

A nurse must pass State Boards. CPAs are tested for certification. Lawyers have to pass the bar exam. Preachers are often ordained.

For ordination an Ordination Council is called. Most questions are related to a pastor's basic understanding of Scripture and theology. But some questions can be very difficult or seem to come out of left field like: *Can Satan ever be saved? Explain the hypostatic union?* Then, some are obviously given in an attempt to stump the candidate: *"What position do you hold in the ordo salutis? Do you believe in supralapsarianism or infralapsarianism?"*

That's what's taking place in Luke 20. The Jewish leaders conspired against Jesus. It's **Let's stump the Teacher**. This morning we're looking at two of the three questions that they slung at Jesus in an attempt to stump Him. We studied the first one last time, when they asked Jesus, *"Tell us by what authority You do these things, or who it is that gave You this authority?"* (Luke 20:2). Let's pick it up in Luke 20:19-40 (p. 879).

Luke 20 describes is often called *The Day of Questions*. The Jewish leaders (Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and Scribes) hate Jesus and are conspiring together against Him. Usually, these groups despised each other. In Jesus they have a common enemy and form an evil coalition.

Jesus set Himself up as a regular teacher in the Temple, in the Court of the Gentiles. His presence on their turf incenses them. They draft spies to listen to Him. Hopefully, they'll trap Him with a question where Jesus answers with an anti-Rome statement and brings down the wrath of Rome. At the very least, they want to discredit Him with the crowds. Jesus, as the God-Man, did in the Temple just what He'd done when He was twelve, answering with divine wisdom and derailing their plots, leaving them speechless.

After Billy Graham (**picture**) died, I was shocked when I stumbled on some blog posts that there were people who hated him. They didn't just disagree... they hated him. The Jewish leaders hated Jesus. They wanted Him dead. *Have you ever wondered why?* Jesus heals the sick, blind, disabled. He casts out demons and resurrects the dead, but they hate Him. Part of it was that Jesus upset their traditions and infringed on their power structure. His popularity, His talk of the kingdom and affirmation that He was in fact the Messiah – threatened the uneasy peace they'd made with Rome. But I think that the primary reason that they hated Jesus was that He forgave sin.

Early in His ministry, Jesus healed the paralytic (Luke 5) and told him that his sins were forgiven. The Pharisees present were incensed, *"Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"* The depraved heart wants nothing to do with needing to be forgiven. The first murder, when Cain killed Abel, was fueled by rage over the need for a substitutionary sacrifice. The human heart hates to hear of its need for a Savior. That's a key part of their evil motivation to entrap Jesus and execute Him. Today we want to work through these two questions and then look at Jesus' question to them. If you're taking notes...

Question #1: Do you live knowing the difference between temporary human government and the Kingdom of Almighty God? Everybody hates taxes. It may surprise you to learn that the Bible talks about taxes.

What made this tax particularly abhorrent was that it was a reminder that the Jews were dominated by Rome. Then, because Caesar's image was on the coin with which it had to be paid, it violated the 2nd of the ten commandments that forbid making graven images. Even the inscription was idolatrous in that Caesar was described as *"the son of a god."*

It resulted in at least one uprising and the founding of the Zealot movement who plotted for Rome's ousting. Ultimately, it led to war with Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It's a very emotionally charged question.

They carefully worded it as a *Yes* or *No* question. If Jesus answered, "yes," the people would abandon Him as a traitor but if He answered, "no," He could be arrested and executed as a revolutionary. They're trying to set Him up, so they flatter Him, acting sincere, *"Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God."* They're trying to hose Jesus. Someone insightfully said that *"Gossip is saying behind someone's back what you'd never say to their face. Flattery is saying to someone's face what you'd never say behind their back."*

Jesus asks, *"Show me a denarius"* (**picture**). They didn't go searching down the street for one. They had no difficulty coughing a denarius up. It shows their hypocrisy. One questioner who was making it an issue had the abominable coin in his own pocket, and used it for trade and business.

Historians universally agree that this simple principle: *"give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God"* is perhaps the single most influential political statement ever made. It's a principle that's greatly impacted western civilization.

Taxes aren't a voluntary contribution. To fail to pay them, or to pay less than what's required, is a sure way to get the government's attention and to discover how strongly they feel about taxes. Taxes are a pragmatic matter. Governments

need money to run, tax money. Paying one's taxes is a symbolic act, showing submission to government. It's an acknowledgment of the government's right to rule over us and our submission to its authority.

The Bible teaches that believers have responsibilities to human government (Romans 14). Here's a simple way to remember our God-given obligations. A Christian's civic duties can be outlined in *three primary areas*.

Pay. God commands us to be good citizens. We need to *pay* our taxes. We enjoy the benefits of the State, so we should pay our fair share.

Pray. We're commanded to *pray* for our governmental leaders (1 Tim 2:1-2), not just the ones we like. The Apostle Paul wrote this command when Nero was the emperor, the one who eventually had Paul beheaded.

Obey. Romans 13:1-7 expands on Jesus' words. This teaching is so important, it's helped to shape the world as we know it today. We're to submit to human government, even evil ones, as long as they don't ask us to violate the Word of God. God placed governments on the earth to restrain sin until He comes. Even a poorly run state is better than no state. We're to view government, not as an enemy of God, but as an agent of God.

This matter of what's due Caesar isn't just a hypothetical academic issue for our Lord. In a matter of days, Jesus will *render* His very life to Caesar, as He's crucified on a Roman cross. It's what Caesar required of Him, but in the will and purpose of God, this was the one and only means of redeeming sinful humanity from sin.

We tend to focus on the first half of what Jesus said and blow by the second half, "*render...to God the things that are God's.*" The coin had Caesar's image on it; we have God's image stamped on us. We're made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Even Caesar was made in the image of God. This is the greater responsibility. All human government and image-bearers of God must submit before the Creator. We're to live in both worlds, but God's eternal kingdom is superior to all earthly governments.

Are you rendering to God the things that are His? Bible-believers tend to be conservative, so let me ask...*Do you have a problem with illegal immigrants living in this country and not paying taxes?* For the most part, I think there would be a resounding, "Yes." So how can a believer rationalize not rendering to God what belongs to Him? Why does it bother us when we see a cop on the side of the road and hit our brakes, but ignore that God sees everything. Proverbs 15:3, "*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.*"

What belongs to God? Everything. Even Caesar and his empire belong to God. Abraham Kuyper (**picture**), the famous Dutch preacher and politician said, "*There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: Mine!*"

It includes absolutely everything. Our bodies belong to God. Our eyes, ears, and hands are instruments to use in His service. We're to praise Him, worship Him and give for the advancement of His Kingdom. God gave us our homes to use for hospitality. Our vehicles are to be used for His glory. Every second of our lives belongs to Him. Our money belongs to God and must be held loosely looking for opportunities to invest it in His Kingdom. It's all His! Everyone is made in God's image. As Creator, they owe Him everything. As believers, we're not just made in the image of God, we've been redeemed and bought back from the slave market of sin. We are twice God's and have a double debt to our Heavenly Father. None of us blows off April 15th. Do we dare to blow off God because His Kingdom is invisible? Yet, if we're honest, we have to confess that we have much more respect for temporary human government than we have love and respect for God.

"Have we given to God, what is God's?" If we think that God wants our money, our time or our talents – or even those nearest and dearest to us – we're wrong! Our Heavenly Father wants us. He won't settle for less than all. Give to God what is His – Give yourself!

Question #2: Do you live knowing that eternity is distinctly different from this temporal world? Look again at vs. 27-40. Their question is silly. This is the only mention of the Sadducees in Luke. They ask a question related to the resurrection, BUT they don't believe in a resurrection, or angels. The only part of the Bible that they believed had authority were the 1st five books of the Old Testament written by Moses (that's very important).

There's an old saying that makes it easy to remember what the Sadducees believed. If you didn't believe that there was a resurrection, "*You'd be sad you see.*" They're a small sect and were theological liberals, yet were in bed with Rome. It's believed that most of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees.

Their hypothetical story is based on a rare Old Testament practice known as levirate marriage. The word *levirate* comes from the Latin *levir*, which means "a husband's brother." Not losing the family name and inheritance was critical for Jews. Remember, God had given them the Promised Land.

If an older brother died, the younger brother was to marry his widow but any male children from that union would carry on the name and have the inheritance of the older deceased brother. There are only two examples of this law being applied, in Genesis 38 and in the book of Ruth. In both cases, the surviving relatives prove very reluctant.

This story of a woman's seven marriages may be loosely based on a fable from the apocryphal book of Tobit. There a woman, Sarah, marries seven husbands but each is killed by a demon before the marriage is consummated. Sarah eventually marries Tobias, son of Tobit, who survives the wedding night through prayer and by repelling the demon with the help of the angel Raphael. It's from Jewish folklore and myth.

Apparently, this was a theological riddle the Sadducees had used to puzzle their theological foes, the Pharisees. It's worked before. They're nearly salivating. They think that they have Jesus.

They're making the resurrection a big joke. Yet, it does bring up an honest question: If you're divorced or widowed (or these days involved in serial relationships without marriage), what becomes of those relationships in heaven? If you've ever been married more than once, it's not a bad question.

There's a tombstone in a cemetery in London dating back to the 19th century. Inscribed on it are these words: "*Seven wives I've buried with a many a fervent prayer. If we meet in heaven, won't there be trouble there?*" If you've been married to more than one person, when you get to heaven, what's your relationship going to be with your ex-husband or ex-wife? Jesus gives a profound answer to this question.

Jews, who believed in an afterlife, like the Pharisees thought heaven was a type of continuation of this life, yet much better. Jesus sheds needed light that heaven is a totally different sphere. It's not a continuation of this life.

His words are only for believers. He says, "*those who are considered worthy to attain...to the resurrection from the dead.*" He doesn't say "of the dead," but "*from the dead.*" Someday all will come back from the dead, only believers will be resurrected to life. They're the only ones "*worthy.*" The phrase *considered worthy* can be translated "made worthy." We're not worthy because of who we are or anything we've done. Because of sin, we'll never be worthy. We are only made worthy because of God's grace. People of faith have trusted Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Jesus calls believers "*sons of God*" and "*sons of the resurrection.*" *Sons* refers to inheritance. Every believer is an heir of the Father. Heaven and the resurrection to life is for every believer who's committed their life to Christ.

Believers do not become angels. Clarence ([picture](#)) from *It's a Wonderful Life* was wrong. Human beings never get wings. We don't become angels, so stop listening for bells to ring. Though we don't become angels, we'll be like angels. We'll have great beauty and strength. Our bodies will have power of which we now can't even imagine. We'll have an enlarged mental capacity and a greater spiritual range. 1 Corinthians 15 tells us we have been "*sown in weakness,*" but will be "*raised in power.*" Like angels, our character will be faultless. We'll be sinless and will perfectly do God's will. Like angels, we will perpetually worship God.

Jesus' emphasis is on the believers' immortality. One reason God designed sexual relations is for procreation. Yet, if no one ever dies, there's no need to have new people born. There's no aging in heaven. Heaven has a stable population. But if you're place there is not secured in this life by trusting Christ, there's no second chance.

If you have a happy marriage, this heavenly fact of no marriage might bother you. Jane is the love of my life. One of my favorite stories is from the life of Sir Winston Churchill ([picture](#)). At a dinner party that he and his wife, Lady Churchill, were attending, everyone around the table was to answer the question: "*If after you died, and you could come back as anyone, who would you come back as?*" The Churchills were deeply in love so when it came time for Winston Churchill to answer he said that he would come back as, "*As Lady Churchill's second husband.*"

In heaven we'll no longer be husbands and wives. This teaching disproves that of the Muslims, who look forward to receiving many virgins in paradise or the Mormons who say marriage is "celestial" to enable us to populate various worlds as we ascend to divinity.

Jesus is telling us something exceedingly wonderful about heaven. If your marriage in this life is heavenly, and heaven is so much better that you're not going to miss being married – how wonderful beyond our imaginations heaven must be! God's power is such that He is able to create a world of greater joy, love and friendship in the life to come.

It's clear too that we'll recognize each other. The disciples recognized Elijah and Moses at the Mount of Transfiguration. We'll have new, glorified bodies, like the one Jesus had after His resurrection.

Jesus proves His point with their "Bible." Remember the Sadducees only believed that the writings of Moses were authoritative. Jesus says, "*But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.*" Chapter and verse divisions were added later to the originals, so Jesus gives them the text: "*in the passage about the bush.*" It's found in Exodus, when God called to Moses from the burning bush ([picture](#)) in Exodus 3. The Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – are spoken of in the present tense. They're not dead, they're alive with God. It's not "I was" but "He is." Jesus uses this passage from Moses, their Bible, to prove the resurrection. Underlying it is God's covenantal promise to the Patriarchs. God's promises aren't terminated even by death!

D. L. Moody ([picture](#)) said, "*One day you'll read that Moody is dead. Don't you believe it! For at that moment I will be more alive than ever before!*" Death won't separate believers from God. Our Father won't abandon us when we

“walk through the valley of the shadow.” 2 Corinthians 5:8 says that we will be, “absent from the body...present with the Lord.”

Jesus affirmed what they denied: the existence of angels, the fact of life after death, and the hope of a future resurrection. He did it with one passage from Moses! There are many other passages He could have used, but He met His opponents on their own turf and silenced them. In Mark’s parallel passage Jesus commented during the dispute, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures.” What about us? Do we know God’s Word? Or, like them, are we often in error because of our own ignorance of Scripture?

The resurrection is not some isolated doctrine found only in a few passages. The oldest book of the Bible, Job, has Job encouraging himself in the midst of his suffering, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth (Job 19:25). 1 Corinthians 15 powerfully unpacks the doctrine of the resurrection. A.W. Tozer (picture) said, “Let no one apologize for the powerful emphasis Christianity lays upon the doctrine of the world to come. Right there lies its immense superiority to everything else within the whole sphere of human thought or experience...Even if the earth should continue a million years, not one of us could stay to enjoy it. We do well to think of the long tomorrow.”

The certainty of the resurrection and the promise of heaven mean that we’re wise to long for something beyond this life. In fact we’re foolish, if we pursue our best life “now.” With the pain, setbacks and suffering in this world, that’s a prospect that’s both depressing and biblically inaccurate.

Question #3: Do you live knowing who your true Lord is? “But [Jesus] said to them, ‘How can they say that the Christ is David’s son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’” David thus calls Him Lord, so how is He his Son?’” They no longer ask Jesus questions, so He turns the tables on them. Why? It’s grace. There’s an important “slogan” I learned years ago when I worked with teens: *An accusation hardens the will, a question pricks the conscience.* Jesus is giving them another opportunity to believe that He is God’s Son, that’s He’s the Messiah.

Jesus often used this method of asking questions. It’s a wise pattern for us as we build gospel bridges. If we pontificate or make assertions, we build barriers. Like Jesus, if we listen first, then ask questions, it opens doors and build bridges.

Jesus draws their attention to Psalm 110, to what was commonly accepted as a Messianic Psalm to ask a question. King David is speaking. But how could the king have someone over him, unless it was David acknowledging the Messiah? David never called anyone Lord except King Saul, his predecessor, or maybe his father...and God. But in this Messianic psalm David acknowledges that the Messiah is his Lord.

Jesus is not denying that He’s a descendant of David. His genealogy in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 clearly show that He’s a descendant of King David and the rightful heir of David’s throne. What makes this so remarkable is that David is talking about his descendant. Jesus is King David’s Lord because He is the incarnate Son of God. Because Jesus is the Messiah, He’s born into David’s family line. Because He’s the God-Man, He’s David’s Lord, and the only one who can be our mediator and secure for us eternal life. Jesus is David’s Son and Lord, and He is so much more.

The Jews looked for a political Messiah. Just a few days before at the Triumphal Entry, they called Him “the Son of David.” Jesus came so He could give them “land” but not in this world. A greater than David is here!

What Jesus said in Psalm 110 became the message of His disciples. This is the Psalm after His resurrection that they quoted more than any other. It shows up more than 20 times in the New Testament. It’s the text Peter used on the day of Pentecost, as he preached the gospel of repentance, telling them that they had murdered the Christ and that God had resurrected Him. And on that day three thousand were gloriously saved.

Those listening that day to Jesus missed it. They had a studied ignorance of God’s Word. They read Scripture through a *political* lens, reducing Messiah to a human leader. We do the same with our lenses – an *economic* lens that turns the Bible into financial advice so we can have financial well-being. Or, turns God’s Word into a *psychological* lens so we can have better marriages or families. Or, even with a *subjective* lens that looks for personal meaning, “this is what this passage means to me.”

We all have our lenses. Our lenses blind us to the Truth of God’s Word. In humility, we must seek to read God’s Word for what it is and ask the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual eyes and give us the grace to submit and obey the Word of the Lord. Believing God’s Word is not just believing intellectually that Jesus is the Messiah or He’s your Savior. It’s true Christianity. It means believing in Jesus in the sense that you follow Him as Lord, so that in thought, word and deed, you’re growing to be more and more like Him. Scripture contains warning after warning that if we claim to know Christ, but continue to live in sin, we’re self-deceived. James 2 warns us that faith that doesn’t result in a transformed is a dead faith.

Conclusion: Do you have questions this morning? Too many of us have the wrong questions. Maybe that’s you. Most people have questions about how we got here? How the universe was created? If Genesis is true?

Let me suggest what I believe is a radically more important question. I hope this morning you've been wondering why this funeral urn is up here. I have it because I want us to realize that what happened in the past, how the universe got here...where we came from, etc., is not nearly as important as – *where are you going?* Your future is much more important than the past. All of us need to consider our eternal future.

The resurrection is true. Everyone someday will be resurrected. Daniel 12:2 “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*”

Which one will it be for you? Will you awake to everlasting life or everlasting contempt? How you answer that question depends on what you do with Jesus now? Will you accept Him as your Lord and Savior? If you haven't will you please do it today? Will you do it now?