

1. **Introduction:** After Jesus told the parable about the vineyard tenants on Tuesday, He apparently remained in the Temple and was again approached by people who hoped to somehow put Him in the wrong.
  - As we saw in our day-by-day list of Passion-week events, Tuesday was an extremely busy day.
2. **Mark 12:13-17:** *And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. <sup>14</sup> And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”*
  - The combination of Pharisees and Herodians is strange.
  - Herodians & Pharisees opposed one another. Pharisees strictly observed the Law of Moses and thought it wrong to have to pay Roman taxes.
  - The Herodians were secular, supported Rome, and wanted Herod to have a larger kingdom than just Galilee and Perea. Herodians and Pharisee’s coming together was because Jesus was their common enemy.
  - They asked a question about the lawfulness of paying taxes to Caesar.
  - “Lawful” refers to acts that are morally permissible within Jewish Law.
3. **Mark 12:15-17:** *But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” <sup>16</sup> And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at him.*
  - Jesus knew they were trying to trick Him. He objected to the way the question framed the issue. The tax in question was something like a poll-tax applied to all adult males.
  - The intent of the question was to reveal either loyalty to Rome or loyalty to the kingdom of God. Either a “yes” or a “no” would create problems.
  - Earthly governments exist within the sovereign plan of God. Believers are expected to submit to their authority unless doing so requires us to violate God’s moral standard.
  - The question Jesus was asked was “abstract.” He answered the abstract question with a “concrete” example. Excellent!
  - Asking for and taking into His hand a denarius which bore an image of the Emperor and an inscription.

- Jesus shrewdly said, *"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*
  - Jesus' answer startled the questioners. They had expected either a "yes" or a "no" answer. Jesus had straight-forwardly side stepped their trap.
  - Jesus' answer was marvelous. It both held to the truth and placed the burden on individuals, not Jesus, to decide what things belong to God and which belong to Caesar.
  - The Herodians and Pharisees and others did not give up on their quest to eliminate Jesus, but for the moment they were stymied. They left amazed that Jesus had once again avoided a carefully planned trap.
  - Their next effort to deal with Jesus was to frame a question that used the Sadducees disbelief in the resurrection to demonstrate Jesus' wrong teaching.
  - Sadducees refused to believe any tradition or teaching that could not be found in the 5 books of Moses.
  - Sadducees asked a hypothetical question about "afterlife" relationships.
4. **Mark 12:18-23**: *"And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, <sup>19</sup> "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>20</sup> There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. <sup>21</sup> And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. <sup>22</sup> And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. <sup>23</sup> In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife."*
- The Sadducees understanding of the Pentateuch convinced them that there was no afterlife, no resurrection, no angels, and no spirits.
  - Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God is eternal and those in the kingdom will live after mortal death. The Sadducees totally disagreed.
  - Sadducees apparently assumed that any imagined afterlife would be very similar to mortal life. Based on that notion, they asked a hypothetical question based on their view of the afterlife they didn't believe in.
  - The question they asked had to do with the custom of levirate marriage which they accepted because it was found in Deuteronomy 25:5-6.
  - The custom was that if a man died leaving a widow without children, an eligible relative (usually a brother of the dead husband) was to marry the widow and raise up children as heirs of the dead man's estate.
  - The Sadducees' hypothetical question assumed there were 7 brothers One brother married and died leaving no children. One after another, the remaining brothers

marry the widow and die without children. So, each of the 7 brothers was married to the same women and all left no children.

- The trap was the question of when the righteous are raised to live in God's kingdom, whose wife will the woman be? In mortal life she was the wife of each on the 7 brothers.

5. **Mark 12:24-27: Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? <sup>25</sup>For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup>And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? <sup>27</sup>He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."**

- The Sadducees thought their question was absurd and that its absurdity proved the absurdity of resurrection.
- Jesus answered the Sadducees question in two stages. First, He said that life in the kingdom in heaven will not be the same kind of existence we experience in mortal life (12:24-25).
- Then, He showed them that, though they had not discerned it, Moses had affirmed the doctrine of life after mortal death (12:26-27).
- The Sadducees assumed that if there was an afterlife, it would be like mortal life. Jesus says that they are mistaken, everything will be changed.
- Marriage in mortal life is an integral part of God's plan to fill the earth with people, but in heaven, people will be like the angels: nonsexual, immortal, devoted to God, without sin on any inclination to sin.
- Recall that the Sadducees did not believe in angels and any description of angels is meaningless to them, but Jesus affirms the truth of angels.
- Jesus then demonstrates from the Pentateuch that Moses assumed a resurrection by quoting Ex. 3:6, "***I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.***"
- God speaks of the Hebrew patriarchs in the present tense. God is and continues to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob though all 3 have experienced mortal death.
- Jesus sums up the Sadducees' theology by saying they are mistaken.
- They have been misled. They wander about aimlessly.
- The Sadducees held the top positions in the Temple. They were the ones who supposedly were the leaders of Israel in spiritual matters.

- We all face the problem of limited and distorted understanding. It is something we must work on constantly. We need the help of the Holy Spirit as we diligently study Scripture.
- Next lesson, we begin with Mark 12:28.