private discussion exposes hearts ruled by fear and politics.

† They know the right answer, but they won't say it.

Luke 20:6

But if we say, From men, all the people will stone us, because they're convinced John was a prophet.

† They fear the crowd more than they fear God.

† This is what hypocritical religion does, it performs for men while resisting heaven.

† They are trapped by the very people they try to control.

Luke 20:7

So they answered that they didn't know where it came from.

† Their claimed ignorance is not honest ignorance, it's deliberate evasion.

† They refuse a clear answer because a clear answer would condemn them.

† When men resist light, they often hide behind false uncertainty.

Luke 20:8

And Jesus said to them, Then I won't tell you by what authority I do these things.

† Since they reject revealed truth, more truth isn't owed to them.

† Christ doesn't hand holy things to men committed to rebellion.

† Their refusal to answer John leaves them unfit to hear further.

Luke 20:9

Then He began telling the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, leased it to vine growers, and went away for a long time.

† The vineyard is Israel, a familiar picture from Isaiah 5:1-7.

† The vine growers are the leaders entrusted with stewardship over God's people.

† Jesus is about to show the history of their failure and the certainty of judgment.

Luke 20:10

At harvest time he sent a servant to the vine growers so they'd give him some of the fruit of the vineyard, but the vine growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

† The servant pictures the prophets sent by God to call for fruit and faithfulness.

† Instead of giving the owner what was due, they abused the messenger.

† This is Israel's long history of rejecting those sent to her.

Luke 20:11

And he sent another servant, but they beat him too, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed.

† God's patience is seen in sending messenger after messenger.

† Their repeated cruelty shows that this wasn't a one-time failure, it was a pattern.

† The leaders had become enemies of the very voice of God.

Luke 20:12

And he sent a third, but this one also they wounded and threw out.

† The abuse keeps escalating, just as Israel's guilt kept piling up.

† They don't merely ignore the message, they strike the messenger.

† This builds the case for why judgment on that generation was just.

Luke 20:13

Then the owner of the vineyard said, What shall I do. I'll send my beloved son. Maybe they'll respect him.

† The beloved Son is Christ, the final and fullest revelation from the Father.

† This doesn't mean God was uncertain, it means the parable is exposing their wickedness.

† After the prophets came the Son Himself.

Luke 20:14

But when the vine growers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir. Let's kill him so the inheritance will be ours.

† They recognize the heir, which makes their guilt even greater.

† This points directly to the leaders plotting Jesus' death.

† They want the privileges of God's house without submission to God's Son.

Luke 20:15

So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them.

† Jesus was taken outside the city and crucified, just as the parable pictures.

† The question now is not whether judgment will come, but when.

† By killing the Son, they seal their own sentence.

Luke 20:16

He'll come and destroy these vine growers and give the vineyard to others. When they heard it, they said, May it never be.

† This is the transfer of kingdom privilege from corrupt Israelite leadership to a new covenant people.

† Their protest shows they understood the warning and hated it.

† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 proved that this judgment was not empty talk.

Luke 20:17

But Jesus looked at them and said, Then what is this that is written: The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone.

† Psalm 118:22 is applied directly to Christ.

† The builders, the leaders, rejected the very stone God chose.

† Their rejection couldn't cancel God's purpose, it only fulfilled it.

Luke 20:18

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but if it falls on anyone, it'll crush him to dust.

† Christ is either the foundation of life or the stone of judgment.

† Rejecting Him doesn't leave a man neutral, it leaves him shattered.

† This warning fell especially on that generation of covenant breakers.

Luke 20:19

The scribes and the chief priests wanted to lay hands on Him that very hour, but they feared the people, because they knew He had spoken this parable against them.

† They understood the message clearly enough when it exposed them.

† Again, fear of the people restrains them more than fear of God.

† Their reaction proves the parable hit its mark.

Luke 20:20

So they watched Him and sent spies who pretended to be sincere, so they could trap Him in something He said and hand Him over to the rule and authority of the governor.

† Their sincerity is fake, their mission is entrapment.

† This is how corrupt religion often works, outward holiness hiding inward murder.

† They want Rome to do their dirty work.

Luke 20:21

They questioned Him, saying, Teacher, we know that You speak and teach rightly, and You aren't swayed by appearances, but teach the way of God truthfully.

† Their flattery is not reverence, it's bait.

† Ironically, what they say is true, even though they don't believe it.

† Hypocrites can speak orthodox words while plotting evil.

Luke 20:22

Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not.

† They think they've found a perfect political trap.

† If He says yes, they hope to turn the people against Him.

† If He says no, they hope to accuse Him before Rome.

Luke 20:23

But He saw through their trickery and said to them,

† Nothing escapes Christ's sight.

† Men can hide motives from others, but never from Him.

† His wisdom exposes the craftiness of the wicked.

Luke 20:24

Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have. They answered, Caesar's.

† The coin itself exposes their participation in Caesar's system.

† They already use the emperor's money while pretending moral outrage.

† Jesus makes them answer their own trap.

Luke 20:25

And He said to them, Then give Caesar what belongs to

Caesar, and give God what belongs to God.

† Civil obligations don't cancel what is owed to God.

† The deeper issue is that they were refusing to give God His due, themselves.

† Since man bears God's image, man belongs to God.

Luke 20:26

And they couldn't trap Him in what He said before the people, and being amazed at His answer, they became silent.

† Their scheme collapses in public.

† Truth doesn't panic under pressure.

† Christ's answer leaves them with nothing more to say.

Luke 20:27

Then some of the Sadducees came to Him, those who deny that there's a resurrection, and they questioned Him,

† Another group steps forward with another challenge.

† The Sadducees rejected resurrection, so they attack the hope they denied.

† Their theology was shallow because they mishandled the Scriptures.

Luke 20:28

saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies having a wife but no children, his brother should take the wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

† They cite the law correctly, but they use it wrongly.

† Their goal is not understanding, but ridicule.

† They think a hypothetical puzzle can overthrow God's power.

Luke 20:29

Now there were seven brothers, and the first took a wife and died childless.

† They build an extreme case to mock resurrection.

† Their argument assumes the age to come is just a

continuation of earthly arrangements.

† That false assumption is what Jesus is about to correct.

Luke 20:30

And the second took her as wife,

† The story continues according to their setup.

† They are piling up details to make their objection sound clever.

† But cleverness is no substitute for truth.

Luke 20:31

and then the third, and in the same way all seven died without leaving children.

† Their example is designed to make resurrection look absurd.

† They think earthly categories can fully explain the coming age.

† But resurrection life isn't bound to old covenant structures.

Luke 20:32

Afterward the woman died also.

† The scenario is now complete.

† They think they've created an impossible dilemma.

† Yet the problem exists only in their own misunderstanding.

Luke 20:33

So in the resurrection, whose wife will she be, because all seven had her as wife.

† Their question assumes marriage continues in the same form after the resurrection.

† They are measuring heavenly reality by earthly patterns.

† Christ will answer by contrasting the ages.

Luke 20:34

Jesus said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,

† He begins by distinguishing this age from the age to come.

† Marriage belongs to the present order with its earthly continuance and mortality.

† The Sadducees had failed to recognize that covenantal transition.

Luke 20:35

but those considered worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.

† The resurrection belongs to that age, the fulfilled covenant order in Christ.

† Jesus is not teaching endless earthly continuation, but transformed covenant standing.

† The coming age would not be structured like the old one.

Luke 20:36

For they can't die anymore, because they're like angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

† This is about resurrection life and covenant sonship, not becoming literal angels.

† The point is no further succession is needed where death no longer rules.

† In Christ, the people of God stand in life, not under the old order of death.

Luke 20:37

But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

† Jesus proves resurrection from the very books the Sadducees claimed to honor.

† He meets them on their own ground and defeats them there.

† The covenant God is not bound to the grave.

Luke 20:38

Now He isn't the God of the dead, but of the living, because all live to Him.

† God's covenant relationship isn't terminated by death.

† The patriarchs lived to Him, proving the certainty of resurrection.

† This destroys the Sadducees' denial at its root.

Luke 20:39

Some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, You have spoken well.

† Even some among the opposing ranks had to admit the force of His answer.

† Truth can compel acknowledgment even from unfriendly listeners.

† Christ's wisdom leaves no honest room for rebuttal.

Luke 20:40

Because they no longer dared to ask Him anything.

† The challengers are now silenced.

† Their traps have failed, one after another.

† The authority they questioned has now publicly exposed them.

Luke 20:41

Then He said to them, How is it that they say the Christ is David's son.

† Jesus now asks the question.

† The issue is not whether Messiah is David's son, but whether that's all He is.

† Their view of Christ was too small.

Luke 20:42

For David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand,

† Psalm 110:1 reveals the Messiah as greater than David.

† David calls Him Lord, showing His superiority and exaltation.

† Jesus is pressing them to see more than a merely earthly king.

Luke 20:43

until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.

† The Messiah would reign until His enemies were subdued.

† This fits Christ's present authority and coming judgment on His enemies.

† The rejection of the Son would end in His vindication, not theirs.

Luke 20:44

David therefore calls Him Lord, so how is He his son.

† The answer is that Messiah is both David's son and David's Lord.

† He is the promised descendant, yet far greater than David.

† The leaders couldn't understand this because they refused to see who Jesus really was.

Luke 20:45

Then while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples,

† Jesus now turns from debate to warning.

† The people are hearing, but the instruction is especially for His disciples.

† They must learn how to recognize false leaders.

Luke 20:46

Beware of the scribes, who like walking around in long robes, love respectful greetings in the marketplaces, chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets,

† He exposes their love of status, recognition, and outward display.

† Their religion is built on appearance and social honor.

† Christ warns His disciples not to be impressed by religious theater.

Luke 20:47

who devour widows' houses and for show make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.

† Their outward devotion hides inward greed and abuse.

† The weak and vulnerable were being exploited by the very men who should've protected them.

† Because their sin was cloaked in religion, their condemnation would be greater.

Historical References

† Josephus described the corruption, greed, and violence among the priestly rulers leading up to Jerusalem's fall.

† Eusebius connected the desolation of Jerusalem with divine judgment on the generation that rejected Christ.

† Clement of Alexandria spoke of the leaders' blindness and the superiority of the teaching of Christ over empty religious display.

† Irenaeus testified to Christ as the rejected stone who became the cornerstone of God's true building.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We must test authority by truth, not by titles, robes, or public honor.

† We must give God what belongs to Him, our loyalty, obedience, and trust.

† We must never mistake religious appearance for genuine faithfulness.

† We must receive Christ as the cornerstone and not stumble over Him in unbelief.

† We must beware of leaders who use spiritual language while feeding on the weak.

† We should live as sons of resurrection life, grounded in the

victory of Christ.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Jesus ask about John's baptism first?

A: Because their response to John exposed their response to God. If they admitted John was from heaven, they'd condemn themselves for rejecting his witness to Christ (Luke 7:29-30).

Q: What does the vineyard represent?

A: It represents Israel as God's planted covenant people, just as Isaiah had already pictured it in Isaiah 5:1-7.

Q: Who are the vine growers in the parable?

A: They are the leaders entrusted with the care of God's people, especially the priests, scribes, and elders who rejected the prophets and the Son (Matthew 23:29-36).

Q: What does the destruction of the vine growers point to?

A: It points to the judgment that came on Jerusalem and its corrupt leadership in AD 70, when the old covenant order was brought down (Luke 21:20-22).

Q: What does it mean that the stone became the cornerstone?

A: It means Christ was rejected by the builders, but God made Him the foundation of His true house and people (Psalm 118:22; Ephesians 2:19-22).

Q: Why was the condemnation of the scribes greater?

A: Because they used religion as a cover for greed, hypocrisy, and oppression, especially against widows, while presenting themselves as holy (Luke 20:46-47; Matthew 23:14).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Luke 20

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History
† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata
† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

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