

Mark 12:18-44 - The God of the Living

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Introduction - Jesus is questioned twice more, then Mark records some teachings and one final temple activity. Jesus teaches the importance of believing Scripture and God's power, loving God and people, and loving genuinely. Christians should embrace Scripture, trust in God's power, and genuinely love the triune God and their neighbors.

v18-27 - Know The Scriptures and the Power of God - "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit" (Act 23:8 NASB). They occupied priestly offices and held more ruling power than Pharisees,¹ believing only the first five books of the Bible. This scenario of a levirate marriage (Deut 25:5-10) was likely used in debate. Jesus states they fail to know "the Scriptures and the power of God." Jesus plainly states the fact of the resurrection (1 Co 15:19). He states believers will live forever and not marry, in that way similar to angels (Lu 20:36; 1 Jo 3:1-3). He demonstrates from Ex 3:6 that God is not of the dead, but of the living (Jo 1:4).

- How does Deut 6:4-9 say we can know the Scriptures? Does our prayer reflect belief in God's power?
- Do I love my spouse as a sibling in the Lord? If unmarried, do I hold a proper perspective on relationships?

v28-34 - Love God and Love People - There are traditionally held to be 613 commandments in the Mosaic Law.¹ Which is the greatest? The first: Jesus cites Deut 6:4-5, the opening of the *Shema*, which was to be recited twice daily.¹ Our love for God must be all-encompassing.² Jesus adds the second command of loving our neighbor (Lev 19:18), thus summarizing the Law and Prophets (Mat 22:40). Christians are admonished to love one another (Jhn 13:35; Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14; 1 Th 4:9; 1 Jo 3:11; 4:7-8, 16, 20). The Pharisee replies positively, drawing from other Scriptures (Deu 4:35; 1 Sa 15:22). God desires true worship demonstrated in a loving relationship with Him and fellow man (1 Sa 15:22; Pro 21:3 Jer 7:21-23; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8). This ends the public's questioning of Jesus (Is 45:23; 52:15).

- Are my worship and good acts obligatory and rote, or do they come from a heart longingly drawn to God?
- How am I doing following these two commandments? (Gal 5:22-32)

v35-37 - Worship the Triune God - Jesus discusses Ps 110. Christ is a title meaning "anointed one" (Messiah). "David... in the Holy Spirit, declared" - The Scriptures are God-breathed (2Ti 3:16-17) and writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit (2Pe 1:20-21). David said, "the LORD (Yahweh) said to my Lord (Adonay)." Note the Holy Spirit, the LORD (Father), and "my Lord" (Son) are all in verse 36. Jesus teaches that the Messiah must not be merely a man, but greater than David in a profound way (fully God). He is able to offer the only perfect and acceptable sacrifice to atone for our sin.

v38-44 - Have a Genuine Love for God - Jesus contrasts prideful, hypocritical religious leaders with a humble yet outrageously generous poor widow. The Pharisees like (*thelo*) being recognized, and public righteousness is their goal (Mat 23). They even "devour widows' homes" - law teachers were not paid and "depended on the hospitality extended to them."¹ The widow deposited her offering into one of the thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles in the Court of the Women. The two coins, *lepta* ("the smallest coin in circulation"²), together made a *kodrantes*, a 1/64 of a denarius (day's wage). "In spite of her abject loneliness, in spite of her appalling penury, she still believed in the God of her fathers, and in her personal relationship to Him. This she expressed as she cast her gift into the treasury."³ In a much more perfect way, Jesus sacrificially lays down His life on our behalf to redeem us from our sin. (Jhn 15:13; 1J 3:16).

- What is the antidote or preventative for a hypocritical heart? (See also Ps 51:17; Lu 18:13)
- Is God of supreme value to my soul? "Test yourself. Would you want to go to heaven if Christ were not there? Is your treasure Christ or his gifts?"⁴
- Is my giving of my whole self (time, talents, treasures) to God out of an abundance or in sacrifice? (2 Sam 24:24)

¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Walvoord and Zuck. 1983. Pg. 162-165.

² *Word Meanings in the New Testament*. Earle. 1988. Pg. 44-45.

³ *The Great Physician: The Method of Jesus with Individuals*. G. Campbell Morgan. 2010. Pg. 268.

⁴ *Let the Nations Be Glad!*. John Piper. Pg. 267.