

“Jesus Challenges the Religious Establishment”
“A Journey With Jesus” — Part 22
Mark 12:35-44

When 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.

Mark 12:34

1. Jesus challenges the religious leadership with a question.

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? 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.”

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

Mark 12:35-37

- The religious leadership had their turn to ask Jesus several questions in order “to catch Him in His words,” but they could not. Now it’s Jesus’ turn.
- Jesus asked the religious leaders what sounded like a theological question, but was the most important personal question they would ever consider.
- Jesus asks, “*Whose Son is the Messiah?*” The experts trained in the law knew the answer: “*He is the Son of David.*”
- Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1, which Jewish scholars interpreted as referring to the Messiah.
- Jesus shows His belief in the inspiration and accuracy of the Old Testament.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'?... If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions. Matthew 22:41-46

- The incarnation holds the key to the answer. As God, Messiah is David’s Lord; as man, He is David’s Son.

“...I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

Revelation 22:16

- Psalm 110:1 teaches the deity and humanity of the Messiah.

- Scholars of that day were confused about the Messiah. They saw two different pictures of Messiah that they could not reconcile. One pictured a Suffering Servant, the other a Conquering King. Were there two Messiahs? How could God's servant suffer and die? (1 Peter 1:10-11)

Application: Making a decision about Jesus the Messiah is the most important decision a person can make. It is a life and death decision. The religious leadership was blinded by tradition, position, and pride. This question is a far more important question than the questions asked of Jesus. If we ignore the truth about Jesus, we ignore the truth about salvation and risk condemning our own souls.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

John 3:16-19

2. Jesus warns the common people about the pride of privilege and the hypocrisy of holiness.

As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Mark 12:38-40

- If a person is important only because of the uniform he wears, the title he bears, or the office he holds, then his importance is artificial. It is internal character that makes a person, not external adornment or position.

3. Jesus observes how people are giving their offerings.

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. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

Mark 12:41-42

- Jesus was an observer of people, and in His observation He saw the heart.
- Jesus made His evaluation based not on the external actions, but the internal motivations.
- Jesus did not disparage the giving of the rich.

4. Jesus teaches His disciples about giving.

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

Mark 12:43-44

Giving is measured by:

- cost not count
- trust not amount
- spirit not money
- faith not sight
- heart not appearance

***“Sacrifice requires trust in
God’s power,
God’s provision, and
God’s goodness!”***

Application: According to the Sadducees, God rewards the righteous in this life, after which one goes into nothingness. Therefore they reasoned, rich people are shown to be righteous by their riches, while poor people are proven wicked by their poverty. The Pharisees believed in rewards and punishment in the afterlife, but they also believed wealth to be a sign of God’s favor and misfortune to be a sign of God’s judgment for sin. This short episode sets the record straight for the poor and those facing hardship.

Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

2 Corinthians 8:2

For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

2 Corinthians 8:12

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

These types of giving can only come from a grateful heart!