

Mark Chapter 12

Verses 1-12: The wicked vinedressers are a parable of Israel. Jesus taught this parable to confront the chief priests and elders and reveal their hypocritical character.

Mark 12:1 "And he began to speak unto them by parables. A [certain] man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about [it], and digged [a place for] the winevat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country."

"Them": The chief priests, scribes and elders (11:27).

"Vineyard": A common sight in that region. The hillsides of Palestine were covered with grape vineyards, the backbone of the economy. Here it is a symbol for Israel (Psalm 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21). Jesus uses (Isa. 5:1-2), as the basis for this imagery (see note on Matt. 21:33).

"A hedge": Literally "a fence." It may have been a stone wall or a hedge of briars built for protection.

"Digged a place for": Located under the winepress. The grapes were squeezed in the press and the juice ran through a trough into this lower basin, where it could be collected into wineskins or jars.

"Tower": This structure had a 3-fold purpose:

- (1) it served as a lookout post;
- (2) it provided shelter for the workers; and
- (3) it was used for storage of seed and tools.

"Let it out to husbandmen": Jesus added to the picture from (Isaiah 5:1-2). The owner makes an agreement with men he believes are reliable caretakers, who are to pay a certain percentage of the proceeds to him as rent. The rest of the profit belonged to them for their work in cultivating the crop. The "vine-growers" represent the Jewish leaders.

"By parables" means "parabolically," denoting the manner in which Jesus spoke, for He uses only one parable. The vineyard stands for Israel, as the leaders recognize (verse 12).

This parable about the vineyard is really the history of the Church. Jesus spoke this in front of the so-called religious people of the day. It is important for us to see ourselves in this, as well. These scribes, Pharisees, and priests, probably, would not even understand that He was telling them of their failures, because their hearts were hardened. They could not receive the truth.

The man who planted the garden was God. Just as God put Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden to dress and keep it, God entrusted this symbolic vineyard here, to the physical house of Israel. God Himself, protected them from their enemies. God through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, left this group of Israel His law to go by.

He promised if they would keep His Commandments, He would bless them. God left it in the hands of His people and went to heaven (far country). These husbandmen were His people.

Verses 2-5: These "servants" would stand for the Old Testament prophets and John the Baptist.

Mark 12:2 "And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard."

"The season": This usually occurred for the first time in the fifth year after the initial planting (Lev. 19:23-25).

"Servant": All the servants or slaves in the parable, represent the Old Testament prophets.

God sent these prophets to warn His people of what would happen, if they did not keep His Commandments. The husbandmen were to produce fruit. Christians must produce other Christians. A person is judged by God by the fruit he produces.

Mark 12:3 "And they caught [him], and beat him, and sent [him] away empty."

The Jews would not accept these prophets, and they beat them and killed many of them. These prophets' messages were rejected. The Jews did not grow in the Lord from these prophets at all.

Mark 12:4 "And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded [him] in the head, and sent [him] away shamefully handled."

We know that was still continuous rejection of the judges and prophets that God sent to warn the Jews. With every blessing for obeying God's commands there was a curse, if they were not obeyed.

Mark 12:5 "And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some."

God's patience with His rebellious people was one of the great mysteries. God forgave them and started them out again, over and over; but they continued to go away from God instead of toward Him.

Verses 6-8: Jesus foresees the treatment He will receive. He will be cast out of the vineyard. Hebrews 13:12 speaks of Jesus suffering "without the gate."

Mark 12:6 "Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son."

"His well-beloved": The son represents Jesus Christ (see note on Matt. 21:37).

God's love was so great for a world caught up in sin that he sent His only begotten Son. He said to Himself, "They will not reject my Son". He had tried everything else He knew to do to save these ungrateful people. Now, He would send His Son.

This was the very God, God the Son, who took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us. Surely God's beloved chosen family would believe Him.

Mark 12:7 "But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours."

"The inheritance shall be ours": The vine-growers were greedy; because they wanted the entire harvest and the vineyard for themselves and would stop at nothing to achieve that end. They plotted to kill the owner's son. Because Jesus had achieved such a following, the Jewish leaders believed the only way to maintain their position and power over the people was to kill Him (John 11:48).

Instead of those chosen of God accepting the Son of God and reverencing Him, they rejected Him and plotted to kill Him. There was overwhelming evidence who He was, but they did not accept it. The voice from heaven calling Jesus God's Son should be enough.

The feeding of the 5000 should have told them who He was. The opening of blind eyes, the draught of fishes, any of these things should have told them who He was. There were thousands of miracles. Probably they knew who He was, and just did not want to turn over their power to Him.

Mark 12:8 "And they took him, and killed [him], and cast [him] out of the vineyard."

We see from this that God the Father had had enough at this point. He had done all He could to save His chosen people, but now they had killed His beloved Son. The fig tree had truly died. The Jews would be passed over now and the message would go to the Gentiles.

Mark 12:9 "What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others."

"Destroy the husbandmen": The owner of the vineyard will execute the vine-growers, thus serving as a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), and the nation of Israel. According to Matthew, this verdict was echoed by the chief priests, scribes and elders (see note on Matthew 21:41).

"Give the vineyard unto others": This was fulfilled in the establishment of Christ's church and its leaders, who were mostly Gentiles.

Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 may well be a partial fulfillment of this statement.

In Romans 11:25 we read, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

God had made a way for the Gentile believers to be saved. God took the vineyard from the Jew and turned it over to the Gentile believers who accepted His Son as Savior.

Verses 10-11: This messianic prophecy is a quotation of (Psalm 118:22-23), from the LXX. Jesus continued His teaching in the form of a parable, but here His kingdom is seen as a building instead of a vineyard. The point is that the rejected Son and the rejected stone represent Christ.

Mark 12:10 "And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:"

"The stone which the builders rejected": Builders typically rejected stones until they found one perfectly straight in lines that could serve as the cornerstone, which was critical to the symmetry and stability of the building.

In Jesus' metaphor, He Himself is the stone the builders (the Jewish religious leaders), rejected (crucified). But the resurrected Christ is the cornerstone (Acts 4:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:6-7; see note on Matt. 21:42; see Psalm 118:22-23).

The scribes, priests, and Pharisees had rejected Jesus, and God started a new Church with Jesus as the Cornerstone.

1 Peter 2:4, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious,"

This describes Jesus the choice Cornerstone on whom the church would be built upon.

1 Peter 2:5, tells about how we, Christians, fit into this building, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

We, Christians, are the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. We dwell in God, and He dwells in us.

Mark 12:11 "This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

"Marvelous" is used in the sense of "remarkable" or "striking."

The building of this house with Jesus as the Cornerstone was God's work. The ways of God are really so wonderful they are beyond our understanding.

Mark 12:12 "And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way."

"Against them": The chief priests, scribes and elders were completely aware that Christ was condemning their actions, but it only aroused their hatred, not their repentance.

This is so strange that they were more afraid of the people than they were of God. They even realized this parable was about them, and they did not repent. They went away waiting until they had a better chance to move against Him.

Verses 13-17: The second of a series of questions that the Jewish religious leaders hoped would trap Jesus into declaring Himself an insurrectionist (11:28). This one concerns the controversial issue of paying taxes to Rome.

Mark 12:13 "And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in [his] words."

"Pharisees ... Herodians": Matthew indicates that disciples of the Pharisees accompanied the Herodians. The Pharisees may have hoped that Jesus would not recognize them and be caught off-guard by their seemingly sincere question. The Herodians were a political party of Jews who backed Herod Antipas, who in turn was only a puppet of Rome (see note on Matt. 22:16).

Herodians were Jews who were loyal to Herod. We see here, that they were plotting together to see if they could trap Jesus. Jesus was too smart for them, and the tables had been turned on them every time they tried to trap Jesus by asking questions that were unanswerable.

Jesus always replied with questions they couldn't answer themselves. These Herodians loved causing others to pay Caesar taxes.

Mark 12:14 "And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"

"Carest for no man" This speaks of impartiality or showing no favoritism. While this was flattery on the part of the Pharisees and Herodians, it was nonetheless true that Jesus would not be swayed by a person's power, prestige, or position.

"Tribute to Caesar": The Greek word for "poll tax" was borrowed from the Latin word that gives us the English "census". The Romans counted all the citizens and made each one pay an annual poll tax of one denarius (see note on Matt. 22:17).

First of all, their calling Jesus Master was a lie, because they did not consider Jesus as their master at all. They were trying to defame Jesus, not to build Him up. They were trying to trap Jesus. If Jesus said to pay Caesar, the Jews would be offended; and if He said not to pay, then Caesar and these Herodians would be mad.

These Herodians and the Pharisees were on opposite sides, but they had joined together to do Jesus in. They were saying that Jesus was truth. If they really believed that, they would not be trying to trap Him. If they didn't believe it, they were lying. Jesus had taught to not be a respecter of persons.

Mark 12:15 "Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see [it]."

"Hypocrisy": The Pharisees and Herodians, using feigned interest in His teaching, attempted to hide their true intention to trap Jesus. But He perceived their true motives (John 2:25).

"Why tempt ye me?" Jesus' response exposed the true motive of the Pharisees and Herodians and revealed their hypocrisy.

"Penny": ("denarius"). This small silver coin, minted by the Roman emperor, was the equivalent of a day's wage for a common laborer or soldier (see note on Matt. 22:19).

Jesus had them completely figured out. He knew they were hypocrites, saying one thing and meaning something entirely different. He knew that all of this was a plot to get Him in trouble. His request for a penny was so that He could trap them.

Mark 12:16 "And they brought [it]. And he saith unto them, Whose [is] this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's."

"Image": On one side of the denarius was likely the image of the current emperor, Tiberius, though at that time it could have also been Augustus, since both coins were in circulation. Tiberius is most likely because the response was "Caesar's," indicating the current ruler rather than the past one.

"Superscription": If the coin was minted by Tiberius, it would have read, "Tiberius Caesar Augustus, the son of the Divine Augustus" on one side and "Chief Priest" on the other (see note on Matt. 22:19).

Many people believe that this says to pay taxes, but it really doesn't. What He really showed them was a penny. The penny had Caesar's picture on it, so give him his penny.

Mark 12:17 "And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marveled at him."

"Render to Caesar": The Greek word for "render" means, "to pay or give back," which implies a debt. All who lived within the realm of Caesar were obligated to return to him the tax that was owed him. It was not optional. Thus, Jesus declared that all citizens are under divine obligation to pay taxes to whatever government is over them (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; see note on Matt. 22:21).

"They marveled", perhaps at the ease with which He escaped their trap. The Christian citizen has obligations to government, but there are limits. Allegiance to God is primary. One ought to do both without neglecting either, where possible. Other related passages are (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

Jesus didn't answer this at all. His answer marveled them, because He didn't answer them. We know that everything belongs to God. There was a question of what belonged to Caesar.

Mark Chapter 12 Questions

1. In verse 1, Jesus began to speak to them by _____.
2. Who was the man who planted the vineyard symbolic of?
3. Who was the vineyard symbolic of?
4. What did he "built a hedge about it" mean?
5. This parable about the vineyard was what?
6. Who were the husbandmen?
7. This servant that God sent was symbolic of whom?
8. When God sent people to help His chosen people, what did they do to them?
9. Who was the last one God sent to them?

10. What did they do to Him?
11. Who did God send His beloved Son for?
12. What did the Lord of the vineyard do?
13. Who was the vineyard then turned over to?
14. What did the head of the corner represent?
15. Christians are the _____ of the _____ of God.
16. Who came to Jesus to catch Him in His words?
17. What did they ask Jesus?
18. What did they call Him that they didn't really mean?
19. What did Jesus ask for?
20. How did Jesus know they were Hypocrites?
21. Jesus said render unto _____ the things that are _____ and unto _____ the things that are _____.
22. And what did they do when He told them?
23. Who does everything belong to?

Mark Chapter 12 Continued

Mark 12:18 "Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,"

"Sadducees": The most wealthy, influential and aristocratic of all the Jewish sects.

All the High-Priests, chief priests, and most the Sanhedrin (see note on Matt. 26:59), were Sadducees. They ignored the oral law, traditions, and scribal laws of the Pharisees, viewing only the Pentateuch as authoritative (see note on Matt. 3:7).

"Which say there is no resurrection": The most distinctive aspect of the Sadducees' theology, which they adopted because of their belief that Moses did not teach a literal resurrection from the dead.

With such a disregard for the future, the Sadducees lived for the moment and whatever profit they could make. Since they controlled the temple businesses, they were extremely upset when Jesus cleansed the temple of the money changers because He cut into their profits (11:15-18), the reason they also wanted to discredit Jesus in front of the people.

The Sadducees were Jews who did not believe in the Spirit. They did not believe in life after death. They were strict Jews who believed in the Pentateuch (the first five books of Moses), and nothing else. They did not believe in angels or demons. They really had no future at all to look forward to. They had a sort of fleshly religion with no spirit at all connected to it.

Mark 12:19 "Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave [his] wife [behind him], and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother."

The Sadducees were summarizing (Deut. 25:5-6), which refers to the custom of a levirate marriage (marriage to a dead husband's brother). God placed it in the Law of Moses to preserve tribal names, families, and inheritances (see note on Matt. 22:24).

"Moses wrote": The Sadducees appealed to Moses because they were fully aware of Jesus' high regard for Scripture, and therefore believed He would not contest the validity of the levirate marriage.

This is called "levirate marriage" (levir being Latin for "husband's brother), and is instituted (in Deut. 25:5).

They thought they would give Jesus a problem that He would not be able to reconcile in these seven brothers who marry the same woman. Everything they believed was based on Moses' teachings. Here again, they called Him Master, but they did not accept Him as Master. They tried to use one little thing that Moses said to trap Jesus.

Mark 12:20-23 "Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed." "And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise." "And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also." "In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife."

They thought surely this would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt, that there was no resurrection. They never dreamed Jesus could get around this. How could she be married to all seven? Here again, Jesus showed them up to be very foolish, because they did not understand the Scriptures about heaven.

Mark 12:24 "And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?"

"Ye know not the scriptures:" They knew the words of the Old Testament, but they lacked insight into its spiritual implications.

"The power of God": "Their ignorance of the Scriptures extended to their lack of understanding regarding the miracles God performed throughout the Old Testament. Such knowledge would have enabled them to believe in God's power to raise the dead.

Their ignorance was twofold. They should have further studied the Scriptures, which plainly teach life after death. The power of God was evident in all of Moses' teachings, so they were without excuse for not knowing God's power.

Mark 12:25 "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

"Neither marry": Marriage was designed by God for companionship and the perpetuation of the human race on the earth. Jesus was emphasizing the fact that in heaven there will be no exclusive or sexual relationships. Believers will experience an entirely new existence in which they will have perfect spiritual relationships with everyone else.

"As the angels": Believers will be like angels in that they will be spiritual, eternal beings who will not die (1 Cor. 15:39-44, 48-49; see note on Matt. 22:30).

The resurrection state will bring with it a life different from what we know now.

"Angels" are ministering spirits.

Hebrews 1:13-14 "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

You see, the flesh will not be important in heaven. We will be changed into a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:44 "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

Mark 12:26 "And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I [am] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

"Book of Moses": The Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. Jesus appealed to the only Scriptures the Sadducees held as completely authoritative.

"In the bush": A reference to (Exodus 3:1 - 4:17), where God first appeared to Moses at the bush.

"God spake unto him, saying, I AM": By keying on the emphatic present tense of (Exodus 3:6), "I am ... the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," Jesus was underscoring the personal and perpetual covenantal relationship God established with the 3 patriarchs.

Even though all 3 were dead when God spoke to Moses, God was still their God just as much as when they were alive on earth, and more so in that they were experiencing eternal fellowship with Him in heaven (see note on Matt. 22:32).

Here Jesus places a great deal of weight on the grammar of (Exodus 3:6). God said "I am", despite the fact that the patriarchs had died long before. He spoke these words to Moses. Thus, the Old Testament itself points to the fact of life after death.

Mark 12:27 "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err."

"Ye therefore do greatly err": Jesus accused the Sadducees of making a complete error in teaching that there is no resurrection.

Jesus told them of a Scripture in Moses' writings; because that was the only part of the Bible they read. Jesus was telling them that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive and would join their bodies on resurrection day.

Mark 12:28 "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?"

"Scribes" (see note on 1:22).

"Which is the first commandment of all?" The rabbis had determined that there were 613 commandments contained in the Pentateuch, one for each letter of the Ten Commandments. Of the 613 commandments, 248 were seen as affirmative and 365 as negative.

Those laws were also divided into heavy and light categories, with the heavy laws being more binding than the light ones. The scribes and rabbis however, had been unable to agree on which were heavy and which were light. This orientation to the law led the Pharisees to think Jesus had devised His own theory.

So, the Pharisees asked this question to get Jesus to incriminate Himself by revealing His unorthodox and unilateral beliefs.

Salvation, it was taught, depended on the scrupulous observance of each rule.

We see this scribe (educated), came to see, since the Sadducees couldn't trip up Jesus, if he could. He knew God had given Ten Commandments, and he was seeing if he could get Jesus to say that they were unimportant. More than all of that, he wanted to understand the importance of the burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments [is], Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:"

"Hear, O Israel": By quoting the first part of the Shema (Deut. 6:4-9), which is Hebrew for "hear," Jesus confirmed the practice of every pious Jew who recited the entire Shema (Num. 15:37-41; Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21), every morning and evening.

See (Deuteronomy 6:4). These are the opening words of the Shema, the Jewish call to worship. They establish the basis of love for God in the fact of God's being the Lord our God, the God who has covenanted to redeem us to Himself.

Surrounded by Egypt and others countries that believed in many gods as well; the one thing that separated God's people was that they believed in one God.

Mark 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this [is] the first commandment."

"Love the Lord": Taken from (Deut. 10:12; 30:6), Jesus used God's own word from the Pentateuch to answer the question, indicating the orthodox nature of His theology (see note on Matt. 22:37).

You see, Jesus left no doubt at all about what position the Lord thy God must have in our lives. First of all, He must be Lord. He must be the most important thing in our lives. The heart is mentioned first, because it is the center of our being, and we are what our heart is. Our will is involved with the soul. The mind controls our thoughts. We must be stayed upon Him.

Mark 12:31 "And the second [is] like, [namely] this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

"The second": Jesus took the Pharisees' question one step further by identifying the second greatest commandment because it was critical to an understanding of the complete duty of love. This commandment, also from the books of Moses (Lev. 19:18), is of the same nature and character as the first. Genuine love for God is followed in importance by a genuine love for people (see note on Matt. 22:39).

"Neighbor" (Luke 10:29-37; see Leviticus 19:18).

All of the Ten Commandments are actually caught up in these two, because if you love your neighbor as yourself, you won't murder, or lie, or cheat, etc. You would not do those things to yourself, so you won't do them to him either, if you love him as yourself.

Verses 32-33: "The scribe said": The scribe's response reveals he understood Old Testament teaching that moral concerns took precedence over ceremonial practices (1 Sam. 15:22; Isa. 1:11-15; Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8).

Mark 12:32 "And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:"

This scribe had received the Lord's truth unto himself. He had understood the meaning of the law, and not just the ritual of the law. This scribe in truth called Jesus Master, because he understood. This scribe confessed with his mouth that this was truth. He recognized that Jesus was true.

Mark 12:33 "And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love [his] neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

"Burnt offerings": Sacrifices that were completely consumed on the altar (Lev. 1:1-17; 6:8-13).

This scribe, like some in the Old Testament (see 1 Sam. 15:22), realized that heart commitment and obedience out of gratitude to God were of utmost importance. God cannot be bribed into accepting us if we do not, from the heart devote ourselves to Him (see Psalm 40:6; Isa. 1:11-17).

Mark 12:34 "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him [any question]."

"Not far from the kingdom": Jesus both complimented and challenged the scribe. Jesus acknowledged the scribe's insight regarding the importance of love. Yet by stating that the scribe was "not far" from the kingdom He emphasized that he was not in the kingdom. He understood the requirements of love, he needed only to love and obey the One who alone could grant him entrance to the kingdom.

"Discreetly," meaning wisely, or sensibly, appears only here in the New Testament.

They saw how futile it was to try to trap Him. Jesus saw that this scribe truly was seeking truth and He encouraged him. This showed that people from all walks of life can receive God's truth, because this was a man of the law and he understood.

Mark 12:35 "And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?"

Jesus' question exposed the Jewish religious leaders' ineptness as teachers and their ignorance of what the Old Testament taught regarding the true nature of the Messiah.

"Temple" (see note on 11:11).

"Christ": This is a translation of the Old Testament Hebrew word "Messiah," which means "anointed one" and refers to the King whom God had promised.

"Son of David": The common messianic title that was standard scribal teaching. The religious leaders were convinced that the Messiah would be no more than a man, thus they deemed such a title appropriate (see notes on 10:47; Matt. 22:42).

David, if David called Him Lord?" It is not an easy question to answer, if you think of everything from the physical standpoint. We do know that, in the flesh, Jesus was descended from David.

Mark 12:36 "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

"David himself said by the Holy Ghost": David used his own words, yet he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Sam. 23:2).

"The Lord said to my Lord": In this quote from the Hebrew text (Psalm 110:1), the first word for "Lord" is Yahweh, which is God's covenant name. The second word for "Lord" is a different word that the Jews used as a title for God. Here David pictures God speaking to the Messiah, whom David calls his Lord. The religious leaders of Jesus' day recognized this psalm as messianic.

Jesus grounds the authority of this Old Testament passage (Psalm 110:1) in its divine inspiration. David recognized the Messiah, who would be his descendant, as being also his Lord.

We see here, that Jesus took this opportunity of being in the temple to further instruct these scribes and Pharisees on who He truly is. He just said, "How can Christ be a descendent of Jesus Christ (the Spirit of God), is eternal. The Spirit of Jesus, which is eternal, was David's God. God is a Spirit.

Jesus is God the Son who was housed in a body for His stay on this earth. Jesus, even now, is seated victorious at God's right hand. You see, Jesus (the Word), took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus was saying to these people here, you are looking at the flesh, you are not understanding the Spirit.

They could not understand why God would take on the form of flesh and dwell among them. They were like many people in our day. They wanted to think of Jesus as a man and not God. All they could see was His flesh.

Mark 12:37 "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he [then] his son? And the common people heard him gladly."

"David therefore himself calleth him Lord": Jesus interpreted (Psalm 110:1), for the Pharisees. David would not have called one of his descendants "Lord." Thus, the Messiah is more than the "Son of David", He is also the "Son of God." Jesus was proclaiming the Messiah's deity, and thus His own (Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8; see note on Matt. 22:45).

"Common people": The multitude of people who observed this confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders.

Mark 12:38 "And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and [love] salutations in the marketplaces,"

"Beware": This means "to see" or "to watch." It carries the idea of guarding against the evil influence of the scribes.

"Long clothing": A long, flowing cloak that essentially trumpeted the wearer as a devout and noted scholar.

"Salutations": Accolades for those holding titles of honor.

These scribes, above, were not servants of their fellow men. They wanted to be looked up to as being special. Their prayers were not sincere, they were only for those around them to hear and brag about how great they were. God does not care about fancy big worded prayers. He just wants us to pray from our hearts.

Mark 12:39 "And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:"

"Chief seats in the synagogues": The bench in the synagogue nearest the chest where the sacred scrolls were housed, an area reserved for leaders and people of renown (see note on James 2:3).

Mark 12:40 "Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

"Devour widow's houses": Jesus exposed the greedy, unscrupulous practice of the scribes. Scribes often served as estate planners for widows, which gave them the opportunity to convince distraught widows that they would be serving God by supporting the temple or the scribes own holy work. In either case, the scribe benefited monetarily and effectively robbed the widow of her husband's legacy to her.

"Long prayers": The Pharisees attempted to flaunt their piety by praying for long periods. Their motive was not devotion to God, but a desire to be revered by the people.

Many scribes of that day were dependent on generous individuals for their livelihood. Some abused the hospitality they were shown and brought their hopeless donors to the brink of financial ruin. Others flaunted their religion for the sale of impressing others with their spirituality, perhaps thereby obtaining more support.

Mark 12:41 "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much."

"Treasury": This refers to the 13 trumpet-shaped receptacles on the walls in the court of the women where offering and donations to the temple were placed.

These scribes, or in fact our modern preachers today, who are more interested in the money and prestige associated with the ministry than they are in ministering to the needs of their sheep are in a whole lot of trouble. You may read more about this in the 34th chapter of Ezekiel.

Mark 12:42 "And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing."

"Two mites": A small copper coin was the smallest denomination in use.

"Farthing": For the benefit of his Roman audience, Mark related the "small copper coin" to this smallest denomination of Roman coinage. A "cent" or a farthing was equal to 1/64 of a denarius, and a denarius was the equivalent of a day's wage.

The mite (Hebrew lepton), was worth something like one-eighth of a cent. It was so small that its stamp was barely legible.

Jesus was explaining, here, that sacrificial giving is truly a gift to God. If you give of your abundance and have plenty left after you give, that is no sacrifice. When you give in your need, not knowing where your next meal is coming from, then that is truly sacrificial giving regardless how small the offering.

Verses 43-44: God does not measure giving by conventional human standards.

Mark 12:43 "And he called [unto him] his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:"

"Verily I say unto you" (see note on 3:28).

Mark 12:44 "For all [they] did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, [even] all her living."

"All her living": This meant she would not be able to eat until she earned more. The widow exemplified true sacrificial giving.

The amount of the offering you give is not as important to God as your attitude about the gift. Give from a free heart, because you love God, and not to be seen of man and God will greatly love your offering.

Mark Chapter 12 Continued Questions

1. What did the Sadducees believe about life after death?
2. What were the Sadducees trying to prove with the story about the seven brothers who had one wife?
3. Who were the Sadducees?
4. What part of the Bible did they accept as truth?
5. What could you call their religion?
6. How many brethren was this story about?
7. In the resurrection, whose _____ shall she be, was the question they asked Jesus.
8. What two things did Jesus tell them they did not know?
9. What are the resurrected dead as in heaven?
10. What are angels?
11. In 1 Corinthians, what do we learn about the body?
12. What did Jesus mean by God of the living?
13. What had the scribe perceived about Jesus' answer?
14. What did the scribe ask Jesus?
15. What was Jesus' reply to him?
16. What one thing that separated God's people from the Egyptians and such around them?
17. What two things cover all Ten of God's Commandments?
18. What remark did this scribe say about Jesus' answer?
19. When Jesus saw the scribe answered discreetly, what did He say to him?
20. David, speaking by the Holy Ghost, had called Jesus what?
21. Why was it so hard for them to believe that Jesus was God?
22. Name three things these scribes liked that caused Jesus to say beware of them?
23. Why did these scribes pray long prayers? What kind of prayer pleases God?
24. What did Jesus notice while He was sitting over by the treasury?
25. Describe a sacrificial gift.