

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Mark 12:28-34**.
- B. The time is drawing near for the Son of Man to be crucified. The opportunities to teach are getting fewer and fewer. In this chapter Jesus deals with several important subjects.
- C. Be careful how you ask questions of the Son of God, you will get an answer!

I. THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS (Mk. 12:1-12).

- A. This parable was directed at the chief priests, scribes, and elders. These were the “most important” and powerful Jews of the multitude.
- B. In the story Jesus shows how that God the Father has sent messengers to help them (the prophets) and they rejected the prophets. He has now even sent His very Son, and they are about to reject Him! Therefore, God will reject the Jews and offer salvation to the Gentiles.
- C. The chief priests, scribes, and elders could not deny that their predecessors had killed the prophets and that they were trying to find a way to reject and kill Jesus! No wonder they became angry and wanted to seize Jesus.
- D. We must accept the word of the prophets as being from God. Their message was two-fold:
 - 1. Turn or burn--repent of your sins and be obedient to God.
 - 2. Believe in the Messiah to come.
- E. Being a good tenant means trusting and obeying the owner in all things.

II. SOME DIFFICULT QUESTIONS (Mk. 12:13-40).

- A. A question about **responsibility** (12:13-17).
 - 1. A common threat forced two enemies to unite, the Pharisees and the Herodians. The Herodians supported the family of Herod as well as the Romans who gave them the authority to rule. The Pharisees, however, considered the Herod clan to be of the evil usurpers of the throne of David; for after all, Herod was an Edomite and not a Jew.
 - 2. Their temporary alliance was a subtle trap, for no matter how Jesus replied to their question, He was in trouble with either Rome or the Pharisees.
 - a. If Jesus said not to pay taxes, he was in trouble w/the Herodians and Rome.
 - b. If Jesus said to pay taxes, he was in trouble w/the Pharisees in honoring Rome.
 - 3. The word translated *render* in 12:17 means “to pay a debt, to pay back.” Jesus looked on taxes as the citizens’ debt to the government in return for the services performed.
 - 4. The individual Xian citizen might not agree w/the way all of his/her tax money is used, but he/she must accept the fact that God has established human government for our good (Rom. 13; 1Tim. 2:1-6; 1Pet. 2:13-17).
- B. A question about **eternity** (12:18-27).
 - 1. This is the only place in Mark where the Sadducees are mentioned. This group accepted only the Law of Moses as their religious authority; so, if a doctrine could not be defended from the first five books of the OT, they would not accept it. They did not believe in the existence of the soul, life after death, the resurrection, final judgment, angels, or demons (see Ac. 23:8).
 - 2. Most of the Sadducees were priests and were wealthy. They considered themselves the “religious aristocrats” of Judaism and tended to look down on everybody else.
 - 3. The Sadducees thought they were smart, but Jesus soon revealed their ignorance of two things: the power of God and the truth of Scripture.
 - a. *The power of God.* The question is flawed because in the resurrection the bodies raised will be without gender like the angels. There will be no more marriage, procreation, or continuance of the race.

- b. *The Scriptures*. They were ignorant of the Scriptures because Moses taught the continuance of life after death. In 12:26 Jesus quotes Ex. 3:6 and stresses that while God spoke to Moses, the physically dead patriarchs were still alive.
- D. A question about **priority** (12:28-34).
 - 1. The scribes were determined that the Jews were obligated to obey 613 precepts in the Law (365 negative, 248 positive). One of their favorite exercises was discussing which of these divine commandments was the greatest.
 - 2. Once this scribe heard X's answer to his question, he agreed w/it! He commended the Lord. The Word had spoken to his heart and he was beginning to get a deeper spiritual understanding of the faith he thought he understood. It was no longer a faith wrapped up in ordinance keeping, but one based on love for God, neighbor, and self.
 - 3. Is our faith based on commandment keeping or our love for God?
 - 4. When the scribe realized this fact he was not far from the kingdom of God:
 - a. He/she is facing truth honestly and not defending some "party line."
 - b. His/her faith is based on a love for God and desire to do what is right.
 - c. W/this attitude one begins to see salvation by grace and not by works.
- E. A question about **identity** (12:35-37).
 - 1. Jesus quoted Psalms 110:1 and asked them to explain how David's son could also be David's Lord.
 - 2. The Jews believed that the Messiah would be David's son (Joel 7:41,42), but the only way David's son could also be David's Lord would be if the Messiah were *God come in human flesh*.
 - 3. The specific answer was Jesus Himself! Our Lord's miraculous conception and virgin birth confirm Jesus as Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-28).

III. THE WIDOW'S OFFERING (Mark 12:38-44).

- A. This section closes w/two warnings from the Lord; a warning against the pride of the scribes and against the pride of the rich.
- B. In 12:38-40 the scribes' idea of importance was the wearing of the uniform, the title one bears, and the office one holds. This "importance" is artificial. True importance comes from having a *Xian character*. This makes a person valuable.
- C. In 12:41-44 Jesus tells of those who gave out of their abundance, and one who gave all she had. The great lesson here is that "it is not the *portion* but the *proportion* that is important."

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. May we do the following with these questions and answers:
 - 1. Respect the authority of Jesus and obey the civil laws.
 - 2. Know the Scriptures and the power of God.
 - 3. Learn to love God, neighbors, and self.
 - 4. Believe in Christ as Lord.
 - 5. Give in a spirit of humility and in proportion to what we have.
- B. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.