



MARK

The Gift of God





Mental Chess

Mark 11:27-12:17

Mark 11:27-12:17



1. Dueling Dilemmas (11:27-12:12)
2. A False Dilemma (12:13-17)



What is a *Dilemma*?

- *Dilemma*: a logical argument to force one to admit what he does not want to admit
 - *Horns*: two undesirable options
 - Pick one horn (to gore you)
 - Split the horns (give a third option)
 - Grab the horns (disprove the dilemma)
 - Get your own horns (counter-dilemma)

Dueling Dilemmas



- Sunday: *Triumphal Entry / Palm Sunday*; recon in the temple
- Monday: cursing of the fig tree; cleansing of the temple
- Tuesday: teaching at the fig tree; back to the temple (27)

Dueling Dilemmas



- Challenger #1: the Sanhedrin (28)
 - “By what authority... or who gave you this authority?”
 - Either embarrassment or blasphemy (see 2:6-7)
 - Jesus went over their heads

Dueling Dilemmas



- Defensive counter-dilemma (29-30)
 - Horn 1: John's baptism was from heaven
 - "Then why didn't you believe him?"
 - Horn 2: John's baptism was from men
 - 'The people will stone us' (Luke 20:6)
- [Split: John's baptism was from hell]

Dueling Dilemmas



- If they admitted John had God's authority they would be forced to admit He did, too (see John 1:19-34)
- Cowardly liars: "We do not know" (33)
- Since they refused to answer, He refused to answer (cf. 4:24-25)

Dueling Dilemmas



- Counter-attack! (12:1; see Isa. 5:1-7)
 - Owner = God
 - Vineyard = Israel
 - Growers = religious leaders (as a whole - Matt. 23:29-39)
 - Slaves = Prophets
 - Son = Jesus

Dueling Dilemmas



- What can we learn from this parable?
 - God graciously provides (1)
 - God expects fruit (2)
 - God is patient / *long-suffering* (3-8)
 - God is the righteous judge (9)

Dueling Dilemmas



- What can we learn about these *leaders*?
 - Unfaithful stewards
 - Violent murderers
 - Scheming co-conspirators
 - Disrespectful rebels

Dueling Dilemmas



- “Have you not even read this Scripture...”?
- Who is He talking to? (11:27)
- *Read with understanding? (eyes to see)*
- Ps. 118:22-23 (*Hallel* psalm – Passover)
 - Some things that people reject (stone, Israel, the Son), God exalts and uses



Highlights / Game Summary

- He ruined their business (at Passover!)
- He embarrassed them
- He defied their authority
- He denounced them in a parable
- He challenged their Bible knowledge

Checkmate!

A False Dilemma



- New Challenger: Pharisees/Herodians (13)
 - Rematch of sorts (see 3:1-6 – *is it lawful*)
 - Opening move: *flattery* (14)
 - *Truthful*: honesty, integrity
 - Impartial; no favoritism
 - *Teach the way of God*: Ps. 18:30; 77:13

A False Dilemma



- “Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar?”
 - Herod the Great was given Palestine as a semi-autonomous tributary kingdom
 - On his death (4 BC) it was divided 3 ways
 - Archelaus – Judea and Samaria
 - AD 6 – he failed, so Rome took over

A False Dilemma



- “Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar?”
 - Governor Cyrenius – census and taxes
 - Poll-tax: 1 denarius/head (ages 14-65)
- Judas of Galilee revolted (Acts 5:37):
“Taxation is no better than slavery!”
- OT Law vs. Caesar (claimed to be a god)

A False Dilemma



- Horns: “Shall we pay or not pay?”
 - “Pay” – traitor to the Jews
 - “Not pay” – treason to the Romans (Luke 20:20)

A False Dilemma



- “Bring Me a denarius to look at” (15)
 - They were using these coins, showing they recognized Caesar’s rule over them
- “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”
 - ‘Who does this coin belong to?’
- They acknowledged Caesar’s authority and property

A False Dilemma



- “Give to Caesar what belongs to him”
- “AND give to God what rightfully belongs to Him”
- They are not mutually exclusive but are compatible and expected (Rom. 13:1-7)

Checkmate!

So What?



- Am I honoring 'Caesar'? (Rom. 13:1-7)
 - Render: *to give in fulfilment of an obligation or expectation*
 - "Yeah, but, ...they misuse it" "...they waste it" "...they don't deserve it"
 - Do you enjoy the benefits?

So What?



- Do I have a right view of God?
 - God is loving & gracious & patient
 - And He is also holy & righteous & just
 - We may feel like we are getting away with something now, but judgment will come

So What?



- Do I fear people?
 - God calls us to love people, not fear them
 - Jesus spoke the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)
 - With boldness! (confidence in God)
 - Regardless of the consequences

So What?



- Am I really loving God?
 - “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30)
 - Christians should not fear *reason/logic*
 - Don’t bypass or disengage the mind