

# The Rejection of the King

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[ 0 : 00 ] So, excuse me, starting verse 45. One day, as Jesus was teaching people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up and said to him, Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.

He answered them, I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? And they discussed it with one another, saying, If we say from heaven, he will say, Why did you not believe him?

But if we say from man, all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet. So they answered that they did not know where it came from.

And Jesus said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. And he began to tell the people this parable. A man planted a vineyard and led it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while.

When the time came, he sent a servant and the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[ 1 : 34 ] And he sent another servant, but they also beat and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out.

And the owner of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him. But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, This is the heir.

Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours. And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

When they heard this, they said, Surely not. But he looked directly at them and said, What then is this that is written? The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces. And when it falls on anyone, it will crush him. The scribes and the chief priests saw that they hands on him at that very hour. For they perceived that he had told this parable against them.

[ 2 : 37 ] But they feared the people. So we've been studying the Gospel of Luke these past few months. We read in the first chapter of Luke that he wrote this narrative of the life and ministry of Jesus to a friend named Theophilus.

At this point in the narrative, we're approaching the culmination of Jesus' life and mission. And last Sunday in Luke 19, we read about Jesus entering Jerusalem. Not on a war horse as a usurping conqueror, but on a cult as a true and rightful king.

Welcomed amidst the praises of his people. And it's here in Jerusalem where he will be unjustly condemned to death and hung on wooden planks to die.

And that's soon. So how is it that Jesus goes from here to there? From one day, people saying, Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord to crucify, crucify him.

This animosity and opposition to Jesus has been present throughout his ministry. But today we start to see it boil and bubble over. So our passage starts in verse 45 to 48 of chapter 19.

[ 3 : 46 ] With Jesus driving out business people from the temple. Then in verses 1 to 8 of chapter 20, the leaders of the people challenge Jesus' authority. And then the last part, verses 9 to 18, Jesus teaches a parable about wicked servants.

With the leaders understanding that Jesus is talking about them. And so if we zoom out and take a high level view of this passage, we'll see that the main thing is that Jesus, rejected by this world, but chosen by God, is the one who faithfully serves God and cares for his people.

And we'll walk through these three sections. And we can summarize them in 45 through 48. It talks about the unfaithfulness of Israel's leaders to God. Verses 1 through 8, the opposition of Israel's

leaders to Jesus.

And 9 through 18, the removal of Israel's leaders from their leadership roles. So first let's look at verses 45 to 48. In verse 45 it says, He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold. So what's happening here? Why is Jesus so upset? Well, imagine Jesus walking onto the temple grounds. Here's a picture of what the temple looks like.

[ 4 : 59 ] And this is a place where Israel's sacrificial system took place. It's a sacrificial system that God instituted. So it's not a bad thing. It's a very good thing.

And back in chapter 2, we see that even Jesus and his family took part in this. After Jesus was born, it says that his parents took him to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord.

A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. So this is where Jesus came. There's a temple tax that needed to be paid too. So with people traveling from all over the region to the temple, it made sense that there needs to be some sort of commercial activity.

People needed to exchange their Roman or Greek currency for the temple tax. And people who didn't bring the extra luggage of a bunch of animals for sacrifices, they would need to buy them there.

So it's not these things in themselves that Jesus is reacting against, but it's the manner in which they're being done. Verse 46 gives us clues into what's happening.

[ 5 : 59 ] So it says, Saying to them, It is written, My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers. Jesus is referencing two Old Testament passages here.

First, he's referring to Isaiah 56, verses 6-7. So it says, And the foreigners who joined themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants.

Everyone who keeps the Sabbath does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant. These I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar.

For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. And the other passage it refers to is Jeremiah chapter 7. It says, Behold, you trust in deceptive words, to no avail.

Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known? And then come stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered, only to go on doing all these abominations.

[ 7 : 04 ] Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. So God wanted his temple to be a place where people could know him.

Him, the awesome God of all creation. The righteous God of justice and purity. The compassionate God of love and tenderness. He made it so that anyone, even people outside of Israel, could come and enjoy him in his temple.

But the leadership of Israel had failed to fulfill God's intentions for the temple. Looking back at this picture, so there's the temple structure in the middle, and the open space around it, around the main structure, was designated as the court of the Gentiles.

So that's where people who were not Israelites could come, could pray, could seek God. But instead of that, the leaders had allowed the merchandisers to set up shop there.

So, I mean, how easy would it be for you and for me to seek God in prayer in the middle of, like, Quincy Market, right? Very busy, loud. It's not very considerate.

[ 8 : 18 ] And maybe the leaders just didn't care about the Gentiles. Maybe they thought, I mean, who cares if they don't have a place to pray? Like, they're not us Israelites. It doesn't matter. Maybe they thought it's not a big deal for God.

Maybe they said the temple's a pretty big space. There's a lot of space here. I'm sure people can find somewhere to pray. I mean, just pray at home. What's the big deal? So, the leaders had allowed this temple to become a den of robbers.

This idea of a den of robbers refers to a cave or a house or a gathering place. So, it's not the place where robbers go to do their robbing.

It's their hideout. It's their home. It's their refuge. It's where, after they go do their robbing, they come back and they retreat to escape justice and to relax. So, that's what this den of robbers is here.

The Jewish leaders in verse 47, it says, The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men who sought to destroy Jesus, they had made the temple a home for the wicked.

[ 9 : 22 ] They used the authority of the temple as a guise to legitimize their greed and their injustice. This group of people presented the elite of the nation.

So, it talks about the chief priests. These were the people who were born into the priesthood. So, by birthright, they could serve at the temple. The scribes were the legal experts.

They had received advanced education. They were the religious professors, if you will, of that time. And the principal men were those born into noble Jerusalem families. Maybe they were rich.

Maybe they were well-connected. Maybe they had prominent ancestors who did great things in Israel's history. But together, this group represented the social and religious elite.

But instead of using their authority and position to serve God and his people, they chose to serve themselves. Back in chapter 11 of Luke, we read about them. And the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees, cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish.

[ 10 : 23 ] But inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? Woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe, mint, and rue in every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God.

These you ought to have done without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you! For you are like the unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.

Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Remember the time when Jesus powerfully and compassionately healed people.

People who have been suffering for a long time. And the leaders reacted callously and selfishly. It's like the women who have been disabled for 18 years. And when that happened, the synagogue ruler got angry because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath.

He said, come about the day and be healed, but not on the Sabbath. And then, it's like when a man was born blind. He had been blind all his life. And when Jesus healed him, the Pharisees, they failed to believe that Jesus came from God.

[ 11 : 38 ] Because they disagreed with him. They hated him. And then, the healed man explains to them, if this man were not from God, he could not do, or he could do nothing. But the leaders answer him, you were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?

And they cast him out. So, they're insulting him. They're saying, what do you know? We are the educated people. We're the leaders. So, placed in this position of power and privilege, the leaders prove, I'm faithful to God and to his people.

But Jesus sees what's happening. And in a relatively small but significant act, he drives out the sellers from the temple. It's similar to how he drove out demons from all the people that they have possessed.

Jesus renews the temple for its intended purpose. This doesn't go well with the leaders, as you can imagine. So, let's look at the next section, verses 1 through 8. Jesus is, again, in the temple.

And it says that he's teaching the people and preaching the gospel. The priests, scribes, and elders hate his guts. And they're looking for opportunities to trick him up, to embarrass him, to discredit him.

[ 12 : 46 ] And so, what they bring to him is, while Jesus is preaching the gospel, they question and challenge his authority. What's the source of your authority? What or who enables you to teach like you do?

They might have thought that they had Jesus trapped. Because in their society, they had the monopoly on authority. They were the center, and Jesus was a nobody. Right?

He wasn't born into the temple priesthood, like the chief priests. He wasn't highly educated, like scribes. He grew up a carpenter's son. Right? Very blue-collar work. And he wasn't born into a well-to-do family or neighborhood, but he grew up in a town called Nazareth.

And one of his disciples, the way he put it, when he first heard about Jesus, he said, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Right? It's like, this place is no good. But man's ways are not God's ways.

And Jesus doesn't have the credentials required by the elite. But he is the eternal son of God. And so Jesus reframes the question and turns it back to them.

[13:51] And he asks, Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? So the baptism of John, this refers to the whole ministry and message of John that we write about early in Luke.

And from heaven means from God. Right? It has divine authority. And the opposite being from man. It's just something that humans have made. Jesus wasn't trying to dodge the question here.

He's not looking for an easy way out. It is actually a common way of speaking amongst the Jewish rabbis during this time. Of speaking with counter questions. Right? That's how you dialogue. And actually, if we dig deeper into what Jesus said, we see that it's connected to the original question. Remember that John's ministry was meant to prepare the way for Jesus. Therefore, declaring that John's ministry was from God would equate to declaring that Jesus' ministry was from God.

Right? So there's a connection there. But that's a big problem for the leaders because they hadn't accepted John's ministry. They rejected it just like they were rejecting Jesus.

[14:57] But, you know, the passage reveals that they're not actually concerned with what they did. They're not concerned with an honest answer. What they really care about is what the people think and what the people do to them.

Right? Not what they did and what they think. So they're caught in a dilemma. They can't backtrack and say, actually, yeah, our previous position was wrong.

John was sent by God. Because then they would be criticized. Right? Why didn't you accept it? So they don't want to do that. They want to save face. But they also can't say that John wasn't a prophet from God because that's what the people believed.

And they believed it so much so that if they disagreed, they might consider it blasphemy and stone him to death. Right? So they're caught between these two options.

They choose option three, which is no comment. We don't know. It's a safe answer, but it's a self-condemning answer. Because they should know.

[15:59] That's their job. They're the leaders of Israel. They should understand God's heart and God's purposes. They should perceive when someone is from God and when someone is a communist.

By saying we don't know they're disqualifying themselves from serving as the teachers and protectors of the people. But they're not concerned about that. It's not a big deal. They just care about themselves.

And so in response to their answer, Jesus refuses to answer their question. At least in the way that they will. And for the time being.

Because, again, if we look a little deeper by referring to John and his ministry, Jesus is implicitly answering their question about divine authority. Right?

Because everyone accepts that John is a prophet. So by pointing to him, Jesus is saying, I'm coming from the same source. And the upcoming parable, he makes another reference to his divine origin.

[16:55] And so he does, again, implicitly answer their question. Let's look at this last passage, or last section, verses 9 through 18. So this talks about the removal of Israel's leaders.

Looking at this last section, starting in verse 9, we read the parable of the wicked tenants, which points to the removal of Israel's leaders as the caretakers of God's people.

To quickly summarize the parable, a man owns a vineyard. He travels far away for a long time. And he has tenants who work the ground.

So the tenants have the opportunity to harvest the bare fruit. He sends three separate servants to gather some of his fruit, because it's his land. But each time, these servants are beaten and sent away empty-handed.

Until finally, the owner, he sends his beloved son, who is killed. And the point of the story is that these wicked servants, these wicked tenants, will be destroyed in the responsibilities given to others.

[18:05] The components of this parable have real-life equivalents. So the man who owned the vineyard is God. The vineyard is Israel, or God's people, you know, which applied to us today refers to us the church.

The fruit of the vineyard refers to good fruit, produced in the lives of God's people. These are the outworkings of faith and obedience in our lives. The tenants responsible for caring for the vineyard are Israel's leaders.

And God charges the leaders of his people to nurture and care for them, so that they produce good works in their lives. The servants who are sent and beaten are Old Testament prophets.

So though they're sent as God's representatives, they're disrespected, they're mistreated. And there are a lot of these prophets in Israel's history. To name a few, there's Moses in Numbers chapter 14, you read, And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

This is after Israel's been brought out of Egypt from slavery. And the whole congregation said to them, Would that we have died in the land of Egypt? Or would that we have died in this wilderness? Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to fall by the sword?

[ 19 : 20 ] Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt? And they said to one another, Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt. Or like Micaiah in 1 Kings 22, He's speaking with Ahab, the king of Israel at this point.

And it says, Now therefore behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets. The Lord has declared disaster for you. The context of this is Ahab is thinking about going to war, and he has all these false prophets around him.

And they're saying, yeah, you should do it. God will give you victory. And Micaiah is the only one in Israel who's the prophet of God, a true prophet. And he's saying, don't go. It's going to be a disaster for you, right?

Then Zedekiah, one of these false prophets, the son of Chanana, came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, how did the spirit of the Lord go for me to speak to you? And the king of Israel said, seize Micaiah and take him back to Ammon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son, and say, Thus says the king, put this fellow in prison and feed him meager rations of bread and water until I come in peace.

And Micaiah said, if you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me. And Ahab does end up getting killed in this battle. And one last one, there's Jeremiah, Jeremiah chapter 26.

[ 20 : 39 ] Thus says the Lord, stand in the court of the Lord's house and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the Lord, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not hold back a word.

It may be they will listen, and everyone turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds. And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, you shall die.

Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, this house shall be like Shiloh, and the city shall be desolate without inhabited? And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the Lord. Jeremiah is speaking on behalf of God for the good of the people.

They don't want to hear it. Again and again, God sends his servants, the prophets to his people, to warn them of sin and to instruct them in the way that they should go in his ways.

And in this parable, the owner holds out hope and keeps sending servants, though they receive the same shameful treatment over and over again. And finally, he sends his beloved son, the owner still holds out hope, but mixed with hope is real risk.

[ 21 : 54 ] Perhaps they will respect him, my son, but perhaps they won't. And the beloved son is Jesus. Here again, Jesus implicitly declares his divine origin of his authority because he's the son of God, the vineyard owner.

And maybe the son will carry enough respect and authority with the tenants. But no. The tenants come up with this crazy scheme to kill the son so that they will become the heirs of the land. Maybe they saw the son coming and they thought, well, the son's coming, not the owner, so maybe the owner died. So if we get rid of the son, then it sort of like legally reverts to us since we're working the land.

And whatever the reason, they chose to kill the son. And so Jesus asks, what will happen to these wicked tenants? They will be destroyed.

And their charge of caring for the vineyard of God's people will be handed to others. This others is Jesus and his apostles. We'll read in a few weeks later in Luke chapter 22, 28 verse 30, Jesus says, The problem with Israel's leaders is that they didn't want to be tenants.

[ 23 : 20 ] They didn't want to be managers of God's things. They wanted to be the owners. They wanted to be God themselves. So by refusing the owner's claim to share in the harvest of his own land, the tenants in this parable are denying his title to the vineyard, saying, it doesn't belong to you.

It belongs to me. I'm the boss. You should just go away. I've been speaking a lot about the priests and the scribes and the elders, but their problem is not unique to them.

The sickness of our own hearts is ultimately the same problem that they had. We all want to be God. We all want the world to revolve around us.

I mean, have you ever said in your heart or with your actions or even with your lips sometimes, God, go away. This is my life. I'm going to do what I want to do.

My life doesn't belong to you. It belongs to me. I'm the boss. But we are not God. And challenging the ruler of all creation for his place on the throne, it demands justice.

[ 24 : 31 ] It's mistreatment. It's disrespect against God. And God knows better than we do that this demands justice, which is why he sent his son.

He knows that a price needs to be paid to satisfy justice. Justice. But there's a difference between the owner of this parable and God in real life. The owner thought that perhaps they will respect him. Maybe they will listen. There's some hope there. But with God, there's no perhaps. There's no maybe. Because he knew without a doubt what would happen to Jesus. He would be rejected and crucified.

God didn't just know this. He planned it. This is what God wanted. God wanted. Because this was the only way that he could get you and that he could get me. God needed to place the burden of our sin upon his son so that he could remove that burden from us.

God loves us and he made a way for us to live and it cost him so much. But that's who God is. That's his character. He loves us with a costly love.

[ 25 : 40 ] Looking at verse 16, the reaction of the people in the crowd to Jesus is strong. They say, surely not. This is not the leaders but the people in the audience, right, in the crowd who are saying this.

I'm not sure they understood exactly what was happening in this parable. Maybe they thought they were being destroyed like Israel was being destroyed that they would be removed. But at the very least they understood that it was serious whatever was happening here.

So they're very against it. And in verse 17, Jesus cites Psalm 118 which we read for the call to worship. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. The cornerstone is the foundation stone of the building. It's the stone that bears the weight of two intersecting walls and is crucial to a building's stability.

So yes, Jesus might be rejected by this world and its leaders. And yes, he might suffer persecution. And yes, he might even be killed. But ultimately, he will have the victory because God, not the world, has the final word.

[ 26 : 48 ] As Peter says in 2 Peter 2, as you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Rejecting Jesus leads to devastating results, as it says in verse 18. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.

One connection to this verse is Isaiah chapter 8, and he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and many shall stumble on it.

They shall fall and be broken. They shall be snared and taken. And it also reminds us of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1. For Jews demand signs, and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and following the Gentiles.

So it's like, you know, Jesus is the cornerstone, and rejecting him is like a clay pot opposing the stone. Stumbling and falling on the stone, or being under it when it falls, it's going to lead to complete destruction.

[ 28 : 11 ] To close, let me ask about us personally. So how have we responded to the cornerstone? How have you responded to the cornerstone? If you haven't accepted him as the king and savior that he claims to be, then I would ask you to seriously consider his claims.

I know it can be difficult. Jesus can seem offensive to us because he claims exclusive authority over our lives. Jesus will take no rival. But before reacting to this offensiveness, I ask that you take time to ask questions.

Is Jesus credible? Does he in fact have authority over our life? Is he trustworthy in what he says? Is he who he says he is, or is he a fraud? God. It's worth getting to the bottom of this.

There's nothing more important in life apart from this question of who we belong to. It's more important than our careers, more important than finding a future spouse, husband or wife, more important than the six and O paths, right?

I mean, this is not just our earthly well-being, but our eternal well-being. It talks about our eternal life. For those of us who have connected ourselves to Jesus, to the cornerstone, by trusting him, I would ask us, does our lives, do our lives reflect this decision, or does it indicate something different?

[ 29 : 40 ] To be Christian is not to make a one-time decision, or to adhere to a set of rules, or to join a subculture. It's to enter into a vibrant relationship with God that grows and grows like any healthy relationship does.

And, I mean, what does this look like in real life? It looks like a growing trust in God. That's the foundation, trusting God.

It's trusting God in the midst of life's difficulties, that he's sovereign, that he's infinite in wisdom, so he knows what's best for us, that he's perfect in love, that he cares about us, he truly cares for us. Yes. It means trusting that, as we read, not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from God, so we will not fear, because we are of more value than many sparrows.

God cares about us. It looks like growing in holiness, to be more and more separate from sin, and the things that pull us away from God. Holiness is this idea of being separate, right?

[ 30 : 45 ] As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7, Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

And we also read in Hebrews 12, Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. It looks like growing in service, growing in service to God.

Ephesians 2.10 says, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. And 1 Peter chapter 4, As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

Whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God, whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Growing in our relationship with God doesn't happen automatically, it's not easy. It takes work, it takes time, it takes perseverance.

[ 31 : 52 ] In Philippians, we read, Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

So it's, we are working out our own salvation, but God works in us both to will and to work for him. In Colossians 1, him we proclaim, mourning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

For this, I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. This is Paul speaking. So this makes, this makes sense. Right? The good things of life take work.

I mean, if I want to have an easy life, I wouldn't have a family, I wouldn't be married, I wouldn't have a job. Right? I'd be playing PlayStation all day eating like Taco Bell and Doritos. Right? I don't know how I afford all those tacos, but, you know, I want the good things of life, so I go to work, I study as I need to, I invest in the relationships with people I love, and my relationship with God takes work too. So if you're a Christian, the question is, does your life reflect that you are connected to Jesus, the cornerstone that's ever growing? Are you bearing good fruit in your life?

[ 33 : 14 ] This is an important self-assessment to make because, I mean, otherwise, you might just be a really good chief priest or scribe. Jesus loves you.

Jesus cares for you. And while we and others have failed to faithfully serve God, Jesus faithfully fulfilled God's plan to save us from our sins. Though the world rejected him, God chose him, and he's the one who leads us and protects us and nourishes and cherishes us.

And so that's, that's the Lord, that's the cornerstone. And may we all cling tightly to our wonderful Savior evermore. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, Heavenly Father, All right.