

things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were amazed at Him.

Still yet seeking to **catch Jesus** in some way as to bring up **charges** against Him, they now ask him about His loyalty to Caesar. **"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?"** Here they give lip service to Jesus but only as it is convenient for them, for they surely don't believe that He teaches **"the way of God in truth."** But rather they think they have Him **trapped** because they think He will say that it is right to **evade** the **taxes** of Caesar, thus **trapping Him** as one inciting **sedition**. **"15 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 things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were amazed at Him."** Here of course in the amazing wisdom of Jesus He not only wiggles out of their trap, but holds them to the perfect **standard** of **truth**. It is righteous both to **pay tax** to the **state**, but even greater, to give God His due in genuine lives of **worship**. Since **Caesar's inscription** is on the **coin**, he is its rightful owner and may govern it as he sees fit. With this statement Jesus gave the maxim to Christian's of **every age** that it should be **loyal** to the **state** by honoring its tax system. But also seeking the honor of God, Jesus point to **God's image**, which is stamped on all **human beings**, who are rightfully God's property, and we are owing to God with our lives to honor Him. Jesus answers all things well.

**Mark 12:18-27** - 18 And some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Him, and began questioning Him, saying, 19 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves behind a wife, and leaves no child, his brother should take the wife, and raise up offspring to his brother. 20 "There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died, leaving no offspring. 21 "And the second one took her, and died, leaving behind no offspring; and the third likewise; 22 and so all seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. 23 "In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." 24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or 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. 26 "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you

not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken."

Now it seems that every sect of people who have **influence** in the **Jewish culture** have sought to **challenge Jesus**. The **chief priests, scribes and elders** (the **Sanhedrin**), along with the Pharisees have been after Him and opposing Him since all the way back up in Galilee. We have seen the **Pharisees**, the **Herodians** (a Jewish sect loyal to Herod and Rome) and now the **Sadducees** (a wealthy liberal sect of Jewish leaders responsible for the maintenance of the Temple and the sacrificial system, who deny oral tradition and only holding the written law). Here the Sadducees challenge Jesus on their own **religious** questions. **“18 And some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Him, and began questioning Him, saying, 19 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves behind a wife, and leaves no child, his brother should take the wife, and raise up offspring to his brother. 20 "There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died, leaving no offspring. 21 "And the second one took her, and died, leaving behind no offspring; and the third likewise; 22 and so all seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. 23 "In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.”** The scenario in their question is obviously an exaggeration, yet it poses their question in such a way as to **force Jesus** into answering in **favor** of their own **belief**. But Jesus returns a serious rebuke to these wealthy Temple keepers. **“24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or 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. 26 "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.”** Jesus here **corrects** their misunderstanding concerning the **resurrection**, citing the Old Testament **Law** in Exodus, for they did not believe in the resurrection. But He affirms that **the dead will rise again**, clearly stating that there will be a **bodily resurrection** (1 Cor 15:35-53, 2 Cor 5:1-10), and that people who have **died** and are **not yet raised** are **alive** in the **presence** of God (2 Cor 5:8, 1 Thess 4:13-14). Here Jesus also tells us definitively that **marriage** does not exist **after death**, **“For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”** The Lord does not expand on the statement but simply makes it clear.

MacArthur comments, *“Like other human relationships, marriage is for this present life only. There will be no need in heaven for sex, reproduction, and families to maintain the population. There will be only one relationship between the glorified saints, perfect love and joy. Since they will be like the angels in heaven, who are glorious, eternal beings and do not reproduce or die, those eternally living in God’s presence cannot even die anymore, and hence do not need to be replaced. Nor will there be any need for marriage and family relationships to pass truth and righteousness from generation to generation, since everyone will be in perfect holy union with the triune God and each other. Because of the eternal perfection of every person, there will be no need for marriage partners to complement and complete each other, as husband and wives do in this life.”* The **Sadducees** were **mistaken** about the **resurrection**, and Jesus used the **Scriptures** to set them straight. It must have been a humbling, and in their case, **angering** moment of **correction**. Here in the midst of **Passion Week**, Jesus has exposed the **false religion, religious hypocrisy** and shallow **authority** of all the different sects who held **influence** in **Jerusalem**. The opposition has been mounting and now all the **religious** and **cultural elites** are clearly opposing Him, and no doubt will be happy to have Him killed.

**Mark 12:28-34** - 28 And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; 30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 And the scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher, You have truly stated that He is One; and there is no one else besides Him; 33 and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 And when Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

Here Jesus has a **dialogue** with a **scribe** who apparently wants to **learn** from Jesus. He chooses to ask Jesus a question about what is the **most important thing** in all the **Bible**. Jesus explains from both **Tables of the Law** that **loving God** and **neighbor** is the most important thing that **God** has ever **commanded**. **“28 And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God**

is one Lord; 30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Here really is the final doctrinal test that the scribes and elders have for Jesus, and it is a test concerning the most important doctrine. If Jesus fails here, He is in fact a **heretic** and can be **condemned** for that offense. But **Jesus** clearly answers with the **perfect truth**, and in so doing shines a light on the **meaning** and **application** of the Old Testament **Law** as well. His answer not only **silences** those who are testing Him, but brings them face to face with what the **true worship** of **God** is, it is a matter of love and devotion to God Himself, as God has taught in His Law. "29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; 30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" Jesus here quotes the **Shema**, that all important Jewish confession from **Deuteronomy 6:5**. It was the most foundational teaching in all the Law, and it gets to the heart of **true worship** calling God's people to an **unfeigned love** for **God** with all one's faculties. It is a beautiful expression of religious devotion and what Jesus calls the "**foremost**" commandment. We would do well to think of the **meaning** and **application** of God's Word in the **Old Testament** as **summarized** and **explained** in terms of this command. And Jesus adds to His answer a most important result of loving God, which of course is a quote from Leviticus 19:18, 34. "31 "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." When one truly fears the Lord properly and with a pure devotion to God, one cannot but also then have a **love** for their **fellow human being**. These two commandments perfectly summarize the **Two Tablets** of the Old Testament **Law**, the **First Table** summarizing one's **relationship to God** and the **Second Table** summarizing one's **relationship** with his **fellow man**. Now to this perfect answer to the scribe's question, those who are testing Him are silenced. "32 And the scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher, You have truly stated that He is One; and there is no one else besides Him; 33 and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." The scribe affirms Jesus's answer which puts Jesus squarely in the true and **orthodox** position in this **doctrinal test**. Jesus also acknowledges that the scribe understands God's Word rather well, but He has not come full circle to the **most important truth**, which will in fact from this time forward be the proper confession of faith centered on the **Person** and Work of **Jesus**. "34 And when Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." Now that God's King and Messiah has arrived,

bringing God's Kingdom to His people, the true and orthodox profession will be one that confesses Jesus as the Christ. This scribe had no full understanding just yet, and we are not told if he actually does come to believe upon Christ. But this answer from Jesus silenced their questioning of Jesus, **"34 And after that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions."**

**Mark 12:35-37** - 35 And Jesus answering began to say, as He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? 36 "David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord,' Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet.'" 37 "David himself calls Him 'Lord'; and so in what sense is He his son?" And the great crowd enjoyed listening to Him. 38 And in His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, 39 and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets, 40 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation. "

No longer in a defensive position Jesus will now begin to **confront** the **religious leaders** with the **reality** about **who He is**. He will ask them a question from the Scriptures regarding the **identity** of the **Christ**. This will bring them to a point of accepting or denying His own identity as the Messiah. **"35 And Jesus answering began to say, as He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? 36 "David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord,' Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet.'" 37 "David himself calls Him 'Lord'; and so in what sense is He his son?" And the great crowd enjoyed listening to Him."** Jesus here quotes **Psalm 110**, which was long hailed as a Messianic Psalm, speaking of David's son as the Christ. Several key points are made here. **First**, Jesus affirms that David, the author of the Psalm, spoke by the **"Holy Spirit,"** and therefore is an utterance of God and true. **Second**, that **David** calls his own son **"Lord"** which placed him in a **higher role** than David himself, who in fact will be exalted to sit at the **"right hand of God,"** as **"the Lord,"** (God) says the **"my Lord,"** (David's son), **"Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet."** Of course, the inescapable conclusion is that the **Christ** will be no **mere man** on an earthly throne, but will be exalted to sit at the **"right hand of God."** This is to say He will be **equal in power** and **authority** with **God Himself**. Jesus here shows, from their own Scriptures, that the Messiah will be **both a man**, a human descendent of David, and **God Himself**, seated in **heavenly authority** at the right hand of God. Matthew records the response from the religious leaders and crowd.