

**Luke 20:41-47**  
**July 19, 2020**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: What does false religion look like to you? [Let people engage]

**Transition:**

Up to this point, Jesus has mostly been on the defense against His critics in Jerusalem. They challenged Him with the source of His authority for cleansing the temple. He responded with the question about the baptism of John and the parable of the wicked tenant farmers. They tried to trick Him with the questions about paying tribute to Caesar and the woman with seven husbands in the resurrection. Each time Jesus deftly answered the skeptics in a way that left them speechless.

In today's text, we see Jesus deciding to play offense. He will ask them a question. His intent is to show His listeners in the temple courtyard that neither they, nor their teachers of the Law, understood their own Scriptures. He will expose the false religion embodied in the scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders in Israel. Let's begin.

**BOOK:**

*Whose Son Is the Christ?*

<sup>41</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David? <sup>42</sup> David himself declares in the Book of Psalms:

"The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

<sup>43</sup> until I make your enemies

a footstool for your feet."

<sup>44</sup> David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

<sup>45</sup> While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, <sup>46</sup> "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. <sup>47</sup> They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

**LOOK:**

Human wisdom cannot entrap Jesus into self-incrimination. Jesus operates from heavenly authority as the beloved Son of God/Son of David who dies for his people and will be the first example of resurrection

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 259-260). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### **A Question about David (Luke 20:41–47)**

While the Pharisees were still gathered together, Jesus asked them a final question: “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” (Matt. 22:41–42) This is the *key* question for every generation and each individual, for our salvation and eternal destiny are dependent on what we think about Christ (1 John 2:21–25; 4:1–6; 5:1).

Of course, they knew the expected reply: “The Son of David.” They based this on such verses as 2 Samuel 7:13–14; Isaiah 11:1; and Jeremiah 23:5. God had ordained that the Messiah should come from the family of David and be born in David’s city, Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The fact that the Jewish people identified Jesus with Nazareth, not Bethlehem, indicates that they had not really looked into the facts connected with His birth (John 7:40–53).

Jesus then referred them to Psalm 110, which is quoted in the New Testament more than any other psalm. The Jewish religious leaders in that day identified Psalm 110 as a prophetic psalm and said that David was speaking of the Messiah. But if the Messiah is David’s *Lord*, how can He be David’s *son*? Here was an enigma for them to solve!

The only explanation is that Messiah must be both God and man. As eternal God, Messiah is David’s Lord, but as man, He is David’s son (Rom. 1:3; 9:4–5; Acts 2:32–36; 13:22–23).

On Palm Sunday, the multitudes had acclaimed Jesus as the Son of David, and He had not rebuked them (Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:10). By applying Psalm 110:1 to Himself, Jesus claimed to be Israel’s promised Messiah, the Son of God.

Then why did the Pharisees not believe in Him? Because their minds were made up, their hearts were hardened, and their eyes were blind (John 12:37–50). They did not have the courage to confess the truth, and they persecuted those who did affirm faith in Jesus Christ. Christ’s question silenced His enemies (Matt. 22:46) and ended their public challenges, but they would not admit defeat.

Because of their hypocrisy and dishonesty, the scribes and Pharisees were dangerous to have around, so Jesus warned the people about them (Luke 20:45–47; see Matt. 23). Men see the outside, but God sees the heart (1 Sam. 16:7; Heb. 4:12).

These religious leaders did not desire personal holiness; they wanted public recognition. Therefore, they wore special garments, expected special titles and greetings, and looked for special seats at public gatherings.

There is a double tragedy here. First of all, their deliberate hypocrisy was only a cover-up that enabled them to fool people and exploit them. Of all rackets, religious rackets are the worst. The religious leaders had turned the temple of God into a den of thieves and religious devotion into playacting. The general public actually thought that their leaders were godly men, when in reality they were defiling and destroying souls (Matt. 23:13–36).

The second tragedy is that they rejected their own Messiah and voted to crucify Him. They led the nation into ruin because they would not admit their sins and confess Jesus Christ. Keep in mind that these men were “experts” in the Bible, yet they did not apply its truths to their own lives. Their religion was a matter of external observance, not internal transformation.

At this point, according to Matthew (Matt. 23:37–39), Jesus once again uttered a lamentation over the blind unbelief of the nation and their unwillingness to trust in Him.

He had given them many opportunities, but they had wasted them.

Now it was too late.

This same tragedy is reenacted today. This is why the Holy Spirit warns, “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 3:7–8).

“How often I wanted to ... but you were not willing!” (Matt. 23:37)

**Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 256)**

20:41–44. **Jesus** then took the offensive and asked a question of the people around Him. The question concerned the nature of the Messiah—**How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David?** Jesus then quoted from Psalm 110:1, in which **David** called the Messiah **my Lord** and said that He was exalted by being at Yahweh’s **right hand**, the place of prominence. Two points are evident in these words of Jesus. First, the Son of David is also David’s **Lord** (Luke 20:44) by the power of the resurrection. (In Acts 2:34–35 Peter used the same verse from Ps. 110 to prove that Jesus’ superiority is based on His resurrection.) Second, David must have realized that the Son, who was to be the Messiah, would be divine, for **David** called **Him Lord**.

20:45–47. Jesus’ words were designed not only to teach **His disciples** but also to instruct the crowds (v. 45). Jesus pointed out the dichotomy between what **the teachers of the Law** taught and what they practiced. Their lives were bound up in greed and pride—they desired: (a) display (**flowing robes**), (b) attention (**greeted in the marketplaces**), (c) prominence (**important seats in the synagogues and ... at banquets**), and (d) more money, taking from those who did not have much (e.g., widows). Their pompous **lengthy prayers** were thus hypocritical. Jesus stated that these teachers would **be punished most severely**. Those who have greater knowledge are held more accountable (James 3:1).

**Butler, T. C. (2000). Luke (Vol. 3, p. 339). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

### **E. The Identity of the Glory: The Son of David (20:41–44)**

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *As Messiah, the expected Son of David is greater than David, who calls him Lord.*

**20:41–44.** Having passed the examination of the various groups of Jewish religious leaders, Jesus then set up a test for them based on Scripture. Citing Psalm 110:1, he used Jewish methods of studying Scripture to identify the Messiah. Israel looked for a Son of David who would occupy the Jerusalem throne and restore Israel’s political fortunes. Jesus argued that they had the wrong concept of the Messiah. The Messiah is greater than David, with a greater mission than David, since this psalm showed that David called him Lord. You do not call your own son by such an honored name. Originally, David may have uttered the words as he looked forward to a successor who would complete the job he started and do it in such a way that all enemies would be subdued, and all warfare would be ended. Jesus used the psalm to say that Messiah had the highest title, that of Lord, used by the Jews in place of pronouncing the divine name. If one is recognized as Messiah, then he is recognized as one greater than David and as one closely associated with God.

Such lofty language about Messiah prepares us as we walk to the cross with Jesus. We are being led closer and closer to the identity of Jesus, the Messiah, the beloved Son of God.

### **F. The Glory in Contrast: False Glory Disrobed (20:45–47)**

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *The glory of God in Christ shows the false sense of glory and pride by the Jewish teachers.*

**20:45.** Jesus turned once more to teach his disciples, but he had to do so in public. The crowd eavesdropped on his teaching, still hanging on his words.

**20:46.** Jesus assumed a prophetic teaching role, issuing a prophetic condemnation but directing it to his disciples rather than to the ones condemned. When the going gets rough, Jesus' disciples will be tempted to turn back to the familiarity of Judaism. Jesus reminded them how false this way of life had become. The teachers wanted to be seen for their extraordinary clothing. They wanted everyone to gush over them, eager to greet them and be seen with them in the market. They wanted seats of honor during worship so everyone could see and admire them for their wisdom. At social gatherings they wanted to be seated with the honored guests. All this demonstrated one personality trait: pride ruled their lives. Pride makes a person self-centered. Do you want a self-centered person to teach you? Or would you rather have someone who has shown love and care for you and your needs? Jesus said this on the way to the cross, where he would be stripped of clothing and die for his disciples.

**20:47.** The Old Testament emphasizes the necessity for the people, especially the religious leaders, to care for widows. The scribes probably had authority as executors of estates for widows. Certainly, they had access to funds taken for charity. They may have gone so far as to use legal tactics to rob widows of their houses and other properties. Whatever method they used, they found ways to manipulate widows and their possessions, so the scribes got richer and the widows joined the poverty lines. Having so mistreated the needy, they would then go to prayer time and make a public show of their piety.

After outlining their sins in prophetic fashion, Jesus then stated the judgment. They faced greater punishment than all the rest because they had greater responsibility and had not exercised it properly (cf. 19:11–27). To whom much is given, much is required. Yes, Jesus can affirm the reality of resurrection, but not a resurrection of blessing and joy for these religious leaders. They have their glory now. In the world to come, they would face a fate far worse than they imposed on the widows.

**MAIN IDEA REVIEW:** *Human wisdom cannot entrap Jesus into self-incrimination. Jesus operates from heavenly authority as the beloved Son of God/Son of David who dies for his people and will be the first example of resurrection.*

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 20:41-47). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**