

Gospel of Mark 12 Bible Study

Mark 12:1–12 The Parable of the Tenants

1. How does this parable draw upon Old Testament vineyard imagery, especially Book of Isaiah?
2. What theological significance lies in the identification of the “beloved son” within the parable?
3. How does the parable function as both prophetic judgment and covenant critique?
4. In what ways does Jesus reinterpret Israel’s history through this narrative?
5. How does the quotation from Book of Psalms (“the stone the builders rejected”) shape the interpretation of Jesus’ rejection?
6. Discuss the implications of divine patience demonstrated through the repeated sending of servants.
7. How would this parable challenge the authority and legitimacy of the Jerusalem leadership?

Mark 12:13–17 Tribute to Caesar

1. Why was the issue of taxation particularly volatile in first-century Judea?
2. How does Jesus avoid the political trap set by the Pharisees and Herodians?
3. What is the significance of the imperial image on the denarius in light of Book of Genesis and humanity bearing the image of God?
4. Does Jesus establish a separation between political and divine authority, or is His response more nuanced?
5. How has this passage historically been interpreted in church-state discussions?
6. What ethical tensions arise for believers living under imperfect political systems?
7. To what extent is Jesus critiquing Roman imperial ideology in this exchange?

Mark 12:18–27 The Sadducees and the Resurrection

1. What distinguishes Sadducean theology from Pharisaic theology concerning resurrection and the afterlife?
2. How does Jesus’ argument from Book of Exodus demonstrate rabbinic interpretive methods?
3. Why does Jesus accuse the Sadducees of knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?
4. How does this passage contribute to New Testament resurrection theology?
5. What assumptions about marriage and covenant continuity are challenged in Jesus’ response?
6. How does Jesus’ understanding of resurrection transcend merely restored earthly existence?

Mark 12:28–34 The Greatest Commandment

1. Why is the scribe's question significant within Jewish legal debates of the Second Temple period?
2. How does Jesus combine Book of Deuteronomy and Book of Leviticus in a theologically profound way?
3. What does holistic love for God ("heart, soul, mind, strength") imply in Hebrew anthropology?
4. How does Jesus' summary of the Law compare with other Jewish rabbinic summaries of the Torah?
5. Why does Jesus affirm the scribe as "not far from the kingdom of God" rather than declaring him fully within it?
6. In what ways does this passage critique purely ritualistic religion?

Mark 12:35–37 David's Son and Lord

1. Why does Jesus cite Book of Psalms in this context?
2. How does this passage challenge prevailing messianic expectations?
3. What implications does Jesus' question have for understanding the Messiah's divine authority?
4. How is this text later employed in early Christian Christology?
5. Why might Mark include this teaching immediately after the series of controversies?

Mark 12:38–40 Condemnation of the Scribes

1. What social and religious privileges were associated with scribal status in the first century?
2. How does Jesus connect religious performance with exploitation of vulnerable populations?
3. What critique of honor-shame culture emerges in this passage?
4. In what ways can religious institutions today mirror the abuses condemned here?
5. How does public piety become distorted into spiritual self-promotion?

Mark 12:41–44 The Widow's Offering

1. Why does Jesus evaluate the widow's gift differently from the crowd?
2. How does this narrative redefine concepts of wealth, sacrifice, and devotion?
3. Should this passage primarily be interpreted as a commendation of sacrificial giving or as a critique of exploitative religious systems?
4. What role do widows play symbolically throughout Scripture?
5. How does this account anticipate themes of suffering and self-giving in the passion narrative?