



**UNIT 9 LESSON 8**  
**MARK 11:27 - 13:37**

**THE FINAL TEACHING.**

The study passage for this lesson consists entirely of various teachings of Jesus which illustrate for the last time the clash between Jesus' teaching and those of Judaism. The second part, Chapter 13, deals with eschatology and we shall come to that later.

Read through 11:27 - 12:44 and notice the several incidents and the teaching that Jesus gives in connection with them.

You will notice the wealth of detail in this section about contemporary Judaism and society. For example, the parable of the tenants in the vineyard is a faithful reflection of the social setting of much of Palestine where absentee landlords were common and where rebellion was always a factor to be reckoned with.

**SECTION A.**

1. **QUESTION ABOUT JESUS' AUTHORITY AND PARABLE OF TENANTS. Mark 11:27 - 12:12.**

Jesus knew that he was being tested so he replied with a question which would put the priests into a quandary. If they said that John was divinely ordained, then that meant Jesus was too, because John pointed to Jesus.

The parable is more allegorical than most, i.e., many of the details in it have counterparts in real life. The owner of the Vineyard is God; the Vineyard is Israel and the tenants are the rulers of Israel. The servants are the prophets and the son is Jesus himself.

The quotation in vs. 10-11 is from Psalm 118:22,23 and reoccurs in many places in the N.T. including Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:4,7.

The deputation from the Sanhedrin evidently get the point of Jesus' remarks without difficulty and continue their plans (v.12).

2. **QUESTION ABOUT TAXES. Mark 12:13-17.**

There were three main taxes at the time, the ordinary income tax, property tax and the hated poll-tax, which was paid direct to Rome because Judea was at the time ruled direct from Rome, not enjoying any independence at all.



Coinage and its acceptance was a symbol of domination by the ruler whose image it bore. Most Roman coins minted for use in Palestine did not carry the Emperor's image out of respect for Jewish feelings, but the special silver coin minted for the poll-tax was an exception.

But Jesus pointed out that such was acceptable so long as they remembered that there was a greater King, whose Kingdom was imminent and who would assume precedence over any earthly King and whose Kingdom was, in essence and fact, of a vastly different nature.

### 3. QUESTION ABOUT RISING FROM DEATH. Mark 12:18-27.

The Sadducees accepted only the written Law, and of that only the first five books of the Old Testament. They also rejected any beliefs about the resurrection. Jesus accepted their reference to a seldom used law about marriage but pointed out their non-belief in the resurrection was based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15) and furthermore, the part of Scripture that they accepted, did in fact proclaim such a belief!

### 4. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT. Mark 12:28-34.

The quotation which Jesus gives from the O.T. in v. 29 is the well-known Jewish *Shema*: Deut. 6:4,5.

The other quotation is from Lev. 19:18. It was quite the custom for prominent rabbis to be asked if they could summarise a whole host of Jewish laws into one or two short statements.

Verse 34 is the transition to the concluding part of this section. From this verse on we have Jesus taking the initiative in teaching, without waiting for questioners.

### 5. COMMENTS ABOUT THE MESSIAH. Mark 12:35-37.

This is a typical piece of rabbinic reasoning which may not be easily understood by Westerners. Basically the thought is this: Messiah, or the Christ, is to come from David's line, and you would think that no matter how great the Messiah is, he is not as great as the founder of the Davidic line, David himself. But David in his Psalm 110, actually calls the Messiah His Lord. Jesus does not deny that the Christ is the descendant of David, but he shows that the concept of Christ which the scribes were teaching was much too low. The Christ is not only David's son but David's Lord.

So Jesus here again teaches that His Messianic Kingdom is not like David's Kingdom, of a military nature, but it is of a new order, and it supersedes anything that came before it.



## 6. MARK Chapter 12:37-44.

The section concludes with a condemnation of the teachers of the Law, here sketched in a vivid series of phrases, and a commendation of the Widow, who had managed to exemplify all that Jesus stood for and thereby challenged all that the official teachers proposed and did (v. 40).

## SECTION B.

### 1. MARK Chapter 13.

The thinking throughout this chapter is in terms of Jewish history and Jewish ideas familiar to the Jews of Jesus' day but strange and therefore difficult to us. This chapter contains the prophetic teachings of Jesus and specifically the prophecy of two major events in history - (a) the fall of Jerusalem and (b) Jesus' own second coming. Both events were future to the time when Jesus spoke. The first event prophesied was fulfilled in 70A.D., but Jesus' second coming is still future.

You will notice that this chapter is unique in Mark's Gospel, being a lengthy connected discourse.

*The New Bible Commentary*, IVF suggests this outline of the chapter.

vs. 1-4 The question of the disciples.

vs. 5-13 Warning to the disciples about troublous times and the loss of faith.

vs. 14-27 Two crises of the future - the Fall of Jerusalem and the Second Coming.

vs. 28-37 Exhortations to Watchfulness.

William Barclay advises examining the chapter on a thematic, rather than consecutive basis. His themes are:

vs. 1,2,14-20 Prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem.

vs. 9-13 Warnings about persecutions to come.

vs. 3-6,21,22 Warnings about the dangers of the last days.

vs. 7,8,24-27 Warnings about the Second Coming.

vs. 28-37 Warnings about watchfulness.

Whatever way you end up analysing the chapter, you will have to deal with the vocabulary in the words of Jesus. This chapter is a particularly concentrated example of the way God breaks into the affairs of the world at the end day in the person of Jesus, i.e., the coming of the Kingdom of God. One of the popular Hebrew ways of referring to this event is the "Day of the Lord."



2. The trials of persecution during the few centuries just before the Christian era produced many developments of this "Day of the Lord" teaching, and many of them were found in the new type of writing, called Apocalyptic. These were couched in dreams and visions, mostly put into the experiences of notable men of the past, such as Moses, Abraham and others. These books were full of cryptic symbols and codes, the meaning of which was perfectly clear to those who were "in the know" but was a complete mystery to outsiders.

The Book of the Revelation is a Christian example of this style of writing, designed to produce faith, hope and courage in the face of overwhelming odds.

Mark 13 is often called, "The Little Apocalypse" and must be understood in the light of the above. Almost all of the phrases can be found in previous writing. Jesus was using well-known thought forms to communicate His message.

Matthew 24 and Luke 21 have similar material but a particular difference is the reference to "the awful horror" (v.14). Luke is much more explicit in referring to this as the Roman army which laid siege to Jerusalem (Luke 21:20). Probably Luke compiled his Gospel after this event had occurred and did not need to retain the secrecy whereas Mark wrote before the event and used a cryptic reference.

The origin of the phrase "the awful horror" is Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 and refers to the statue of Zeus set up by the pagan King Antiochus, in the Jewish Temple in 168 B.C.

The overwhelming feature of Mark 13 is its sober emphasis, not upon timetables and date-fixing in respect of the future, but upon the strong ethical and moral implications of God's action in history, both past and present. (See esp. vs. 23,33).

3. In concluding this Lesson, we discuss briefly the wider implications of various issues raised in this chapter. In the study of theology, the title which is given to this section is "Eschatology". In Biblical studies the word eschatology refers not only to events in the future, i.e., death, heaven etc., but also to refer to any facet of Christian teaching or belief which is coloured by God's breaking into the world in Christ, either in the Incarnation or at the End-Time. Thus, Jesus' own incarnation is not merely an example of a man who is a great teacher or humanitarian - it is an eschatological event, in that the Kingdom of God comes in Jesus. This is the basis upon which we have interpreted Mark's Gospel, for it is undoubtedly the context in which Jesus preached and healed. His miracles are not just social welfare programmes but have eschatological significance.

**QUESTION 1:**

Mark 12:1-12. What is the point of this parable? How do the tenants treat the servants? How is the Owner's son described and how is his authority received? What prophecy does Jesus make in the parable?

**QUESTION 2:**

Analyse Jesus' answer in Mark 12:29-31. In what way is it a summation of the ten commandments? (see Exodus 20:3-17 for ten commandments). How does the scribe respond to Jesus' answer and what does he reveal about himself? Why does their questioning of Jesus stop here?

**QUESTION 3:**

Mark 12:35-37. What question does Jesus now ask? What wrong emphasis have the scribes been giving in their teaching about the Messiah? What relationship between David and Christ does Jesus want to make clear?

**QUESTION 4:**

Mark 13:9-13. In addition to the general calamities what specific troubles does Jesus foretell for his disciples? From what groups will pressure come? What command and what promise does Jesus give to those who bear testimony for him?

**QUESTION 5:**

Mark 13:24-27. What things does Jesus describe as accompanying the second great crisis event? When will these events take place? How will Jesus come again? What will he do when he comes?

**QUESTION FOR GROUP STUDY:**

What 6 things in Mark 12:38-44 characterise the teachers of the Law? What do all these things add up to? Which of these must we be alert to avoid? Why is their condemnation to be greater?