

saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?" 29 And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me." 31 And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 32 "But shall we say, 'From men?'" — they were afraid of the multitude, for all considered John to have been a prophet indeed. 33 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

One of the **themes** that has run through **Mark's Gospel** has been that of **Authority**. We have seen in **1:22**, that Jesus was **1:22 "teaching as One who had authority, not as the scribes,"** and in **1:27 "He even commands unclean spirits and they obey Him!"** Or again in **2:10** that **Jesus** was one who had **authority** even **"to forgive sins."** Jesus actually possesses **all authority** because He is the Son of God who created the world; it belongs to Him. In **3:10** Jesus had called the Twelve to send them out to preach and to **"have authority to cast out demons,"** and in **6:7 "And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs; and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits;"** so that the result was in **6:12-13, "12 And they went out and preached that men should repent. 13 And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them."** Jesus' **authority** was **real** and it was **powerful** and anyone who saw Him immediately knew this. So it is no surprise that when the **religious leaders** saw what Jesus had done in the Temple, they were shocked, and afraid to arrest Him **publicly** because He had **favor** with all the **people** (11:18). So they seek to **confront Him** they ask Him what **right** did He have to do such things in God's Temple. **"27 And they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and scribes, and elders came to Him, 28 and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"** Now of course Jesus is very clever, and He wants the **people** to **see** how hollow and empty both the teaching and the **authority** of the **religious leaders** is, and so He publicly calls them to account for the **ministry** of **John the Baptist**, who all the people hailed as a **prophet** from God, knowing that John's **main message** was that the **Messiah** would come after Him bringing the Kingdom of God. **"29 And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."** Stuck in the middle between wanting to confront Jesus and their own **fear** of the **multitude**, the religious leaders are dumbfounded, **"31 And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we**

say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 32 "But shall we say, 'From men'?" — they were afraid of the multitude, for all considered John to have been a prophet indeed. 33 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." Several things to note here, **first**, when the religious leaders began to reason for an answer, rather than **state the truth** publicly, they have to try and **fabricate** an answer that is satisfactory, because their ministry to the people is one of **manipulation** and **exploitation**, and so **secondly**, **fearing men** rather than **God**, they try to fabricate a response that shows themselves in a favorable light, "**32 they were afraid of the multitude, for all considered John to have been a prophet indeed.**" **Caught in the trap of their own lies, manipulation and fear**, they cannot answer and so Jesus has cleverly exposed the corruption of their system, and they have **denied** the **authority** of God's message through John the Baptist. **Thirdly**, Jesus' authority is One of such power, that He doesn't even need to answer these false shepherds, who have been **exploiting** God's people. Shunning to answer them, Jesus turns to the people to further **expose** the corruption of their **hypocrisy** by teaching all the people a parable meant to show them that religious system of the Jews was in fact at **war** with **God** Himself.

Mark 12:1-12 - 12 And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, and put a wall around it, and dug a vat under the wine press, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. 2 "And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. 3 "And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. 4 "And again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. 5 "And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some, and killing others. 6 "He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7 "But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' 8 "And they took him, and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others. 10 "Have you not even read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; 11 This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes'? "12 And they were seeking to seize Him; and yet they feared the multitude; for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him, and went away.

Now Jesus had been confronted in the Temple by the **chief priests**, and scribes, and **elders** (who make up the Sanhedrin) asking Him by what authority He had done what He did by cleansing the Temple. Having confounded them before the people by asking about John the Baptist, He now turns to **confront** them **directly** by telling them a **parable** designed to expose who they were in the sight of God. They had received the calling as God's people, they had received the Bible and the land, and the tender loving care of God for many centuries, and up until now they have returned only a corrupted system of religion, rather than a house of prayer and worship. The Parable of the Tenants has the people of Israel, especially the religious leaders in view. **"12 And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, and put a wall around it, and dug a vat under the wine press, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey."** Now here is a clear illusion to the House of Israel as recorded in **Isaiah 5:1-7**.

Isaiah 5:1-7 - 5 Let me sing now for my well-beloved A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My **well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.** **2 And He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it, And hewed out a wine vat in it;** Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones. 3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard. **4 "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?, Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? 5 "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. 6 "And I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed,, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it." 7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah His delightful plant., Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;, For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress. NASB**

Now it has become crystal clear how **Jesus** views these religious leaders, and knowing this section of the Bible well, they will no come to see **Jesus accusing** them of being those who will fall under the judgment of God. **"2 "And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. 3 "And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. 4 "And again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. 5 "And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some, and killing others.** These slaves that the owner keeps sending have

in view the Old Testament **prophets**. This of course is how they treated the prophets all the way up to John the Baptist, they mistreated, beat them, and killed them. This leads up to the current time when the owner (god) has only His Son left to send. **“6 "He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7 "But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' 8 "And they took him, and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.”** Wow such a vivid portrayal of the vineyard of Isaiah 5 and how it fits the current situation perfectly. Even as these **“vine-growers”** will soon kill Jesus and throw Him out of the vineyard (a reference to Golgotha which was outside the city and Temple zone), they will also fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy about them, and thus receive the judgment of God. Jesus brings the confrontation to a peak, **“9 "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others. 10 "Have you not even read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone;11 This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?”** Here Jesus has explained that they are the **object** of the **parable** as those who have **resisted God**, and are soon to be judged by Him. Moreover, Jesus has explained that the Kingdom will be taken away from them and **given to “others,”** no doubt the **Gentiles** is what is in view. This enflamed the anger of the chief priests, and scribes, and elders. **“12 And they were seeking to seize Him; and yet they feared the multitude; for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him, and went away.”** Of course, we know that this is also a prophecy of what will soon happen to the **people** of the **Jerusalem** and the **Temple** itself when the Romans will lay siege against the city and destroy it and kill the people in **70 AD**. Since that time the **Temple** has **never** been **rebuilt**. As a result of their rejection of their own Messiah and by the plan of God, these people will soon find themselves under the very judgment that Jesus has spoken, the same Jesus (and Son of the vineyard owner-God) whom they will kill in two short days.

Mark 12:13-17 - 13 And they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him, in order to trap Him in a statement. 14 And they came and said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? 15 "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at." 16 And they brought one. And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's." 17 And Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the