

Shifting Importance

Mark 12:35-37

There was much messianic expectation in Jerusalem. Because of the Roman occupation, the people felt the Messiah was coming soon. We are not privy to all the theological conversations, but Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1. He brings up an apparent contradiction. The Messiah will come from the line of David (David's son) and the Messiah is David's Lord.

How is that possible? This sort of perspective is tough to deal with, especially with our enlightenment mindset. Think back to Jesus' teaching on resurrection. He makes a comment regarding God being the God of the living. (Mark 12:26-27) What sort of reality is Jesus pointing towards? How does time and material life fit in to this reality? This is a hard question and is the key to unwrapping some of the apparent inconsistencies in the Bible. The problem is usually the way we think about reality, not reality itself.

Mark 12:38-40

Jesus is once again speaking on the scribes. They occupied a high position in Jewish culture. One of the scribes even agreed that loving others was the second greatest command. Now, Jesus is offering a warning. Great theology does not equal the Kingdom of Heaven. Bad theology does not help either.

How do you distinguish authentic Christian leaders? In this passage Jesus points to hypocrisy, the world often points to Christian hypocrisy. What is different here in the two types of hypocrisy? What does the world complain about and what does Jesus attack?

Mark 12:41-44

Ironically, Jesus understands that the religious money is not always used but he then lauds the faith of the widow. Also, this widow should be juxtaposed against the behavior of the scribes.

What does this teaching reveal about the Kingdom of Heaven? What about money? What about Kingdom provision? What about your spiritual life would Jesus brag about? What can we learn from this widow?