

ACCOUNTABILITY REMINDER

July 30 Su Reading 211 — Mark 11:27-33 — By What Authority?

²⁷ Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him, ²⁸ and [began] saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?" ²⁹ And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and [then] I will tell you by what authority I do these things." ³⁰ Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me." ³¹ And they [began] reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?'" ³² But if we say, 'From men?'"—they were afraid of the crowd, for everyone was regarding John to have been a real prophet. ³³ And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither ^[fn] will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

LSB Footnote

(11:33) Lit *do I tell*

Answer Me! — Earlier this year, we read about Jesus cleansing the temple near the beginning of His ministry. At that time, He was asked by the Jewish leaders, "What sign do you show us as your authority for doing these things?" (John 2:18). In today's reading, it sounds like nearly the whole Sanhedrin court came to Him ("the chief priests and the scribes and the elders"—Mark 11:27). They asked the same question about authority because they considered themselves to be the ultimate authority over the temple and all that happened there. Jesus demonstrated His superior authority by how He responded to them. He knew their previous attitudes about John the Baptist; they had rejected him because their hearts were wicked. So, He asked, was John's ministry from heaven (divine) or from men (human)? After His question, Jesus authoritatively said, "Answer Me" (v. 39). They had to consult with each other before responding ("if we say..."—vv. 31, 32). They were not discussing what they believed; they were considering what answer to give because of the consequences of what they would say. They couldn't give their true answer because "they were afraid of the crowd" (v. 32). That sounds like the crowd was the real authority, not them! So, they lied, saying "We do not know" (v. 33). If they had told the truth, they would be proving to the crowd that, since they couldn't recognize John as a prophet, they had no ability to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus was the real authority.

Authority - YouTube

One word from You,
Things change on Your authority;
Your word, it's true,
Things change on Your authority.

My fight is not my own,
Its end is in Your hands;
I worship You because I know
All things must bow to Your command.

— Brooke Ligertwood, et. al. (2020)

ACCOUNTABILITY REMINDER If you are up to date in your reading as of today, but did not report yesterday, please [click here](#) to leave your email address or let me know at accbibleread@gmail.com.

ACCOUNTABILITY FINAL DAY

July 31 M Reading 212 — Matthew 21:28-32 — Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸ "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' ²⁹ And he answered and said, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went. ³⁰ And the man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered and said, 'I [will], sir'; but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes ^[fn]will get into the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing [this], did not even regret afterward so as to believe him.

LSB Footnote

(21:31) Lit are getting into

Exposing Hypocrisy — This parable immediately follows the question Jesus asked the Jewish leaders about John the Baptist. They had refused to admit that they believed John's baptism was not from God. So, in today's reading, we see Jesus exposing their hypocrisy. The son who first refused, but regretted it and went to work, was like the sinful tax collectors and prostitutes who believed John and repented. The second son had the talk but not the walk, like the Jewish leaders who claimed that they believed God, but their lives didn't show it. They would not acknowledge their sin and turn to follow those whom God sent to them. Jesus was hard on hypocrites because He knew their hearts.

[Jesus, I Come to Thee - YouTube](#)

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

— William Sleeper (1887)

ACCOUNTABILITY FINAL DAY! If you have not yet reported for this month, please let me know your reading status today at accbiblead@gmail.com.

August 1 Tu Reading 213 — Mark 12:1-12 — Parable of the Absent Landlord

¹ And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A ^[fn]WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to ^[fn]vine-growers and went on a journey. ² And at the [harvest] time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive [some] of the fruit of the vineyard from the vine-growers. ³ And they took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ And again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. ⁵ And he sent another, and that one they killed; and [so with] many others, beating some and killing others. ⁶ He had one more, a beloved son;

he sent him last [of all] to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷ But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' ⁸ And they took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ What will the ^[fn]owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Have you not even read this Scripture:

*'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
THIS HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNER [stone];*

¹¹ *THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE ^[fn]LORD, AND
IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?"*

¹² *And they were seeking to seize Him, and [yet] they feared the crowd, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And [so] they left Him and went away.*

LSB Footnotes

(12:1) Or *fence*

(12:1) Or *tenant farmers*, so in vv 2, 7, 9

(12:9) Lit *lord*

(12:11) In OT, Yahweh, cf. Ps 118:23

Blatant Rejection — The Jewish leaders who challenged Jesus were still present, so Jesus told another parable that was directed “to them” (v. 1). The vineyard often represented Israel in the OT, so the parable’s tenant vine growers were Israel’s religious leaders, the owner was God, the sent slaves were God’s mistreated prophets, and the “beloved son” (v. 6) was the Messiah, Jesus. The rejected “stone” (a quote from Ps. 118:22-23), would become the chief cornerstone of a new building, not primarily for Jews but for all peoples. In the parable, after killing his son, the owner would “give the vineyard to others” (v. 9), which would be mostly Gentiles. The Jewish leaders “understood that He spoke the parable against them,” but it didn’t change their evil intentions toward Jesus, and “they were seeking to seize Him” (v. 12). Notice that they again showed cowardness toward the people: (“they feared the crowd”). Psalm 118 served as a warning, predicting their rejection, but instead of recognizing their wrong direction and turning from it, they plowed ahead to do what would ultimately fit perfectly into God’s plan of sacrificing Himself as the final Paschal Lamb.

[The Stone Which the Builders Rejected - YouTube](#)

The stone which the builders rejected,
The stone which the builders rejected,
The stone which the builders rejected,
has become the cornerstone.

— from Psalm 118

August 2 W Reading 214 — Matthew 22:1-14 — Parable of the Wedding Feast

¹ *And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, ² "The kingdom of heaven ^[fn]may be compared to ^[fn]a king who ^[fn]gave a wedding feast for his son. ³ And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been called to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. ⁴ Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been called, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are [all] butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'" ⁵ But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own ^[fn]farm, another to his business, ⁶ and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were called were not worthy. ⁹ 'Go therefore to the main*

highways, and as many as you find [there], call to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰ And those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with ^[fn]dinner guests.

¹¹ "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

¹⁴ For many are ^[fn]called, but few [are] chosen."

LSB Footnotes

(22:2) Lit was compared to

(22:2) Lit a man, a king

(22:2) Lit made

(22:5) Or field

(22:10) Lit those reclining at the table

(22:14) Or invited

Called vs. Chosen — Even after the Jewish leaders left, Jesus continued to teach about God's kingdom being expanded to the Gentiles following its general rejection by the Jews. In this parable, the king represents God, and the wedding feast is defined as the "*kingdom of heaven*" (v. 1). It is like the "*marriage supper of the Lamb*" described in Rev. 19:7-9, where the church, His bride, was given clothing of "*fine linen, bright and clean ... [which] is the righteous acts of the saints.*" In Jesus' parable, therefore, although both "*evil and good*" people were brought to the feast (Matt. 22:10), the improperly dressed man showed no repentance or evidence that he had been converted. He was called but not chosen; he was in the church *building* but not in the church *family*. The first call went out to Israel, but they were "*unwilling*" (v. 3) and "*paid no attention*" (v. 5). The second call was broader, going into "*the main highways ... streets ... and [they] gathered together all they found*" (v. 9-10), probably referring to Gentiles. At the time Jesus told the parable, His audience was composed of Jews. Would they continue to be unwilling and pay no attention to the call, or would they be changed by the Messiah?

[When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder - YouTube](#)

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more,
And the morning breaks, eternal, bright and fair;
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

— James M. Black (1893)

August 3 Th Reading 215 — Matthew 22:15-22 — Render to Caesar

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and took counsel together about how they might trap Him ^[fn]in what He said. ¹⁶ And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and ^[fn]defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. ¹⁷ Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it ^[fn]lawful to give a tax to Caesar, or not?" ¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, "Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show Me the coin [used] for the tax." And they brought Him a ^[fn]denarius. ²⁰ And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" ²¹ They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Therefore, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." ²² And hearing [this], they marveled, and leaving Him, they went away.

LSB Footnotes

(22:15) Lit *in word*

(22:16) Lit *it is not a concern to You about anyone*;

(22:17) Or *permissible*

(22:19) A Roman silver coin, approx. a laborer's daily wage

Render to God — All the Jewish religious leaders joined forces with their frequent political opponents, the Herodians, to trap Jesus. All their best minds and careful plans were no match for the Son of God. When the interchange was over, "*they marveled, and ... went away*" (v. 22). Jesus was not only infinitely smarter and wiser than they were, but He also knew their hearts ("*... knowing their wickedness*"—v. 18). They had also been deceptive in that they "*sent their disciples*" (v. 16) rather than going themselves and being recognized. As usual, Jesus didn't hold back in rebuking them, calling them hypocrites (v. 18). They were pretending to be impressed with Jesus' truthfulness and even-handed dealings with people (v. 16). They hated to "*render to Caesar*" the high taxes forced on them, but they did not "*render to God*" what He requires, including truthfulness, humility, and seeking the wellbeing of others. Are we? The Bible tells us clearly that what we should be rendering to God are things like prayer, obedience, gratitude, giving financially to His work on earth, and joining together with other believers to worship.

How Pleased and Blessed Was I - YouTube

How pleased and blest was I,
To hear the people cry,
"Come, let us seek our God today!"
Yes, with a cheerful zeal,
We haste to Zion's hill,
And there our vows and honors pay.
— Isaac Watts (b. 1674)

August 4 F Reading 216 — Mark 12:18-27 — Whose Wife Will She Be?

¹⁸ Then [some] Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, 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 ^[fn]MARRY THE WIFE AND RAISE UP A SEED FOR HIS BROTHER. ²⁰ There were seven brothers; and the first ^[fn]married a wife, and died leaving no ^[fn]seed. ²¹ And the second one ^[fn]married her, and died leaving behind no seed; and the third likewise; ²² and [so] ^[fn]all seven left no seed. Last of all the woman died also. ²³ In the resurrection, ^[fn]when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For ^[fn]all seven ^[fn]had married her." ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not ^[fn]understand the Scriptures nor 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 ^[fn]regarding the fact that the dead are raised, 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."

LSB Footnotes

(12:19) Lit *take*

(12:20) Lit *took*

(12:20) Or *offspring*

(12:21) Lit *took*

(12:22) Lit *the seven*

(12:23) Early mss omit *when they rise again*

(12:23) Lit *the seven*

(12:23) Lit *had her as a wife*
(12:24) Or *know*
(12:26) Lit *concerning the dead, that they rise*

Better Than Marriage — The Sadducees were a smaller, but powerful, Jewish group; the chief priests came from that political unit, and they seemed to trust only the OT books of Moses. They didn't believe in the resurrection or in angels. Like the Pharisees and Herodians in yesterday's reading, the Sadducees also came to Jesus deceptively, trying to outsmart and trap Him. After presenting their exaggerated hypothetical case, they asked, as if they believed in the resurrection, "*In the resurrection, when they rise again...*" (v. 23). Jesus said they were mistaken for two reasons. The first, He said, was because "*you do not understand the Scriptures*" (v. 24). Although the five books of Moses don't directly mention the resurrection, the prophet Daniel clearly said that "*many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to reproach [and] everlasting contempt*" (Dan. 12:2). The Sadducees were mistaken because they did not understand that "*All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching ...*" (2 Tim. 3:16). The second reason Jesus said they were mistaken was because they did not understand "*the power of God*" (Mark 12:24). That was not only resurrection power, but it also included His ability to create relationships in heaven that will be far better than the best of those on earth, including marriage.

[When We All Get to Heaven - YouTube](#)

Sing the wondrous love of Jesus,
Sing His mercy and His grace;
In the mansions bright and blessed,
He'll prepare for us a place.

When we all get to heaven,
What a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus,
We'll sing and shout the victory!

— Eliza Hewitt (1898)

August 5 Sa Reading 217 — Mark 12:28-34 — The Foremost Commandment

²⁸ *And when one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, he recognized that He had answered them well and asked Him, "What commandment is the ^[fn]foremost of all?"* ²⁹ *Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE ^[fn]LORD OUR GOD IS ONE ^[fn]LORD;'* ³⁰ *AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE ^[fn]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; 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 thoughtfully, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would dare to ask Him any more questions.*

LSB Footnotes

(12:28) Or *first*
(12:29) In OT, Yahweh, cf. Deut 6:4
(12:29) In OT, Yahweh, cf. Deut 6:4
(12:30) In OT, Yahweh, cf. Deut 6:4

Not Far — Like the interview with Nicodemus, this is a rather rare, more positive encounter Jesus had with one of the religious leaders of the Jews. Jesus saw his honesty and openness, that “*he recognized*” that Jesus had answered the Sadducees well (v. 28a). His question was not a constructed trap, and it seriously sought a truthful answer: “*What commandment is the foremost of all?*” (v. 28b). Jesus was also straightforward in His answer, which was to wholeheartedly love God and one’s neighbor. The most important thing we can do to please God is to love—love Him and love others. The scribe affirmed Jesus’ answer, summarizing it in his own words, and adding that loving God was even more important than the worship activities of offering sacrifices (v. 33). John Piper has said, “Take more delight in the Savior than in His service.” Jesus saw that this scribe was close to the Kingdom because “*he had answered thoughtfully*” (v. 34). He was not quite there, however. What was he lacking? He had probably not yet recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior for the world. Close, but not quite. He had grasped it intellectually but needed to experience it relationally. My guess is that he, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, came to faith in Jesus after His resurrection.

[Almost Persuaded - YouTube](#)

“Almost persuaded,” come, come today;
“Almost persuaded,” turn not away;
Jesus invites you here,
Angels are lingering near,
Prayers rise from hearts so dear;
O wanderer, come.

— Philip Bliss (1871)