

1. **Introduction:** The Sadducees asked Jesus a trick question about resurrection. Jesus told them they were badly mistaken to assume that resurrected life would be similar to mortal life. “Badly mistaken” could have been translated “you are deceiving yourselves.”
 - Jesus on Resurrection: When Jesus raised Lazarus, He asked Martha a question each of us must answer.
 - Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”* (John 11:25-26)
2. **A Sincere Question:** As Jesus continued to stand there after responding to the Sadducees, a scribe, who had witnessed the confrontation and heard Jesus, asked Him a question the scribe genuinely wanted to hear Jesus’ answer.
3. **Mark 12:28-31:** *And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.*
 - Scribes were trained men who devoted themselves to copying the Scriptures by hand. They were meticulous about accuracy. They were regarded as experts on the Law and its interpretation.
 - This man truly wanted to know Jesus’ opinion.
 - In answer Jesus quoted (1.) Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18.
 - These two commandments work together and if truly obeyed would move Israel toward the blessings God promised to Abraham’s descendants. Love the Lord with your whole being!
 - Love God who is the source: Creator and sustainer of the universe and all that is in it. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. He is Savior of His people, Lord and King of His people, and friend of His people.
 - Love people. They are made in God’s image. C.S. Lewis said, “you have never seen an ordinary person.”
 - Some people will become a holy person of love and commitment that is so great you would be inclined to fall down and worship them if you could see their final state.

- Some people’s final state will be as a being so frightful and evil that, if you could see their final state, you would run away in horror.
 - Sincere love for God that includes love for your neighbor is a key to a person’s final state being like that of Christ – true, holy, and righteous.
4. **Mark 12:32-34:** *And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. ³³ And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴ And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.*
- I think this is first time in any of the Gospels that a religious leader of Israel calls Jesus “right” about what He was teaching.
 - The scribe seems to have felt he and Jesus agreed as far as what was most important in Scripture. These commandments are “most important” because in a very real sense they are a forerunner of all the others.
 - The scribe continues, saying that sacrifices and other acts of worship mean very little apart from obedience to God.
 - This answer tells Jesus that here is a man, who though not yet committed to be Jesus’ follower, is very close. Soon he could take the crucial step.
 - The recent round of failed attempts to discredit Jesus led His enemies to draw back and consider a different strategy. Jesus thwarted them on each of their efforts so far.
5. **Mark 12:35-37:** *And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.””³⁷ David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?” And the great throng heard him gladly.*
- After talking with the “almost a believer” scribe, Jesus chose to press the attack. For the most part, His enemies had been asking questions.
 - Jesus at this point asks His own question. He laid the groundwork by pointing out that the scribes acknowledged the Messiah to be King David’s descendant.
 - Yet, in Psalm 110:1, David called his descendant, “*my Lord.*”
 - David recognizes Messiah both as his descendant and as God. Jesus questions what does David mean by that. Is Messiah David’s descendant or is He the divine “Lord?”
 - The answer is that Messiah is both David’s human descendant and the divine “Lord.”
 - We now know that is possible because Jesus has both a human nature and a divine nature. He is the God-man.

- It took over 400 years for the truth of Jesus' dual nature to be formally accepted by the church (Chalcedon Creed – 451 AD).
 - The temple leaders believed in the coming Messiah, but they did they not believe He would be God. How had they missed David's logic?
6. **Mark 12:38-40: And in his teaching he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces ³⁹ and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, ⁴⁰ who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”**
- The scribes were both respected and feared for their expert knowledge of the Law. They were recognized as dependable for correct interpretations.
 - Having shamed the scribes earlier, Jesus now warned the people about the danger of pride. (Scribes were Law experts, the lawyers of the day.)
 - “Long robes” referred to the scribes dressing in Greek robes, the equivalent of what would today be expensive, hand-tailored clothes.
 - “Greetings in the marketplace” referred to the deference they expected from others due to their expertise in the Law.
 - “Best seats in the synagogue” referred to the chairs reserved for honored leaders. “Places of honor at feasts” typically were reserved for people recognized as of highest social standing.
 - Jesus was warning that hypocrites often wear pride is a mask. While presenting themselves as respectable and honorable, they “*devour widows' houses.*” Their long prayers are but a pretense.
 - In other words, they take advantage of helpless people while pretending to be pious and devoted to God and His law.
 - Because they knew God's requirements and sidestepped them, Jesus said they would receive the greater condemnation.
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7. **Mark 12:41-44: And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³ And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”**

- In this passage, the righteousness of the leaders is compared with the character of a poor widow.
- The Sadducees believed that God rewards the righteous in this life. Thus, they judged a person’s righteousness by their wealth and social standing.
- The Pharisees believed in rewards and punishments in the afterlife, but they also believed wealth to be a sign of God’s favor.
- Jesus sat in the court of women opposite the collection receptacles for the free-will offerings of the people. Wealthy people made a big display of dropping large sums into the collection box.
- Meanwhile a poor widow (someone obviously not favored by God) put a very small offering in the box (about one-hundredth of a denarius).
- Jesus did not disparage or condemn those making large donations, but He honored generous people who had little material wealth. This widow gave out of her need.
- Jesus was pleased with the widow’s faithful attitude and generous heart.
- Sacrifice like that of the widow requires trust that God will meet needs. Such people have a grateful heart for God’s provision for life. Jesus praises her sacrificial faith.
- This lesson completes chapter 12. Chapter 13 and a portion of chapter 14 also deal with events on that very eventful day –Tuesday of Passion Week.