



Mark 12:1-27 Lesson 18

Chapter twelve opens to reveal the growing animosity the Jewish religionists had toward Christ. His life and ministry was a constant reminder to them of their hypocrisy. As the chapter begins, this would be the last time Jesus would teach in the temple, and it is quite a memorable message; a public humiliation of these religious pretenders that incited anger and malicious plotting.

Pause and Consider:

1. Settle in to study this section by finding a quiet place to carefully read Mark 12:1-27. If possible, try to read different Bible translations (e.g., KJV, NKJ, NLT, NAS, and NIV) to grasp a fuller picture. From a personal perspective, what is the most valuable lesson in these verses?

Who's Watching the Vineyard? Read Mark 12:1-12

2. Read again this parable from verses 1-11. It would be easy to imagine this story playing out as a movie. Listed below is a cast of characters. Try to match the 'character' with the real-life 'actor' who plays the part.

<u>Character</u>	<u>Actor</u>
The Vineyard	God
The Owner	The Law
The Tenants (Vinedressers)	Jesus
The Servants	The Religious Rulers
The Son	The Prophets
The Ones who will be Given the Vineyard	The Nation of Israel
The Hedge	The Gentiles

3. Through this parable, what warning was Jesus giving the religious leaders?
 - a. In what way was this also a prediction?

4. In verses 10 and 11, Jesus goes on to quote an Old Testament scripture (Psalm 118). For some context to these verses, go back to Psalm 118 and read verses 21–28. Who is Jesus saying is the stone in these verses?
 - a. What do you think was the purpose of adding this passage to the parable?
 - b. Keeping in mind the qualities and uses of a stone, why is the illustration of the “stone” such a good depiction of the Messiah?

5. Verse 12 makes it clear that the Pharisees grasped the meaning of the parable. What was their reaction?
 - a. Clearly they are “*the builders*” who are rejecting the cornerstone. Even though they had witnessed many things to prove that Jesus was who He claimed to be, what would have kept these men from admitting and repenting of their sin?
 - b. Have you ever been a ‘builder’ who rejected Christ and His claims?
 - c. What brought you to a place of repentance and acceptance of Jesus as Savior?

To Pay or not to Pay: Read Mark 12:13–17

After a scathing rebuke from the above parable, the religious leaders are even more determined to rid themselves of Jesus. Clustered together waiting to question and corner the Lord, they attempt to trick Him by asking both political and theological questions.

6. Why did the Pharisees and Herodians team together at this time? (Verses 13–15)
 - a. Notice how they begin their conversation with Jesus. Were they sincere in their inquiry?

- b. Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
 - c. Have you ever fallen into the trap of flattery, or been tempted to flatter rather than speak the truth? What was the result?
 - d. Can you find a Scripture which exemplifies for us what God thinks about flattery?
7. How does Jesus reveal that He knew their intention?
8. What were these religious leaders hoping Jesus would say?
9. Carefully consider His answer in verse 17. What does this tell us about earthly authority and our responsibility toward it?
- a. How does 1 Peter 2:13-17 enhance this truth?
10. What are some practical examples of “*rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s*” today?
- a. How do we render to God the things that are rightfully His?
 - b. Are you fulfilling that today?

Marriage in Heaven...? Read Mark 12:18–27

The next phase of opposition came in the form of the Sadducees, a smaller, but very powerful, sect of Judaism.

11. Using Deuteronomy 25:5–10 for some background to the Sadducees’ inquiry, why was this topic of marriage and remarriage after the death of a husband so important in Jewish culture?
12. After sharing their imaginary story with Jesus, how do they reveal their true attitude toward resurrection?

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13. Where does Jesus point them for the answer to their seemingly impossible story? (Verses 24–27)
- Jesus gets to the real heart of the matter and sums up their character in one sentence. What does He say is the real issue? (Verse 24)
 - Imagine you are in a discussion with the Lord concerning a matter you don't understand. Would this be what He would have to say to you—that you do not know the Scriptures?
 - What is the importance of knowing the full counsel of God, rather than always just reading bits and pieces?
 - Suggest some practical ways *and share with your group* some hints and tips to be in the Word daily, which would encourage a full, balanced knowledge of the Scriptures.

Bringing it into Focus:

Have you ever been in a conversation that began to turn against Christianity—someone commenting on the hypocrisy, or phoniness, of religious leaders or certain Christians? How did you respond? What have you learned from Jesus' example about answering critics or detractors?

14. After studying this passage, is there marriage in heaven?
15. In closing this section, how did Jesus show that God is *the God of the living*?
- How does this truth minister to you today?

Each of these religious sects, though opposing and rivaling each other, quickly joined forces against Christ. Jesus' brilliant responses through this chapter left them stunned and silenced. Their feeble attempts to entrap Him have failed, and now this leaves them vulnerable for a few questions from Him...as we'll see next time in Mark chapter twelve!