

*Nuggets and Gems from the Bible*

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OF THE  
LAMB OF GOD

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***Living Stream Ministry***  
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# THE EXAMINATION OF THE LAMB OF GOD

Luke 20:1—21:4 is a record of the examination of the Man-Savior as the Lamb of God. The Man-Savior had been ministering for over three years in the despised region of Galilee, far from the holy temple and the holy city, the place where it was necessary for Him to die for the accomplishment of God's eternal plan. As the Lamb of God (John 1:29), He had to be offered to God at Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered Isaac and enjoyed God's provision of a ram as a substitute for his son (Gen. 22:2, 9-14) and where the temple was built in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1). It had to be there that He would be delivered, according to the counsel determined by the Trinity of the Godhead (Acts 2:23), to the Jewish leaders and there be rejected by them as the builders of God's building (Acts 4:11). It was also there that He had to be crucified according to the Roman style of punishment (John 18:31-32; 19:6, 14-15) to fulfill the type concerning the kind of death He would die (Num. 21:8-9; John 3:14). Moreover, that was the very year that Messiah

(Christ) was to be cut off (killed) according to Daniel's prophecy ([Dan. 9:24-26](#)). Furthermore, as the Passover Lamb ([1 Cor. 5:7](#)) He had to be killed in the month of the Passover ([Exo. 12:1-11](#)). Hence, He had to go to Jerusalem before the Passover ([John 12:1](#); [Mark 14:1](#)) so that He might die there on the day of the Passover ([John 18:28](#)) at both the place and the time foreordained by God.

According to the prophecy in the Old Testament, both the place and the time of the Lord's death were definite. [Daniel 9:25](#) and [26a](#) say, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." Here we see that the Messiah, the Christ, would be killed at the end of the sixty-ninth week. The year in which the Man-Savior went up to Jerusalem to die was the very year prophesied in the ninth chapter of Daniel. Even more specifically, the Lord was to be put to death on the Passover, that is, on the fourteenth day of the month. The Lord knew that it was

necessary for Him to be in Jerusalem in time to die on the Passover. Furthermore, according to the prophecy concerning the Passover lamb, He needed to be examined for four days. Therefore, it was necessary for Him to be in Jerusalem at least four days before His crucifixion.

In the Gospels we see that the Lord Jesus was very careful not to be killed either before or after the appointed time. If He had been killed before the Passover, there would have been no way for the prophecy to be fulfilled. In such a case, He would not have been the real Lamb of the Passover. But since He was the real Passover Lamb, He preserved Himself until the time had come for Him to be offered on the cross.

Just as the Lord was to be put to death at a definite time, so He was to die at a specific place. This place was Mount Zion, which previously was called Mount Moriah.

If we have the proper understanding of the time and the place of the Lord's crucifixion, we shall know why the Lord was careful in His actions during those crucial days in Jerusalem. He knew that if He had been put to death even one day earlier, He would have missed the mark concerning the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. Therefore, the Lord was very careful in

returning to the temple each day. His purpose in going back to the temple was to present Himself to the Jewish people for them to thoroughly examine Him. We have the record of this examination in [Luke 20:1—21:4](#).

## EXAMINED BY THE CHIEF PRIESTS, SCRIBES, AND ELDERS

In [Luke 20:1](#) we see that as the Lord was teaching in the temple and preaching the good news, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. The priests were the serving ones in the temple, the scribes were those with a thorough knowledge in the Mosaic law, and the elders were administrators among the Jewish people. These three categories of people were the outstanding leaders in the Jewish community. They came prepared to carry out a thorough examination of the Lord as the Passover Lamb.

Luke presents the examination of the Lord Jesus from a different angle from that found in Matthew and Mark. Luke's presentation is from the angle of the highest standard of morality. In [chapter twenty](#) of the Gospel of Luke we have a picture of the Man-Savior behaving Himself in the highest standard of morality. Of course, in all

the foregoing chapters we can see the Lord's high standard of morality produced by His divine essence with the divine attributes and His human essence with the human virtues. Now in [chapter twenty](#) we have a more detailed portrait of the Man-Savior's highest standard of morality.

The chief priests, scribes, and elders said to the Lord, “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things, or who is the one who gave you this authority?” ([20:2](#)). They thought that they could catch the Lord by asking Him about the source of His authority. As the One who was being examined, the God-man was frank, genuine, wise, and dignified. But those who were questioning Him were base, subtle, insidious, and dishonest. They did not come either with a proper attitude or in a proper spirit.

In answering the question raised by the chief priests, scribes, and elders, the Man-Savior was wise. When asked who gave Him authority, He did not say, “My Father gave Me this authority.” To answer the question in such a way would not be wrong, but it would be lacking in wisdom. In His wisdom the Lord said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, and you tell Me: the baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?” ([vv. 3-4](#)). This question put them into a dilemma,

and they debated among themselves about it, saying, “If we say, From heaven, he will say, Why did you not believe him? But if we say, From men, all the people will stone us to death, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet” (vv. 5-6). Eventually, not having the wisdom to handle the situation, they could do nothing except lie by answering, “We do not know where it was from” (v. 7). Knowing that they were lying, the Lord said to them, “Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things” (v. 8). This indicates that the Lord knew the Jewish leaders would not tell Him what they knew. Hence, neither would He tell them what they asked. They lied in saying, “We do not know.” But the Lord spoke the truth wisely to them, exposing their lie and avoiding their question.

In this incident we can see how base and insidious were the chief priests, scribes, and elders. At the same time we see how pure, wise, and dignified the Man-Savior is. What a sharp contrast!

## **EXAMINED BY THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS**

After the chief priests, scribes, and elders

were defeated by the Man-Savior, the Pharisees and the Herodians tested Him (20:20-26). The Pharisees, a religious party, were patriotic and faithful to the Jewish community. The Herodians took sides with King Herod's regime and took part with him in infiltrating the Jews with Grecian and Roman manners of life. They sided with the Sadducees, but were opposed to the Pharisees. But here they joined with the Pharisees to ensnare the Lord Jesus. They worked together in the attempt to carry out a plot to trap the Man-Savior.

According to [verses 21 and 22](#), the Herodians and the Pharisees questioned the Lord, saying, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly, and do not accept man's person, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" This was truly an ensnaring question. Paying taxes to Caesar was opposed by the Jews. If the Lord Jesus said that it was lawful to do this, He would offend the Pharisees. But if He said that it was not lawful, He would give the Herodians, who stood with the Roman government, ground to accuse Him. By asking the Lord such a question, they exposed themselves as being base, dishonest, and insidious.

In handling this dilemma the Lord was again honest, pure, and wise. Considering their craftiness, He said to them, “Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have? And they said, Caesar’s. And He said to them, Therefore pay the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God” ([vv. 24-25](#)). To pay the things of Caesar to Caesar is to pay tribute to Caesar according to his governmental regulation. To pay the things of God to God is to pay the half shekel to God according to [Exodus 30:11-16](#) and to offer all the tithes to God according to the law of God.

In [Luke 20:20-26](#) we see two completely different standards of morality. The Pharisees and Herodians were base, dishonest, and insidious. But the Man-Savior was genuine, frank, honest, and wise.

## EXAMINED BY THE SADDUCEES

In [Luke 20:27-38](#) the Man-Savior was examined by the Sadducees. [Verse 27](#) says, “And some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and questioned Him.” They went on to present to the Lord a case of a man who died, leaving his wife childless: “Teacher, Moses

wrote to us, If anyone's brother dies having a wife, and this one is childless, that his brother should take the wife and raise up seed to his brother. There were then seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless; and the second; and the third took her; and similarly the seven also did not leave children and died. Afterward the woman also died. In the resurrection therefore which one's wife shall the woman become, for the seven had her as wife?" (vv. 28-33). The Sadducees thought that they were wise in presenting this matter to the Lord. To be sure, they were very subtle.

In [verses 34 through 36](#) the Lord replied, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are counted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die anymore, for they are equal to angels, and they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." Here the Lord indicates that marriage is something of this age. But those who are worthy of the coming age and of the resurrection of the dead will be equal to angels, and there will be no marriage among them. No doubt, the Sadducees never imagined that there would be such an age, an age of resurrection.

In Luke 20:35 the Lord speaks of those who are counted worthy to obtain the coming age and the resurrection from the dead. The coming age of the kingdom (13:28-29; 22:18) and the resurrection of life (John 5:29; Luke 14:14; Rev. 20:4, 6) are both eternal blessings and enjoyments in the eternal life for the believers who are counted worthy (Luke 18:29-30; Matt. 19:28-29).

In Luke 20:37 and 38 the Lord went on to say, “But that the dead are raised, even Moses disclosed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for to Him all are living.” Since God is the God of the living and is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this indicates that the dead Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be resurrected. Otherwise, God would be the God of the dead. But the fact that He is the God of the living implies that one day Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be resurrected. From this we see that the divine title—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—implies the truth of resurrection.

In the Lord’s answer to the Sadducees, we see His wisdom not only in answering their subtle

question but also in understanding the depths of God's Word. It takes wisdom to understand the depths of the divine title. The Man-Savior certainly knew the Word of God. Unlike the Sadducees, who were very superficial, the Lord had the wisdom to penetrate into the depths of the holy Word.

According to the record in Matthew and Mark, the question asked by the Sadducees is followed by a fourth question, the question raised by a lawyer concerning the great commandment in the law. The fact that Luke does not record this fourth question is further evidence that his concern is with the Man-Savior's highest standard of morality. The question about which commandment is the greatest does not involve morality. This, I believe, is the reason Luke does not include this question.

Luke 20:39 and 40 simply say, "And some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, you have spoken well. For they no longer dared to question Him about anything." The fault-finding opposers' insidious questions exposed their evil, subtlety, and meanness, which were countered by the Man-Savior's perfection, wisdom, and dignity. This vindicated Him in His human perfection with His divine splendor and muzzled

them in their hateful plot and the Satan-instigated conspiracy.

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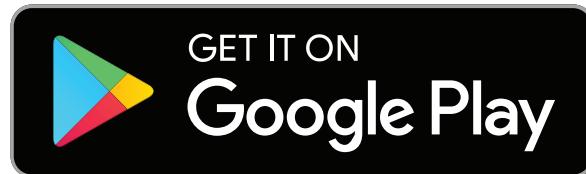
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