

5. He observes the circumstances which accompany our actions: Whether sparingly and reluctantly; or bountifully, with a ready mind; etc.
  6. He sees the judgment we form of what we do in his name: Whether we develop a false sense of independence, false security, pride, boastful spirit; or feel humbly that we have done little, and even that in an imperfect manner.
- C. The Lord's judgment of our actions: "And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in or their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (43,44).
1. He appears surprised that so much reverence should be found with so much poverty, in the person of the generous widow.
  2. A work of charity must be estimated, not by its appearance, but by the spirit which produced it.
  3. God judges us as if all men are in a state of equality, for he looks upon the heart, and the poorest person therefore has equal chance, with his mite, to be as acceptable to God, by purity of affection and sincerity of purpose, as the rich who give their millions for whatever reasons.
  4. All children of God should be impartial in judging the gifts of others, not allowing ourselves to be carried away or led to favor others by gifts to God which seem to be large.

## STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON THIRTY-SEVEN

Jesus Asks A Question and Commends The Generous Widow  
Mark 12:35-44; Luke 21:1-4

### INTRODUCTION -

#### I. LESSON LINKS AND CONTEXT.

- A. The matters considered here were delivered by the Lord on the last day of his public ministry.
- B. The authority of Jesus had been challenged as he began his teaching in the temple: "By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things" (Mark 11:27,28; Matt. 21:23)?
- C. He answered with another question which his opponents refused to answer (Mark 11:29-33), and there followed three parables and a series of questions which Jesus handled masterfully in silencing his critics.

#### II. NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE LESSON.

- A. Turning from the defensive, and taking the offensive, Jesus asked the scribes a great but baffling question concerning the Messiah.
- B. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record this event concerning the question, "Whose Son is he" (Matt. 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44)?
- C. "What think ye of the Christ: whose son is he?" remains to this day the great question of all time (Matthew 22:42). All depends upon how we answer this question.
- D. The poor widow's sacrifice, like that of Jesus, is self-denial God commends.

### DISCUSSION -

#### I. JESUS ASKS A QUESTION ABOUT THE SON OF DAVID (12:35-37).

- A. How say the scribes: "And Jesus answered and said, as he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David" (35)?
  1. Having silenced his adversaries, the Lord asks a counter-question.
  2. His motive was obviously to instruct, not retaliation.
  3. The scribes had long taught that Messiah would be of the line of David (John 7:42), and Matthew 22:42 records their correct but incomplete answer, "The son of David."
  4. His royal entry into Jerusalem that week had been accompanied by hosannahs shouted to "the son of David" (Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:10).

B. What David said: "David himself said in the Holy Spirit,  
The Lord said unto my Lord,  
Sit thou on my right hand,  
Till I make thine enemies the  
footstool of thy feet" (36).

1. Jesus here confirms the truth from Psalm 110:1, that David wrote by inspiration of God.
2. Could anyone desire better authority for the inspiration of the Psalms than that of Jesus?

C. How is he his son? "David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son" (37a)?

1. Since David, by inspiration, calls his own son Lord, he is more than David's descendent physically.
2. Jesus Christ, son of David by earthly descent, is also God manifest in the flesh.

D. "The common people heard him gladly" (37b):

1. Not the priests, scribes, or lawyers, who, as a class, had failed in their efforts to weaken public confidence in Jesus.
2. This conversation silenced them so that "no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (Matthew 22:46).
3. But comparatively many of "the common people" heard Jesus and became believers in him (John 15:18,19; Acts 2:47).

## II. JESUS DENOUNCES THE OSTENTATION AND AVARICE OF THE SCRIBES (12:38-40).

A. Beware: "And in his teaching he said, Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts" (38,39).

1. This is the first of three charges Jesus launched against the behaviour of the scribes to warn his disciples against their sinister motives.
2. Mark records barely two sentences of a speech which fills an entire chapter in Matthew (23).

B. Hypocrites receive greater condemnation: "They that devour widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation" (40).

1. These constitute the second and third charges

against those who sat "in Moses' seat," but whose motives and conduct did not harmonize with their teaching.

2. This bold and scathing charge of hypocrisy against the Jewish leaders was the Lord's last public teaching, after which he departed from the temple (cf. Luke 21:1-4; John 12:20-50; 12:36).
3. Let us be swift to learn from this the serious nature and dreadful consequences of all ostentation in religious practice (cf. Matt. 6:1-8,16-18); but let us be very slow to imitate the Lord in judging motives until the "fruit" is ripe (Matt. 7:15,16).

## III. JESUS COMMENDS THE SACRIFICE OF THE POOR WIDOW (12:41-44).

A. Why he watched: "And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury" (41a).

1. This scene from the life of Jesus is one of the great moments in his life. It pictures him sitting and watching the people pass by "the treasury" in the court of the women, into which the people cast their gifts.
2. Someone pointed out several reasons why Jesus was so deeply interested in watching people give: (a) Giving, rightly done, is worship. (b) Our attitude toward giving is a test and reflection of faith and character. (c) He knows the tragedy of our failure to give. (d) He knows how tremendously helpful our giving may be. (e) Because he is interested not only in the object for which we give, but he is also interested in us personally. Cf. Clarke, Vol. V, p. 330,331.

B. What he sees as he "beholds" how we give: "And many that were rich cast in much. And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing" (41b,42).

1. Christ sees all men and all things (Proverbs 15:3; Acts 1:24; John 16:30).
2. He saw a multitude casting money into the treasury.
3. He saw the state and circumstances of all: The abundance of the rich and the poverty of the poor.
4. Jesus also sees the motives of all who give: Whether we give as unto the Lord or to be seen of men.