

“The Examination of Jesus – Part Two”

Mark 12:18-40

Introduction

- We are doing a study in the final week of Jesus’ life, the greatest seven day period in human history
 - Where man was redeemed, where my sin was paid for, and where Jesus had victory over death
 - The greatest week ever
- It started with Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, fulfilling prophecies from Daniel 9 and Zechariah 9
 - The next day after Jesus prayed it in and thought it thru was the cleansing of the temple

Later that day Jesus moves to another part of the temple and remember. the city is filled with millions of people because this was Passover Week

- and Jesus begins to teach the people
 - but there are others swilling around the outside of the multitudes who have come to hear Jesus
 - on the outside are religious leaders who have no desire to learn from Jesus, they want to examine Jesus, they want to test Jesus

And remember this was fulfilling a prophetic picture as well

- if we go back to the very first Passover, God was very specific in His instructions to Moses...

“Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.” – Exodus 12:1-6

God tells Moses that every family was to take a lamb without spot or blemish, and they were to take that lamb into their house, God is very specific, on the 10th day of Nisan

- and you are to keep that lamb in your home until it dies for your sins on the 14th of Nisan
 - now as we looked at last week, during this four day period of time two things would happen
- number one, your family would fall in love with the lamb, the kids would name it puffy, your girls would put a little tutu on it – your boys would feed it secretly from the table – it would become a member of the family
 - and this was on purpose for then when that lamb was put to death you had a real picture of how ugly sin really is, not our justified view of sin we normally have
- but secondly, the other purpose for that 4 day period of time was you were inspecting this lamb to see if it really was without spot or blemish
 - you may have not noticed in the field the scab on the back of the leg or the cut on the belly
 - and so you would inspect this lamb to see if it really was without spot or blemish

Well – as we noticed as we were looking at the Feast of Passover last Wednesday Night, these thing were commanded by Moses not to just bring lambs into homes

- but they spoke prophetically of what would happen to Jesus
 - for Jesus entered Jerusalem on the 9th of Nisan
 - This questioning and examining of the priests started on the 10th of Nisan

So the exact same day the Passover lambs were being brought into the homes and examined, the same day Jesus is being examined by the religious leaders of the Jerusalem

Just like the Passover lambs, the Lamb of God was being examined on the 10th of Nisan and just like the Passover lambs, He would die, not for the sins of a family, but

the sins of the world, Jesus would die – on the 14th of Nisan which is on what feast? – the Feast of Passover – that is correct

- Last week we saw this examination begin with the Sanhedrin
 - This group of chief priests, scribes and elders of Israel that were responsible to check out those that were having authority over the nation of Israel
 - So they examined Jesus with

The Examination of Jesus

#1 – A Question of Authority – Mark 11:27-33

- Who gives you the right to speak into our lives
 - And Jesus knowing they were just trying to trap Him, said to these guys – tell me, was the baptism of John of man or God – tell me and I will let you know by what authority I do these things
- The members of the Sanhedrin met and realized there was no good answer
 - If they said – of man – the people would have rebelled because they loved John
 - If they said - of God – well John had told them to repent and that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, so they couldn't say that
 - So they said – we don't know
- And instead of Jesus looking foolish, they looked foolish

If they just would have been honest, the Sanhedrin were asking a great question

- What gives You the right to speak into my life?
 - This is a question we all need to ask our hearts

Does God have the authority to speak into my life?

- well of course He does, that is not the question
 - He loves you, He made you, designed you, died in your place
 - He has the right and the wisdom to speak into your lives
- The question is, do you allow Him the right to speak into your life
 - Or are you just trying to do things your own way, with no thought to the Lord's heart or the Lord's opinion
 - You need to seek the Lord
 - Well why would I want to do that???

Well that was answered in our next question

- after the Sanhedrin struck out, the Herodians and the Pharisees came to ask him a question
 - these guys couldn't have been more different
- The Herodians loved the Roman occupation of Israel, they loved Roman taxes and they even took their name from the Roman appointed Governor – Herod
 - The Pharisees on the other hand – hated Rome, hated Roman taxes and couldn't stand Herod
- But these two totally opposite groups, join together in their hatred of Jesus and ask...

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- Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not
 - Of course they too thought they had Jesus
 - If He says – Yes – well then the people will rebel against Jesus
 - But if He says No – well we will call over one of the many Roman guards in the city at that time and Jesus would be taken to prison – they had Him or so they thought

But Jesus asked for a Denarius and said whose picture is on this coin

- Ah Caesar???
 - You see each Roman Caesar would print money with his picture on it and by that He was saying, this money, you can use it, but it belongs to me

- And Jesus picks up on that and says brilliantly – so give to Caesar the things that are Caesars and to God the things that are God
 - It's Caesar money, let Caesar have what is Caesars
 - But more importantly – and the answer to the question – why would I want to submit to God's authority
 - Because Jesus says – you are to give to God the things that are God's
- The coin was made in the image of Caesar – you have been made in the image of God
 - Your life has been bought with the precious blood of the lamb
 - You are His

And to me that is a wonderful truth, but some really need to wake up to that reality

- because the more you fight against, oh I know it is counter intuitive, but the more you fight against it the more miserable you will be and probably are at this moment
 - but to say – Lord I am yours – you have the authority in my life, speak into my life
 - that is one of the most amazing moments in your entire Christian walk

Well we see the religious leaders are not done, they are slow learners and so next they send in the Sadducees

The Examination of Jesus

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#3 – A Question of Eternity – Mark 12:18-27

- The Sadducees were leaders who came from the upper class of society
 - They were wealthy and they were worldly
 - And they did not believe in much
- We learn from Acts 23:8 they did not believe in angels or the spirit world
 - The Jewish Historian Josephus tell us they did not believe in life after death – they did not believe in heaven, so no reward, but also no responsibility
- And from the passage we just read we see they also did not believe in a resurrection from the dead
 - The one thing they did believe in was the Law – the first five books of the Bible which they said had no mention of resurrection – so if it is not in the law – we don't accept it

So these guys – they did not believe in heaven, they did not believe in angels, they did not believe they would live after they died and that is why they were Sad-u-cee!

- I'm sorry there is always one who has never heard that, so I have to say it

The question they asked Jesus was based on an old Levitical law that was in place to ensure a family name and the inheritance involved would stay in the family

- if you had an older brother who got married but died without children, you as a younger brother were to take on his wife and your wife and the first child you had would be your dead brother's heir
- **now can you imagine the discussion this would cause in Jewish families before a brother got married**

The younger brother would say, “wait a second, you want to marry who.” – thinking he might end up with her – this would have been very important

- **“Bro – you can't marry her – she is one of those girls with a great personality.”**

But this really happened in Jewish society, and the question they try to trap Jesus on is based on this and no doubt was one they used all the time on the Pharisees who did believe in heaven and resurrection – their question basically was...

- a girl gets married, her husband dies, she gets the brother, same thing happens seven times over
 - Now I would be a little worried if I was the 5th brother – what is wrong with this girl's cooking

- let the dog taste the eggs in the morning
- husband #5 would be starting to wonder

It reminds me there were three fathers to be in the maternity room, and they are all 3 waiting, and the nurse came out to the first man and said congratulations Mr. Smith – twins

- Oh man, great that is amazing!!!! – Here in Minnesota I am a ticket agent for the Minnesota Twins that is great!!!! – I work for the twins, now I have twins – perfect!!!!

Well a little while later, the nurse came out again and told the second man, hey Mr. Jones, your wife she just had triplets

- Oh man, that is a lot of kids, amazing though I work for the 3M Company – and now I have 3 kids, that is great!!!!

Well the last man, Mr. Brown he grabs his hat and his coat and Mr. Jones said where are you going??

- Hey, I drive a truck for 7 Up, I am out of here
 - He was starting to wonder
 - And so would the 5th, 6th and 7th husbands...

But the point the Sadducees were trying to make was,

- this girl has had seven husbands
 - When she is “resurrected” who will her husband be.”
- People ask similar questions today
 - What about the man with a heart transplant
 - Or what about the farmer who dies, becomes grass that is eaten by cows, produce milk I drink, which becomes part of me – oh know!!

Jesus answers them very simply

- He tells them they error because of two major problems
 - You don’t know the scriptures
 - You don’t know the power of God

This same thing is why people ask those dumb questions today

“Can God make a rock so big, He can’t carry it?”

- The person that asks that doesn’t understand the power of God
 - There is nothing God can’t carry, so no, He cannot create something like that
 - Yes - There are things God can’t do – He can’t sin – He can’t deny His nature

“What about those who get a heart transplant. Whose heart is it?”

- You don’t know the scriptures
 - Paul makes the point in his letters, that we are given a new body. This is just a tent, a seed, God will give it a form that pleases him

“What about the girl with the seven husbands?”

- You don’t know the Word, you don’t know the power of God
 - Things are going to be different in heaven
 - This problem will not be an issue

Some people get really worked up over this verse

- “What is Jesus saying?” – there will be no marriage, But I love Him, I don’t like that
 - Some are saying – I hope that is true, please Jesus let that be true!!!!
- Understand – you are dealing with heaven, with things that eye hasn’t seen, ear hasn’t heard it, hasn’t even entered your mind
 - God has it figured out, Relax

You need to understand the scriptures – heaven will be wonderful

- You need to understand the power of God – He has it under control.
 - And you know I think we need to hear this because we error for the same reasons

We don’t know the scriptures, we don’t know the power of God

- Do you know this book, do you know the Bible
 - If you do – I say wonderful – but then, do you know the power of God

- Do you know this book intellectually or have you taken it out into the world and lived in out
- Have you tasted and seen that the Lord is Good as David exhorts us to do
- Have you experienced that power of God
 - If not, you are going to error like these Sadducees did
 - But they did not just error in their question, but they were erring in their whole doctrine of not believing in the resurrection of the dead and Jesus addresses this when He asks...
 - And I love it, Jesus goes back to the Law, the first five books they believed were truly from God
- And Jesus says...

By the way guys, about the Resurrection

- In Exodus chapter 3:6, God says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."
 - Now God said that hundreds of years after they were dead
 - How come He didn't say, "I was the God of..."
- He doesn't used the past tense because those guys are not gone, they are not dead – He didn't say I was the God of Abraham..., but I am the God – they are still alive, they have been resurrected from the dead, there is life after death
 - Or their bodies were in the ground, but they had been resurrected and were with the Lord.
 - Jesus shows them with the very set of books they accepted that what they were so set on was not right – they needed to see it, they needed to change

This answer was so brilliant that next came a scribe to ask Jesus a question that I don't believe was insincere, I think He was really impressed with how Jesus had just stumped all the other religious groups and so wanted information on something that was troubling his heart

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#4 – A Question of Priority – Mark 12:28-34

- The lawyer or scribe, was not like Perry Mason for you older folks or LA Law for those my age or the people Lindsay Lohan needs to hire all the time for you younger people
 - These were not those types of lawyers, but experts on the Jewish law

But as experts they were always trying to make it simple

- But the law wasn't very simple

There are 613 commandments in the Old Testament

- 248 positive, 365 negative
 - I love it, the Rabbis had found one "thou shalt not" for every day of the year."
 - They were in such bondage to the law
- But with 613 commandments to remember, it was very hard to remember what you were doing wrong and what you were doing right

So some scholars divided the law into a few "heavy" commandments – which had to be followed at all times, and "light" – which could be ignored

- And some liked one view and some the other
 - And the debate raged
 - So this lawyer sees someone who seems to have insight into the heart of God
- So the man asks – which is the greatest commandment

And by the way, it gives us insight into what is most important to God – that is amazing to me

- We have God on record telling us what is most important to Him, pretty cool, so what was His answer

Jesus said the most important thing is that we love God with all our hearts, with all our souls and with all our minds

- and I love this
 - What is the most important thing to you God
 - What are you looking for in my life
- God says – that you would love me, that you would really love me with all that you are, with your heart, with your soul, with your mind

We are to love God, but what does that really mean

- love is so messed up today in our culture, of what we consider love, what is called love
 - What does God mean we He says – the most important thing is to love Me with your mind, with your soul, with your heart?

Well I think from the context, it means a love that encompasses all we are God says we are to love Him with our minds

- **The word “mind” there is dianoia” and it means the seat of your understanding**
 - We are to love God with our minds, that is one of the many reasons we devote so much time here on Sundays and Wednesdays to get into the Word
 - It is important that you know what you believe and why you believe it

To not do that – affects so many – it affects our young and women - The statistics say that 75 percent of High school students will walk away from their faith once they go to college

- And it affects older men and women – we are cruising along walking with God
 - But the minute tragedy strikes – so many stop loving and following the Lord

And the reason I am convinced is because we teach people to love God with their emotions and feelings, and not to love Him with their minds, understanding what they believe and why

- JP Moreland has a great book called, Loving God with all your mind – in it He writes, **“It’s high time that Christians stop believing in God just because it feels right or because it works. We need to believe in Christianity because it is true.” – JP Moreland**

God what is most important to you, what are you looking for from me

- ah – that you would love me
 - I just want you to love Me with all you are
 - Okay – what does that mean
- Well – love Me with your mind
 - Engage your mind in the study of My word so you know what you believe, not just what Pastor Jason believes or Pastor Rob believes – what does the Word of God say
 - Pick up an apologetics book or two – familiarize yourself with Charlie Campbell’s website, alwaysbeready.com – and know why you believe these things to be true
 - You will be blessed
- And I believe it blesses the Lord
 - Love me with your mind – but we can’t stop there

God also says, love me with your soul

- **the word “soul” there is the Greek word “psuché” and it means to the center of your emotions**
 - and that is so important – because God does want us to love Him with our minds, but we can’t stop there – religion departments in universities all over the world are filled with men and women that are loving with their minds, but it never goes any further

- They have much knowledge of the Lord in their heads, but it never translates into an intimate knowledge in their hearts

When Paul would write to the Philippians about his intense desire to know the Lord – “That I may know Him...” – Philippians 3:10

Paul knew the Lord intellectually – He was one of the greatest minds the church has ever had

- but in Philippians He is speaking about a desire to go way beyond head knowledge
 - **the word “know” there in Philippians 3:10 means “to know by experience”**
- that is intimate knowledge

When I was a youth pastor here many moons ago, I took the kids up to Knott’s Berry Farm – and I love amusement parks and I love roller coasters. The only type of ride I don’t like are the ones where they drop you straight up and down. I’m just not a fan, but one of the number one rules in youth ministry, is you don’t let the kids know something scares you. So I saw this new ride at the time, Supreme Scream – and it was that type of ride, and the kids could wait. Oh for a while I tried to direct them to this coaster and the log ride, but eventually we were in line for Supreme Scream. I knew I was not going to like that ride. I looked at people getting off the ride who didn’t look like they had a good time. I knew it. But then they strapped me in, in this little seat and you start going up and up, eventually I could see my house in Oceanside, and then the worse sound in the world – pushhhh – and as I began to drop, it was no longer head knowledge, it wasn’t just I believe I will not like that ride. I felt my fear in my toes. I knew, by experience, I did not like that ride.

- And I share that with you, because our love for the Lord, it must go beyond our heads, oh it needs to include the mind
 - But I need to do more than just know the Lord intellectually – I need to strap in and experience who He is by walking with Him, and loving Him and clinging to Him

David said it best in Psalm 34...

“Taste and see that the Lord is good” – Psalm 34:8

Maybe you need to let go a little bit – maybe in worship this morning – you were intellectually agreeing with the songs – yeah that is true

- but maybe in a few minutes when we close, you need to cry out and engage your emotions with your intellect and love God with your mind and your soul, the seat of your emotions
 - but to love Him doesn’t even stop there

For Jesus says we are to love Him with our hearts and our strength

- **the word for “heart” is “kardia” in the Greek and it means the seat of our physical lives**
 - and the word for strength is very similar
- God is saying I want you to love Me with your mind, I want you to love Me with your emotions, but I also want you to love Me with the way you live your life
 - Don’t misunderstand – I am not saying –by saying this, you’ll be made perfect by this
 - I am just saying a lawyer comes to God and says what is important to you

And God’s response is that we would just love Him

- but that means more than a giddy feeling
 - It means to love Him with our minds
 - To engage Him with our emotions
 - And to love Him with the way we live our lives

And when I begin to do that – when I begin to get my vertical relationship with God right, well then what so often, we would say is most important, especially in this age social Christianity, loving and serving people that is what is really important – well only then does that become possible

- I see how much God loves me, and I love Him with all I am in return
 - Well then the second thing Jesus says will fall into place

I see how much He loves me, and I can't help but love others – Jesus summarizes all 613 commandments by saying – Love God, Love people

- Jesus is so wise
 - Instead of getting into a debate about what is the most important law, which is heavy, which is light
- Jesus is saying, it much simpler than that
 - Just love – Love Me
 - Love others – and the whole law comes together
- Well that brings us to our final question, now it is Jesus' turn to ask some questions

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#5 – A Question of Identity – Mark 12:35-40

- Now it was Jesus' turn to ask a question and His question hit the heart of everything wrong they believed about Him and was used by the early church over and over again

What was the basis of Jesus' question?

- well you need to understand that in that culture, the Jews expected that Messiah would be a warrior of the bloodline of David
 - Not God, just a man, who was a warrior
 - So Jesus didn't fit the cultural expectation
- But Jesus goes back to the Word to get them to see why they should have seen that Messiah was going to be more than a man, Messiah was going to be God made flesh

The Jewish teaching all pointed to the fact that the Messiah would be a son of David

- Meaning the Messiah would be human

But Jesus quotes Psalm 110 - (which they all taught was about the Messiah) says that the Messiah would sit at the right hand of God – a place that would only be given to someone who was divine

- And more than that – David who wrote Psalm 110 is you calling the Messiah, who remember they thought was just a descendant of David, David is calling Him Lord

You see, maybe not so clear to us, but it would have been crystal clear to them - No Jewish man would call his son "Lord"

- The respect for the elders, the previous generations, you would never call a son, a grandson or a great grandson – My Lord
 - Unless His son was greater or going to be greater than he was.

How is David able to call the Messiah His Lord (a title of the divine) and his son? (a title of humanity)?

- the answer of course was what they were not willing to see
 - that the scriptures taught the Messiah was both human and divine
 - A descendant of David, but at the same time, God made flesh – exactly what Jesus was claiming to be
- Now this was something they rejected, it was something they didn't see because they did not understand the scriptures, nor the power of God
 - But let's take this from 2,000 years and drive it home this morning

They didn't see it

- they didn't see Jesus had the authority
- they didn't see Jesus had the right to speak into their lives
 - they didn't see that they needed to love Him

And they didn't see that He was the son of not just David, but the son of God

- because they did not know the scriptures or the power of God
 - they didn't see it, they wouldn't see it

But their lives are long past

- the question for us today is do we see it
 - while Jesus was being examined, our hearts are being examined
- Do we see He has the authority to speak into our lives
- Do we see that we bear His image and belong to Him
- Do we see that we are to love Him with all our hearts and with all our souls and minds
- Do we see that He is more than just some man that walked the earth and taught good things
 - That He is God and therefore has the authority and is worthy of our love and our worship and our obedience

Do we see that, or do we reject that

- maybe not verbally, but certainly with the way we handle our lives
 - we live like He doesn't have the authority to speak into our hearts
 - we live like we don't bear His image
 - like we don't love Him with all we are
 - Like He isn't our Lord and our God

Friends – it's great to look back 2,000 years in history and see this exchange between Jesus and the religious leaders of ancient Israel

- but we need the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts and how we can learn this morning from the examination of Jesus how we need to grow and go beyond the cultural expectations of who Jesus is and what it is to be a Christian – and really walk with God
 - Let's pray!