



Mark: Following in the Footsteps of Jesus

Chapter #12 – Authority, Judgment, and Devotion

Main Idea

Mark 12 presents a series of powerful encounters between Jesus and the religious leaders, revealing both His authority and their hardened hearts. Through parables, questions, and challenges, Jesus exposes hypocrisy while teaching profound truths about God's kingdom. From the Parable of the Tenants to questions about taxes, resurrection, and the greatest commandment, Jesus demonstrates unmatched wisdom and clarity. The chapter culminates in a call to wholehearted devotion, loving God fully and others selflessly, while also warning against empty religion. Mark 12 invites us to examine our motives, recognize Jesus as Lord, and respond with sincere faith and obedience.

Chapter Outline

- Parable of the Tenants (1–12)
- Paying Taxes to Caesar (13–17)
- Marriage and Resurrection (18–27)
- The Greatest Commandment (28–34)
- The Widow's Offering (38–44)

Questions for Consideration

1. What warning does the parable of tenants give?
2. How does Jesus respond to political traps?
3. Why is love central to God's law?
4. What distinguishes pride from devotion?
5. Why is the widow commended?



Mark 12 (NIV)

The Parable of the Tenants

12 Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ²At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. ⁶“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ⁷“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ⁸So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹“What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
¹¹the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

¹²Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

¹³Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. ¹⁴They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax[Ⓜ] to Caesar or not? ¹⁵Should we pay or shouldn’t we?” But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” ¹⁶They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. ¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him.

Marriage at the Resurrection

¹⁸Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹“Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²²In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³At the resurrection[Ⓜ] whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” ²⁴Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ²⁶Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’[Ⓜ]? ²⁷He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

The Greatest Commandment

²⁸One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” ²⁹“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’[Ⓜ] ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’[Ⓜ] ³¹The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[Ⓜ] There is no commandment greater than these.” ³²“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.



Whose Son Is the Messiah?

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

“The Lord said to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.””³⁶

³⁷ David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?”
The large crowd listened to him with delight.

Warning Against the Teachers of the Law

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

The Widow’s Offering

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Footnotes

- a. [Mark 12:11](#) Psalm 118:22,23
- b. [Mark 12:14](#) A special tax levied on subject peoples, not on Roman citizens
- c. [Mark 12:23](#) Some manuscripts *resurrection, when people rise from the dead,*
- d. [Mark 12:26](#) Exodus 3:6
- e. [Mark 12:29](#) Or *The Lord our God is one Lord*
- f. [Mark 12:30](#) Deut. 6:4,5
- g. [Mark 12:31](#) Lev. 19:18
- h. [Mark 12:36](#) Psalm 110:1

