

**I. Read Luke 20:9-18**

- A. In verses 9-16, Jesus uses a parable to depict the response of the nation of Israel to the prophetic revelation pointing to the fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace. In particular, He points to their treatment of the prophets who preceded Him and the manner by which the leaders of Israel will soon seek to get rid of Jesus Himself. Read Hebrews 11:35-38 and describe how many of the prophets were treated.

**They were often rejected and treated badly, even to the extent of being tortured and martyred.**

How did John the Baptist die?

**He was beheaded.**

How did Jesus die?

**He was crucified.**

- B. What was it about each prophet's message that the people of Israel disliked? (See John 3:16-21.)  
**The *light* of the prophetic message showed the true condition of their hearts. They had adopted a *form of godliness* which was merely a façade, when in reality they hated God and His truth. When confronted by the prophets, the people were forced into a corner formed by their own sinful natures, and they didn't like it at all! They often reacted with hatred and violence, lashing out at the truth-teller.**
- C. Did everyone in Israel hate the message of the prophets? (Read Romans 9:27; 11:5.)  
**God always preserves a *remnant* of those who will love and trust Him. Israel of the Old Testament was the *Visible Church*. Within the *Visible Church* there was an *Invisible Church*. The *Invisible Church* is made up of the elect or the true *remnant* of God's people. Even during times of great apostasy in Israel, there was still a percentage of the people who believed God and was faithful. This is true today as well. There will always be a disparity between the *Visible Church* and the *Invisible Church*. In other words, in the *Visible Church* there will always be some folks who are actually unbelievers!**
- D. What does a person's response to the message of Christ's gospel reveal? (John 3:18)  
**If Christ is rejected, then God and His truth are rejected as well. Our response to Christ reveals the condition of our hearts, so those who appear to be religious yet reject Christ have embraced a false religion. They are idolaters.**
- E. In verses 15-18, Jesus is presented as *the chief cornerstone*. According to verse 18, what will happen to those who reject the *cornerstone*?  
**They will "fall" and be "broken to pieces." In other words, they will suffer eternal condemnation. Another way to look at it (in keeping with the metaphor of a building) is that all their efforts to build a life of substance and stability will ultimately fall apart. Their lives will end in destruction and despair — if not in this life, then certainly in the life to come (without Christ).**

Read John 10:7-10; John 14:6-7 and discuss the point Jesus was making.

**In describing Himself as the "door," He was saying clearly that He is the only *legitimate means* of gaining entry into the Church. Those who choose another route are "thieves and robbers." In describing Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life," Jesus was making it clear that He is the *exclusive and only way of salvation*. In 14:7, He reiterates the point made**

**in John 3:18 that those who embrace Him are embracing God the Father, and by inference, those who reject Him are rejecting God the Father.**

- F. How is the message of only *one way of salvation* or an *exclusive gospel* received by most folks in our day?

**It isn't well received. When absolutes are thrown out and you live in a relativistic culture, the notion of *one way to God* or an *exclusive gospel* is offensive. Some might even call it discrimination! People are taught to think in terms of compromise and synthesis in our culture. Anyone taking too firm a stand, especially on an issue that has not been sanctioned by the *politically correct* crowd, is seen as a narrow-minded bigot and perhaps stupid. Even folks in relatively conservative denominations are sometimes reluctant to take an unequivocal stand on Jesus and the cross being the only way of salvation!**

- G. Would it be correct to say that Christianity is *exclusive* in how it allows folks to enter in? (strictly from the human perspective)

**Yes. However it is also *inclusive* in that the criteria for admittance is not based on race, wealth, nationality, popularity, intelligence, or good looks. In other words, all who would become Christians must enter the *flock* the same way, through Jesus and His cross. There is no other way, and those who would claim otherwise are indeed excluded from the *Invisible Church* for all eternity. So you might say the Church of Jesus Christ is *inclusively exclusive*!**

- H. What are some of the more difficult (even alarming) conclusions one must draw from the fact that Jesus claimed to be *the way, the truth, and the life* and that no one could get to the Father except through Him?

- \* **That the majority of people in the world are practicing false religions.**
- \* **That many of the so-called gods being worshipped in these false religions are not really gods at all; some are even demonic.**
- \* **That most of the people living in our world today will die and enter an eternity apart from Christ.**
- \* **That people are capable of total delusion and of dedicating their lives to things and ideas that are false.**