

Out of the Vineyard

Mark Chapter Twelve



~ Our Spiritual Safari will revisit a familiar Scriptural passage in this report; one that we previously covered in Matthew. I think God goes over the same information several times in the Gospels not so much because He is emphasizing it - although He is doing that - but, more so to give the entire account from myriad facets of viewpoints; combined like a kaleidoscope for one big awesome picture. Jesus is now the Passover Lamb, being brought under close examination before the slaughter. Remember, the Passover Lamb was to be displayed and inspected. Wrath will roll over Jesus' head now as the interaction becomes fierce again with the religious rulers. This is where we see the heavy artillery brought out and utilized; every arrangement for the battle of Heaven and hell are made here. Light meets darkness and God deals with Satan!

Our so-called safari seems to slow down to a standstill at this point, but things are really just heating up now in Marks Gospel. For a book known as the "action Gospel," we sure aren't seeing any action now; and for a Gospel that contains the most accounts of miracles, we don't see any more miracles being performed for a while. Well, it's a miracle that the Pharisees will not try to trap Him anymore after this chapter. The religious rulers won't have any more questions after we complete this report. They had tried to turn the people against Jesus and those efforts have been futile. Their final effort will ferret out the last bit of futility; and will end in humility for the ruling classes: the Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees and Herodians – all are shamed by their own loaded questions! Jesus responds to them with the most pointed, plain and penetrating parables of His entire ministry. I believe the meaning of the parable of the vineyard should be obvious; but, even so, I'm going to outline this chapter as we go, which is something I do not usually do; with some unusual alliteration; all designated by a word beginning with the letter "Q" ~

Jesus QUICKENS the religious rulers with the parable of the vineyards

1 And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

~ This is what Isaiah called a vineyard brought up out of Egypt. The vine that God planted is the nation Israel. God gave them His personal religion, and they were the only people that had ever been directly led by the Lord as they were, out there in the wilderness, witnessing the visible presence of God. No church has ever had that! Well, Mark was writing to the Roman strong man, but even the Roman understood this religious parable....

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

~ The servants God sent were the prophets. The certain man that had the vineyard is God the Father. The vineyard is the nation Israel. The son is the Lord Jesus. God chose to personally lead and protect this nation. The husbandmen are the religious rulers; and this is exactly what they did. Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but He came to the world, also. Jesus makes a deliberate and direct thrust of the spear at the Pharisees standing around looking at Him. They had already plotted His murder and Jesus let's them know that He knows what they are up to. Jesus knows what's in your heart, too, friend; irrespective of whether you love Him or reject Him!

Jesus prophesied their every step and anticipated their every move indicting them for His murder before they ever get the chance to conspire against Him! This is simply most remarkable as Jesus predicts the judgment of the religious rulers. Further, "the stone that the builders refused has become the headstone," is not another parable; this is a "two-in-one" parable. Christ is a stumbling stone and a rock of offense to the religious rulers - but many of the people turned to Him. That's when He becomes the cornerstone of the earth. Well, the religious rulers come unglued at this point; and they would have stoned Jesus on the spot or placed Him under arrest at this time - but they're afraid of the people. Typical politicians....

[*Jesus QUERIES the Pharisees and Herodians about paying taxes to Cesar*](#)

13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

~ The vineyard parable amounted to the declaration of a verbal war with the Pharisees, but Jesus also knew the boundless depths of their hypocrisy. They were awful people, friends. They flattered Jesus, and He called them hypocrites in return! Well, their question is going to bite them this time. Jesus asks for a penny in this parable - because Jesus didn't have a penny. The donations from the healed people only afforded Jesus and the apostle's perpetual poverty! Judas Iscariot took care of cheating them out of anything leftover. The religious rulers weren't about to hand Jesus a hundred-dollar coin, and every man there had several of them in his purse, you may be sure. I think they had to actually search for a penny....

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

~ This certainly is a marvelous answer as it reveals how the child of God has myriad responsibilities regarding money. It's easy to get some very pious ideas about money without realizing our mistakes. We have an obligation towards the government. I feel like I have too much responsibility, personally - and I'll be happy to digress. The way senators and congressmen live versus the way I live is shameful. They waste more money in one single night than I make in several years! Well, even so, we still have a responsibility to them. We have a responsibility to our church, and we have a responsibility to get the Word of God to the world. This safari does not self-promote, and we don't promote any organizations; we're trying to "promote" the Word of God - if we have to define it - that's

all. Our responsibility to the government does not relieve us of our responsibility to God. If you give money to anything that does not directly get the Word of God out to the world in sound doctrine, then you need to pray for forgiveness because your giving is sinful. You will be required to answer for it....

Jesus QUELLS the skepticism of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection

18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

~ Their description of the law concerning the kinsman redeemer is accurate, but their ultimate question is still laughable because the Sadducees didn't even believe in the resurrection! Yet here they are asking a resurrection question! It was business as usual for unbelievers at the time in which we are studying - just as it is today. These liberals knew what Scripture said, but they used it in a distorted and incomplete way to hurt people and to get what they wanted from those people. They aren't interested in Jesus answer; they're merely trying to trap Him in His words. This is an absolutely ridiculous illustration, is it not? I think Hollywood does

have some products that have been married seven times; but that's a lot of marriages, even for them! Well, they still feign a need, apparently, of wanting to know the answer....

24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

~ Abject ignorance of the Word of God is the number one problem in the church today, without exception; and it's one of the greatest difficulties we encounter when dealing with those who are critical of the Scriptures. God may have said to Adam, "be fruitful and multiply," but God isn't saying that to men named Adam today! That does not happen to speak to this present generation. We happen to have a population explosion that's out of control right now. If you and your spouse were the only couple left on earth, then God would probably say something like that to you; but you're not - and He's not!

The way the Bible is misquoted is perfectly shameful - and it reveals a woeful blindness to all things spiritual on their part. If these people displayed such an utter stupidity and complete lack of knowledge in other fields as they do regarding the Bible, they would be declared irrelevant and not worthy of thoughtful consideration. They are, truthfully, SO ignorant that they ought not be heard; of course, they ought not speak but THAT would be a miracle! The unlearned are spouting off about the Bible at an alarming rate. With the things I hear, I question whether or not most self-professing believers really consider the Bible to be the inspired and inerrant Word of God. The atheistic crowd that backs them up is as ignorant of the Bible as they are! That is truly mind-boggling; and not only are they ignorant of the Scripture itself but they are ignorant of the power of God....

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

~ The Sadducees did not know the power of the Scriptures, so they played with it; and, like playing with fire, they got burned! Moses and Abraham aren't dead! The bodies are buried, but they've gone on to be with Him. Reasonable, thinking people wonder about this earthly body after it dies; and how we receive a glorified body at the resurrection. So, what happens in the meantime? I have to admit, I'm not sure. What I am sure of is that Moses and Elijah were at the transfiguration - and Peter and the other apostles knew exactly who they were. Jesus didn't have to introduce everyone around! When you get to Heaven and you see everyone there, you're going to recognize and know everyone - and they're going to know you! That's where Christians who die in the Lord are today - right now! Jesus answers to these religious rulers are devastating to their credibility....

Jesus QUIETS the mind of the scribe regarding the greatest commandment

28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

~ That is the greatest statement found in the Old Testament. Our God is One God - the Trinity! He is One Jehovah and One God that we are to love with all our heart. Remember, all the other laws of the prophets hang on these two greatest commandments. By the way, do you keep this commandment? Someone may be reading that doesn't think they need Christ as their Savior; they might really think they obey God. Well, do you love God with all your heart and mind and soul? If you hedge at that question even a little bit, and even if you don't; you need a Savior! I know I don't measure up here; I wish I did. I want to but I will never be able to in this flesh. I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart - but not like I should. Well, how about your neighbor? Are you considering the welfare of

others above your own and esteeming others better than yourself? How are you really doing with obeying His commandments, friends? Why do you do them? Because you love Him? Any other motivation is simply wrong....

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

~ So, to love God is better than a sacrifice - because it means we will obey Him. If you realize you don't quite measure up, and you want to turn to Him, He is there for you - right now! That's all there is to say about that, and there are no other logical following questions from that. Jesus has a few questions for you, though! ~

Jesus QUESTIONS the Pharisees about the Messiah and QUOTES Psalm one hundred ten

35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?

36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

~ This record of Jesus words is His Own account of His virgin birth. The son is always inferior to the father. Our day of philosophy says a son is superior to his father - which is asinine. If the son is inferior to the father, then how could David call his many generations removed grandson his Lord? That would be impossible except that Jesus IS the Lord, that's the way! The only way Jesus can be the Lord is to not only be David's son, but He will have to be virgin born! What a tremendous thought Jesus communicates to us here....

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

****Jesus QUALIFIES the Scriptural giving of the widow with the two mites****

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

~ Privilege creates responsibility, and Jesus denounces the religious rulers for having neglected and failed in their responsibility to God altogether. Then, the final incident in this report is Jesus qualifying Scriptural giving with an observation of the widow and her two mites. I think Jesus was the only One in the temple Who even noticed that poor woman that day. Jesus is “people watching” today - and He is watching what they give. He’s watching what you DON’T give, too! His authority is to stand over the offering in your church - or whenever you are called upon to give to some other cause for God or His work.

God is watching your giving, friends; but He’s not tallying up what you give! He only keeps track of what you keep for yourself! The widow gave what we know as two pennies. Jesus saw the rich throw in a whole lot more than that; but Jesus does not note their generosity. The widow’s gift was hardly worth counting when you considered the wealth of the temple. Jesus saw that she kept nothing for herself; she gave it ALL to God. Some people ask if they should give a tenth. The question really is: how much do you keep for yourself? How much do you really love God? God wants your heart. If He has your heart - He'll have your money. See, it's already His anyways. He wants it ALL from you! This widow gave everything – which was nothing – and it was more than all the rest combined in God's eyes ~

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