Mark 12

PREVIEW: In Mark 12, Jesus is tested by the religious leaders. He gives them a parable to show them their rejection of Him and His rejection of them. He stumps the religious leaders with a test and condemns them for their hypocrisy.

Parable of the Vineyard Owner - Read Mark 12:1-12

1. In this parable, who do the vineyard owner, vinedressers, servants, and the son of the landowner represent?

2. What did the vinedressers do to the landowner’s servants and son when they were sent to collect fruit from the vineyard (v. 2-8)?

3. After Jesus told the parable of the vineyard owner, He asked the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Mark 11:27) what they thought the vineyard owner would do to the vinedressers (v. 9). What did they admit should be done to the vinedressers (see Matthew 21:41)?

4. The chief priests, scribes, and elders would have been familiar with the message of the parable from a similar parable in Isaiah. Read Isaiah 5:1-7. Who does Isaiah say the vineyard represents (Isaiah 5:7)? This understanding of the parable in Isaiah led them to an emotional response. What was their response to this parable? (See Luke 20:16.)
5. Jesus used a passage (vv. 10-11) from Psalm 118 (the very psalm which the multitudes were crying out when Jesus made His triumphal entry [Mark 11:9] and the children were crying out in the temple [Matthew 12:15]) to make the chief priests, scribes, and elders realize that they had rejected Him and He was speaking of them. Whom does Jesus say the vineyard will be given to (v. 9)? (See Matthew 12:41 and Matthew 8:12.)

6. The vineyard owner gave his vineyard over to a nation that would render to him fruits in their seasons. Who is represented by that nation? What fruitfulness is required of them? (See Acts 13:46, 1 Peter 2:9-10, John 15:8, Matthew 5:16, 7:20, Hebrews 13:15, and Galatians 5:22.)

7. The chief priests, scribes, and elders were upset by the Parable of the Vineyard Owner, which spoke of them. What did they want to do to Jesus (v. 12)? What did they end up doing (v.12)? Why?

8. Often we can read a parable like the Parable of the Vineyard Owner and become indignant towards the chief priests, scribes, and elders, because we see the hardness of their hearts towards the teachings of Jesus. However, in this parable Jesus expressed the desires of God (the vineyard owner) to see fruit (praise and good deeds) from those who occupy His vineyard. The vineyard has been given over to Gentiles (Acts 13:46) including us. What do you think the vineyard owner expects of us, His new vinedressers? (See John 13:34-35, 15:4-7, 16, and Philippians 1:9-11.)
Question of Taxes - Read Mark 12:13-17

9. What was the Pharisees’ intention in sending their disciples with the Herodians to ask Jesus about paying taxes (v. 13)? (See also Matthew 22:15 and Luke 20:20.) Who were the Herodians?

10. The Pharisees and Herodians began by saying several nice things about Jesus (v. 14), but their hypocrisy was obvious—they really did not believe in Him and were merely flattering Him. What did Jesus know about them and their intentions (v. 15)? (See also Matthew 22:18 and Luke 20:23.)

11. The Pharisees and Herodians were hoping their question would catch Jesus in His words. Explain how their question was a trap.

12. Why did the Pharisees and Herodians marvel at Jesus’ answer (v. 17)?

13. How can we practice Jesus’ exhortation to “render to God the things that are God’s”? (See 1 Corinthians 3:23, 6:19-20, 12:27, Matthew 11:29, Acts 9:6, Hebrews 12:9, and James 4:7-10.)
Question of the Resurrection - Read Mark 12:18-27

14. The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, present Jesus with a preposterous scenario of seven brothers marrying the same woman. They ask whose wife she would be in the resurrection, since they all had her as a wife in this life. Jesus said they were mistaken. According to Jesus, how were they mistaken (v. 24)?

15. What two things did the Sadducees lack an understanding of (vv. 25-26)?

16. In their preposterous scenario regarding a man who died childless, the Sadducees were referring to a section of Deuteronomy 25. What was required of the man’s brother if he died childless? (See Deuteronomy 25:5-10.)

17. The Sadducees believed in the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. Because the Sadducees didn’t see angels or the resurrection in those books, they didn’t believe in them. Jesus answered them by reminding them of Moses’ burning bush experience. What did Jesus say concerning the resurrection of the dead that caused them to be astonished (vv. 26-27)? (See also Matthew 22:33.)
18. Because the Sadducees believed only in the Pentateuch, they had false beliefs. Why is it important to ensure you are not like the Sadducees in some of your beliefs, not knowing the whole counsel of God? (See Acts 20:27, Isaiah 28:13, John 12:48, and Hebrews 10:7.)

19. In correcting the Sadducees mistaken theology and beliefs of the resurrection, Jesus clearly implied that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had died 500 years before Moses at the burning bush, were not dead but alive. How does a person attain this life that the patriarchs attained? (John 11:25-26, John 5:21, 6:39-40, 44, and Ephesians 2:4-8.)

**Question of the Greatest Commandment - Read Mark 12:28-34**

20. The scribes had 613 commandments in the Old Testament and were hoping to stir up a controversy, so they gathered together to test Jesus again. This time they sent a lawyer (an expert in the law) who asked Him, “Teacher, which is the first commandment of all?” What was Jesus’ response (v. 29-30)? (See also Deuteronomy 6:4-5, 10:12, and 30:6.)

21. Instead of only giving the first and greatest commandment as an answer to the Pharisees’ test, Jesus added the second most important commandment (v. 31). What is it? Why did He add this to His answer? (See Leviticus 19:18 and 1 John 4:20.)
22. The scribe who questioned Jesus about the greatest commandment was duly satisfied with Jesus’ response (vv. 32-33) and answered Jesus wisely (v.34). This scribe had the kind of spiritual understanding and openness to Jesus that brought him near to embracing God’s kingdom. Will being near get a man into the kingdom? What is required? (See Mark 1:14-15, Matthew 3:2, and Romans 10:9-10.)

Jesus Questions the Leaders - Read Mark 12:35-37

23. Jesus then turned the tables and presented two questions to test the religious leaders. What are the questions (vv. 35, 37)? Was the first question difficult for them to answer? (See Matthew 22:42.)

24. Jesus’ follow-up question stumped the religious leaders. (v. 37). Why couldn’t they answer that question? (See also Matthew 22:45.)

25. What was the end result of Jesus’ test question to the Pharisees (v. 37)? (See also Matthew 22:45)
26. The Davidic sonship of the Messiah was a standard Jewish belief (see John 7:41-42) firmly based on the Old Testament Scriptures (see 2 Samuel 7:8-16; Psalm 89:3-4; Isaiah 9:2-7, 11:1-9, Jeremiah 23:5-6 33:15-17, 22, Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24, Hosea 3:5, and Amos 9:11). If the religious leaders would have been like the Bereans and received Jesus’ teaching with readiness of heart and searched the Scriptures (see Acts 17:10-12), they would have seen that these things were so. Yet what was the religious leaders’ overall response to Jesus? (See John 1:11.)

Jesus Condemns the Leaders - Read Mark 12:38-44

27. Jesus told His listeners to beware of the religious leaders and stated several actions they perform. What specific actions did Jesus state (vv. 38-40)?

28. The religious leaders desired the places of honor, to be respectfully greeted (see Matthew 23:7), and to be looked upon as very important people. How is this attitude the opposite of what it takes to be great in the kingdom of God? (See Mark 10:31 and 43-44.)

29. Jesus said that the religious leaders make long prayers for a pretense, which means for appearance’s sake. How does Jesus want us to pray? (See Matthew 6:5-7.)
30. What did Jesus say would be the end result of the religious leaders’ desires to be first, honored, greeted, and to be seen by man (v. 40)?

31. Jesus watched people as they made their offerings to God. He observed how the people put their money into the treasury. How did the rich contribute to the treasury (v. 41, 44)?

32. Jesus watched a poor widow make her contribution to the treasury. How much did she give (v. 47)?

33. Jesus made a contrast between how the rich gave and how the poor widow gave. The contrast wasn’t based upon the amount given but rather on percentage of giving. What percent did the rich give? What percent did the poor widow give (vv. 43-44)?

34. Jesus used the example of poor widow to teach His disciples the value God places on wholehearted commitment. In giving to God sacrificially, she completely entrusted herself to Him to provide for her needs. What will God do when we trust Him completely to provide for our needs? (See Philippians 4:19.)

35. How does God want for us to give to Him? (See Luke 6:38 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-11),