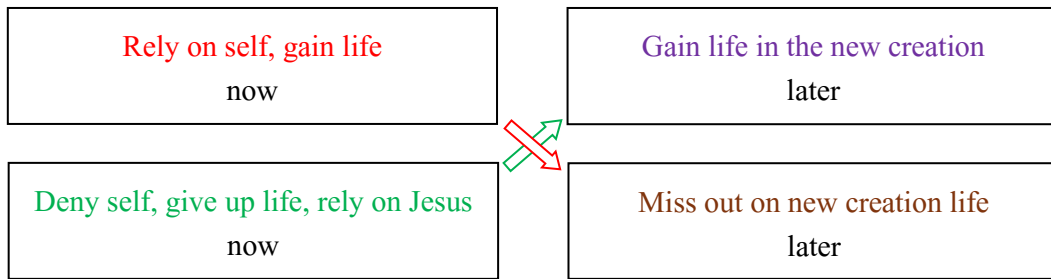


The major **reversal** paradigm for Mark 8-13 could be summed up from Mark 8:34-38:



12:1-17 The fruitless temple further condemned

12:1a TELL: Parable → hardening of hearts

12:1b-9 Isaiah 5 foundation:

God's care → Israel's fruitlessness → God's destruction

**Shove off, God
I'm in charge
No to your rule!**

Mark's extension:

12:6 'son, whom he loved'

cf. Mark 9:7 (Psalm 2 Messiah/smashing-enemies-king)

12:9 'give the vineyard to others'

12:10-11 Psalm 118 quote: rejected unto death → vindictory resurrection

Subtle observations:

- 'stone' reminds us thematically that the *temple* is being discussed
cf. 11:11-21 fig tree sandwich
cf. 13:1 'what massive stones, what magnificent buildings!'
- 'rejected' has death connotations within Mark, e.g. 8:31
the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again

12:12-15 SHOW: JSLT immediately act like the tenants!

Powerplay: transgression-or-treason trap

- pay → sin against God; or
- don't pay → be an enemy of the Roman Empire?

12:16-17 Powerplay: Jesus turns tables

- 'bring me a denarius!'
- 'whose image and inscription?'



12:18-37 Scripture showdowns: **sneering** sadducees vs **sincere** scribe

12:18-23 **sneering** sadducees

- put Pentateuch (Deut 25:5-10) above other scripture (e.g. Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2)
- deny God's promises of eternal life

12:24-27 - Pentateuch does actually assume eternal life!

12:28-34 **sincere** scribe

- Pentateuch shows you should **love God from the heart** above **appearing to make sacrifices**
- Jesus, 'you are not far from **eternal life** (nor the king)!'

12:35-37 '**blind** teachers do not understand their own scriptures!'

- Psalm 110: Jesus is God's smashing-enemies-king

deny scripture /
external religion

resurrection /
kingdom of God

love God with
all heart

Lord AND son?

Jesus is David's son, in the sense of being his 25x great-grandson.

Jesus is David's lord, because David trusts in the eternal king for salvation and calls him 'my lord' (2 Sam 23:5; Ps 110:1).

12:38-44 **Gain life** teachers vs **reliant** widow

12:38-40 Leaders: **very important**

12:41-44 Widow: **relies on God** to provide

gain life leaders

rely on God
widow

NB: not salvation by giving!

Mark 8-13 section

Verses	Function	Main point
8:31-10:52	The right way to enter Jesus' kingdom	Rely on God
11:1-12:44	The wrong way to enter the kingdom	Rely on external religious credentials/respectability
13:1-37	Motivation to choose the right way	God destroyed the definitive 'wrong way' (Jewish temple)

Diagnostic questions

- 12:1-17 1. You have a church friend who says, 'thank God I'm not like the Pharisees here!' What general attitude problem do the Pharisees have? How would you persuade your friend to think more carefully about not being like the Pharisees?
- 12:18-37 2. For us today, how can knowing the Bible become another way of looking religious, rather than actually trusting and obeying God?
- 12:38-44 3. What are our subtle versions of 'flowing robes' and 'important seats'?
4. Why is it hard to be like the widow, relying on God to provide?

Getting back into the text

- 12:1-11
1. Why does Mark tell us the owner did so much to prepare the vineyard before leasing it?
 2. What does the escalating sequence of servants achieve? Why save 'a son, whom he loved' until last?
 3. In 12:7, why do they think murdering the heir will somehow make the inheritance theirs?
 4. What do you make of the reversal by 12:9?
'kill the heir, so vineyard becomes ours' → actually kill the heir, so vineyard taken away
 5. How persuaded are you that 12:10 'has become the cornerstone' refers to Jesus' resurrection?
 6. What does 12:11 'the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes' from Psalm 118 add?
- 12:12-17
7. In 12:12, to what extent do the JSLT understand Jesus' teaching through the previous parable?
 8. What is the intent behind 'to catch [Jesus] in his words' 12:13?
 9. With what tone do you hear 12:14-15 being said?
 10. Why does Jesus make the Pharisees and Herodians produce the denarius? Why ask, 'Whose image? Whose inscription?' rather than simply answer the taxation question?
- 12:18-27
11. Why does Mark introduce the Sadducees specifically by telling us what they *deny*?
 12. Why is their hypothetical so absurdly extended to seven brothers?
 13. What do not knowing 'the Scriptures' and not knowing 'the power of God' mean in 12:24?
 14. Why answer them from Exodus 3 rather than from a more explicit resurrection text e.g. Daniel 12:2? What irony is produced if their preferred part of Scripture itself defeats their argument?
 15. How does the logic of Jesus' answer work in 12:26-27, going from Abraham to resurrection?
- 12:27-33
16. Why does Mark record the *Shema* ('Hear, O Israel') rather than e.g. name a commandment?
 17. What is striking about the scribe not merely agreeing, but restating Jesus' answer in his own words?
 18. Why the accumulation 'all your heart... all your soul... all your mind... all your strength'?
 19. What does 'more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices' sound like while they are standing in Jerusalem's temple?
 20. What meaning(s) do you hear in 'you are not far from the kingdom of God'?
 21. Why does Mark end the controversy sequence with 'from then on no one dared ask him any more questions'?
- 12:34-37
22. Why does Jesus now become the questioner?
 23. Why frame the problem as 'How can the teachers of the law say...?'
 24. What is the social impact of Jesus teaching about the Psalm 110 smashing-enemies-king while sitting in the temple courts?
 25. Why does Mark leave Jesus' question apparently unanswered? What does that do to the reader?
 26. Why mention that 'the large crowd listened to him with delight'?
- 12:38-40
27. Notice the accumulation: robes → greetings → important seats → places of honour → devour widows' houses → long prayers. Why arrange the details this way?
 28. Why does Mark move directly from 'they devour widows' houses' to an actual widow?
 29. Why tell us many rich people threw in 'large amounts'? Does Mark condemn the large gifts?
 30. What is the visual effect of two coins rather than one?
- Overall
31. How does Mark expose the inadequacy of *external religious credentials* in this chapter?

it will be yours. ²⁵ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”^a

²⁷ They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. ²⁸ ‘By what authority are you doing these things?’ they asked. ‘And who gave you authority to do this?’

²⁹ Jesus replied, ‘I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰ John’s baptism – was it from heaven, or of human origin? Tell me!’

³¹ They discussed it among themselves and said, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” he will ask, “Then why didn’t you believe him?”’ ³² But if we say, “Of human origin” . . .’ (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)

³³ So they answered Jesus, ‘We don’t know.’

Jesus said, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.’

12 Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: ‘A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall round it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ² At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵ He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

⁶ ‘He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, “They will respect my son.”’

⁷ ‘But the tenants said to one another, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.”’ ⁸ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

⁹ ‘What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

“‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

^a Some manuscripts include here words similar to Matthew 6:15.

Isaiah 5:1-7

⁸ “Let me sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

² He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do
for my vineyard,
that I have not done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵ And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.

⁶ I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briars and thorns shall grow up;

I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice,
but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, an outcry!

¹¹ the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes"^a?

¹² Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

¹³ Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. ¹⁴ They came to him and said, 'Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the poll-tax^b to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay or shouldn't we?'

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. 'Why are you trying to trap me?' he asked. 'Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.' ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he asked them, 'Whose image is this? And whose inscription?'

'Caesar's,' they replied.

¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, 'Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.'

And they were amazed at him.

¹⁸ Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹ 'Teacher,' they said, 'Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection^c whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?'

²⁴ Jesus replied, 'Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ²⁶ Now about the dead rising – have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"^d? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!'

^a Psalm 118:22,23

^b A special tax levied on subject peoples, not on Roman citizens

^c Some manuscripts *resurrection, when people rise from the dead,*

^d Exodus 3:6

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?'

²⁹ 'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one."^a ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."^b ³¹ The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself."^c There is no commandment greater than these.'

³² 'Well said, teacher,' the man replied. 'You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.'

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, 'Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

""The Lord said to my Lord:

'Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.'"^d

³⁷ David himself calls him "Lord". How then can he be his son?'

The large crowd listened to him with delight.

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, 'Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the market-places, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.'

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few pence.

^a Or *the Lord our God is one Lord*

^b Deuteronomy 6:4,5

^c Leviticus 19:18

^d Psalm 110:1

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.'

13 As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!'

² 'Do you see all these great buildings?' replied Jesus. 'Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.'

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ 'Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?'

⁵ Jesus said to them: 'Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, "I am he," and will deceive many. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth-pains.

⁹ 'You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. ¹¹ Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

¹² 'Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ¹³ Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

¹⁴ 'When you see "the abomination that causes desolation"^a standing where it^b does not belong – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. ¹⁶ Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. ¹⁷ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ¹⁸ Pray that this will not take place in winter, ¹⁹ because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now – and never to be equalled again.

²⁰ 'If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. ²¹ At that time if

^a Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11

^b Or *he*

Background to Mark 13

The phrase 'abomination of desolation' stems originally from the Old Testament book of Daniel, where it was prophesied that the temple sanctuary would be profaned and sacrifices would be stopped (Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11). These prophecies were partially fulfilled in 167 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes IV marched his armies on Jerusalem, set up an altar to Zeus on top of the altar of burnt offering, and sacrificed a pig.

So when Mark says 'let the reader understand', he is bringing back these kinds of memories. Jesus is saying that something very bad will happen in the temple as a sign of further devastation to come – a time to 'flee to the mountains'. This was fulfilled in AD 70 when Titus marched on Jerusalem with four Roman legions, set fire to the temple and carried the temple riches back to Rome as booty. Those Jews who had not fled were massacred.