SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Luke 20

The Stone the Builders Rejected — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

In the temple, Jesus' enemies try every trap they have, and He answers them all from Scripture and turns each question back on the questioner. The rejected Son is the cornerstone, the living God raises the dead, and David's son is David's Lord — so I must give God what bears His image: me.

00 The Text

LUKE 20 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him,

2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?"

3 Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me:

4 "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?"

5 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'

6 "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet."

7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from.

8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

9 And He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time.

10 "At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

11 "And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed.

12 "And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out.

13 "The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'

14 "But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that 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 destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"

17 But Jesus looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘△ THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, △ THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone’?

18 “⚠ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

19 The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.

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.

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.

22 “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

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.”

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.

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.”

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;

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

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.

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.”

Marked in the text

- **v2** "by what authority You are doing these things" — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** "they did not know where it came from" — Sin / warning
- **v10** "beat him and sent him away empty-handed" — Sin / warning
- **v13** "I will send my beloved son" — God — His character & actions
- **v14** "let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours" — Sin / warning
- **v16** "will give the vineyard to others" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED" — God — His character & actions
- **v17** "THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "sent spies who pretended to be righteous" — Sin / warning
- **v23** "He detected their trickery" — God — His character & actions
- **v25** "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" — Command / instruction
- **v27** "who say that there is no resurrection" — Sin / warning
- **v36** "they cannot even die anymore" — Promise / blessing
- **v36** "sons of the resurrection" — Promise / blessing
- **v37** "the dead are raised" — Promise / blessing
- **v38** "He is not the God of the dead but of the living" — God — His character & actions
- **v38** "all live to Him" — Promise / blessing
- **v42** "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND" — God — His character & actions
- **v44** "David calls Him 'Lord,'" — God — His character & actions
- **v46** "Beware of the scribes" — Command / instruction
- **v47** "devour widows' houses" — Sin / warning
- **v47** "for appearance's sake offer long prayers" — Sin / warning
- **v47** "These will receive greater condemnation" — Sin / warning
- **v2** "authority" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v9** "vineyard" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v27** "resurrection" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

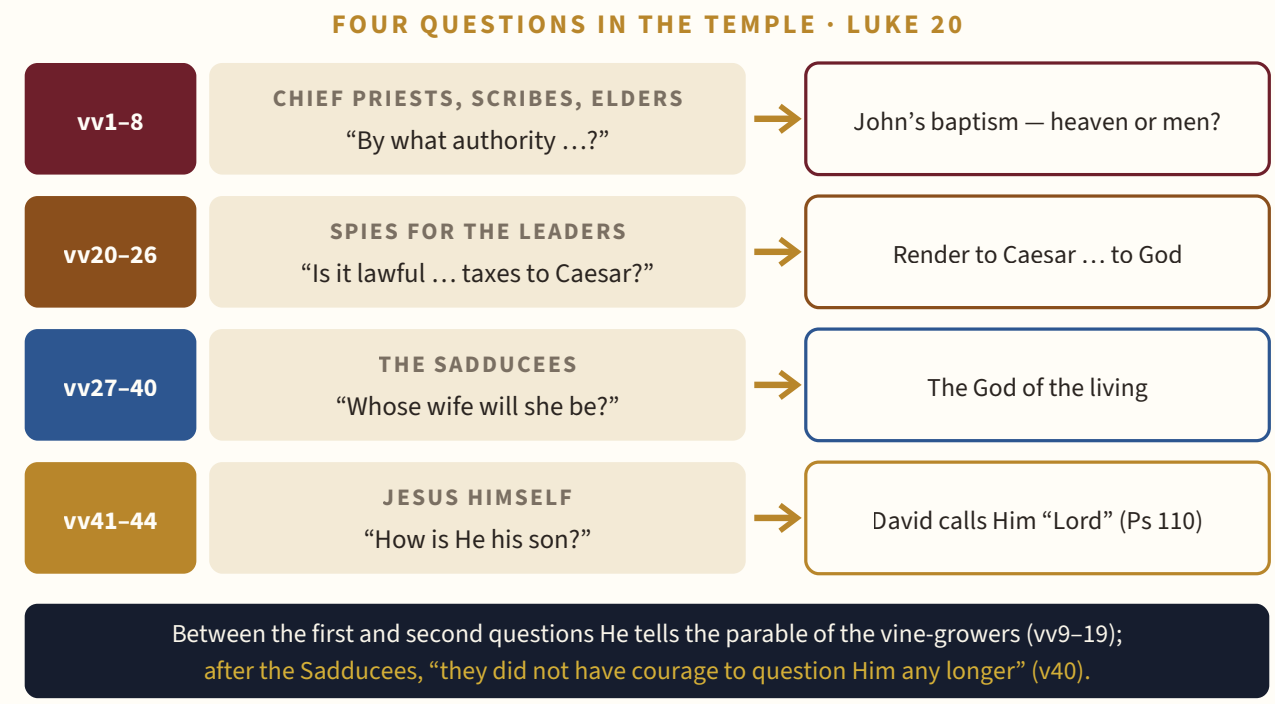
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 20:2

"and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?""

FIGURE · QUESTIONS IN THE TEMPLE



Read each row from left to right: who asks, what they ask, and how Jesus answers — until the last question is His own and no one can answer.

Setting. "On one of the days" of the last week, Jesus is "teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel" (v1). The leaders who had been "trying to destroy Him" (19:47) now come at Him one after another: the chief priests, scribes and elders (v1), spies sent to catch Him (v20), and Sadducees (v27). He answers them all in front of "the people" (vv1, 9, 19, 26, 45), then asks His own question and warns His disciples about the scribes (vv41–47).

Structure:

- vv1–8 — **the authority question:** "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things" (v2); "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" (vv3–4); they reason among themselves — if heaven, "Why did you not believe him?"; if men, the people will stone us (vv5–6); "they did not know" (v7); "Nor will I tell you" (v8).
- vv9–19 — **the vine-growers:** a man plants a vineyard and goes away (v9); three slaves beaten, shamed, wounded, sent away empty-handed (vv10–12); "I will send my beloved son" (v13); "This is the heir; let us kill

him" (vv14–15); the owner will destroy them and give the vineyard to others — "May it never be!" (v16); the rejected stone becomes the chief corner stone; broken to pieces or scattered like dust (vv17–18); the leaders want to seize Him, "for they understood that He spoke this parable against them" (v19).

- vv20–26 — **Caesar's coin:** spies "who pretended to be righteous" (v20); flattery and the question, "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (vv21–22); "He detected their trickery" — "Show Me a denarius" (vv23–24); "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (v25); amazed, they fall silent (v26).
- vv27–40 — **the resurrection:** Sadducees "who say that there is no resurrection" (v27); Moses' law of the husband's brother (v28); seven brothers, one wife, "which one's wife will she be?" (vv29–33); this age and that age; no marriage, no death, "like angels … sons of the resurrection" (vv34–36); the burning bush — "He is not the God of the dead but of the living" (vv37–38); "Teacher, You have spoken well," and no one dares ask more (vv39–40).
- vv41–47 — **David's Lord; beware the scribes:** "How is it that they say the Christ is David's son?" (v41); Psalm 110:1 (vv42–43); "David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?" (v44); before all the people, to the disciples: long robes, greetings, chief seats, devouring widows' houses, long prayers for show — "greater condemnation" (vv45–47).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "God" ×8 — vv21, 25 (×2), 36, 37 (×3), 38.
- "send / sent" ×7 — vv10 (×2), 11 (×2), 12, 13, 20.
- "vineyard" ×6 — vv9, 10, 13, 15 (×2), 16; "vine-growers" ×5 — vv9, 10 (×2), 14, 16.
- "son / sons" ×6 — vv13, 34, 36 (×2), 41, 44.
- "people" ×6 — vv1, 6, 9, 19, 26, 45.
- "die / dies / died / dead" ×8 — vv28, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38.
- "marry / married" ×5 — vv28, 31, 33, 34, 35; "wife" ×4 — vv28 (×2), 29, 33.
- "authority" ×4 — vv2 (×2), 8, 20.
- "Caesar('s)" ×4 — vv22, 24, 25 (×2).
- "resurrection" ×4 — vv27, 33, 35, 36.
- "Lord" ×4 — vv37, 42 (×2), 44; "David" ×3 — vv41, 42, 44.
- "stone" ×4 — vv6 (stone us), 17 (×2), 18.
- "question / questioned" ×4 — vv3, 21, 28, 40; "Teacher" ×3 — vv21, 28, 39.
- "scribes" ×4 — vv1, 19, 39, 46.

Contrasts: From heaven ⟷ from men (vv4–6). The owner's patience ⟷ the tenants' violence (vv10–15). The beloved son ⟷ the heir they kill (vv13–14). Builders who reject ⟷ the stone God makes chief (v17). Falling on the stone ⟷ the stone falling on you (v18). Caesar's things ⟷ God's things (v25). Sons of this age ⟷ sons of the resurrection (vv34–36). God of the dead ⟷ God of the living (v38). David's son ⟷ David's Lord (vv41–44). Long robes and long prayers ⟷ devoured widows' houses (vv46–47).

Shape of the chapter: four rounds of question and answer, with a parable after the first round. The leaders ask three questions designed to trap Him; each trap fails, until "they did not have courage to question Him any longer" (v40). Then Jesus asks the one question they cannot answer — who is the Messiah? — and the chapter ends with a warning about religion that looks good and does harm.

Chapter theme (my words): Jesus' authority comes from God, and the men who reject Him are tenants who have killed the Owner's Son. The rejected Son is God's cornerstone. Give the world what it is owed, give God yourself, believe the living God who raises the dead, and bow to David's son as David's Lord.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 20:38

"Now △ He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for ☆ all live to Him."

FIGURE · THE PARABLE'S PARTS

THE PARABLE'S PARTS · LUKE 20:9–18 · ISAIAH 5:1–7

the owner	vv9, 13, 15	God, the LORD of the vineyard
the vineyard	v9	Israel — "the house of Israel" (Isa 5:7)
the vine-growers	vv9–16	Israel's leaders (v19: "against them")
the slaves, beaten	vv10–12	the prophets sent again and again
"my beloved son"	vv13–15	Jesus — thrown out and killed
"others"	v16	new stewards: Jesus' apostles and church
the stone	vv17–18	the rejected Son made cornerstone

"they understood that He spoke this parable against them" (v19)

Match each piece of the story on the left to what it stands for on the right; the gold bar is the beloved son, the turning point of the parable.

Why won't Jesus answer the authority question? He does answer — with a question that exposes the questioners. John had pointed to Jesus as the Coming One (3:16; 7:19–27); if John was from heaven, so is Jesus' authority. The leaders "reasoned among themselves" (v5) about what each answer would cost them. Guzik: "They cared more about winning the argument against Jesus than in knowing the truth." Henry: "Those that bury the knowledge they have are justly denied further knowledge." Sproul: "Instead of answering their question, He turned the tables on them."

Who is who in the parable? Sproul starts in Isaiah 5: "God likened His people Israel to a vineyard." The owner is God; the vine-growers are Israel's leaders — they "understood that He spoke this parable against them" (v19); the slaves are the prophets; the beloved son is Jesus, who here tells His own death in advance (Guzik). Spurgeon traces the tenants' slide: "They grow bolder, and more wicked."

"Give the vineyard to others" (v16). Teachers read this differently. Many see the kingdom passing from Israel to the church. I read it as the text does: the vine-growers — the leaders — lose the vineyard and new stewards take charge (Jesus' apostles and the church He builds), but the vineyard is still God's, and God is not finished with

Israel. The people's "May it never be!" (v16) is the very phrase Paul uses: "God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!" (Romans 11:1; see 11:25–29). Spurgeon applies the warning to us: "Lest we should have the heritage taken from us, let us yield up the fruit to him who has the best right to it all."

What does the stone mean (vv17–18)? Psalm 118:22 — the stone the builders rejected becomes the chief corner stone; the crowd had just sung Psalm 118 on the road (19:38). Falling on the stone means being broken in humility; the stone falling on someone means judgment, like the stone of Daniel 2:34–35 that crushed the statue to chaff. Guzik: "Anyone who comes to Jesus will be broken of their pride and self-will." Sproul: "If you trip over Jesus, He will crush you."

What does "render to Caesar" teach? The trap was simple: "yes" angers the people; "no" is treason. Jesus asks for the coin. Caesar's image is on it, so give it back to him — "Jesus affirmed that the government makes legitimate requests of us" (Guzik). But Caesar claimed divinity — "Tiberius Caesar, like his predecessor, considered himself a god" (Sproul) — and Jesus limits him: "He's due taxes, but not worship." Henry: "in sacred things God only is your King." And the other half: we bear God's image (Genesis 1:27). Guzik: "Everyone has the image of God impressed upon them." Give yourself to God.

What about marriage in the resurrection? Jesus says those in "that age" "neither marry nor are given in marriage" because "they cannot even die anymore" (vv35–36). Sproul is careful — "At first glance, that would suggest that we are not in a state of marriage in heaven" — and adds, "Whatever state we will be in will be better than anything we can imagine now." Like angels in deathlessness, not turned into angels. Henry: marriage is "for the comfort of human life, here in this state."

How does the burning bush prove the resurrection? The Sadducees accepted Moses above the rest of Scripture (Sproul), so Jesus answers from Moses. God said "I am" — not "I was" — "the God of Abraham" long after Abraham died (Exodus 3:6). Spurgeon: "A living God is the God of living men; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive." Guzik: "They are not lost – we know where they are, and they also know."

David's son and David's Lord. Psalm 110:1 — "The LORD says to my Lord" — is, Sproul notes, the Old Testament text the New Testament quotes most. If David calls the Messiah "Lord," the Messiah is more than David's son: He is God the Son who sits at the Father's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool (Acts 2:34–36). I read that "until" as pointing to His return to reign.

The warning about the scribes. They loved long robes, greetings, best seats, and long prayers — and they "devour widows' houses" (v47). Henry: "dissembled piety is double iniquity." Guzik: "God is concerned about our religious reality, not the image." The next verses (21:1–4) show a poor widow giving all she had.

Word study (Greek):

- **authority — *exousia* (G1849):** lawful right to act (vv2, 8, 20).
- **reasoned — *syllogizomai* (G4817):** to calculate together; only v5.
- **beloved — *agapētos* (G27):** "My beloved Son" (3:22; 20:13).
- **scatter like dust — *likmaō* (G3039):** to winnow, crush to powder (v18; Dan 2:35).
- **pretended — *hypokrinomai* (G5271):** to play a part; only v20.
- **trickery — *panourgia* (G3834):** craftiness (v23; 2 Cor 11:3).
- **denarius — *dēnarion* (G1220):** a day's wage (v24).
- **likeness — *eikōn* (G1504):** image (v24; Gen 1:27; Col 1:15).
- **render — *apodidōmi* (G591):** give back what is owed (v25; Rom 13:7).

- **resurrection — *anastasis* (G386):** standing up again (vv27, 33, 35, 36).
- **like angels — *isangelos* (G2465):** only v36.
- **Lord — *kyrios* (G2962):** Psalm 110:1 (vv42, 44).
- **robes — *stolē* (G4749):** long robes (v46; 15:22).
- **devour — *katesthiō* (G2719):** eat up (v47; 15:30).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Honest questions get answers; traps get questions** (Guzik).
2. **They reckoned instead of repenting** — *syllogizomai* (v5).
3. **The vineyard was never theirs** (Guzik).
4. **The Son knew He would be killed** — "my beloved son" (v13).
5. **One stone, two outcomes** — broken or crushed (v18; Sproul).
6. **"Others" is not "never again"** — Romans 11:1.
7. **Give back to God what bears His image** — "due taxes, but not worship" (Sproul).
8. **Present tense, living saints** — "I am the God of Abraham."
9. **Like angels, not angels** — *isangelos* (v36).
10. **David's son is David's Lord** — Psalm 110:1.

Cross-references: Gen 1:27; Exod 3:6; Deut 25:5–6; Ps 110:1; 118:22–23; Isa 5:1–7; Dan 2:34–35, 44–45; Matt 21:23–22:46; Mark 11:27–12:40; Luke 3:16; 7:19–30; 21:1–4; Acts 2:34–36; 4:11–12; 23:8; Rom 11:1, 25–29; 13:1–7; 1 Cor 15:20; 2 Cor 11:3; Col 1:15; 1 Pet 2:7–8.

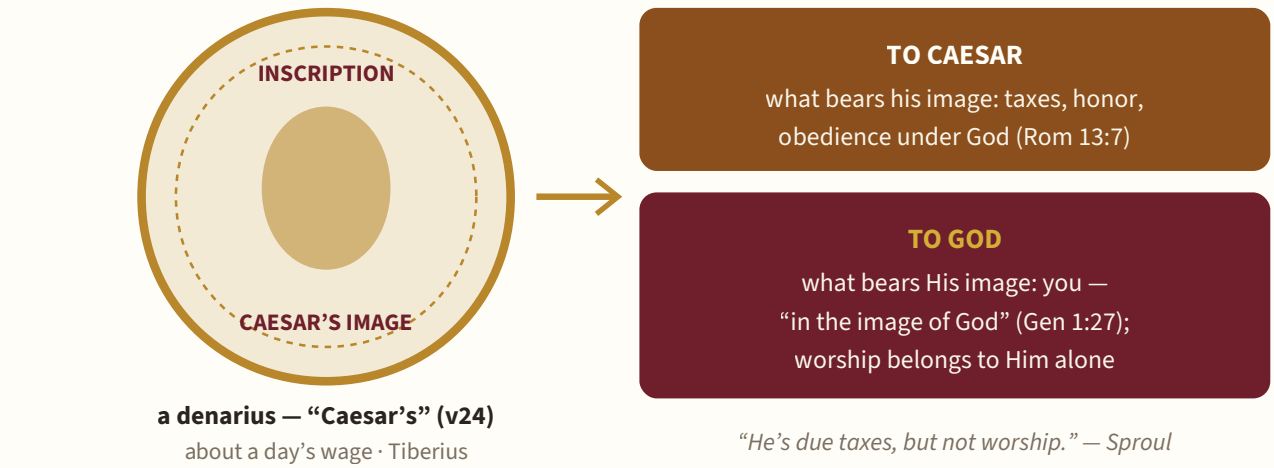
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 20:25

"And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.""

FIGURE · WHOSE LIKENESS?



The coin bears Caesar's image, so give it back to him; you bear God's image, so give yourself to God.

Truth to face — I am a tenant, not an owner. The vine-growers forgot whose vineyard it was (vv9–14). My life, my body, my family, my time, my recovery — none of it is mine. Guzik: "The vinedressers didn't buy the vineyard, and they did not make it." The Owner is asking for fruit, and He has been patient with me longer than I deserve.

Command to obey — render to God what is God's. Jesus told me to pay what I owe — taxes, honest work, respect for authority (v25; Romans 13:7). Some of the men I serve are rebuilding trust with courts, parole officers and employers; doing that honestly is obedience to Christ. But the coin is not the point. I bear God's image. He gets me — not a slice of my week, but me. This week I will name one area I have been keeping back and hand it to Him.

Sin to confess — calculating instead of obeying. The leaders asked what answer would cost them least (vv5–7). I know that move. I have weighed what obedience would cost me in front of people before I did what I already knew was right. I confess it, and I ask God to make me a man who answers honestly, whatever it costs.

Promise to trust — He is the God of the living. "He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him" (v38). The brothers in the Lord I have buried are not lost. Spurgeon: "We are by no means deprived of our dear ones by their death." And my own death is not the end of my story; there is an age where they "cannot even die anymore" (v36).

Warning to heed — beware the long robe. It is possible to look holy, pray long in public, take the best seat, and still use people (vv46–47). Guzik: "God is concerned about our religious reality, not the image." I want my private life to match my prayers.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. The leaders asked what answer would cost them least, not what was true. Where am I tempted to calculate rather than simply obey what I already know? (20:3–8) *Those that bury the knowledge they have are justly denied further knowledge (Henry).*
2. The vineyard belonged to the owner; the tenants only worked it. What part of my life am I treating as mine that really belongs to God? (20:9–16; Ps 24:1) *They didn't buy the vineyard, and they did not make it (Guzik).*
3. Jesus is a stone you either fall on and are broken, or one that falls on you. What does it look like for me to be broken on Him rather than crushed by Him? (20:17–18; 1 Pet 2:7–8) *Anyone who comes to Jesus will be broken of their pride and self-will (Guzik).*
4. I bear God's image the way the coin bore Caesar's. What would it mean this week to "render to God" what is His — my time, body, money, worship? (20:24–25; Gen 1:27) *He's due taxes, but not worship (Sproul).*
5. God is the God of the living, and those who die in the Lord live. How does the resurrection change how I grieve, and how I face my own death? (20:37–38; 1 Cor 15:20) *They are not lost — we know where they are (Guzik).*
6. Jesus warned about men who wanted to look holy and used religion to take advantage of the weak. Where do I care more about my image than my reality? (20:46–47) *God is concerned about our religious reality, not the image (Guzik).*

Worship. The Father sent His beloved Son to a vineyard that had beaten His servants, and they threw Him out and killed Him — and God made the rejected stone the chief corner stone. Jesus answered every trap with the truth. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the living, and He is David's Lord, seated at the right hand of the Father until every enemy is under His feet.

Prayer. Father, the vineyard is Yours and so am I. Forgive me for living like an owner and for calculating instead of obeying. I fall on the Stone; break my pride and build me on Jesus. Help me give Caesar what I owe and give You all of me, since I bear Your image. Thank You that You are the God of the living and that those who die in Christ live to You. Keep me from religion that looks good and loves little, and make me honest before You and kind to the weak. In the name of Jesus, David's Lord. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see Luke-20-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.