

Day 64 (Tuesday 6th November)**Read Mark Chapter 12 verses 18 to 27**

The Question about the Resurrection

The Sadducees didn't accept anything other than the Books of Moses (first five books in the Bible) and they had decided that there was no resurrection mentioned there. Jesus has mentioned His own resurrection three times now and talked about giving "his life a ransom for many" (chapter 10 verse 45). The Sadducees seek to disprove the idea with a hypothetical question. They want to justify their own position. Christ points to a resurrection life different to the present one: for starters, wanting our name to be perpetuated will be a thing of the past. In some ways (but not all) we, the children of God, will be like angels. The Sadducees have even got Moses wrong. Moses wrote about the Patriarchs (who had died) as if they were alive. Our relationship with God will continue beyond this life.

Questions to think about

1. Do we accept the whole of our Bibles or only the parts that fit in with our own ideas?
2. How well do we know the scriptures and the power of God? (verse 24)
3. Are we looking forward to the Resurrection or are we focusing on this life all the time?

A prayer you may want to say

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we praise you for your mighty power to save frail humans like us and raise us up to a new and glorious life in the Resurrection. Continue, we pray, to reveal yourself to us through the scriptures and grant us an ever-closer walk with you. Amen

Day 65 (Wednesday 7th November)**Read Mark Chapter 12 verses 28 to 34**

The First Commandment

This scribe's questioning is different to what has gone before. He notices that Jesus' answers are very good and so puts to Him a question that the scribes liked to discuss: 'What's the most important commandment?' He is not trying to catch Jesus out or justify his own position. Christ answers first with Deuteronomy 6.4&5 (Love God) and second with Leviticus 19.18 (Love your neighbour). Christ's response makes sense to the scribe who can see that those laws are much more important than going through the motions of religious observance.

Questions to think about

1. Are we seeing what Scripture has to say about topical questions?
2. Today we tend to emphasize loving our neighbour. How might we love God more?
3. The scribe was "*not far* from the kingdom of God"? What did he maybe still need to do?

A prayer you may want to say

Oh Lord our God, stir our hearts with love for you and desire to obey your commands. We praise you for your great love to us. Help us to reflect that, as we, in turn, love our neighbours. Grant us the faith to put our complete trust in You. Amen

Day 66 (Thursday 8th November)**Read Mark Chapter 12 verses 35 to 37**

The Question about David's Son

Having answered everyone else's questions, Jesus now asks one Himself – the most important one of all. Who do we say Jesus is? Is He just a descendant of King David? In Psalm 110 quoted here, David saw the coming Messiah as his Lord, not just his son. The Messiah was to be God incarnate, God taking the form of a man. Everything depends on our trusting in Jesus as the Son of God. "Those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God." (John 3.18). Jesus said "You will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he" (John 8.24).

Questions to think about

1. Who do we say Jesus is?
2. What difference does that make in our lives?
3. Why do you think that now "the large crowd was listening to him with delight" (verse 37)? Is 'listening with delight' sufficient?

A Prayer you may want to say

My Lord and my God, thank you that you came to this earth so that we might not be condemned but might have everlasting life. Fill us we pray with that new life now and make us "doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves" (James 1.22). Amen

Day 67 (Friday 9th November)**Read Mark Chapter 12 verses 38 to 40**

Jesus denounce the Scribes

Notwithstanding notable exceptions (v34), the scribes set enormous store by outward appearance. People could see how important they were from their clothes and greeted them respectfully. The seats they were given at synagogue and banquet reflected their status in society. Jesus however denounces the evil of their moral bankruptcy (devouring widows' houses) and religious pretence (saying long prayers). No wonder the crowd were listening with delight! (verse 37).

Questions to think about

1. "Beware of the scribes" (verse 38). What is it actually about the scribes that we should beware of?
2. Is everyone honoured, both at church and our fellowship lunches, equally?
3. Are long prayers necessarily wrong?

A Prayer you may want to say

Heavenly Father, help us to think more about how you see us than how other people see us. Help us to see others, from the least to the greatest, as you see them. Forgive us if there have been times when we have done more to impress others by our prayers than talk to You. Teach us to pray. Amen

Day 68 (Saturday 10th November)**Read Mark Chapter 12 verses 41 to 44**

The Widow's Offering

In the Temple system, everyone could see the people as they put their money into the collection chests. The rich would be seen putting in lots -and feel good about it. The poor would put in a little - and feel humiliated, even though proportionate to their means, they had given far more. Jesus reverses the ranking. The widow is the one commended because she has given all she has. We don't necessarily need to put all we have in the collection – we do need to give all we have to God.

Questions to think about

1. What are our motives as we put our offerings in the bag?
2. In what ways can we give all we have to God?
3. If we knew Jesus was watching us, would we do things differently?

A Prayer you may wish to say

God who gives us everything, take all we have and all we are and use it for your glory and all Your children's good. Use our talents, our time and our possessions in your service. Give us wisdom in their use and joy, knowing that you love a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9.7). Amen

Day 69 (Sunday 11th November)**Read Mark Chapter 13 verses 1 to 8**

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

Even after Christ's condemnation of the Temple in chapter 11, his disciples are still impressed by it. It was after all, larger than York Minster with some stones more than eight metres long. Christ tells them of its coming destruction (this did happen some 40 years later). They ask when this will be and what signs will indicate its coming. Christ warns them to not allow themselves to be misled by false prophets nor alarmed by wars and natural disasters which will only be the beginning. A way to God far greater than the Temple was here now though: Christ. He had said "destroy this temple" (meaning His body)," and in three days I will raise it up" (referring to His resurrection) (John 2.19).

Questions to think about

1. When we see beautiful churches and cathedrals do we always look beyond them to Christ, our real way to God?
2. Temples, churches and cathedrals crumble and decay -if they are not pulled down first. Where can we put all our trust however?
3. Would it be good for us to know exactly when things are going to happen in the future?

A Prayer you may wish to say

Heavenly Father, thank you that you know all things and we can have complete trust in You, even though we see change and decay all around. Thank you that through Christ we all now have direct access to You and our future is secure. Amen

Day 70 (Monday 12th November)

Read Mark Chapter 13 verses 9 to 13

Persecution Foretold

Christ had foretold that he would “undergo great suffering, and be rejected ...and be killed” (Mark 8.31). He had then said “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Persecution was certainly the lot of the early Christians and is still so in parts of the world. The Church has ironically flourished under it while languishing in times of toleration. The gospel has pretty much been proclaimed to all *nations* now, though 1.5 billion people are still without a Bible in their 1st language.

Questions to think about

1. How can we support persecuted Christians in other countries?
2. How important is it to us to be able to read the Bible in our mother tongue?
3. The passage covers not worrying about what to say when on trial for being a Christian. Should we worry about what to say when sharing our faith with other people?

A Prayer you may wish to say

Lord, thank you for the freedom we enjoy in this country. Help us to use it to reach out with the gospel to those around us. Hold and sustain we pray, our persecuted brothers and sisters. Thank you for the work of The Barnabas Fund to provide hope and aid for the persecuted Church. Amen