

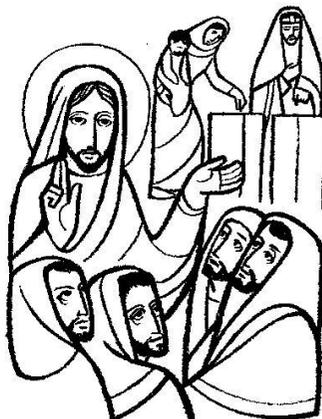
**Read Mark 12: 35 - 37.**

*To a Jew in the time of Jesus, a descendant was always inferior to an ancestor. A son might call his father or grandfather "lord", but never vice versa.*

- 6.(a). How can Christ be both David's Lord and his descendant?
- (b). Why do you think the people "heard him gladly"?
- (c). What does it mean for us to call Jesus "Lord"?

**Read Mark 12: 38 - 44.**

- 7.(a). What warning to us is present in Jesus' cautions about the teachers of the law?
- (b). In contrast to the teachers of the law, what motivates the widow's religious behaviour?
- (c). How does she fulfil the great commandment?
- (d). What implications does this example have for our giving?
- (e). **Read Malachi 3: 1-5.**  
In what ways has Jesus been fulfilling this prophecy in chapters 11-12 of Mark's Gospel?



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

## SESSION 14: CHAPTERS 11:27 - 12:44 "TRAGEDY AND TRAPS"

Some people ask questions because they want to know the answers. Others take malicious delight in posing unanswerable questions or in trying to trip up an opponent. Jesus often asked questions to get his hearers to think about matters deeply for themselves.



### Read Mark 11: 27-33.

#### QUESTIONS:

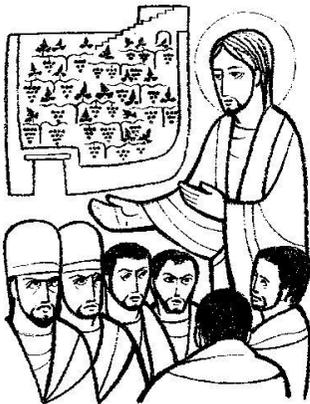
1.(a). *In v.27, the chief priests and other Jewish leaders came asking what seemed a relatively straight forward question.*

What does Jesus' reply and the subsequent discussion reveal about their motives?

- (b). Why doesn't Jesus answer them?
- (c). Why did they decline to answer?
- (d). Are there times when we shouldn't answer some of our questioners? Explain.



### Read Mark 12: 1 - 12.



*The parable of the tenants is rich in meaning especially in light of its allusion to Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7).*

- 2.(a). If the tenants are Israel and its religious leaders, who are represented by the owner, the servants and the son?
- (b). How are these religious leaders about to fulfil the scripture (*Ps 118:22-23*) Jesus cites in vv.10-11?
- (c). Why do you think Jesus tells this parable?

**NB** This parable didn't need an explanation... As it stands it is pure tragedy. All that is left is judgement. It's a terrifying picture of what happens if the people of God persistently reject the purpose for which God has called them. WRIGHT

### Read Mark 12: 13-17.

**NB** A common enemy can often draw together people who are not otherwise on good terms. Here we find Herodians (supporters of the puppet monarchy) and the Pharisees (ardent nationalists and opponents of Roman rule) joining forces.

- 3.(a). How does the question they pose to Jesus reflect their conflicting interests?
- (b). How did they set their "trap"?
- (c). Jesus not only avoids their trap by his answer, he also succeeds in establishing an important principle.



What sorts of things are rightfully Caesar's and what are God's?

What aspects of life today are people tempted to believe are separate from religious conviction or don't have much if anything to do with faith?

**NB** Judea became a Roman province in A.D. 6 and was subject to the poll tax (or head tax, distinct from the tax on property and customs on articles). The census provided the data (computed in acres and human heads) from which the Romans levied this tax. Its establishment provoked the revolt of Judas of Galilee because it placed God's own land at the service of foreigners.

A "yes" answer to Jesus' question invites the charge of turning traitor to God by endorsing Caesar's hegemony over the land. It was also an emotionally charged issue since most residents of Palestine knew someone the Romans sold into slavery, executed, or forced off their land by the whirlpool of debt from the spiraling tax burden.

A "no" answer, by contrast, invites the charge of sedition      ARNOLD

### Read Mark 12: 18-28.

*The Sadducees differed from their Jewish contemporaries because they rejected the idea of resurrection.*

- 4.(a). What motives lie behind their question to Jesus?  
What is the trap this time?
- (b). How do the Sadducees display their ignorance of the scriptures and the power of God?



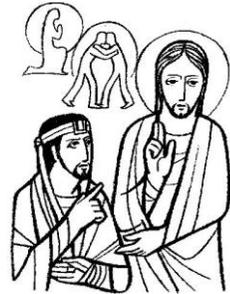
- (c). How is Jesus' response from Scripture particularly appropriate for the Sadducees who accepted only the authority of the Pentateuch?
- (d). How does Jesus explain "life after death"?
- (e). Are there any pointers we can pick up about how we should deal with the questions we might be asked about what we believe?

**NB** By the time of Jesus, the Jews had accumulated hundreds of laws - 613 by one count. Some religious leaders tried to distinguish between major and minor laws, and some taught that all laws were equally binding and that it was dangerous to make any distinctions.

**Read Mark 12: 28 - 34.**

**QUESTIONS:**

5.(a). Another teacher of the law come to Jesus with a pointed question. What evidence is there that this was another attempt to trap Jesus?



(b). *Though Jesus is only asked for one commandment (Deut. 6:4-5), in good rabbinical fashion he responds by adding a second commandment to the reply (Lev. 19:18).*

What relationship does this second commandment bear to the first?

(c). The teacher not only endorses Jesus' answer, but takes it a step further with reference to burnt offerings and sacrifices. (cf. Micah 6:6-8; Amos 5:21-24).

What might be some contemporary equivalents to burnt offerings and sacrifices?

(d). How has Jesus succeeded in silencing his questioners? Explain.