

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Mar 12:13-44 NKJV] 13 Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in [His] words. 14 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? 15 "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]." 16 So they brought [it]. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription [is] this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." 17 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.

The religious rulers have had a couple of bad days since Jesus entered the temple on Palm Sunday.

Jesus has exposed them for who they really are – instead of leading people closer to God, they were pushing them away by ripping them off.

We saw it again last week as Jesus to their face – tells them the parable of the wicked vinedressers – and as Jesus speaks the parable – it became obvious to the religious rulers that Jesus was speaking about them again.

The religious rulers wanted to kill Jesus – the only thing holding them back was that the multitudes loved Jesus.

And the religious rulers were more afraid of offending the people than they were offending God.

So in this first test that we are going to see this morning, two groups come together to attempt to bring down Jesus.

The Pharisees, of course, were the religious zealots – while the Herodians were pretty much a political group.

Notice their insincerity as they address Jesus as teacher – You are true – You teach the way of God in truth –

They didn't care about Jesus, they want Him dead.

So they come prepared with a question. “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?”

These guys came prepared this time – remember last week they came asking Jesus by what authority was He doing these things – and Jesus answered the question with a question and they were the ones that couldn't come up with an answer.

You see, they are trying to force Jesus to answer the question and no matter what way Jesus answers the question, they can use it for their advantage.

If Jesus says – yes, you have to pay taxes to Caesar – the people would then turn on Jesus. Rome occupied Jerusalem and had imposed taxes on everything. The people hated paying taxes to Rome.

If Jesus says – no, you don't have to pay taxes to Caesar – the religious rulers would simply accuse Jesus of mounting an insurrection against Rome and have the Roman officials take care of the problem.

And this would eventually become the argument that they used to have Jesus crucified.

And we see an example of this in Luke 23 as the religious rulers come before Pontius Pilate...

[Luk 23:2 NKJV] 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this [fellow] perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

But Jesus never said this.

Jesus responded by asking for a coin.

Jesus didn't carry coins because Judas was the treasurer among the disciples.

[Mar 12:16-17 NKJV] 16 So they brought [it]. And He said to them, "Whose **image and inscription [is] this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." 17 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.**

Because the area was under the occupation of Rome, they used Rome's money.

And during this time, the image was probably that of Tiberius Caesar, and besides the image of Tiberius Caesar – the inscription would state “Tiberius Caesar Augustus, Son of the Divine Augustus,”

So Jesus pretty much says –

It’s his face on the money. That is his money. Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.

Look at what Paul tells us in the book of Romans

[Rom 13:1-2 NKJV] 1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

What Paul tells us here in Romans is that since governments have authority from God, we are bound to obey them – unless, of course, they order us to do something in contradiction to God’s law. Then, we are commanded to obey God before man.

And we see examples of this in the book of Acts with Peter and John when they are commanded not to preach Jesus Christ.

And we see an example of this in the Old Testament when the King of Babylon orders everyone to worship his golden image and Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego refuse.

But Jesus doesn’t simply stop there.

Because He also says, “Render to God what belongs to God”

What does this mean???

The key – is the coin.

Because Caesar had authority over the people, his image was stamped on every coin and he demanded a certain percentage in return – and he had every right to do this as ruler.

God has authority over us, we are like the coin because we are stamped with His image – Genesis 1:27 – God created us in His own image.

And rendering to God what belongs to God means that we live our lives in obedience and submission to His will.

And the reason that they marveled at Jesus when He said these words was that they knew in their hearts that they (the Pharisees and Herodians) had not rendered to God what belonged to God.

Whether we are watching the news or skimming through our social media feed, it doesn't take long before we are bombarded with arguments from both sides of the political spectrum.

I think we need to be cautious because we can become so fixated on whether or not to render to Caesar that we miss out on rendering to God.

So the Pharisees and Herodians leave with their tails between their legs, they regroup and they send in a different group with another test. Some of the Sadducees will be the ones giving test #2.

18 Then [some] Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying: 19 "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. 20 "Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. 21 "And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. 22 "So the

seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. 23 "Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

Now, the Sadducees were a religious group that only adhered to the first five books of the bible.

They denied the existence of a spiritual world with angels and demons; they did not believe in an afterlife, believing that your soul perished at death.

Therefore they said there was no resurrection from the dead.

So they come up with this absurd scenario and there is a reason that it is so absurd because what they want to do is to demonstrate how silly the concept of the resurrection is.

Who is this lady going to be married in heaven Jesus???

24 Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the

power of God? 25 "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

There are two things here I want to point out.

1. Jesus makes it very clear that there will be no marriage in heaven.

Why no marriage? Think of it for a minute. God established marriage for companionship, and for procreation. In Heaven, we won't be alone; and Heaven will be populated by those who have been born-again by faith in Jesus prior to eternity, not by people being born in eternity. By the way, this goes against the theology of the Mormon Church who believe that in the afterlife, they will spend eternity populating their individual planets.

The Bible teaches there is one marriage in Heaven. It is Jesus Christ married to His bride, the church.

2. What does - but are like angels in heaven mean???

Let me quickly dispel an error some people fall into. We do not become angels after we die.

There is that quote from It's a Wonderful Life that says Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings. That is incorrect.

What Jesus is saying here is that we will be like angels in heaven in the way that they do not procreate. There are no pregnant angels and baby angels running around heaven.

Notice Jesus said, "when they rise from the dead." He clearly believed in the physical resurrection, and next He proves it to the Sadducees from their own self-limited Scriptures.

26 "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' ? 27 "He is not the God of the

dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

Because the Sadducees only believed the first five books of the bible, Jesus proceeds to prove the resurrection with a reference from scripture from one of the first five books of the bible.

(Jesus quotes from Exodus 3:6), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead for more than 430 years yet God still refers to Himself as the "God of . . ." these deceased patriarchs.

God told Moses, I am – not I was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This is the point Jesus makes, that if there was no resurrection as the Sadducees claimed, then why would God claim to be the "God of the living" 430 years after the patriarchs were dead?

Jesus demonstrated from the Scriptures that the Sadducees' doctrine was false and failed to take into account the truth of the Scriptures.

This brings us to the third test we are going to look at this morning.

This test is going to be administered by a scribe. And a scribe was one who interpreted the law.

If I were to ask everyone here this morning how many commandments there are – most of us would say 10 right???

However, for the Jews living in the time of Jesus Christ, they would say 613.

The 613 commandments include 248 "positive commandments," to perform an act, and 365 "negative commandments," to abstain from certain acts.

These were the do's and the don'ts that they were to adhere to.

And because there were so many, some of them were viewed as more important than others.

So this is what this scribe is going to test Jesus with.

28 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?" 29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments [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, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This [is] the first commandment. 31 "And the second, like [it, is] this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Jesus responds to the scribes question by reciting the Shema –

This is a portion of scripture that every Jew memorized.

It was the centerpiece of their morning and evening prayer.

[Deu 6:4-9 NKJV] 4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD [is] one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Now, the scribe upon hearing this would have totally agreed to the response of Jesus.

However, Jesus adds to it.

Because in verse 31, Jesus gives the scribe another commandment – He calls it the second commandment – not because it is less than the first one, because He says it **is like** the first one.

They go hand and hand. It's as though Jesus were saying that this second commandment is inextricably linked to the first commandment.

In other words to a great extent, **you love God by loving your neighbor.**

You see, love is the distinctive difference between those who are legalists and those who are actually saved and have experienced Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Now, keep in mind that Jesus is not teaching that salvation is based on the works of keeping these two laws; He is simply stating what the two most important Laws in God's word are.

The only way to come to know the love of God and to be able to love with His love is to first admit we fall far short of His perfect love and are guilty of not loving like we should. We must repent or turn from our sinful lack of love and ask God to forgive us based on Jesus' work on the cross on our behalf.

It is only then that the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us, He brings the love of God into our hearts and with His help we can begin to love as the Lord loved.

Now, let's look at the scribes response.

32 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. 33 "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." 34 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.

This scribe put truth ahead of political correctness and social status. He knew Jesus had answered the question beautifully, and once and for all. He recognized that ritual sacrifices, important though they were, could never substitute for loving your neighbor.

I asked you to underline Jesus' response to the scribe.

"You are not far from the Kingdom of God" – what was Jesus trying to tell the scribe.

It was an invitation to salvation.

Just because the scribe agreed with the response of Jesus – it didn't mean that the scribe was saved.

The scribe still needed to receive Jesus as His Savior, repent of his sin, and submit to Jesus' spiritual rule in his heart.

Think about how many family members and friends we have that come close to the Kingdom of God yet, fall short.

And the reality church is that coming close isn't going to get anyone to heaven unless one accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

So the religious rulers have so far struck out in their testing of Jesus.

Now, it is Jesus' turn to ask them questions.

Do they really understand who the Messiah is???

35 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? 36 "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." ' 37 "Therefore David himself

calls Him 'Lord'; how is He [then] his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly.

Jesus is quoting from Psalm 110.

And in the Psalm, David (inspired by the Holy Spirit) writes about a conversation between God the Father and Jesus Christ.

We see the word LORD with all capitals meaning that it refers to Yahweh.

Here is where it is important to have an understanding of the culture of Jesus' day. For a father to refer to his son as, "Lord," would never happen.

For a father to refer to his son as "Lord," meant that his son was greater than him and was culturally repugnant and unacceptable.

This was especially true in the patriarchal system of the day.

Therefore, Jesus points this out and asks why did David refer to his

successor in this way. It was because David, in the Spirit, was referring to One greater than himself, Jesus!

Their understanding of the Messiah was that he was simply going to be a king from the line of David. However, David points out that the Messiah was going to be greater than any earthly king could ever be in that the Messiah was going to be God Himself.

38 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, 39 "the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 40 "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation." 41 Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many [who were] rich put in much. 42 Then one

poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 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; 44 "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

We end our study this morning as Jesus makes a distinction between pretenders and those who are truly committed to the Kingdom of God.

The scribes are the pretenders.

They present themselves in a way the people will say – Man these are really spiritual individuals but in reality, they are spiritually broke.

It is all done for show.

And Jesus warns that they will receive a greater condemnation.

We contrast that with the example of the widow – who is truly broke, yet she gives all that she has to God.

What separates the widow to the others that put money in the treasury was that the other put in out of their abundance – the widow had no abundance or left over yet she still gave.

It is important to realize that God doesn't want our abundance – He wants all of us.

He wants a full commitment. Not just Sunday mornings or Wed evenings, He wants a continued fellowship with Him – through prayer and reading His word and through walking in obedience to His will.

You see, Jesus can ask that we give Him everything that we have because that is exactly what He did for you and me.

God wants us to be living sacrifices – that is what brings Him glory.

Amen...

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that

You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins

and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my

personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

