

# The Gospel of Mark

## Lesson 28: Mark 12:1-17

### Parable of the wicked tenants (vv. 1-12)

Matt. 21:33-46  
Luke 20:9-19

- This is probably a continuation of the encounter from chapter 11
- The listeners would have associated this with Isaiah 5:1-7
- Some have questioned the authenticity of this passage
  - They see it as too allegorical for true teaching from Jesus
  - Most scholars are convinced that this is a genuine recounting
- The situation of the absentee owner was typical in 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel
- The tenants may have thought the son's coming meant the owner was dead
  - A property considered ownerless could be taken over by the tenants
- Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23 in verse 10
  - This psalm (especially vv. 25-26) would be fresh in their ears

*Who is represented in this parable (vineyard, owner, tenants, servants, son)?*

*What point is Jesus making about the tenants taking over the vineyard?*

*To whom is the owner going to give the vineyard (verse 9)?*

### Is paying taxes to Caesar lawful? (vv. 13-17)

Matt. 22:15-22  
Luke 20:20-26

- The Roman tax was one denarius (a laborer's day wage) per year
  - The Herodians and Sadducees generally had no problem with the tax
  - The Pharisees were not in favor of the tax, but they paid it
  - The Zealots opposed the tax and refused to pay it
  - At its essence, the tax represented foreign domination
- The obverse of the denarius had an image of Tiberius Caesar
  - The image included the words "Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus"
  - On the reverse side was written "Pontifex Maximus" – Chief (or High) Priest
  - The image and the wording were an affront to the Jewish people
- The Pharisees and Herodians thought they would trap Jesus with their question
  - He would either alienate the people or risk arrest for sedition

*Jesus' answer amazes the people. What is He teaching here – for them and us?*

*What happens when Caesar oversteps his bounds?*