

Discrediting Jesus

Jesus is about to be betrayed by Judas and turned over to the authorities, but not before the religious leaders have a final go at Him. It would be a rough Tuesday for Jesus (entering on Sunday and cleansing the Temple of Monday). Moore states, "In fact, there are more details given about this day in the life of Jesus than any other. Matthew devotes nearly one sixth of his gospel to it." People attempted to discredit Jesus, and they will do the same to you. It's a reminder that we must live the word and know it!

Note: I've enjoyed and recommend Mark E. Moore's "The Chronological Life of Christ." Some of my comments can be found in his material by coincidence (he's not the only one making such observations articulated in his material), and other times, I've leaned on his accurate and helpful observations. He's done an excellent job making 1st-century culture and practices available.

Events that occurred between last week's lesson and today: Greeks Seek Jesus (Jn. 12:20-26); Rejected Again (Jn. 12:37-50); Withered Tree (Mt. 21:19b-22; Mk. 11:19-25; Lk. 21:37-38).

Authority Challenged (Luke 20:1-18)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - We likely have the Sanhedrin at this point. Chief priests would be Sadducees, scribes/teachers are you Pharisees, and elders or "lay" leaders.
 - See Matthew 21:23-22:14 and Mark 11:27-12:12 for Jesus' complete teaching.
 - Matthew's parable in 21:28-32 illustrates how rejecting John's baptism was equivalent to not believing in John's message, and most concerning, rejecting God's will. See Luke 7:29-30.
- *Something to meditate on:*
 - It's okay to ask questions. We often feel pressured to answer everything perfectly and forget that it's a two-way street.
 - If you're going to ask a question, be ready to engage. Be intellectually honest.
 - The problem wasn't that they didn't know the Son; rather, they didn't accept Him. They rejected the Father's will. Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you", not "neither do I know." They refused to acknowledge the truth.
 - You don't always have to entertain the discussion if you believe the other party lacks sincerity
 - Be ready and willing to change your views or choices or the courage to hold on to them. It may be hard, but what's the alternative?

Paying Taxes (19-26)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - Jesus is challenged by the Pharisees and some Herodians.
 - Pharisees - "Religious right wing." (Moore). That's a fair summary.
 - Herodians - "They were not a religious sect, but, as the name implies, a court or political party, supporters of the dynasty of Herod." (ISBE)
 - Their insincere compliments are odd considering they lacked none of the qualities themselves.
 - The trap is obvious: please the people (but be accused of disobeying Rome), or obey Rome (but look like a Messiah who couldn't free them from Roman power).
- *Something to meditate on:*
 - Intellectual honesty seems to be a problem in today's teaching. Be honest with yourself.

- Trying to put one person against another isn't a stellar approach. Intimidating tactics are evil. Be careful not to get into the "Well, elder so and so said this," or "preacher so and so believes this." Don't do that, in particular, if your goal is to sow division.
- Jesus is much wiser than we are (to be fair). Still, we often overlook the simplest explanations and opt for intricate and sometimes complicated ones. Think it through.

Sadducees & Resurrection (27-40)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - Now the Sadducees take a turn at Jesus.
 - Sadducees - "This group died out with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. . . . Religious 'liberals,' denying any kind of a resurrection, either in form of angels or spirits . . . They also apparently prioritized the Pentateuch over the rest of the OT, and certainly denied the validity of the oral traditions of the Pharisees. It looks like they were the dominant force in the priesthood, hence they would also control the temple." (Moore).
 - Their argument is based on combining passages such as Deuteronomy 25:5 and Genesis 38:8.
 - Jesus' answer is two-fold: (1) You're scripturally ignorant: Exodus 3:6 (argument based on verb tense) states that the Father is God of the living, not the dead. (2) The power of God: We're given new bodies in the resurrection and will be like the angels.
- *Something to meditate on:*
 - Insincerity. They're only attempting to trap him because they don't believe in a resurrection. Do you question because you're genuinely looking to discuss or only attempting to trap?
 - Make sure your starting point is accurate. A long-held practice/belief doesn't prove the belief/practice is sound.
 - Go back to the word. Slow down. Read it with fresh and unbiased eyes. Is this difficult? Yep! Can it be done? Yes. Pray to God for help and wisdom. Be patient.

Whose Son Is The Christ (41-44)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - Jesus turns the tables to exegete Psalm 110.
 - In their culture, the father was always greater than the son (more than holding authority).
 - This human son of David is also the Son of God. Don't be surprised when Jesus makes His claim as both Messiah and the Son of God. It all adds up, doesn't it?
- *Something to meditate on:*
 - We're not looking to destroy others. We want to help them see the truth as others have helped us. So, be thoughtful and try to bring to the table powerful observations that will help others clear their mental hurdle. Look for something indisputable. You don't always need 10 examples of the same thing.

Beware (45-47)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - See Matthew 23:1-16 and Mark 12:38-40 for the whole narrative. Jesus has given the same rebuke and warning before in Luke 11:37-54.
- *Something to meditate on:*
 - Finally, pay attention to the actions of others. Do you want to be like them? Do they bear good fruit? It doesn't mean they're wrong (I'm sure Jonah wasn't a peach), but it may be an indicator. Yes, even in the church, we can have people who speak with great confidence, but are admired by very few, or only those who share their like-minded ways.