

THE SCRIPT: Mark 12:35-44; Psalm 110:1

Psalm 110 is considered a Messianic psalm, but was also used at coronations, professing God's support for the king. Interpretation: "The Lord [God] said to my Lord [Messiah]..."

1. With what question is Jesus challenging the scribes?
2. What ideas of Messiah might be inferred by that Psalm?
3. What does Jesus reveal about Messiah that is contrary to the Messiah expected the scribes (and the crowds)?
4. What does Jesus' warning reveal the scribes' behavior?
5. The widow: Compare and contrast what we've learned about the ruling class, its wealth and power, and the widow's last penny. What do you think is Mark's point? Is she required to give all she has? Is she giving out of faith and generosity?

THE REVIEWS:

1. What revelations of Jesus' character stand out for you in this lesson?

FURTHER STUDY:

A. Scriptures (parallel Gospel accounts):

Matthew 22; 23:1-36
Luke 20; 21:1-4

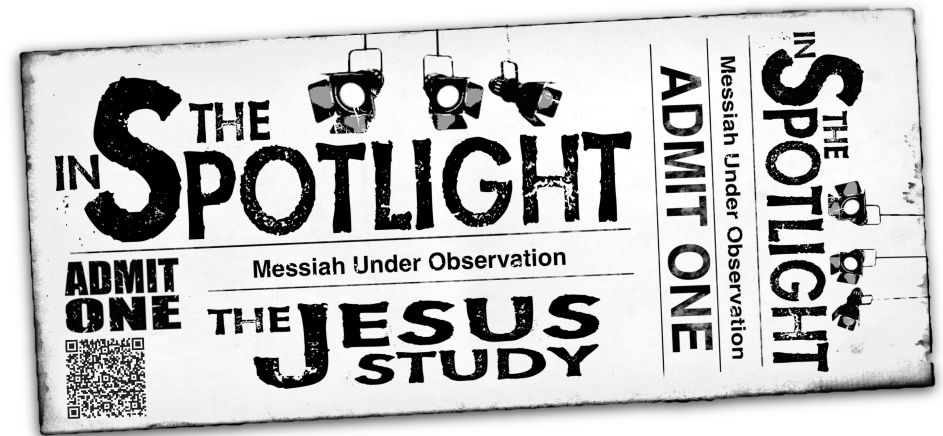
B. Suggested Reference Materials:

"The Last Week" Borg & Crossman
"Beautiful Outlaw" by John Eldredge
"The Jesus I Never Knew" by Phillip Yancey
"Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus" by Lois Tverberg

Next Week: Mark 13

"It's the End of the World As We Know it"

You won't want to miss it!



LESSON #18

"By Whose Authority?"

or

"Please Phrase Your Answer in the Form of a Question"

Mark 11:27 - 12:44

Focus Scripture:

Mark 12:24

"Your problem is that you don't know the scriptures, and you don't know the power of God." -Jesus

Food for Thought:

Have you ever had the opportunity to express your faith? How strong are your debate skills?

Vocabulary Definitions:

Passover Lamb (πάσχα, pascha): Before 70CE the Passover Lamb was the center of the Seder meal, to commemorate when the Angel of Death passed over Jewish homes, and God freed Israel from Egypt's bondage and slavery. The lamb was to live in the home four days and be inspected for impurities. *"On the tenth [day] of Nissan, [the household] will each take for themselves a lamb for the family, a lamb for the household.[...] The lamb for you must be a male, without defect, in its first year; you will take it from the sheep or from the goats. "You will keep it [in your home] until the fourteenth day of this month, and all the assembly of the community of Israel will slaughter it at twilight." Exodus 12:3,5-6*

Herodians: Also referred to as "Hellenists," a Jewish sect, political, friendly with Rome, and supportive of Herod the Great and of his dynasty.

Pharisees: a fundamentalist religious movement at the turn of the 1st century, who's beliefs became the foundational, liturgical, and ritualistic basis for Rabbinic Judaism.

Sadducees: the aristocracy of Jewish society, high priestly families and lay nobility at the turn of the century, who favored Hellenization, and rejected all the Hebrew scriptures except the first five books, or Torah.

Levirate Marriage: where a widow is married to the brother of her dead husband, in order to produce heirs. It was the primary purpose of patriarchal marriage - progeny and property.

Denarius: a first century Roman coin, worth about a day's wage. Its use was forbidden by the temple leadership because it bore a "graven" image of Caesar, and an inscription claiming Caesar as deity.

Brief Historical and/or Cultural Context:

It is now Monday of Passover week, and the Lamb is "in the house." Jesus is in the temple, surrounded by crowds, confronted by the Temple leaders, Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, and other high society leaders. Meanwhile Jewish households are bringing their lambs to Temple to be inspected for purity. Every Jewish household is preparing their home for Passover, burning all leaven (a Jewish symbol of corruption, or contamination) and scouring the home.

A word about Jewish belief in a resurrection: For the most part, Hebrew scriptures are silent about a final resurrection. The belief came about only two centuries prior to redress a human injustice that faithful Jews were being executed by the Greek emperor Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Belief in a resurrection was a way of defending God's justice, that martyrs would receive a reward at the end of time, which differs from the Greek understanding that the afterlife exists as contiguous but separate universe, outside of time. Sadducees did not hold to belief in any resurrection, however. Many Jews, including Jesus, did believe.

Passover Week: Tuesday

THE STAGE: Read Mark 11:27 through Mark 12

1. Where is Jesus, and who are all the various actors?

Script Scenes

THE SCRIPT: Mark 11:27-33

1. Who interrogates Jesus, what is their question, and intention?
2. Why is the issue of baptism and forgiveness a hot topic, and trap?
3. How does Jesus respond, and how is it a non-response?
4. Of what/whom are the interrogators afraid?

THE SCRIPT: Mark 12:1-12

1. To whom is this parable intended?
2. Who represents each of the players, i.e. the Vineyard, the Owner, the Tenants, the Slaves, the Son?
3. What is Mark's point in retelling this parable?
4. In v. 12 who are "they," what is their desire, what is their fear?

THE SCRIPT: Mark 12:13-17

1. Who is "they" in vs 13, who did they send, and what was their intention?
2. What is Jesus' first response? What does it say about the interrogators that they are able to produce a denarius from their own pockets?
3. How is Jesus' response to the coin a non-answer to their initial questions?
4. Consider: a. "they" were responsible for collecting taxes from the people for "tribute" to the Empire, who profited from its possessions. b. Jesus never says, "pay your taxes." (*So the Church's misinterpretation of an eternal truth about church & state is moot.*) How does his response beg the question: "What belongs to God?"
5. What is "their" reaction?

THE SCRIPT: Mark 12:18-27

1. Who is interrogating Jesus, and what is their intention?
2. What are Jesus' three responses?
3. Does Jesus actually answer their question, or does he pose more things to think about?
4. What interesting details does Jesus reveal about life-after-death in his response? (*Recall the transfiguration*)

THE SCRIPT: Mark 12:28-34

1. Who is interrogating Jesus?
2. Compare: if God is owed our heart, soul, mind & strength and if love renders the walls between the "haves & have-nots," what is owed to Caesar (Empire)?