



Mark 12

An OCF Bible Study

Mark 12

Define parable. An earthly story with a spiritual meaning.

Who are the players in this parable? Man/owner = God. Vineyard = nation of Israel. Farmers/tenants = Israel's leaders. Servants = prophets. Son = Jesus.

The man (owner) sent his servant to receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the farmers who were renting the vineyard. How did the farmers receive him (v. 2-3)? They beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Note that the farmers didn't own the vineyard. A generous owner allowed them to work in his vineyard.

Who was the final messenger (v. 6)? The Son/heir. There would be no other. Either they would accept the message, respond correctly to the Son, or face certain judgment. This was the supreme test for the tenant farmers.

They killed the son (v. 9). What was owners/God's response? Judgment. He killed the farmers.

This parable is addressed to the Jewish religious leaders. What is the spiritual meaning of the parable for them? It was an illustration of the wicked treatment Israel's leaders had given the servants (the prophets) whom God had sent to them. And to let them know that Jesus was aware of their murderous plot to kill Him.

How did the Jewish leaders react to the parable (v. 12)? They knew He had spoken the parable against them. They reacted by plotting to arrest and ultimately murder Jesus instead of repenting before Him. Instead of an attitude of "let's ponder His message," theirs was "let's kill the messenger."

Another group of leaders came to question Jesus (v. 13). They appealed to His nonexistent ego with flattering comments—which happened to be true (v. 14). Why did Jesus label them as hypocrites (v. 15)? Their hearts were not pure. Their motives were not pure. They were not asking because they wanted to know the answer. They were trying to trap Him.

If He agreed the tax should be paid, what effect would that have on the Israelites? In their eyes He would be denying the sovereignty of God over Israel, and He would lose popular support and alienate the people.

If Jesus agreed that the tax should not be paid, what effect would that have on the Romans? He would be openly declaring Himself to be an enemy of Rome and would be treated like a revolutionary.

What's the message of v. 17? If we take advantage of the benefits of governmental rule, we are obliged to submit to government, as long as it does not infringe upon our service to God. Be a good law-abiding citizen (Romans 13:1-7).

What do we know about the Sadducees (v. 18-27)? The Sadducees were mainly wealthy, influential and educated Jews—the property owning class. The liberals of the day. They limited their beliefs to what was prescribed in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). They observed their own set of traditions which were different from those of the Pharisees. For example, they did not believe in the resurrection, immortality, spirits or angels.

They were very ready to cooperate with the Romans, which, of course, enabled them to maintain their privileged political position while angering their fellow Jews.

With their ridiculous question, they wanted to make the idea of resurrection seem absurd (v. 24-25). How does Jesus respond? He informs them that the marriage relationship does not continue in heaven. Things won't be the same. Heaven will be much more than just a glorious version of earth.

Regarding resurrection, what is the significance of Jesus' statement, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob* (v. 26)? If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not continue to live after death, He would

have to say that He *was* their God. But here, Jesus quotes from Exodus 3:6 where God says that He *is* their God, speaking in the present tense and thus proving there is a resurrection of the dead.

Since the Sadducees said the true Bible only contained the first five books of the Old Testament, that is why Jesus proved the legitimacy of the resurrection from this passage in Exodus 3, one of the books of the Bible the Sadducees said was genuine.

How did the Sadducees respond? There was no apparent response from the Sadducees. They were stumped once again by Jesus' wisdom.

Which commandment is the most important of all (v. 28)? The rabbis counted 613 commands in the Mosaic Law, 365 positive and 248 negative.¹ **How did Jesus respond to the question?** Instead of promoting one command over another, Jesus defined the Law in its essence by quoting two Old Testament sources—Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. In other words, the two greatest commandments are not something new that Jesus just invented. In this, we see what God really wants from man is love—love God with everything you have and love your neighbor as yourself.

Why are these are the two greatest commandments? These are the greatest commandments, in that they summarize the two basic responsibilities regarding the Law: our duties toward God and our duties those toward other people. These are basic human responsibilities. The termination of the Mosaic Code does not invalidate them.²

Was the scribe's response to Jesus on the mark (v. 32-33)? Yes. It is easy to think that religious ceremony and devotion are more important than love for God and our neighbor but that isn't the case as the teacher discerned.

What did Jesus mean that the scribe was not far from entering the kingdom (v. 34)? His openness to Scriptural revelation and his positive orientation to Jesus, if continued, would bring him to faith in Jesus and ultimately entrance into His kingdom.³ He knew the Scriptures but he didn't personally know the author of the Scriptures quite yet.

If these are the two greatest commandments, what role do they play in our lives?

What is Jesus doing in this section (starting at v. 35)? Teaching. Since Jesus is the Christ, here He speaks of Himself. He's getting to the heart of the matter: "Do you really know who I am?" Jesus' primary ministry was to teach the people. Their greatest need was to understand.

Is Jesus the son of David or the Lord of David (v. 35-37)? Yes. The Old Testament clearly taught that Jesus would be a descendant of David in His humanity (2 Samuel 7:8-16). David also described Jesus as his Lord in His deity. As Revelation 22:16 says, *He is both the root and offspring of David.*

What are some of the principles/applications (v. 41-44)? A gift's value is determined by the *spirit* in which it is given. God doesn't want grudgingly given money or guilt money. God loves the cheerful giver.

God does not need our money. If God needed our money, then how much we give would be more important than our heart in giving. Instead, it is our privilege to give to Him, and we need to give because it is good for us, not because it is good for God. Generous giving reveals where our hearts are.

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¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Mark, 2014 Edition* (published by Sonic Light, www.soniclight.com), pp. 162

² Ibid, pp. 164

³ Ibid, pp. 164