

**Introduction** (Luke 20:1-18)

Several years ago, when we planted this church, I went down to the New Mexico Educator Federal Credit Union to open up our church checking account. (The bank has since changed its name to Nusenda.) The bank personnel knew me. I had kept a personal checking account there for many years. Our company also had a business account with them, and I was a signer on the account. So, the bank personnel knew who I was. But, before they would do business with me, they asked me what authority I had to open up the church account. Before they would open the account, they needed a copy of the articles of incorporation, and a letter from the board authorizing me to open up the account. A couple days later I brought in the articles of incorporation, and a letter from our temporary board of directors and they opened up our account.

Last week Pastor Donald covered Luke 19:45-48. Jesus had entered the temple and driven out all those who were selling. It was the religious rulers who were the benefactors of these temple businesses. They were profiting off of the money exchanges and the sale of animals to be sacrificed. Jesus came in and drove them out. Luke recorded that the chief priests, scribes and leading men tried to destroy Jesus. They were angry about what Jesus had done.

(Luke 19:45-48) “Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, {46} saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN." {47} And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him, {48} and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.

The other accounts tell us that he made a scourge of cords and drove them all out of the temple. He was full of righteous anger. He was not just angry, He was full of zeal. John records that Jesus' disciples remembered that it was written in Psalms 69:9 that “zeal for Your house will consume Me.” The word that is used is zelos, from which we get our word zeal from. Zelos comes from zeo, which means to boil or be hot. Jesus was boiling with anger about what they were doing in the temple. He was full of zeal.

(John 2:15-17) “And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; {16} and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." {17} His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.”

John also records that the Jews then said to Him, “what sign do You show us as Your authority for doing these things?” They wanted a copy of his letter of incorporation and a letter from His board showing that He had authority to do what He was doing. That leads us into our passage today. **The religious leaders wanted to know what legal authority He had to do things He was doing.** They wanted to know by what authority He threw out the money changers and animal sellers.

(John 2:18) “The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?”

This morning, we are going to look at the rejection of Christ's authority by the religious leaders, and the consequences of rejecting Christ. We will be reading the first eighteen verses of Luke 20.

(Luke 20:1-8) "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."

(Luke 20:9-18) "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."

## 1. The rejection of Christ's authority

Our passage begins by saying 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. They said to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?" Our parallel accounts tell us that this was the day after He had cleansed the temple by throwing out the money changers. That happened on Tuesday, so this is Wednesday. The religious leaders were upset over the cleansing of the temple. They were also upset about His teaching and preaching the gospel. And so they confronted Him about His authority to do all the things that He was doing.

(Luke 20:1-2) "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?"

This was not a new topic of discussion with the religious leaders. Throughout Jesus' ministry, they questioned His authority. In Luke 5, some people cut a hole in Jesus' roof and let down a paralytic.

There was such a crowd that his friends could not get him to Jesus in a conventional way, so they cut a hole in the roof and let him in that way. Jesus said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." The scribes and Pharisees did not like that and accused Him of speaking blasphemies. They said, "who can forgive sins, but God alone?" Jesus was aware of their reasonings and asked them which was easier, to forgive sins or to say, "Get up and walk?"

(Luke 5:20-23) "Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." {21} The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" {22} But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? {23} "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

Notice what Jesus tells them next. "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I say to you, get up and pick up your stretcher and go home." **Jesus demonstrated His authority to those same religious leaders at the beginning of His earthly ministry.** Luke records that they were struck with astonishment. It is three years later and the astonishment has worn off. They were angry, jealous, and were seeking to destroy Jesus.

(Luke 5:24-26) "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home." {25} Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. {26} They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."

In Luke 11:14-20, Jesus had cast out a demon that had caused a man to be mute. When the man spoke, the crowds were amazed. But, the religious rulers accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. In other words, they accused Jesus of receiving His authority from Satan. Jesus told them, "If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Once again, Jesus had told them what authority He had been acting under.

(Luke 11:14-20) "And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed. {15} But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." {16} Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. {17} But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. {18} "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. {19} "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges. {20} "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Throughout Jesus' ministry, He had made it very clear whose authority He was under. Let's look at the gospel of John for a few minutes. In John 5:19-20, He said that He could do nothing unless it was something that He saw the Father doing.

(John 5:19) "Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."

A few verses later Jesus said, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." The Father had sent Jesus and Jesus was only doing the will of the Father. He was acting under the Father who had sent Him. **Jesus always acted under the authority of His Father.**

(John 5:30) "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

In John 7, Jesus told them that His teaching was not His own, but was from God, who had sent Him.

(John 7:16) "So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me."

In John 10:18, Jesus said that no one was going to take His life from Him, but He was going to lay it down on His own initiative. He said, "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." Where did Jesus' authority come from. Once again, Jesus had made it very clear where He received His authority. **Jesus' authority came from the Father.**

(John 10:18) "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

This was not a new topic of discussion. Jesus had told them on numerous occasions that the Father had sent Him, and that He was acting under the Father's authority. Now, as they were angry about Him throwing out the money changers, they once again challenge His authority. I love how Jesus answers them. He asks them a question. "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?"

(Luke 20:3-4) "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?"

Why was this such a great question? Let's go back and review Jesus' baptism by John to see why it was such a great question to ask them. I will look at the accounts in Luke and John. In Luke 3, when Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form and a voice came out of heaven saying, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." The religious leaders knew of this. Some of those present had probably been there and had actually heard that audible voice from God that day. **When Jesus was baptized, God declared Jesus to be His Son and God anointed Him with His Holy Spirit.**

(Luke 3:21-22) "Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, {22} and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, then went into the wilderness. After He returned in the power of the Spirit, and began teaching in the synagogues. In Nazareth, He entered the synagogue and read a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61. He declared that He had been anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind." These were the signs

of the Messianic King that they were anticipating. Jesus declared Himself to be the Messianic King that they had long awaited. He finished by saying, “today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

(Luke 4:14-21) “And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. {15} And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. {16} And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. {17} And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, {18} "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, {19} TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." {20} And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. {21} And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Now, let me read about the baptism of Jesus from the Gospel of John. In John 1, he saw Jesus coming and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” **John testified was that Jesus was the Lamb of God, and that He was eternal.** His testimony was that Jesus was the Messiah. Then, John said, “after me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.” John was born several months before Jesus, yet he said that Jesus existed before him. John knew that Jesus was eternal, and that He was the Son of God who had come down from heaven as the Son of Man to be the Messiah. He knew that Jesus was Immanuel, God in the flesh.

(John 1:29-30) “The next day he \*saw Jesus coming to him and \*said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! {30} "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'”

John went on to say that he did not recognize Jesus, but he saw the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and remaining on Jesus. God had told John that the One whom he saw the Spirit descending and remaining is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. Then, John declared, “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

(John 1:31-34) “I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.” {32} John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. {33} "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' {34} "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

The religious leaders had a problem. If they said that John was from God, they would have to accept John’s testimony, which was that Jesus was the Son of God. They had rejected John’s testimony. In fact, they had rejected John’s ministry. They had rejected God’s purpose for them. Luke tells us that when all the people and tax collectors had heard the message of repentance, they acknowledged God’s justice and were baptized by John. “But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God’s purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.” They had already rejected John’s testimony.

(Luke 7:29-30) “When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. {30} But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.”

So, the religious leaders had a problem. If they admitted John was a prophet from God, they would have to accept John's testimony, and they did not want to do that. On the other hand, the people were convinced that John was a prophet. If they denied that John was a prophet, they would anger the people and could possibly be stoned to death. Therefore, they refused to answer Jesus. Therefore, Jesus said to them, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” But, by asking them the question that He asked, He had indeed told them where His authority came from. They just refused to accept it.

(Luke 20:5-8) “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.”

**The religious leaders had rejected Christ's authority throughout Jesus' ministry.** When Jesus replied to their question with a question about John, they would not give an answer. Not giving an answer may be a politically correct thing to do, but it won't gain you entrance into the kingdom of God. On the fence is a “no” answer. There are lots of people who think that it is okay to be on the fence. What they don't realize is that we must accept Jesus as the Messiah. Until we get off the fence and receive Christ, we are giving Jesus a no for an answer.

## 2. The Consequences of Rejecting Christ

Now, let's take a look at the consequences of rejecting Christ as the Messiah. Jesus immediately told the people a parable to show the consequences of rejecting Christ as the messiah. He tells them about a man that planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers. The man who planted the vineyard was God, and the vineyard was the nation of Israel. The vine-growers are the religious leaders.

(Luke 20:9) “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.”

The owner sent a slave to the vine-growers at harvest time to get some of the produce of the vineyard. The vine-growers beat up the slave and sent him away empty handed. The owner sent a second and third slave, and they beat them and treated them shamefully. They went away beat up and empty handed. The slaves represents the various prophets that God had sent to the Jews to encourage them, exhort them to repent and walk in His ways. **The Jews had not heeded the warnings and exhortations of the various prophets that God had sent to them.**

(Luke 20:10-12) “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.”

Jesus had spoken to the Jews about this at various times of His ministry. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, Jesus said, “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Jesus made it clear that they had persecuted the prophets that God had sent.

(Matt 5:11-12) “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. {12} "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

In Matthew 23, we have another account of Jesus speaking about the prophets. This time, He was approaching Jerusalem. He wept over Jerusalem, and then He said, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her...Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!” Jesus has given them a brief history lesson, and now He is telling them prophetically what they are about to do. The parable continues and Jesus is introduced.

(Matt 23:37-38) “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. {38} Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!”

The owner of the vineyard then decided to send His beloved son, thinking they would respect him. However, when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned that this was the heir, and they decided to kill him so that the vineyard would go to them. So, they threw out the son and killed him. The beloved son is Jesus Himself, and He is telling them that they are going to kill Him. Now, the owner of the vineyard has a decision to make about what he will do to the vine-growers.

(Luke 20:13-15) “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?”

The owner decides to come and destroy those vine-growers and give the vineyard to others. The religious leaders understood that He was talking about them, and they said, “May it never be!” But, it was to be. **God was going to remove their stewardship of His people and give it to others.**

(Luke 20:16) “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!”

In fact, this is what Jesus has been doing for three years. He has been preparing the new keepers of the vineyard. He has been training and preparing the future leaders of His people, His bride, His church. Let’s take a quick look at this change in leadership.

In Matthew 4, immediately after Jesus began His earthly ministry, He began recruiting His team. He gathered Peter and Andrew. He told them that they would no longer be catching fish, but if they followed Him they would become fishers of men. He kept calling others to follow Him. And, He began discipling them and teaching them to be fishers of men.

(Matt 4:18-20) “Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. {19} And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." {20} Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.”

In Luke 6, Jesus spent the night in prayer. He was seeking the Father’s counsel and direction in choosing the twelve apostles. When day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles. These apostles were going to preach the gospel of the kingdom, plant churches, lay foundations, and raise up leaders within the churches. They were going to take the place of the current religious leaders and become the stewards of God’s people.

(Luke 6:12-13) “It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. {13} And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.”

In Luke 9, Jesus called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons to heal diseases. Then, He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. Jesus had received authority from the Father. Now, He was sending out the apostles and giving them authority to proclaim the kingdom of God.

(Luke 9:1-2) “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. {2} And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.”

If we fast forward to the end of Matthew, after Jesus has risen from the dead, He makes this transfer of authority and responsibility very clear. He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.” **The apostles were given the stewardship and responsibility of God’s kingdom.** They were the new vine-growers in charge of God’s vineyard. Jesus had given the vineyard to others.

(Matt 28:18-20) “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. {19} "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, {20} teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

As we finish the passage, Jesus asks them about a prophesy in Isaiah 8:14-15. He asks, “what then is this that is written, ‘the stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone.’” Jesus is the corner stone that they have rejected.

(Luke 20:17) “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'?"

(Isa 8:14-15) “Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. {15} Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught.”



Then, Jesus said that everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust. For those people who do not receive Christ, they will be broken and destroyed. **That chief corner stone had two consequences. For those who accepted Christ, it was good news, but for those who rejected the chief corner stone, it would be devastating.**

(Luke 20:18) "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

Isaiah speaks to these consequences. He said that those who believe in it will not be disturbed.

(Isa 28:16) "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed."

Paul wrote of this same concept in Romans 9. He says that the Gentiles attained righteousness by faith in Christ, while the Jews did not attain to that righteousness while pursuing the law. Because they pursued righteousness by works, they stumbled over the stumbling stone, which is Christ. Then, he quotes Isaiah 28:16. Christ, our corner stone, is a rock of offense for those who are perishing. But, for those who have received and accepted Christ, they will not be disappointed or ashamed (KJV).

(Rom 9:30-33) "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; {31} but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. {32} Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, {33} just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

Peter also speaks about the precious cornerstone. He said that we have come to Christ as to a living stone which has been rejected by men. To us who have accepted Christ, it is a choice and precious stone. As living stones, we are being built up into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices to God.

(1 Pet 2:4-5) "And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Peter quotes Isaiah 28, and says that those who believe in Christ will not be disappointed. But, for those who reject Christ, it is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Because they do not accept Christ, they are appointed to doom. **Those who reject the gospel are appointed to doom.**

(1 Pet 2:6-8) "For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed." {7} This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone, {8} and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed." The religious leaders rejected Christ's authority. They rejected Him as the long-awaited Messiah.

They rejected the testimony of John that He is the Son of God. They rejected the attesting miracles that Jesus had performed. Because they have rejected Christ, the stewardship of God's vineyard, His kingdom, was going to be taken away and given to others. Because they had stumbled over the rock, they would be destroyed. This was true in the natural and it was true in the spiritual. Jerusalem was going to be overthrown and destroyed. Jesus saw the coming destruction and wept over Jerusalem. Jesus does not want any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But, the religious leaders had refused the baptism of John, which was repentance, and they had rejected God's purpose for themselves. And Jesus wept over them, and the rest of the Jews who had rejected Him.

Matthew records that the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, and they understood that He was speaking about them. Because they feared the people, they did not seize Him. Even though they heard, they did not receive His message.

(Matt 21:45-46) "When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. {46} When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet."

## Conclusion

As we come to a close this morning, what about you? The religious leaders knew that Jesus had been speaking to them. Has God been speaking to you this morning? Have you accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah? Have you come to a place in your life where you believe that He is the chief corner stone? There is a choice that all of us have. For those who receive Christ, it is a message of great news. Jesus is a precious corner stone. Jesus calls us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He makes us a people of His own possession. He pours out His love and mercy on us. He gives us life and purpose. We become living stones who are being built up into a spiritual house. But, for those who do not accept Jesus as their Messiah, He is a rock of offense and a stone of stumbling.

(1 Pet 2:9-10) "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; {10} for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

If you would like to receive Christ this morning, we want to pray with you. We invite you to come forward and let us pray with you. It is a decision that you will never regret. Your life will never be the same. You will be eternally grateful that you did not stumble over this stone. You will never be dismayed or disappointed in this rock.

For others, if you have an area of need that you would like to have prayer for, we would love to pray with you.

Let's pray.

**Introduction** (Luke 19:45-48, 20:1-18, Ps 69:9, John 2:15-17)

- The religious leaders wanted to know what legal \_\_\_\_\_ He had to do the things He was doing. (John 2:18)

**1. The rejection of Christ's authority** (Luke 20:1-8, 5:20-23)

- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ His authority to those same religious leaders at the beginning of His earthly ministry. (Luke 5:24-26, 11:14-20, John 5:19)
- Jesus always acted under the \_\_\_\_\_ of His Father. (John 5:30, 7:16)
- Jesus' authority came from the \_\_\_\_\_. (John 10:18, Luke 20:2-4)
- When Jesus was baptized, \_\_\_\_\_ declared Jesus to be His Son and God anointed Him with His Holy Spirit. (Luke 3:21-22, 4:14-21)
- John testified was that \_\_\_\_\_ was the Lamb of God, and that He was \_\_\_\_\_. (John 1:29-34, Luke 7:29-30, 20:5-8)
- The religious leaders had \_\_\_\_\_ Christ's authority throughout Jesus' ministry.

**2. The Consequences of Rejecting Christ** (Luke 20:9-18, Isa 8:14-15)

- The Jews had not heeded the warnings and exhortations of the various \_\_\_\_\_ that God had sent to them. (Luke 20:10-12, Matt 5:11-12, 23:37-38, Luke 20:13-18)
- God was going to remove their \_\_\_\_\_ of His people and give it to others. (Luke 20:16-18, Matt 4:18-20, Luke 6:12-13, 9:1-2)
- The apostles were given the \_\_\_\_\_ and responsibility of God's kingdom. (Matt 28:18-20)
- That chief corner stone had \_\_\_\_\_ consequences.
- For those who accepted Christ, it was \_\_\_\_\_, but for those who rejected the chief corner stone, it would be \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 20:18, Isa 28:16, Rom 9:30-33, 1 Pet 2:4-5)
- Those who reject the gospel are appointed to \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Pet 2:6-8, Matt 21:45-46)

**Conclusion** (1 Pet 2:9-10)**Introduction** (Luke 19:45-48, 20:1-18, Ps 69:9, John 2:15-17)

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