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Mark 12

Debating in the Temple Courts

Debates that began in the temple in Jerusalem (Mark 11:27-33) continue through this chapter. The religious leaders place ideological land mines for Jesus at every turn, but he walks right through their traps. Observe how he challenges them with his own questions, with parables, and with quotations from Old Testament Scripture.

Read Mark 12:1-12

1. In this parable, how do the tenants treat the servants and the son?

How is the owner's son described?

2. What prophecy does Jesus make in the parable?

Note: In this parable the owner of the vineyard is God, the vineyard is Israel, and the tenants are the rulers of Israel. The servants are the prophets and the son is Jesus himself.

3. To repeat the point of the parable, Jesus quotes from the Old Testament using a different word picture. Who are the builders and who is the rejected stone (verses 10-11)?

4. Why do the chief priests, scribes, and elders react as they do to this parable?

How has Jesus answered their original question (11:28)?

Read Mark 12:13-17

5. With what motive and in what manner do the Pharisees and the Herodians come to Jesus?

Why would they believe that their question is a perfect trap?

6. What does Jesus recognize about his questioners?

7. How does Jesus answer their question?

What things are Caesar's? What things are God's?

To what situations can you apply this principle today?

Read Mark 12:18-27

8. What does the Sadducees' disbelief in the resurrection reveal about their question?
9. On what two subjects does Jesus say the Sadducees are wrong (verses 24-27)? Why?
10. What Scripture and what reasoning does Jesus use to prove that there is a resurrection?

Read Mark 12:28-34

11. What stimulates the next question?

Why would a teacher of the law ask this question?

12. Jesus' answer is a quotation from two portions of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18). In what way is Jesus' answer a summation of the Ten Commandments given in Exodus 20:3-17?
13. What, do you think, does it mean to ***love the Lord your God*** in the way Jesus describes?

What does it mean to ***love your neighbor as yourself***?

14. What does this teacher of the law reveal about himself in his response to Jesus (verses 32-33)?
15. Why does the questioning stop here?

Read Mark 12:35-37

16. Jesus now questions the current teaching about David's relationship to the Messiah (Christ). What wrong emphasis have the scribes apparently been giving in their teaching?

17. What relationship between David and the Messiah does Jesus want to make clear?

*Note: The people of Israel in Jesus' time held David in high esteem because during his reign they had been free and victorious. They expected that the Messiah as Son of David would be a great political conqueror. Jesus shows that the concept of the Messiah that the scribes taught was much too low. The Messiah is not only David's descendant, but also David's **Lord**. (See Psalm 110:1.)*

Read Mark 12:38-44

18. What six things characterize the religious leaders against whom Jesus gives a warning?

Which of these things must Christians be alert to avoid today?

19. Why is the leaders' condemnation greater?

20. How does the poor widow compare with the scribes and the many rich people?

How is the widow obeying the commandment in verse 30?

SUMMARY

1. What do you learn about Jesus' view of the Old Testament from his repeated use of it in this chapter?
2. If you had been one of the twelve disciples, what especially would you remember from this day in the temple?

CONCLUSION

Jesus uses the temple—headquarters of his enemies—for his classroom. They exchange challenges, questions, and accusations. But even in this atmosphere one individual responds to Jesus with spiritual insight.