

## **OPPOSING KINGDOMS (Mark 12)**

A major theme within **Mark 11-12** is in what the writer (Mark) is using of Jesus' interactions between Jewish religious leaders as well as Jewish political leaders in drawing a most definite distinction between the kingdom of this world vs. the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Heaven. While those terms aren't used in Jesus' teachings in **Mark 12**, nevertheless, as we'll see, He was referring to God's eternal kingdom. As mentioned last week, in the King James translation of the Scriptures, "kingdom of God"<sup>1</sup> is used 69 times and "kingdom of heaven"<sup>2</sup> is used 32 times in the New Testament. That's 101 times "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" is used. As also mentioned previously, they are essentially speaking of the same thing, that we are presently in the time, where God is building His eternal kingdom, one person at a time so to speak, so it has been and can be said, the kingdom of God is upon us, which is then according to the "New Covenant" that God our Creator, the Sustainer of all things has established through the life, death, and resurrection of His only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus paid the price for our sins against God, He took our sins upon Himself, on the cross and then to the grave. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (**Romans 3:23-24**) That covenant is established with each of us personally, as Apostle John stated, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) That is what Jesus was talking about when He said that all must be "born-again", that is, born of the Holy Spirit of God. And it is through the love of God, that He has initiated an offering of a reconciliation with Him and in then having that covenant relationship with Him. As Jesus tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**)

Our response then to God's love is to "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (**1 John 3:1**) We are then responding by loving Him as He first loved us! (**1 John 4:19**) How do we express that? Jesus tells us, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**) So then, as children of God, with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we then are to naturally bear fruit for His glory, as we keep His Word. That fruit of the Spirit is, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) As we'll read in

---

1 <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/phrases/Kingdom-of-God/type/kjv>

2 <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/phrases/Kingdom-of-Heaven/type/kjv>

**Mark 12**, in Jesus' own words, He teaches us of God's great commandment and the second like unto it that fulfills all the law and the prophets. In other words, what is of the heart of God, what God really desires for us to do and how to live, and that is for us to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and then also to love our neighbors as ourselves. (**Mark 12:30-32, Matt. 22:37-40**) That is kingdom of God-mindedness!

So, it doesn't end at just "being saved", so to speak, does it? We aren't just saved and then we just wait around, doing whatever we please, until Jesus takes us home to glory. **Ephesians 2:8-10** gives us a succinct explanation of how we are saved, who is doing the saving, and then what we do beyond that, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." That's the bearing of fruit that Jesus was talking about in **John 15** as well as in our parable in **Mark 12**. In **John 15** we read, as Jesus tells us, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing.**" (**John 15:1-5**) Let's compare that to:

=====

**The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (Mark 12:1-12)**

Then He [Jesus] began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. Therefore still having **one son**, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. "Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not even read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" And they sought to lay hands on

Him, but **feared the multitude**, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.

=====

The Son that is inferred upon in Jesus' parable of the vineyard and the vine-dressers, is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. God, being the owner of the vineyard, sends his servants, the prophets to get some fruit to take back to the owner, of which the vine-dressers either beat or killed them. Finally the owner sends his one Son, saying, 'surely they will respect and listen to Him'. It is a bit of the mixing of metaphors, comparing **John 15** to **Mark 12** but that fruit that God, the owner of the vineyard is seeking after, is through His one and only Son. Therefore, if one rejects the Son, there is no bearing of fruit. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (**1 John 5:12**) "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also." (**1 John 2:23**)

Yet, praise the Lord, death could not hold down the Son of God! As the Apostle Peter preached on that day of Pentecost after Jesus had risen from the dead and after there was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it." (**Acts 2:22-24**) Those of the kingdom of this world cannot stop the kingdom of God!

In the "*The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers*", Jesus was initially speaking to the **scribes and the chief priests**, as it is mentioned in **Mark 11:18**. The scribes were the keepers and maintainers of the Scriptures, the law of Moses, or the laws of God. They were then, experts at interpreting and knowing the law.<sup>3</sup> Yet as we know from Jesus' interactions with them, as well as the other Jewish leaders, they knew the letter of the law but rejected the Spirit behind it. As Jesus Himself stated, "**The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, [if it is God's Word by all means do it] but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. [At times Jesus came right out and called them hypocrites] For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men.**" (**Matthew 23:2-5**) Jesus was then speaking to the Jewish religious leaders in the comparing of those seeking that of the kingdom of this world vs. the kingdom of God. As Jesus said, "**if you love Me you will keep my Word.**" We continue:

---

3 <https://www.gotquestions.org/scribes-Jesus.html>

=====

**The Pharisees and the Herodians (Mark 12:13-17)**

Then they [the scribes and the chief priests] sent to Him some of the **Pharisees and the Herodians**, to catch Him in His words. When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "**Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it.**" So they brought it. And He said to them, "**Whose image and inscription is this?**" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And Jesus answered and 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.

=====

Ah, the kingdom of this world vs. the kingdom of heaven! What is most interesting here is in the unity of the Pharisees and the Herodians. The Herodians were "a political party of Jews who supported the dynasty of Herod and the rule of Rome." They were hated by the Pharisees as the Herodians were lax on morals and religious observances.<sup>4</sup> Yet, they joined forces, religious and political leaders to come against Christ Jesus. They were unsuccessful in getting Jesus entangled in the political affairs of this world. Previously in **Mark 8:15**, Jesus had warned His disciples, "**Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.**" That is, to beware of their false teachings and hypocrisy. There is: the kingdom of this world which is opposed to the kingdom of God! As Jesus also said as recorded in Mark 8, "**Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?**" (**Mark 8:34-36**) So not only was Jesus "kingdom of God"-minded but He tells us to be as well. In speaking about the worrying of what one would eat or wear, Jesus said, "**For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**" (**Matthew 6:32-34**)

When we combine that with God's great commandment and the second like unto it, we're not just concerning ourselves about just ourselves, but also for others too. The rulers of the Jews, that is, the scribes, Pharisees, and Herodians that Jesus warned His disciples about, were concerned about their place in the kingdom of this world. We are called out of that darkness and into the marvelous light of Christ Jesus to be kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven minded, for the

---

4 Scofield Study Bible, pg. 1384.

glory of God. "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

=====  
**The Sadducees: What About the Resurrection? (Mark 12:18-27)**

Then some **Sadducees**, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves his wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

=====  
As it is also written, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Jesus spoke of that also in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Once the wicked rich man died he was in torment in hell. Contrary to that, Lazarus, who was poor and suffered on earth was then in the bosom of Abraham, ie-in heaven. One was kingdom of this world-minded, one was kingdom of heaven-minded. For us that means abiding in Christ, keeping His Word, and continuing to look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. (**Hebrews 12:2**)

=====  
**The Scribes: Which Is the First Commandment of All? (Mark 12:28-34)**

Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole



burnt offerings and sacrifices." Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that no one dared question Him.

=====  
If Jesus said that he was not far from the kingdom of God, what then did he lack? To believe on Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God! "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5)

=====  
**Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord? (Mark 12:35-37)**

Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" ' Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?' And the common people heard Him gladly.

=====  
The last part of **Mark 12** is Jesus' warning of the scribes and then the contrast to that is in the widow and her two mites. Kingdom of this world vs kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven-mindedness.

=====  
**Beware of the Scribes (Mark 12:38-44)**

Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

**The Widow's Two Mites**

Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

=====  
As **Psalms 24:1** says, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein." Whatever we have, we are just stewards of what God has given us. We too are the Lord's. As the Apostle Paul tells us, "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 **Corinthians 6:20**) Being kingdom of God minded vs kingdom of this world-minded. Loving God with all that is in us and loving others, not loving this world that will pass away. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!