

Lesson 19: The Gospel of Mark, Chapter 12

In our last lesson, Jesus made his entrance into the city of Jerusalem. The streets were lined with people welcoming pilgrims to the city for Passover. Jesus rode a young colt/ donkey, symbolic of a king arriving in peace and with humility. His entrance reminds the people of both Messianic prophecies of Zechariah and of Solomon's entrance into Jerusalem for his coronation as king. Also in chapter 11, Jesus used a fig tree that had many leaves but no fruit as a metaphor for the spiritual deficiencies of Israel and her religious leaders. Next, Jesus entered the Temple, and cast out the money-changers and those who sold sacrificial animals to the poor pilgrims for an unjust price. Chapter 11 closes with the chief priests, scribes and elders of Jerusalem questioning the authority of Jesus to do these things. As you begin reading this chapter, recall the story of the fig tree that had no spiritual fruits and withered. In our lesson today as well as in many places in the Old Testament, Israel is referred to as the LORD's vineyard.

1. **Read Mark 12:1-12 and footnotes. The parable is filled with symbolism and metaphors. Check your footnotes to help you determine the intended meaning of the following symbols. The answer for the first one is already provided.**

The Vinyard = _____ Israel _____

The planter of the Vinyard = _____

The tower in the vineyard = _____

The servants (12:2-5) = _____

The Son (12:6-8) = _____

The new tenant farmers (12:9) = _____

2. **Review Mark 11:27-28, 12:1 and 12:12.**

a. **For whom was Jesus *really* addressing this parable?**

b. **How did they react to hearing the parable?**

3. **Read Mark 12:10-12 and 1 Peter 2:3-5 below.**

1 Peter 2:3-5 for you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

a. **Who is the cornerstone?**

b. **Who had rejected this precious stone?**

4. **Read Mark 12:13-17 and footnotes.**

a. **So, who was sent to try to trap Jesus in this episode?**

b. **Reflection: What do you think they *expected* Jesus to say?**

5. **Read Mark 12:18-27 and footnotes. Read also Deuteronomy 25:5-6 below.**

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 When brothers live together and one of them dies without a son, the widow of the deceased shall not marry anyone outside the family; but her husband's brother shall come to her,

marrying her and performing the duty of a brother-in-law. ⁶The firstborn son she bears shall continue the name of the deceased brother,

a. Who is trying to trap Jesus this time?

b. The Sadducees do not believe in life after death or in the resurrection of the body.

Reflection: Why do you think they asked this particular question?

c. Read Jesus' response to the Sadducees in 12:26-27 and Wisdom 3:1-3 below.

Wisdom 3:1-3 The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, no torment shall touch them.

²They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction³ and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace.

d. What was Jesus trying to teach the Sadducees by using God's words to Moses through the burning bush?

6. Read Mark 12:28-34 and footnotes. We often refer to Jesus' words here as the "Law of Love."

a. There are 613 laws in the Torah, but Jesus said that the laws calling for love of God, neighbor, and self are even *more important* than what?

b. What do we know about the scribe questioning Jesus here?

c. What is the real meaning of Mark 12:34?

7. Read Mark 12:35-37 and footnotes. In these verses Jesus uses Psalm 110, a psalm of David, to explain that King David foresaw the coming of the Messiah, and that the Messiah would be greater than even David himself. Reflection: Is 11:1-9; Jer 23:5; and Ez 34:23 also prophesied that the Messiah would come from the line of David. So, is Jesus here claiming to be Son of God rather than Son of David? As the Incarnation, can he be both?

8. Read Mark 12:38-40. Compare these verses to the warning to beware the "Leaven of the Pharisees" in Mark 8:15, to the fig tree with leaves but no fruit in Mark 11: 12-14, 20-25, and the parable of the Wicked Tenants in 12:1- 12.

a. What is Jesus saying about the leadership of Israel and her Temple?

b. In what ways were they missing the mark when it came to following the will of God?

9. Read Mark 12:41-44 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 here: 2 Cor. 9:6-7 Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

a. What does Jesus tell us about poverty and salvation here?

b. How do Paul's words add meaning to how one gives to the Church or to others?