



Turning the Question Luke 20:41-47

Intro: Throughout Luke 20, Jesus has been questioned by the religious leaders (20:1–40). Now, he turns the tables with His own question about the identity of the long-awaited Messiah in order to point out how different Israel's leaders are than the Messiah.

The question is, "*Who is Jesus really? Is he merely David's son, or David's Lord?*"

Note: Jesus constantly provides a model for us in his responses to people. He often turns the question to answer something more important than what has been asked. Learning how to do that would be an asset to us. If you are interested in improving your ability to interact with people, consider reading *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations*, available on [Amazon](#).

Jesus continues the conversation with the Sadducees (and others) with a question about...

First: The Identity of the Messiah. 41–44

In these verses Jesus asks how the Christ can be both David's son and David's Lord – 44.

This is how Jesus says it,

- The Messiah is the "Son of David." That's his human descent - 41
- He is also, (according to Psalm 110:1), "David's Lord." This means the Messiah has divine descent – 42-43
- How is that possible? The incarnation!
- Jesus perfectly fulfills that – 44

Matthew and Luke present two lines of Jesus' genealogy demonstrating that Jesus is Israel's promised King (Matthew) and humanity's true son (Luke).

Note: Info about Matthew and Luke's genealogies are at the end of these notes.

If this is true, and it is, it means that Christianity is not about a mere teacher or moral example, but the God-man King.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

- C. S. Lewis in Mere Christianity

The Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes and lawyers refused to confess Jesus as David's Lord.

We don't want to be 'confessors' and not 'possessors.' We don't want to claim to believe that Jesus is who he said he is and then live otherwise. We want to live according to our profession.

APP: Think about the implications for your own life.

We are to live with a "that age" mentality in "this age" (vs 34-35).

We must bow to Jesus as Lord, not just admire Him as a good man. Where in your life are you doing this? Where are you resisting? (In a few moments, Jesus is going to contrast the Messiah with the scribes. Like Jesus, we want to live surrendered, humble lives.

Second: The Danger of the Scribes (vv. 45–47a)

Jesus warns the disciples about the scribes' hypocrisy. "Hypocrite" = hypokritēs (ὑποκριτής), meaning *actor* or *stage player*. It is anyone who pretends to be someone they aren't. How do the scribes do this?

- They love appearances (robes, greetings, seats of honor) – 45-46
- They exploit the vulnerable (devour widows' houses) – 47a
- They mask their greed with long prayers – 47b

How different this is than Jesus. He, who is God's Son, who sat exalted by the Father, yet surrendered the treasure of Heaven to serve humanity. How contrary to the mind and heart of Jesus this is. This is the greater judgement.

It is bad enough to be such a bad person, but to sit in God's place, as a Christian, as a Christian leader, and take advantage of your position/authority to abuse others, is an even worse sin

The sin is at least two-fold:

- 1 – You do it.
- 2 – It is so unlike Jesus

Third: The Judgment of God. 47b

How do we interpret this? Judgment is certain, and it is proportionate ("*greater condemnation*" for greater hypocrisy).

Those who exploit religion for selfish gain face God's wrath.

But, what is the "greater condemnation?"

John 19:11 – ...*he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.*

Greater sin = *megas hamartia*

Luke 20:47 = *perissotepov krima* = *greater condemnation*

"*The greater condemnation*" = There are degrees of judgement.

The phrase implies that God's judgment is not one-size-fits-all. Some sins incur "greater" guilt and therefore "greater" condemnation.

What does this look like?

General - Matthew. 11:22–24 - *But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.*"

Personal - Luke 12:47-48 - *And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating.⁴⁸ But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*

Why is it greater here? The Pharisees have

- Spiritual Privilege: The scribes had access to Scripture and the knowledge of God, yet, they have twisted it for self-promotion and gain.
- Religious Hypocrisy: They masked sin with piety, which is worse than open rebellion. (ILL. A&E's sin was great but trying to mask it with leaves only made it worse).
- Exploitation of the Weak: Abusing widows, the very people God commanded Israel to protect, compounded their guilt.

So, there are at least 3 things to consider –

- 1 - The Justice of God: Hell is not the same for everyone. Punishment corresponds to the degree of sin, light rejected, and hypocrisy.

Do you really think you can live your life without consequences? When the resurrection of Spring follows the winter of death, and every sunset is followed by a sunrise, do you really think there is nothing beyond now?

In the resurrection, Jesus has imposed his will on creation, certifying and insuring we will live forever somewhere. The question is where?

Gospel: This is the BIG question! - Romans 7:24 – *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

And this is the BIG answer! Romans 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*

An Important Excursus: One of the great misconceptions about Christianity is that God sees our lives like a scoreboard. One side tallies our sins, and the other side records our good deeds. As long as the 'good deed' side has more when we die, everything is okay.

But if we try to outdo our sins, we will always lose because it isn't even a competition. It's like ETSU playing UT. It's a blowout.

Too many of you think you'll make a spiritual comeback just before the final whistle blows. But that isn't the game grace plays.

Our score never helps us win with God. Salvation "*is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*" Paul says in Ephesians 2:8. Nothing less than his perfect righteousness will do, and it is yours as a free gift.

That may sound too good to be true but that's exactly the point. Your salvation is entirely a gift; the work of Jesus based on his victory. You can storm the field after the game but that doesn't mean you played it or scored a goal. We are declared perfectly righteous and uncondemned only because of what Jesus has done.

But there is no middle ground between grace and condemnation. If we are not justified, declared righteous on the work of Christ, then we are condemned.

Jesus states it plainly when he says, "*Whoever believes is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God*" (John 3:18).

The implications are serious because they are eternal.

- 2 - Accountability of Leaders: Those in spiritual authority are judged more strictly because their influence is greater.
- 3 - Seriousness of Hypocrisy: Pretending piety while exploiting others is not a "light" sin but one that provokes greater wrath.

God sees through our appearances. We must humble yourself now before the Lord of David, *as the Lord of David did in his incarnation and passion*, or face Him as Judge later.

Fourth: Here's the Point

ILL – I have two major emphases in Lewis studies:

- 1- Lewis and Hell
- 2- The influence of Northern Ireland's north coast (finding Cair Paravel, the capital of Narnia). I think I have found it.

Picture: The Bishop's Palace.

The problem is that Ireland has up to 30,000 ruined castles and the vast majority are only echoes of their former glory, and yet, this is much like the world we live in.

- Adam and Eve were the apex of God's good and glorious creation.
- They were made in God's image with unique roles but tried to gain by their own efforts what God always intended to give them, and, in the process, sin corrupted the image of God in each of them.
- Like Adam and Eve, we too doubt promises and warnings.
- But when we reject God's word, we don't become better versions of ourselves but worse.
- After about 4,000 years of human failure, Jesus showed up as the only human being to ever perfectly obey God.
- As such, He's the only person who doesn't deserve to be 'banished' from God's presence.
- And yet, he willingly faced the punishment you and I deserve.
- In his death he paid the penalty for our sin and in his resurrection, he set the stage for our eternal future.
- And now, as it has always been, God's great goal is to conform you and me to the image of Jesus, the perfect human.
- The closer to God we get the more human we become. The farther away from God we get, the less human we are.

Conclusion:

In this passage, Jesus presents us with two pictures –

- 1 The true Messiah — fully God and fully man, worthy of worship.
- 2 False religionists — impressive on the outside but condemned by God.

Gospel: Will you bow to David's Lord as Savior, or face Him as Judge?



Observation (What does the text say?)

1. Who begins this section with a question, and to whom is it directed?
2. What Old Testament passage does Jesus quote (vv. 42–43)?
3. What problem does Jesus raise about the Messiah's relationship to David?
4. How are the scribes described in verses 46–47?
5. What final judgment does Jesus pronounce on them?

Interpretation (What does the text mean?)

1. Why does it matter that David calls the Messiah "Lord" instead of just "son"?
2. What does this imply about the Messiah's identity beyond being a descendant of David?
3. Why would Jesus confront the scribes' hypocrisy immediately after teaching about the Messiah?
4. How does their exploitation of widows contrast with God's covenant concern for the vulnerable?
5. What does "greater condemnation" suggest about levels of accountability before God?

Correlation (How does this connect to the rest of Scripture?)

1. Where else in the New Testament is Psalm 110:1 quoted, and how is it used (e.g., Acts 2:34–36; Hebrews 1:13)?
2. Compare Jesus' warning here to His extended woes against the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23. What themes overlap?
3. How does Luke's earlier description of Jesus as "Son of David" (Luke 1:32–33; 18:38) prepare the way for this deeper teaching?

4. What other passages reveal God's special care for widows and condemnation of those who oppress them (e.g., Deut. 10:17–18; James 1:27)?

Application (How should this shape our lives?)

1. How does this passage strengthen your understanding of Jesus as both fully human (David's son) and fully divine (David's Lord)?
2. In what ways are you tempted to seek recognition or status, like the scribes who loved honor?
3. How can we examine our religious practices to ensure they are sincere rather than showy?
4. What concrete steps can we take as a church or individuals to care for the marginalized?
5. How does Jesus' warning about "greater condemnation" stir you toward humility, integrity, and reverence in your walk with God?



Mon, Sept 8th, read Luke 20:41–44. Jesus asks, "If the Messiah is David's son, how can David call Him 'Lord'?" This shows that Jesus is both human and divine. He comes in David's line but rules as David's King. He is near us in his incarnation but above us in his deity. Such an awesome truth ought to lead us to stand in awe of Jesus and worship him as God. Are you reading about Jesus in Luke and watching him to learn how to live as a human? But are you also, at the same time, remembering that He is God, to be worshipped?

Tues, Sept 9th, read Luke 20:42–43; Psalm 110:1. According to the Psalmist, the Messiah is seated at God's right hand, the place of power and authority. This means Jesus isn't simply a good man or teacher. He reigns as King at the Father's side. We often try to excuse our sin saying, "God will understand." But after Jesus has died to free us from sin, will he? Is there any part of your life you still cling to and refuse to surrender to God? If

so, confess it now, repent of it today, and build hedges to keep it from re-entering your life.

Wed, Sept 10th, read Luke 20:45–46. The scribes loved honor, long robes, greetings, and special seats. Their religion was a performance. This is because our pride seeks recognition, but humility seeks God's glory. Did Jesus seek glory or practice humility? Where are you tempted to seek attention for your faith or service? In the light of what Jesus surrendered (Phil 2:5f), ask the Holy Spirit to give you a meek and humble spirit that needs only Jesus's "well done" to satisfy your soul.

Thur, Sept 11th, read Luke 20:47a. The scribes used their position to exploit anyone they could, even widows and the poor, the very people God promises to protect. True faith defends the vulnerable; false faith takes advantage of them. Are you taking advantage of anyone? Are you overlooking an overlooked person? Remedy that today. And "put on" the new person of Jesus, who pays attention to everyone and cares for the needy.

Fri, Sept 12th, read Luke 20:47b. There are rewards in Heaven and degrees of judgement in Hell. Here, Jesus tells us that judgment is proportional to responsibility and hypocrisy. God takes seriously the misuse of spiritual authority and false appearances of holiness. Are you.... abusing any authority God has granted you? Are you mimicking holiness while living hypocritically? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and create a whole heart, a servant's heart in you.

Note: Why isn't every name listed in the genealogies? Both Matthew and Luke's genealogies are selective — they do not list every ancestor of Jesus. Here's why.

Here's **one way** to look at it: The Gospel genealogies don't list every name because ancient Jewish genealogies were often selective, crafted for theological or literary purposes rather than exhaustive record-keeping. Matthew and Luke shaped their lists to highlight symbolic numbers, covenant milestones, and Christ's identity, not to provide a complete ancestry chart.

Matthew arranges Jesus' genealogy in three groups of fourteen to emphasize His covenant role as the promised Son of David and heir to Israel's throne. Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam to show Him as the true Son of Man and Savior for all humanity.

Both Matthew and Luke's genealogies are selective — they do not list every ancestor of Jesus. Here's why.

1. Jewish Genealogical Practice

- In the ancient Near East, genealogies often functioned theologically or legally rather than as exhaustive family trees.
- "Son of" (Greek *huios*) could mean descendant of, not necessarily immediate son.
- Thus, names could be skipped to highlight key figures or structure the list in a memorable way.

2. Matthew's Genealogy

- Matthew arranges his genealogy into three sets of 14 generations (Matt. 1:17).
- To achieve this symmetry, he omits certain kings (e.g., Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, between Joram and Uzziah in Matt. 1:8).
- Why 14? Possibly because the Hebrew letters for "David" (D-V-D = 4+6+4) equal 14, underscoring that Jesus is the "son of David."
- Matthew is less concerned with every name than with showing Jesus as the culmination of Israel's story.

3. Luke's Genealogy

- Luke traces a continuous line back to Adam, but he too may compress the list.
- For instance, Old Testament genealogies often skip names (compare Ezra 7:1–5 with 1 Chron. 6:3–15 — Ezra skips six generations).
- Luke's purpose is theological: Jesus is not only Israel's Messiah but the Son of Man, connected to all humanity.

4. Theological Function

- Genealogies in Scripture are selective and shaped to make theological points:
 - Matthew: Jesus is the promised King (son of David, son of Abraham).
 - Luke: Jesus is the universal Savior (son of Adam, Son of God).
- Both are true, even if not every single ancestor is listed.

5. Implications

- The omissions do not undermine accuracy; they reflect ancient literary practice.
- The lists are trustworthy but also purposeful — designed to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises, not to satisfy modern genealogical detail.

Summary: The genealogies of Jesus are not exhaustive because ancient Jewish genealogies were often selective, skipping generations for the sake of symmetry, theology, or memorability. Matthew shapes his list around David and covenant history,

while Luke traces Jesus' universal connection back to Adam. Both present Jesus as the rightful heir, even without naming every ancestor.

Another way to look at it is like this –

1. Matthew's Genealogy (Matt. 1:1–17)

- Runs forward: Abraham → David → Solomon → Joseph.
- Focus: Royal/legal line through Joseph, Jesus' legal (though not biological) father.
- Purpose: To show that Jesus has the legal right to David's throne.
- So: Matthew records Joseph's genealogy, emphasizing Jesus' *legal* status as heir.

2. Luke's Genealogy (Luke 3:23–38)

- Runs backward: Jesus → Joseph → Heli → Nathan (son of David) → Adam.
- Key difference: Instead of going through Solomon (like Matthew), it goes through Nathan, another son of David.
- Traditional view: Luke is giving Mary's genealogy, with Joseph listed as "son of Heli" by marriage (Heli would then be Mary's father).
- Purpose: To show that Jesus has a true biological descent from David — through Mary.

3. Harmonization

- Matthew = Joseph's line (legal/royal right).
- Luke = Mary's line (biological descent).
- Together, they demonstrate Jesus as both legal heir and natural descendant of David.

Here's a **third way** to say it/look at it –

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Summary: The genealogies of Jesus are illustrative, even poetic, and not exhaustive because ancient Jewish genealogies were often selective, skipping generations for the sake of symmetry, theology, or memorability.

Matthew shapes his list around David and covenant history, while Luke traces Jesus' universal connection back to Adam. Their purpose is theological storytelling to frame Jesus as the climax of God's covenant history (Matthew) and as the Redeemer of all humanity (Luke). Both present Jesus as the rightful heir, even without naming every ancestor.