

The Chief Cornerstone

Luke 19:47 – 20:19

by Don Falkos

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Every day Jesus taught in the Temple. One day as he was proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, the chief priests, the experts in the Law, and the religious leaders – who really wanted to get rid of Jesus but hadn't been able to because the people were so taken with him – came to Jesus with a question. "Who gave you the authority to do what you're doing?"

Jesus said, "I have a question for you. John's baptism – did it come from heaven or was it purely human?"

They talked it over. "If we say it was from heaven, he'll ask, 'Then why didn't you believe in him?' But if we say it was purely human, the people will tear us limb from limb. They're convinced John was a prophet." So they said, "We don't know where it came from."

And Jesus replied, "If you won't answer my question, I won't answer yours."

Jesus told the people this story:

A man planted a vineyard, leased it, and then went off on a long trip. At harvest time, the tenants refused to give him his share of the crop and beat or killed the servants he sent to collect it. Then the owner sent his son, thinking, "They'll have to respect him." But the tenants threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"What will the owner do? He'll come back, kill those men, and give the vineyard to other tenants."

The people cried out in anguish, "God forbid!"

Jesus asked, "Then what do the scriptures mean when they say, 'The stone rejected by the builder has become the chief cornerstone'?"

The experts in the Law and the chief priests wanted desperately to arrest Jesus right then and there, but they were afraid of the people. They knew Jesus' story was about them.