

# Luke 20-21



A denarius; the actual diameter is about that of a quarter

## Easter Stories Week 2

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1. By what authority do You do these things?

Luke 20

1 And it came to pass on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and brought good tidings<sup>1</sup>, the chief priests and the scribes stood by with the elders,

2 and spoke to Him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest Thou these things, or who is he who gave Thee this authority?

3 And He answered and said to them, I will also ask you one word, and answer Me:

4 the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven, He will say, Why then did you not believe him?

6 But if we say, From men, all the people will stone us; for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered that they did not know not where *it was* from.

8 And Jesus told them, Neither do I say to you by what authority I do these things.

AE 293. “Power [or authority]” here signifies salvation, because all Divine power looks to salvation as the end. For by Divine power man is reformed, and afterwards introduced into heaven, and there he is withheld from evil and falsity and held in good and truth; and only the Lord can make this happen....

Moreover, the Lord has power over all things because He alone is God; but the salvation of the human race is the principal object of power, since for the sake of it, the heavens and the worlds were created; and salvation is the reception of the proceeding Divine.

AC 10795. Priests must not claim for themselves any power [or authority] over the souls of men, because they do not know in what state are a man’s interiors; and still less must they claim for themselves the power of opening and closing heaven, because this power belongs to the Lord alone.

AC 7456:2. As regards the signification of “stoning,” be it known that there were two death penalties among the Israelites and Jews, with whom the representative of a church had been instituted, of which the one was stoning, and the other was hanging upon wood. Stoning was for anyone who desired to destroy the truths of worship that had been commanded, and hanging was for anyone who desired to destroy the good of life. That those were stoned who desired to destroy the truths of worship, was because a “stone” signified truth, and in the opposite sense falsity... and that those were hanged upon wood who desired to destroy the good of life, was because “wood” signified good, and in the opposite sense the evil of cupidities....

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<sup>1</sup> Or “preached the gospel”

AC 7456:8. In Luke:

They concluded among themselves that if they were to say that the baptism of John was from heaven, He would say, Why did you not believe him? But if they said, From men, all the people would stone them (Luke 20:5-6);

where also “stoning” is predicated of what is contrary to truth. The Jews desired to stone Jesus because He said that before Abraham was, He was (John 8:58, 59); and this was because that nation believed it to be false. It was the same when they desired to stone Jesus because He said that He and His Father are one (John 10:30-33); for this they believed to be blasphemy, as is said there.

From all this it is now evident what “stoning” involves, and why it was commanded, and also that the penalty of stoning, being in Egypt from ancient times, had been derived from the representatives of the Ancient Church.

#### Questions and Comments

1. The Lord was exercising the authority to expel people from the temple who were selling and buying animals for sacrifices. He was showing that the time of worshiping by sacrificing animals was over—a huge change. No wonder the leaders wanted to know who gave Him authority to make such a change. (Besides, they may have profited from the sale of the sacrificial animals.)
2. We can ask ourselves which kind of authority or power means more to us, the authority of heaven or the authority of man. Does social pressure push us away from believing and following the Lord?
3. Why is it that if people do not acknowledge the authority of John’s baptism of repentance, neither will they acknowledge the authority of the Lord, who brings the promise of eternal life?

## 2. The parable of the workers in the vineyard

Luke 20

9 And He began to say to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it out to farmers, and went abroad for a considerable time.

10 And at the time, he sent a servant to the farmers, that they should give him some of the fruit of the vineyard; but the farmers beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

11 And again he sent<sup>2</sup> another servant; and they beat him also, and treating *him* shamefully, they sent *him* away empty.

12 And he added to send a third; and they also wounded him and cast *him* out.

13 And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; likely<sup>3</sup> when they see him, they will have respect for *him*.

14 But when the farmers saw him, they reasoned to themselves, saying, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may become ours.

15 And they cast him out of the vineyard and killed *him*. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do to them?

16 He shall come, and shall destroy these farmers, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard, they said, Let it not be so.

17 And He looked at them and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner?<sup>4</sup>

18 Everyone who falls upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 And the chief priests and scribes sought to put *their* hands on Him in that same hour; and they feared the people, for they knew that He had spoken this parable towards them.

HH 534. The way that leads to heaven and the way that leads to hell were once represented to me. There was a broad way tending towards the left or the north, and many spirits were seen going in it; but at a distance a large stone was seen where the broad way came to an end. From that stone two ways branched off, one to the left and one in the opposite direction to the right. The way that went to the left was narrow or confined, leading through the west to the south, and thus into the light of heaven; the way that went to the right was broad and spacious, leading obliquely downwards towards hell. All at first seemed to be going the same way until they came to the large stone at the head of the two ways. When they reached that point they divided. The good turned to the left and entered the confined way that led to heaven; while the evil, not seeing the stone at the fork of the ways, fell on it and were hurt; and when they rose up they ran on in the broad way to the right which went towards hell.

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<sup>2</sup> Literally, "added to send," which is like Hebrew; likewise in verse 12

<sup>3</sup> The Greek is ἴσως, meaning "equal" or "alike."

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 118:22

[2] What all this meant was afterwards explained to me. The first way that was broad, in which many, both good and evil, went together and talked with each other as friends, because there was no visible difference between them, represented those who externally live alike honestly and justly, and between whom seemingly there is no difference. The stone at the head of the two ways or at the corner, on which the evil fell and from which they ran into the way leading to hell, represented the Divine truth, which is rejected by those who look towards hell; and in the highest sense this stone signified the Lord's Divine Human. But those who acknowledged the Divine truth and also the Divine of the Lord went by the way that led to heaven.

By this again it was shown that in externals the evil lead the same kind of life as the good, or go the same way, that is, one as readily as the other. And yet those who from the heart acknowledge the Divine, especially those within the church who acknowledge the Divine of the Lord, are led to heaven; while those who do not are led to hell.

[3] ...The stone seen at the corner where the broad and common way ended, and from which two ways were seen to lead in opposite directions, illustrated what is signified by the words of the Lord... in Luke.... "Stone" signifies Divine truth, and "the stone of Israel" the Lord in respect to His Divine Human; the "builders" mean those who are of the church; "the head of the corner" is where the two ways are; "to fall" and "to be broken" is to deny and perish.

#### Questions and Comments

1. Can you fill in the blanks?
  - The vineyard signifies the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The farmers signify \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The fruits of the vineyard signify \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The servants who were sent to ask for the fruits, and who were abused by the farmers, signify \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The beloved son signifies \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In the parable, the first evil committed was refusal to give any of the fruits of the vineyard. The second was to abuse the servants sent by the lord of the vineyard. Finally they killed his son. What warnings can we draw from this downward track?
3. Is it hard to believe in the Lord and let Him be the cornerstone of the church? If not, why do churches always eventually follow the downward track? If so, why is it hard to believe in Him?

3. Render to God the things of God.

Luke 20

20 And watching *Him* closely, they sent out spies, feigning themselves to be just, that they might take hold of His word, to deliver Him up to the rule and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked Him, saying, Teacher, we know that Thou sayest and teachest rightly, and dost not receive the face, but teachest the way of God in truth.

22 Is it permitted for us to give levy to Caesar, or not?

23 But He, considering their craftiness, said to them, Why do you tempt Me?

24 Show Me a denarius<sup>5</sup>. Whose image and inscription does it have? And answering they said, Caesar's.

25 And He said to them, Render therefore the *things* of Caesar to Caesar, and the *things* of God to God.

26 And they were not able to take hold of His saying before the people, and marveling at His answer, they were silent.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL and CIVIL GOVERNMENT

NJHD 311. There are two things which ought to be in order with men, namely, the things which are of heaven, and the things which are of the world. The things which are of heaven are called ecclesiastical, and those which are of the world are called civil.

NJHD 312. Order cannot be maintained in the world without overseers, who are to observe all things which are done according to order, and which are done contrary to order; and who are to reward those who live according to order, and punish those who live contrary to order....

NJHD 314. Overseers over those things with men which relate to heaven, or over ecclesiastical affairs, are called priests, and their office is called the priesthood. But overseers over those things with men which relate to the world, or over civil affairs, are called magistrates, and their chief, where such a form of government prevails, is called a king.

NJHD 319. As priests are appointed to administer those things which relate to the Divine law and worship, so kings and magistrates are appointed to administer those things which relate to civil law and judgment.

DP 129. IT IS A LAW OF THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE THAT MAN SHOULD NOT BE COMPELLED BY EXTERNAL MEANS TO THINK AND WILL, AND THUS TO BELIEVE AND LOVE, THE THINGS OF RELIGION, BUT SHOULD PERSUADE AND AT TIMES COMPEL HIMSELF TO DO SO.

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<sup>5</sup> A Roman silver coin, typical wages for a day's labor, like a Greek drachma

[2] A man may also be compelled to speak in favor of religion and to act according to it; but he cannot be compelled to think in favor of it from any faith in it, or to will the things of religion from any love of it. Moreover, in kingdoms where justice and judgment are guarded, everyone is restrained from speaking and acting against religion; but still no one can be compelled to think and will in favor of it.

DP 136:2. ... Who can be compelled to believe and to love? One can no more be compelled to believe than to think that a thing is so when he thinks that it is not so; and one can no more be compelled to love than to will what he does not will, for belief belongs to the thought and love to the will. There is, however, an internal which may be restrained by the external from speaking evilly against the laws of the kingdom, the moralities of life and the sanctities of the Church. To this extent the internal may be compelled by threats and punishments; and moreover, it is compelled and ought to be.

TCR 430. The public duties of charity are especially the payment of tribute and taxes, which ought not to be confounded with official duties. Those who are spiritual pay these with one disposition of heart, and those who are merely natural with another. The spiritual pay them from good will, because they are collected for the preservation of their country, and for its protection and the protection of the church, also for the administration of government by officials and governors, to whom salaries and stipends must be paid from the public treasury. Those, therefore, to whom their country and also the church are the neighbor, pay their taxes willingly and cheerfully, and regard it as iniquitous to deceive or defraud. But those to whom their country and the church are not the neighbor pay them unwillingly and with resistance; and at every opportunity defraud and withhold; for to such their own household and their own flesh are the neighbor.

#### Questions and Comments

1. The Lord exercised authority to cast out the people buying and selling from the temple, but He did not claim authority over paying tribute or levy to Caesar. In the Doctrine He distinguishes the things of heaven from the things of the world. On what civil issues should priests take a stand, and on what issues should they not?
2. *Divine Providence* says that in a well-ordered kingdom, everyone is restrained from speaking and acting against religion, and from speaking evilly against the laws of the kingdom, the moralities of life and the holy things of the church. But the English are praised for their freedom of speech and of the press, allowing them to think more clearly than other nations (TCR 807). How do these ideas fit together?
3. To what extent do Americans regard deceiving or defrauding on their taxes as an honorable game; or on the other hand, to what extent do we pay our taxes from good will, regarding the country as our neighbor?

4. "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Luke 20

27 But certain of the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,

28 saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if someone's brother should die having a wife, and he die childless, his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brothers, and the first took a wife, and died childless.

30 And the second took the wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third took her, and likewise the seven also, and they left no children, and died.

32 And last of all the woman died also.

33 In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of them is she? for the seven had her to wife.

34 And Jesus answering said to them, The sons of this age wed and are given to be wed;

35 but they who shall be held worthy to attain to that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither wed nor are given to be wed.

36 For they cannot die anymore, for they are equal to the angels, and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

37 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bramble, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;<sup>6</sup>

38 and He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him.

39 And some of the scribes, answering, said, Teacher, Thou hast well said.

40 And after that they no longer dared to question Him *about* anything.

AC 1200. When a man is such that he does not believe that he will live after death, he also disbelieves that there is anything internal which is spiritual and celestial; and such are they who live in mere cupidities [or lusts], because they live a mere life of the body and of the world; especially those who are immersed in loathsome avarice.

HH 382 [b]. Marriages in heaven differ from marriages on the earth in that the procreation of offspring is another purpose of marriages on the earth, but not of marriages in heaven, since in heaven the procreation of good and truth takes the place of procreation of offspring.... Marriage in heaven is a marriage of good and truth...; and as in that marriage good and truth and their conjunction are loved above all things, so these are what are propagated by marriages in heaven. And because of this, in the Word... sons and daughters signify the truths and goods that are procreated.... All this makes clear that marriages in heaven are not like marriages on earth. In heaven marryings are spiritual, and cannot properly be called marryings, but conjunctions of minds from the conjunction of good and truth. But on earth there are marryings, because these are not of

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<sup>6</sup> Exodus 3:1-6, 15

the spirit alone but also of the flesh. And as there are no marryings in heaven, consorts there are not called husband and wife; but from the angelic idea of the joining of two minds into one, each consort designates the other by a name signifying one's own, mutually and reciprocally. This shows how the Lord's words in regard to marrying and giving in marriage (Luke 20:35, 36), are to be understood.

CL 41. THAT SPIRITUAL NUPTIALS ARE MEANT BY THE LORD'S WORDS, THAT AFTER THE RESURRECTION THEY ARE NOT GIVEN IN MARRIAGE.

There are two things which the Lord taught by these words: First, that man rises again after death; and second, that in heaven they are not given in marriage. That man rises again after death, He taught by saying, that God is not the God of the dead but of the living, and that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are living....

[2] The second point, that in heaven they are not given in marriage, He taught by the statement that those who are accounted worthy to attain to another age neither marry nor are given in marriage. That here no other nuptials are meant than spiritual nuptials is very evident from the words which immediately follow: that they cannot die anymore because they are like angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. By spiritual nuptials is meant conjunction with the Lord. Conjunction with the Lord is effected [or takes place] on earth, and when effected on earth, it is effected in heaven also. Therefore, in the heavens they are not again married and given in marriage. This is also meant by the words, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but they who are accounted worthy to attain to another age, neither marry nor are given in marriage." They are also called by the Lord... angels, sons of God, and sons of the resurrection....

#### Questions and Comments

1. Why do some people deny the resurrection? How might we help someone who is in doubt about it?
2. There certainly is no marriage in heaven as the Jews understood it, with polygamy, divorce for any cause, and the responsibility to take a dead brother's wife! What are the other two reasons for the Lord's saying there are no weddings after death, given in HH 382 and CL 41:2?
3. What is one way that a marriage is better, knowing that there is a life after death, and that a marriage can continue to eternity?

5. The Christ is not merely the son of David.

Luke 20

41 And He said to them, How do they say that the Christ is *the* son of David?

42 And David himself says in the Book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord<sup>7</sup>, Sit Thou on My right hand,

43 until I put Thine enemies *as* a footstool of Thy feet.<sup>8</sup>

44 David therefore calls Him Lord, and how is He his Son?

45 And in the hearing of all the people He said to His disciples,

46 Beware of the scribes who desire to walk in robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the first seats in the synagogues, and the first places to recline at suppers,

47 who eat up widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; these shall receive all the more judgment.

TCR 102. It is believed that the Lord as to His Human not only was, but still is, the son of Mary; but in this the Christian world is under a delusion. It is true that He was the son of Mary, but not true that He still is; for by the acts of redemption He put off the human from the mother and put on a Human from the Father. And this is why the Human of the Lord is Divine, and in Him God is Man, and Man is God.

That He put off the human from the mother and put on a Human from the Father, which is the Divine Human, is shown by the fact that He Himself never called Mary His mother, as can be seen from the following passages:

The mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no wine. Jesus said to her, Woman, what [is it] to Me and to thee? My hour has not yet come (John 2:3, 4);

and again:

When Jesus saw [from the cross] His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He says to His mother, Woman, behold, thy son. Then says He to the disciple, Behold, thy mother (John 19:26, 27);

and on one occasion He did not acknowledge her:

It was told Jesus by some who said, Thy mother and Thy brothers are standing outside, desiring to see Thee. Jesus answering said, My mother and My brothers are these who hear the Word of God and do it (Luke 8:20, 21; Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35). Thus the Lord did not call her mother but "woman," and gave her to John as a mother. In other places she is called His mother, but not by His own lips.

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<sup>7</sup> In Psalm 110, "Jehovah said unto my Lord"

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 110:1

TCR 102:2. This is further confirmed by the fact that He did not acknowledge Himself to be the son of David, [as] we read in the Gospels....

[3] To the above I will add this, which is new: Once it was granted me to speak with Mary the mother. On a certain occasion she passed by and appeared in heaven above my head in white raiment like silk; and then pausing a little she said that she had been the mother of the Lord, who was born of her; but that He, having become God, had put off everything human that He had derived from her, and that she therefore worshiped Him as her God, and was unwilling that anyone should acknowledge Him as her son, because in Him all is Divine.

From all this there now shines forth this truth, that thus Jehovah is Man, as in first things so also in last things, according to these passages:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, He who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty (Rev. 1:8, 11)....

AC 2162:10. Here... a “footstool” signifies natural things, both those which are sensuous, and those of memory-knowledge, and the derivative rational things of man, which are called “enemies” when they pervert worship, and do this from the literal sense of the Word, so that there is worship solely in externals, and either no internal worship, or else that which is filthy.... When natural and rational things are thus perverted and defiled, they are called “enemies;” but because, regarded in themselves, they have reference to internal worship—when this is restored, they become a “footstool,” whether they are things of external worship, or of the literal sense of the Word.

#### Questions and Comments

1. David was the writer of many of the psalms, including Psalm 110. In it, David calls the Christ or Messiah “my Lord.” Fathers do not call their sons “my lord.” This shows that David did not consider the Christ his son.
2. In TCR 102, “the acts of redemption” by which the Lord put off the human nature from Mary and put on the Divine Human, were the subjugation of the hells, the ordering of the heavens, and the establishment of a new church, the Christian Church. In the process of doing this work, He glorified His Human, that is, made it Divine. What is the parallel process with us, by which our human nature is regenerated?
3. Why was it not rude of Jesus not to call Mary His mother? Would it be rude of our adult children to refer to us by our names instead of as mother & father?
4. What is a modern example of religious hypocrisy?

## 6. The widow's mites; the destruction of the temple

### Luke 21

1 And as He looked up, He saw the rich casting their gifts into the treasury.

2 And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in there two mites<sup>9</sup>.

3 And He said, Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than they all.

4 For all these from their excess have cast *offerings* into the gifts of God; but she from what she lacks has cast in all the living that she had.

5 And as some spoke of the temple, that it was adorned with goodly stones and consecrated gifts, He said,

6 *As for* these things which you behold, the days will come in which there shall not be left a stone upon a stone which shall not be undone.

TCR 459:9. [*An opinion expressed at a conference in the spiritual world on what charity is:*] “Let not the rich exalt the munificence and excellence of their charity over the pittance that one poor man gives to another; for we know that everyone in what he does acts according to what is suitable to his person, whether he is a king or a magistrate, a commander or an attendant. For charity, viewed in itself, is not estimated by the excellence of the person, and consequently of the gift, but by the amplitude of the affection that prompts it; so that a menial giving one penny may do so from a larger charity than the great man who gives or bequeaths an immense sum. This is in accordance with these words.... (Luke 21:1-3).

TCR 459:13. [*Swedenborg said:*] “It is my opinion that charity is to act with judgment from a love of justice in every employment and office, but from a love derived from no other source than the Lord God the Savior. All that I have heard from those sitting upon the benches, both on the right and on the left, are eminent examples of charity; but, as the president of this assembly stated at first, charity in its origin is spiritual, but in its flowing forth is natural; and natural charity, if it is inwardly spiritual, appears to the angels transparent like a diamond; but if not inwardly spiritual, and therefore purely natural, it appears to the angels like a pearl that resembles the eye of a cooked fish.

TCR 459:14. “It is not for me to say, whether the eminent examples of charity which you have presented in order, are inspired by spiritual charity or not; but I can say what the spiritual must be that ought to be in them, so that they may be natural forms of spiritual charity. The spiritual itself of these is this, that they be done with judgment from a love of justice; that is, that in the exercise of charity man should see clearly whether he is acting from justice, and he sees this from judgment. For a man may do evil by deeds of beneficence; and by what appear to be evil deeds he may do good....”

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<sup>9</sup> Greek *lepta*, small copper coins

AR 191:3. ...By “the temple” here is signified the church at this day; and by its dissolution so that “there is not one stone upon another,” is signified the end of this church, in that no truth whatever would then be left. For when the disciples spoke to the Lord concerning the temple, the Lord foretold the successive states of this church even to its end, or “the consummation of the age,” and by “the consummation of the age” is meant its last time, which is at this day. This was represented by that temple being destroyed to its foundation.

#### Questions and Comments

1. Does the story of the widow casting her two mites into the treasury give you encouragement in making your modest contributions to the church, even though evil spirits may tell you they are too small to make a real difference? What are the most important values of our contributions of money, time and talent?
2. In what sense should each of us contribute “all the living we have”?
3. What might be an example of acting with judgment from a love of justice, in a marriage of truth and good that produces a spiritual diamond? What might be an example of acting without judgment or without the love of justice, that is like the eye of a cooked fish?
4. What are some of the implications of the teaching that the church at this day is consummated? How should this teaching affect how we think of the church with ourselves, as people living in the post-Christian world and sharing its heredity? In what ways should we take care not to be a part of the consummation of the age, but instead be part of the New Church?