

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל



A bronze *mite*, also known as a *Lepton* (meaning *small*), minted by *Alexander Jannaeus*, King of *Judaea*, 103 - 76 B.C. obverse: the blooming lotus scepter of ancient Egypt in circle, reverse: star of eight rays.

Picture to the right:
http://bibleencyclopedia.com/pictures/Mark_12_Widow_and_and_her_two_mites.htm

The Gospel of Mark

Jesus' Manhood, Motion, and Mission

Day 1 – Summarize chapter 12:28-44

Welcome

Welcome the Holy Spirit into your time of study with prayer; write it here:

Read the Chapter

Read Mark 12:28-44 in one sitting. Try to summarize each event briefly with 10 words or less, keeping to the main points. Write your text divisions on the left and your summaries in a sentence to the right.

Day 2 – The Greatest Commandment

The Shema: Let's learn some background first

Shema — listen, or hear & do (according to the [Targum](#), accept)

Yisrael — Israel, in the sense of the people or congregation of Israel

Adonai — often translated as "LORD", it is read in place of [YHWH](#)

Eloheinu — the plural 1st person possessive of אֱלֹהֵינוּ *Elohim*, meaning "our God".

Ehad — the cardinal number one

This is called the Shema and was sung, taught, and learned by every Jewish person. After the Shema came the greatest commandment section called the V'ahavta.

V'ahavta

The following verses, commonly referred to by the first word of the verse immediately following the Shema as the *V'ahavta*, or in [Classical Hebrew](#) *W'ahav'ta* meaning "And you shall love...", contain the commands to love God (the Talmud emphasizes that you will, at some point, whether you choose to or not therefore "shall" future tense, love God), with all one's heart, soul, and might; then the verse goes on to remind you to remember all commandments and "teach them diligently to your children and speak of them when you sit down and when you walk, when you lie down and when you rise" (Deut 6:7); to recite the words of God when retiring or rising; to bind those words "on thy arm and thy head" (classically Jewish oral tradition interprets as *tefillin*), and to inscribe them on the door-posts of your house and on your gates (referring to *mezuzah*). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shema_Yisrael)

For centuries, Jews had sung and recited this. How then did religion take over the simplicity of the greatest commandment? Before we condemn anyone for straying, look at your own life. How simple is it for you to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Reflect on this, also using Eugene Peterson's translation of the Shema and the V'ahavta:

Jesus said, "The first in importance is, 'Listen, Israel: The Lord your God is one; so love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy.' And here is the second: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' There is no other commandment that ranks with these."

Day 3 – The Greatest Commandment

Religion and love? Religion or love?

To remember this passage in context, Jesus is embroiled in a series of confrontations with all the representatives of religion in His culture. He is saying that whole-hearted devotion and love (inward) trump systems, rituals, cleansings, ceremonies, and deeds (outward). What does this mean to you? In other words, how do you make loving God with all you've got and loving your neighbor as yourself real in everyday life? Run through a typical day...look at your calendar, and think through the people you meet, the situations you are normally in. Waking children, breakfast, in the car, working, deadlines, pressures, delights, co-workers, car again in traffic, dinner, bedtime routines. How do you do this and love God with all you are? How do you love all these people as you would love yourself?

Day 4 – Lord; the teachers

Lord and Son?

God said to my Master,

"Sit here at my right hand

until I put your enemies under your feet."

"David here designates the Messiah 'my Master'—so how can the Messiah also be his 'son'?" The Message

With those pronouns cleared up, let's look at this passage! Jesus' lineage went through the house of Judah, and you can trace Him through David (Luke 3:31 and Mt 1:6,16). In that sense, Jesus can rightly be called "a son of David" and "the Root of Jesse (David's father)," Isaiah 11:1, Romans 15:12. What does Isaiah 9:6-7 say that ties Jesus to this prophecy, as well as to this passage in Mark?

I imagine Jesus posing that question and watching with a smile as the scholars humphed away, unable to answer. Then He warned the crowd about them. What did He say, and how can you take it as a warning for yourself?

Compare Jesus' description of the teachers of the law with James 1:27. Make a note about it:

Days 5, 6 – The Widow's Offering

The Widow's Mite

How does Jesus evaluate giving?

What about this woman attracts you? What confronts you?

Write a prayer or poem about this lesson below.

Friend, be encouraged: we are praying for you and over you. "You make everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3).