

# NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD

## Introduction

- 1) **Mark 12:28-34** – Jesus and a Jewish scribe have a discussion (cf. Matt. 22:34-40)
- 2) Jesus ends by telling the scribe that he is “not far from the kingdom of God” (v. 34)
- 3) Why did Jesus tell him this, and what does it mean? How can one be “not far from the kingdom of God”? Does this describe you?

## I) **The Discussion**

- A) A scribe (*lawyer*, Matt. 22:35) asks Jesus a question (vv. 28)
  - 1) Impressed by Jesus silencing the Sadducees with Scripture and reasoning (vv. 18-27)
  - 2) Question: ***Which is the first commandment of all?*** (“first” = foremost in importance)
  - 3) Intended as a testing of Jesus’ knowledge and teaching (Matt. 22:35)
- B) Jesus answers with Deuteronomy 6:4-5 as the foremost commandment (vv. 29-30)
  - 1) Leviticus 19:18 is identified as the second commandment (v. 31a)
  - 2) No other commandment greater than these (v. 31b)
    - a) On these “hang [depend] all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22:40)
      - i) Loving God and our fellow man is the foundation of a righteous life
- C) Scribe compliments Jesus’ answer and adds his own comment (vv. 32-33)
  - 1) He understands that Jesus spoke the “truth” – Scripture was their ***common*** authority
  - 2) He adds that loving God with the whole heart, understanding, and strength (total conviction, faith) “is ***more*** than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices”
    - a) This statement shows a significant understanding of what God desires
      - i) ***True and complete devotion of heart is more important than any act of devotion***
    - b) Service without devotion to God and His word is vain (1 Sam. 15:22)
    - c) Many of his fellow-scribes did not grasp this truth (Mk. 7:6-8)
- D) Jesus tells him that he is “***not far from the kingdom of God***” (v. 34)
  - 1) Scribe had answered “wisely” – with spiritual understanding and application
  - 2) One with this attitude, knowledge, and desire is at the “door” of God’s kingdom

## II) **Being “Near” the Kingdom of God**

- A) The scribe is inquisitive, honest, respected scripture, and willing to listen to Jesus
  - 1) He has the proper attitude, desire, and goal – excellent candidate for the gospel!
    - a) His heart is prepared and ready to receive the implanted word (Matt. 13:23; Jas. 1:21)
  - 2) The scribe’s knowledge and understanding of the true nature and will of God put him “near” the new kingdom
    - a) Jews themselves were “near” (Eph. 2:17)
    - b) Gentiles “afar off” (Eph. 2:17; Acts 2:39)
      - i) Gentiles made “near” to have access to the Father and become citizens of God’s kingdom (Eph. 2:13, 18-19)
  - 3) But he is not in the kingdom yet – would need to be “born again” to enter (Jn. 3:5)
    - a) Must believe, repent, and be baptized to be transferred into the kingdom (Col. 1:13-14; 2:11-13; added to the church – Acts 2:47)

## III) **Who is “Not Far from the Kingdom of God” Today?**

- A) Who are those that are “not far from the kingdom of God” today?

- 1) The sincere, honest, and moral person (Acts 10:1-2; 23:1)
  - 2) Those who read the Bible and seek truth (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:15)
  - 3) Those who are influenced by godly families and friends (2 Tim. 1:5)
- B) Those who *reject* God, the Bible, and godly people are *far* from the kingdom of God (Isa. 29:13; Mk. 7:6)
- C) Christians can “drift away” from their hope in the heavenly kingdom of God (Heb. 2:1)

### Conclusion

Are you **near** to the kingdom of Christ? Why not **enter** through the blood of Christ? You do not want to be “near, but not in” at the judgment day. Be transferred into the kingdom of Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.