

## Lesson 10            The Last Days

### **Memory Text: Mark 13:26, 27**

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven

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- Our focus this week = striking prophecy about = fate of the beautiful Jerusalem temple and more.
  - Temple mount dominated city
  - Temple amazingly beautiful = massive stones used in construction still a marvel to this day
- Prophecy goes from = time of Jesus on Earth /to time of the end— His second coming.
- Lesson starts w/ = brief story = Jesus makes profound statement about small act of poor widow emphasizing significance of sacrificial generosity.
- In context of Jesus' teaching = last visit to Temple
  - Broader context = PASSION WEEK

## **SUNDAY                            Two Little Coins in the Offering**

**Mark 12:38–40** <sup>38</sup>Then He said to them in His teaching, “Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, <sup>39</sup>the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, <sup>40</sup>who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

**Mark 12:41–44** (NKJV) <sup>41</sup>Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much.

- Late in day – Jesus had been embroiled in conflict w/religious leaders = about to leave the Temple forever
- On wall / spacious Court of the Women = 13 trumpet-shaped receptacles for offerings / taxes for the temple
- Jesus sat down = opposite these = watched worshipers making their contributions
- One rich man after another = deposited their gifts = perhaps in pretentious display to gain attraction / impress others

**Mark 12:42** Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.

- Two small copper coins = smallest denomination of Roman coinage
- Bold contrast between widow's offering / offering of rich
- Poor widow = lived hand-to-mouth existence = heart overflowed w/love for God = in humility, gave all she had to live on
  - Would not be able to eat till she earned more
- Wasn't much = less than day's wages
  - but gave her all in absolute love/devotion
- **2 Corinthians 9:7** Giving w/cheerful heart = not out of compulsion/obligation but motivated by love/devotion
- **Matthew 6:19-21** Storing up imperishable treasures in heaven
- **Jesus praises her sacrificial giving= act of devotion / faith.**

**Mark 12:43-44** So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has **put in more than all those who have given to the treasury;** <sup>44f</sup>for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

- Jesus = **divine perspective** = said poor widow gave more than **all** combined = didn't know where her next meal would come from
- Profound lesson on nature of wealth / faith
  - widow's act of faith significant
- Jesus measured heart motive = not actual size of contribution
  - Underscores importance of motive / generosity / sacrifice = commitment / faith
- Rich = gave out of abundance = no sacrificial giving on their part
  - no true expression of devotion to God
- Poor widow's = tiny gift was extravagant
- Serves as timeless reminder of God's perspective on giving
- Amount of offering – not always measure of love of one who gives
  - Sometimes more important factor = what is held back
- True meaning of giving = encourages believers to trust in God's provision / prioritize spiritual riches over worldly wealth
- As we reflect on this passage = called to emulate widow's example, giving wholeheartedly /sacrificially in service to God's kingdom.

**ABSG** This story contains a deep lesson about the management of resources. Giving to God's cause does not depend on the actions of leaders to have validity. The religious leadership of the temple was corrupt, but Jesus did not thereby affirm withholding offerings. If ever there were corrupt religious leaders (Caiaphas? Annas?), those at this time were among the worst. And Jesus knew it too.

It is true that leaders have a sacred responsibility to use resources in accordance with the will of God, but even if they do not, those who give to the cause of God are still blessed in their giving, as this woman was.

Withholding tithes or offerings, on the other hand, when leaders do something displeasing, means that the giving is tied to their actions instead of being made in thankfulness to God. However tempting it may be to do that, it's wrong.