Luke 20 (Part 2): 27-47 • More Conversations with Religious Leaders

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We're in Luke chapter 20. We're going to pick it up where we left off here a couple of weeks ago in verse 27. You'll remember that Luke chapter 20 records for us several conversations that Jesus has with various individuals of the religious leaders who are trying to catch Him saying something wrong so that they can hold it against Him. The Sadducees come up next to talk to Him, and they have this weird, weird question.

It says in verse 27, *"There came to Him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection…"* and they're going to ask Him all about something related to the resurrection. And you're told here at the very beginning, they don't even believe in a resurrection. The Sadducees, by the way, before we get into this, they were the rationalists of the day.

They were the liberals. They were those who kind of worshipped their own mind, their own intellect, and, as rationalists, they basically wouldn't believe anything they couldn't explain or something like that. They worshipped their minds. They did not believe in angels or demons or an afterlife, let alone a resurrection.

And they only accepted the first 5 books of what you would call your Old Testament. Those first 5 books are the Pentateuch, or what we call the Pentateuch, and that's as far as they went. They didn't accept any of the rest of the Old Testament, and so there were great gaps in their understanding and so forth.

And we'll see that, but it goes on here and says in verse 28: *"*(that) t*hey asked Him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother."*

By the way, this was called the Levirate rule or law of marriage.

And it was basically just like they're saying: if a man had a wife and he bore no children with that woman, his brother—if he died—his brother was obligated to then take this woman and have children for his deceased brother so that his

brother's name might not be blotted out of Israel. And that was what the Levirate law was about.

Verse 29, now they're going to pose their wacky question: *"Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. [30] And the second [31] and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died."* In other words, they all married the woman—poor lady, right?—and they all passed away.

So there's obviously a high mortality rate in this family as well. It's not a good situation all the way around.

Verse 33: *"In the resurrection* (here's their question)*, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife."* So again, whose wife is she going to be in the resurrection? They don't believe in the resurrection, so they're coming up with this question, no doubt, just to make Jesus look stupid or something. But their question ignores the main issue of life after death and the resurrection.

And Jesus is going to talk about that, and He's going to correct them. But first, He says in verse 34 that, *" The sons of this age marry* (notice that) *and are given in marriage, but* (verse 35) *those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead* (look at this) *neither marry nor are given in marriage."* In other words, people aren't married in heaven.

I don't care what you've been told; Jesus is telling you otherwise. And He goes on to say, *"[36] for they cannot die anymore because they are equal to angels* (or, in that sense, the same as angels in that they don't marry or are given in marriage) *and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."*

So Jesus makes it clear in this section of scripture that marriage is for this life. That's why, when we're having a marriage ceremony, people pledge themselves *until death do they part*. And we part at death—not just in the sense of saying goodbye to someone, but the marriage ends. The marriage ends at that point.

That's why a widow or a widower can remarry. They're free to remarry when their spouse passes away. I mean, it seems strange— I told you that I've been married for Sue now for 41 and a half years. And it seems strange—and we're not done, by the way, in being married, I mean—but it seems really weird to think about the fact that someday, when we see each other in heaven, we're not going to be married.

I mean, I have no doubt about the fact that I'm going to know who she is. I'm going to recognize her and all that stuff. But she just can't tell me to pick up my

underwear anymore because there will not be that thing—any of that marriage thing—anymore.

Now Jesus goes on to deal with the real issue that is really going on here, and that is the real issue of error. Look at verse 37. He says, *"But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush..."* So He's referring to something in a section of scripture they do accept, right? He says, *"...where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."*

In other words, what's going on here? What Jesus is saying is, in this passage—which, again, the Sadducees accepted as inspired scripture—He's reminding them that in that conversation between God and Moses at the burning bush, God declared Himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which would be grammatically incorrect if they were dead and gone.

He would have been the God. He would have been the God of He said, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, right? Present tense. Jesus—or excuse me, God—spoke to Moses in the burning bush, saying in the present tense, I am their God, as if they still are (Exodus 3:6). Which, of course, is the point of this. When we leave these physical bodies, that's not the end of our lives. It's perhaps the end of this physical body's life, but we live on. And that is the error that they had.

And He goes on to say in verse 38, *"Now He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him."* That's a great verse, by the way, if some of you have recently lost a loved one in Christ. You know that they are still living, very much alive. And notice in verse 39 that it says, *"Then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well."* (And at least for a while), *[40] For they no longer dared to ask him any question."*

Now, in this conversation that Luke records for us here between Jesus and the Sadducees, he actually leaves out a statement which Matthew puts in. It's a very important statement because it tells us why the Sadducees were dealing with so much error as it relates to their understanding of such things. I'll put this up on the screen for you so we can see it together. It's from Matthew 22, verse 29. Jesus, now speaking to the Sadducees, said to them,

Matthew 22:29 (ESV)

But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God."

You are wrong because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

And those are two incredibly important things to keep us out of error. The first thing He said was, you don't know the Scriptures. And obviously, they had not embraced the whole counsel of God's Word but only the first five books of the Bible. So they were greatly lacking in their understanding of Scripture.

And this statement, you don't know the Scriptures, I wish it wasn't true, but to a large degree, it applies to the body of Christ. There is a lot of ignorance, even in the body of Christ, about the Word of God. And I'm talking about the whole counsel of God's Word.

One of the reasons is we've gotten so far away from teaching the Bible. I probably get a note at least once a week from somebody who's tuned into our YouTube channel or something like that.

The reasons people fall into error

1. They do not know the Scriptures

People will write me, and they'll say, I'm just so disgusted. I can't find a church in my community where they're teaching through the Bible. They will preach based on some Bible verse, and what that means is the pastor will get up and read a verse or two, and then he'll talk for 45 minutes. And when you're done, you're not really sure how that applied to the verse he read at the very beginning. But they walk away really not having an understanding of the passage because they're not teaching the Bible—they're just teaching from the Bible to make a point.

In other words, I'm going to read a few verses to make my point instead of making the Bible the point. And what I'm finding is that people want to know what the Bible says. They want to know what the books of the Bible are all about.

People will say—they'll write me and say, man, I just wanted to know what is the Book of Job all about? I started reading it once, and I got lost. Or, I started reading through Leviticus. What in the world is that all about? Some people will say, I've been wanting to do a study through the book of Isaiah. I know how often it's quoted. We hear it quoted every time at Christmastime. And it's obviously a very important book, but I've just never read through it.

I told you guys about the woman that wrote me a couple of weeks ago and said that when she got saved, she was told, don't worry about reading the Old Testament. You never have to worry about it. Just read the New Testament. You'll be fine.

And she finally, after years, started opening up the Old Testament, and she wrote me to say, this is just a wealth of information and how it so beautifully

interlocks with the New Testament and brings great insight and understanding to what happens in the New Testament.

So we've got to get back to the Word, you guys. We've got to learn the Word. We've got to know the Word because it will keep you from error.

I don't know, some of you may know the Calvary Chapel pastor over in Caldwell. Great guy by the name of Bob Larson. I love him to death. He and his wife are good friends of ours. But he's one of these busy guys. He's just one of those guys that makes coffee nervous. He's always kind of moving. He talks really fast, but he's just a great guy.

And he'll tell me—he's shared in the past—that people will come down after a service and talk to him. They'll bring up some lame idea that they believe in, and he'll ask them, have you ever read through the whole Bible? And they're like, No. He says, well, I have. And that's not in there.

There is great safety in learning the whole Bible—from Genesis to Revelation. There's safety there, you guys. And it's safety because if we camp on a particular aspect of the Bible and we just stay there forever, we're going to lose the balance that the whole counsel of God's Word gives us. That's what was happening largely with the Sadducees.

But you'll notice it wasn't the only thing that was going on with the Sadducees. The other thing is that they did not know the power of God.

The reasons people fall into error

1. They do not know the Scriptures
2. They do not know the power of God

That's what Jesus said to them: You don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God. Because of that and what it means is your idea of God is small. You have a small view of God. Frankly.

Have you ever met somebody that had a small view of God? Usually, what happens when somebody has a small view of God is they have a big view of man. And that really tweaks them as far as understanding things in the Scripture.

They'll read something in the Bible, and they'll kind of go like the Sadducees did. They'll say, well, I can't really understand how that could be. And so what they do is they kick it out. Well, if I can't figure it out, if I can't reason it in my mind, there's no way it could have happened. I read through the Bible, and it talks about this guy named Jonah that gets swallowed up by a fish. And they're like, forget it. That can't happen.

Hey, listen, if your God is small, then you're probably going to come to that conclusion. That can't happen. But the fact of the matter is, if your God is big, then you're going to know and understand that nothing is impossible with Him. Nothing is impossible.

And so that's what Jesus is really saying to the Sadducees when He says, you don't know the power of God. You have not embraced and accepted the fact that He can make the impossible possible, and therefore you have entered into error. Okay, moving on.

Verse 41: *"But he said to them* (and now Jesus is going to pose a question of His own here. He said to them)*, "How can they say* (and when He says, they, He's referring to those who teach the Word among the Jews, alright? How can they say) *that the Christ* (or the Messiah) *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 your footstool."'

[44] David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?""

Now, I want you to stop there for a moment. This is a very critical question that Jesus is posing. And this, by the way, is recorded in each of the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Jesus is quoting Psalm 110 here when He poses the question to them, saying, how is it that the teachers of the law speak of Messiah as the son of David, meaning in the lineage of David, when, in fact, David calls Him his Lord? And again, He's making reference to Psalm 110.

By the way, Jesus is not saying here that the Messiah is not the son of David. What He's doing is confronting the fact that the Jews at that time focused on the human nature of the Messiah but almost completely ignored any sort of divine understanding of who the Messiah would be. And so He's bringing that out here.

So I want to bring up Psalm 110 and put it on the screen for you so you can see it. I've put a couple of things in parentheses here so you can see a little bit of an understanding of the Hebrew words related to Lord in this passage, where it says in Psalm 110, verse 1,

Psalm 110:1 (ESV)

The LORD (YAHWEH) *says to my Lord* (Adon)*: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."*

The LORD (which is YAHWEH or Jehovah) *says to my Lord* (Adon), (which is the singular form of Adonai, or, if you will, Master)*:"Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."*

In this passage, David, who is writing—as Jesus told us—says that his Lord, YAHWEH, his God, says to his master, Lord, *"Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."* And Jesus is bringing up this Psalm to remind them that the Messiah is more than just the son of David or more than just someone who is humanly born in the lineage of David—much more than that.

I found a quote that I wanted to share with you from a Bible commentator, Bible writer, James Boyce. He writes this, he says,

> "Adonai refers to an individual greater than the speaker. Here is a case of David's citing God's words in which God tells another [person] who is greater than David to sit at God's right hand until God makes [that] person's enemies a footstool for [their] feet. This person can only be a divine Messiah, who is Jesus Christ." **– James Montgomery Boice**

"Adonai refers to an individual greater than the speaker. Here is a case of David's citing God's words (obviously in Psalm 110) in which God tells another [person] who is greater than David to sit at God's right hand until God makes [that] person's enemies a footstool for [their] feet. (His conclusion is) This person can only be a divine Messiah, (who we know, of course, to be) Jesus Christ."

Jesus is bringing out the fact that there is also a divine revelation of Messiah in the Word of God. And of course, this is something we see throughout the Scriptures: that Jesus has both a divine nature and a human nature. He was born of a virgin. In that sense, He is a human being. But He is also the Son of God, which makes Him equal to God.

And I want to show you an interesting statement from the book of Revelation, where Jesus says this Himself. Notice this, Revelation 22:

> **Revelation 22:16 (ESV)**
>
> *I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*

I, Jesus (He says)*, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.* (Now, check this out, He says) *I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*

Did you notice how Jesus makes reference to Himself related to David? He says, I am the root of David. What is a root? It is the source of a thing. I am the source of David, and I am also the descendant of David.

So right here, Jesus makes reference to His divine nature and His human nature. Divine nature: I am the root of David—I am the source of David, literally. His human nature: I am the descendant of David.

And so we have this beautiful picture throughout. I could have quoted several other passages related to this revelation of the divine and human nature of our Messiah.

Finally, verse 45 and following, check this out: *"And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, [46] "Beware of the scribes…""* He's already told the people that they're teaching things that are incorrect, or at least not completely correct.

And He says, *" [46] Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and* (they love) *the best seats in the synagogues and* (they love) *the places of honor at feasts,* (But what's really going is they) *[47] who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long* (flowery, religious-sounding) *prayers*. (But He says,) *They will receive the greater condemnation."*

These final verses of the chapter remind us, as a warning, to watch out for those who would masquerade among us as true servants of the Lord when, in fact, they have a very different agenda.

And while pretending to care about people, they can be seen in a couple of different ways in this passage. First, they like to elevate themselves. Did you notice? He said they like to walk around in long, flowing robes.

We're not talking about bathrobes here. This is a long, flowing ministerial robe. I don't know what it is about robes, but they just kind of make you feel like, I'm kind of a big deal, and you're not, because you don't have the robe. And then those special greetings.

Honestly, that's one of the reasons I do not like and will not allow people to refer to me as Reverend. It's not a biblical term, and it comes from the idea of to rever or to reverence. There is to be no special reverence for the servants of the Lord.

Jesus said, you want to be great in the kingdom of God? Be the least. He says, follow My example: be the servant of all. (Mark 9:35) And He showed it with His example, by humbling Himself and dying on a cross. That's the kind of

servanthood He wants out of leaders. We're not to exalt ourselves. That's actually a bad sign, you know—looking for the best seats. Oh, pastor, here's where you sit. This is the place of honor. That's not to happen. It's not to happen.

Unfortunately, humanly speaking, we're primed and cocked to put people up on a pedestal, aren't we? There's just something about our humanity that wants to, we want to elevate people. That's the way we treat people who are celebrities. There's something special about them. Well, they're not. They put their pants on one leg at a time, just like you.

And there's nothing special about any of us next to each other. Especially in the kingdom of God, it's not supposed to happen. I've had people write me sometimes, and after listening to a message online or something like that, they'll write me and say, Pastor Paul, I need you to pray for me.

And I know what's going on. They think I've got some kind of an inside track to God—more than them. And I don't. I have no more inside track than you do. I approach God by the same means that you do, and that is by the blood of Jesus Christ.

When we come robed in the righteousness of Christ, washed in His blood, we have access, the Bible tells us, to the throne of grace (Romans 5:1-2). Amen? All of us!

And so, when they write me and tell me that, you know what I do? I send that prayer request on to our prayer warrior email group, because they're prayers, and they love to pray. I don't even tell them that I'm going to personally pray for them. I do, but I don't tell them, because I don't want them thinking there's something special going on—because there's not.

Oh man, but we have this tendency to elevate people. And honestly, I don't need any excuses to feel elevated because all of our flesh wants to be elevated. You know that, right?

And so, when people start looking up at you like you're something special, it's real hard to kind of say, no, I don't deserve that. But we don't—believe me.

That's why Jesus is pointing this thing out—long, flowery prayers. They want people to be impressed with them. But I want you to notice the other thing that Jesus reveals, and these are fruits of these false leader character types.

Notice He says that the second thing is that they *"...devour widows' houses..."* And that tells you that whatever is going on the surface, what's going on under it is that there's profit—a desire for profit. They want to profit off these people.

And not only are they profiting off people, but these guys were doing it off against the most vulnerable of society's people, those being the widows.

And it's unfortunate that there are people who like to victimize others, but they've always been around and they probably always will. We've got to be careful in the body of Christ because there will be people who will rise up with nefarious intentions, and we've got to be able to figure out who they are so we're not going to be led astray.

That's why Jesus said, *"Beware…"* Beware, because He doesn't want you being dragged off in the wrong direction, right? That's why we're to beware.

Now, you might recall that when the Apostle Paul was talking to the elders of the Ephesian church, or the church in Ephesus, he gave a very similar kind of warning. Let me put it on the screen for you from Acts chapter 20, he says,

Acts 20:29-30 (ESV)

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you (Notice, what he calls them: fierce wolves. And He says, they will)*, not sparing the flock;* (In fact, he says) *and* (even) *from among your own selves* (he says) *will arise men* (and they) *speaking twisted things* (and that means perverted doctrines, ideas that are not in line with God's Word. And the reason they will do it, he says, is that they want to simply)*, to draw away the disciples after them*(selves).

They want a following. They want to be popular. They want people to look up to them and say, you are really cool. And it's all about the flesh.

What makes matters a little more difficult about these wolves in sheep's clothing is the manner by which they come into the body of Christ. They come in like sheep. They look like sheep, and they talk like sheep, and they smell like sheep —but they're not. They're wolves.

In fact, he calls them fierce, fierce wolves, and they deceive people into thinking that they're spiritual and godly. But Jesus told us we would know them by their fruit, and He's giving us some of the fruit right here. They love the attention, and they're profiting under the surface.

But there's one problem with looking at somebody's fruit. Have you ever noticed sometimes it takes a little while for fruit to ripen—or to go bad, as the case may be?

And so what that means is there are times that we may not know for a little while what's really going on, you know? But that's where the Holy Spirit comes in.

I love the conversations I've had with people throughout the years, who have—usually when they're brand-new Christians or even before they actually come to Christ. They'll get caught up in some group—some weird group somewhere that's teaching dumb, unbiblical things.

And they'll tell me later on how they couldn't put a finger on what was wrong because they didn't know their Bible well enough to really argue with anybody. But they'll come to me and they'll say, I just knew something wasn't right.

Can you relate? Maybe some of you have been there—heard something on the radio, got into a Bible study group, and it was just weird. Or they popped into a strange church or whatever, and they didn't really know enough about the Bible to truly say, oh, well, see, that's where this is wrong. But they just knew something wasn't right.

That's the Holy Spirit. And that's one of His wonderful functions as Counselor: to speak to our hearts even when we don't…And by the way, that's not an excuse for not knowing your Bible. You need to know your Bible. We need the full counsel of God's Word. We need to know what it says.

But you keep your heart open, because we don't always know everything. Keep your heart open. The Holy Spirit will speak to you. He will give you wisdom and insight. If there's some error going on, He will also testify agreement in your heart when you're hearing the truth. If you're listening to His Spirit, God's Spirit will affirm the truth in your heart, and that is a wonderful thing too.

But for those who manipulate and abuse in the name of the Lord, the end of verse 47, Jesus says these words: *"...They will receive a greater condemnation."*

And then the reason it is a greater condemnation is because they project what appears to be a godly attitude, and it appears to be a caring attitude for people, but in fact, it is the opposite. And that's why Jesus says a greater condemnation awaits those who misrepresent the Lord.