

1) Let's begin with the parable of Mark 12:1-12 and a couple of follow-up questions.

**Mark 12:1-12 (NIV)**

- 1) This parable is more pointed than the first one from Matthew's account.
  - a) Jesus lets them know that He knows they are trying to kill Him.
  - b) He also declares their fate when they do.
- 2) He begins by describing a vineyard.
  - a) The correlation is from the words of Isa 5:1-7, where Isaiah described Israel as a vineyard.
    - i) The passage in Isaiah itself is a parable but a parable of a vineyard that was not producing fruit – perhaps a vineyard needing a Messiah?
  - b) At any rate, they immediately understood that Jesus was speaking of the nation of Israel in his parable.
- 3) The other elements of this parable are:
  - a) The man who planted the vineyard — God
  - b) The tenant farmers — the Jewish religious leaders
  - c) The landowner's servants (12:2) — the prophets and priests who remained faithful to God and preached to Israel
  - d) The son — Jesus (12:6)
  - e) The others to whom the vineyard was given (12:9) — the Gentiles.
- 4) The LABC completes the description of this parable very nicely:

Israel, pictured as a vineyard, was the nation that God had cultivated to bring salvation to the world. The religious leaders not only frustrated their nation's purpose; they also killed those who were trying to fulfill it. They were so jealous and possessive that they ignored the welfare of the very people they were supposed to be bringing to God. By telling this story, Jesus exposed the religious leaders' plot to kill him, and he warned them that their sins would be punished.
- 5) Again, from these comments, we can see the connection between the Isaiah parable and the parable Jesus is telling.
  - a) The vineyard caretakers were at the root of the problem with the vineyard itself.
- 6) At its heart, Jesus' parable is about rejection and the consequences of that rejection.
  - a) Rejection of God's prophets and teachers.
  - b) Ultimately, the rejection of God's own Son and the plan God has for the nation of Israel.
- 7) Stepping into our own lives with these lessons, we may not see an easy fit for them but.....

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### ***What are ways you can think of that we reject God's prophets, teachers, His Son, and even His plan for us?***

- Reading a scripture and rejecting it as “not applying to us” because we don’t want it to.
  - Ignoring messages that come to us when we study and become convicted.
    - Too uncomfortable
    - Too drastic a change in our comfort zone.
    - Just can’t give up whatever it convicts us to give up.
    - Oswald Chambers – out of the calm of the harbor.
  - Rejecting messages to us from other sources:
    - A friend or family member who comes to us with a caring word.
    - Rejecting a portion of a sermon or conversation with a someone that clearly were words we needed to hear.
- 8) There is also a portion of this parable that is about possession – hanging on to things that are not truly ours.
- 9) This is seen clearly in the final reason the tenants killed the son – they were unwilling to give up the vineyard and even convinced themselves the “the inheritance will be ours”.

### ***Are we possessive and resentful when our plans (leisure or pleasure) get bumped for Christian responsibilities?***

### ***Would Jesus’ return be unwelcome interruption of the plans that we have made?***

10) Continuing in Mark 12:13-17 ....

#### **Mark 12:13-17 (NIV)**

- 1) Here we have a classic instance of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”!
- 2) The Pharisees and the Herodians had diametrically opposed views regarding their country’s situation.
  - a) The Pharisees were totally opposed to the Roman occupation of Palestine.
  - b) The Herodians were a political group among the Jews that supported Rome’s installation of the Herod dynasty.
    - i) After Herod the Great died in 4 BC Palestine was divided among his sons.
    - ii) Though the nation had been split apart, the rulers of all the parts were still of one family.
    - iii) The Herodians believed that the only way to preserve their land and national identity was to keep Herod’s family together in the ruling positions.
    - iv) Their hope was to someday be a free nation again by maintaining this identity.
  - c) The common enemy between Pharisees and the Herodians in this case was Jesus.

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- i) The Herodians had lost political control when, as a result of reported unrest, Rome had deposed Archelaus (Herod's son with authority over Judea) and replaced him with a Roman governor.
- ii) The Herodians feared that Jesus would cause still more instability in Judea and that Rome might react by never replacing the Roman leaders with a descendant of Herod.
- d) Of course, the Pharisees saw Jesus as an enemy primarily because He exposed their hypocrisy.
- e) He also was a threat to their control and ill-gotten gain – witness the events of the day before.
- f) I want to inject here a point that though I know is true, I tend not to emphasize.
  - i) The Pharisees were, like the Herodians, also attempting to protect their place as God's chosen people in their own way.
  - ii) There was this side of Jesus' teachings that said that this was no longer true – the God of the Jew was no longer “just the God of the Jew” He was the God of all mankind.
  - iii) Along with this, Jesus also posed a threat because of his popularity.
    - (1) He drew thousands to him and if this continued, the Jewish nation could again wind up in exile and Rome could force them to loose their homeland once more.
- 3) Getting back to the scripture at hand, this group begins by blatantly lying about how they felt about Jesus.
  - a) They absolutely did NOT believe that He taught correctly and spoke the truth.
  - b) If they did, they would not have been opposing Him.
- 4) The truth was that they viewed Him as a deceiver, liar, and fraud, who had to be silenced by death.
- 5) Their lying flattery had at least two devious purposes.
  - a) First, they were pretending to identify with the people who, for the most part, did believe that Jesus taught the truth.
  - b) Second, they hoped to inflate the Lord's pride so that He would feel He could not answer the question correctly (as He truly felt).
- 6) Ironically, the Sanhedrin was made responsible for collecting taxes.
  - a) It is assumed that as such, they oversaw the corrupt system of tax collectors that we have discussed in the past.
- 7) The whole idea of paying taxes was a hot topic in Palestine at this time – the people did NOT like paying taxes to Caesar.
  - a) The Jews had been paying tribute (taxes) to Rome since 63 BCE when the Roman Empire annexed Palestine.
  - b) The money supported their oppressor and symbolized their subjection.

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- 8) The question was asked in a way that was intended to force Jesus into a straight Yes or No answer.
- 9) Either a yes or a no could lead Jesus into trouble.
- 10) If he answered YES then Jesus agreed that it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, the Pharisees would say he was opposed to God, and the people would turn against him.
- 11) If Jesus said NO that the taxes should not be paid, the Herodians could hand him over to Herod on the charge of rebellion.
- 12) Theoretically, this was a no win situation for Jesus.
- 13) But of course, Jesus immediately sees thru their deceptions and plans, then answers in a way that evaded their trap.
- 14) The Greek here again shows a real ability to highlight the nuances of this conversation.
  - a) The leaders use a word which means “**to give**” bestow, commit, deliver, grant, supply, yield.\*
    - (1) δίδωμι Parse: Verb: Pres Act Ind 1st Sing Meaning: to give (something) to (someone) to grant, bestow, impart to give, give out, hand over, pay out to entrust (something) to (someone) to put, place to give up, sacrifice
    - ii) The idea being to give something to someone perhaps more strongly to the voluntarily aspect.
  - b) The word Jesus uses means to “**give back**”, render (what is due), restore.\*
    - (1) ἀποδίδωμι Parse: Verb: Pres Act Ind 1st Sing Meaning: to give away, give up, give out to give back, return, restore to add to render, reward, repay, recompense, make payment, requite middle: to sell middle: to give up, yield middle: to perform, fulfill (e.g., perform a vow)
    - ii) The idea being to repay a debt or to render what is due..
- 15) Though Jesus and the Herodians were likely speaking Aramaic the dual meaning was likely conveyed there as well.

This is a perfect scripture for exploring language relationships. If we make the assumption that Jesus and these men would have carried on this conversation in Aramaic then at first assessment, the Greek wording might be rendered useless in context of what we had just discussed. However, if we consider the influence of the Holy Spirit on the writer and in this case most likely Peter relating the story of the incident, I think we can KNOW that whatever wording was used in the Aramaic was captured in the Greek. This is the absolute correct way to look at God’s word. God has a message that was preserved in every word and every incident given in His holy word. We can always rest assured that that message is preserved and we have it today.
- 16) I don’t want you to get the impression that Jesus’ answer was some fancy play on words. The words used carried a far deeper meaning.
- 17) By His answer, He was truly teaching two distinct lessons – both were NOT what either of the two parties wanted to hear.

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18) In the first part “Give to Caesar what is Caesar's”, the word He used, he was clearly teaching that rendering “paying back” was fulfilling an obligation to a God instituted government.

- a) Again, repaying something owed.
- b) We are taught by Paul in Romans 13:1-7 the government is a institution of God

### **Rom 13:1-7 (NIV)**

19) In the second part of the answer “to God what is God's", He aimed directly at the Pharisees.

- a) They balked at paying taxes even though they were likely profiting from them.
- b) Yet and by far much worse, they did everything in their power to not give to God what was His.
  - i) The most immediate example was their refusal to properly (if at all) honor His Son.

20) We obviously pay our taxes, hopefully with the right attitude?

21) We obviously ALWAYS give to God what is God's right?

***So, what does Jesus' answer say to us? Since we are so right in our attitudes, it probably is not for us at all – RIGHT?***