

# Mark 12:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

## Analysis

Jesus' assessment—**Thou art not far from the kingdom of God** (Οὐ μακρὰν εἴ ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ)—is both commendation and warning. The scribe **answered discreetly** (νουνεχῶς, nounechōs = 'intelligently,' 'wisely'), demonstrating spiritual insight. He understands that love surpasses ritual, that relationship with God exceeds religious performance. Yet he is 'not far'—implying proximity but not arrival. To be near the kingdom isn't to be in it.

What separates this perceptive scribe from kingdom citizenship? Personal faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord. Theological understanding, even accurate understanding of Scripture's priorities, doesn't save. The scribe affirms truth about God but hasn't yet submitted to God's Messiah standing before him. Jesus' response is tender but sobering—moral insight and religious knowledge bring one close but cannot substitute for repentance and faith in Christ himself (Mark 1:15). The verse's final note—**no man after that durst ask him any question**—signals Jesus' decisive victory in the temple debates. His wisdom has silenced all challengers.

## Historical Context

This encounter occurred during Passion Week, Jesus' final week before crucifixion. Successive groups—Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees—had attempted to trap Jesus with hostile questions (Mark 12:13-27). This scribe's genuine inquiry breaks the

pattern of antagonism. His recognition that love exceeds sacrifice echoed prophetic tradition and aligned with Jesus' own teaching (Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 10:27). Yet tragically, we have no record this scribe took the final step of discipleship. He represents many in Israel who intellectually grasped Jesus' teaching but didn't embrace Him as Messiah. Within days, religious leaders who knew Scripture would condemn Jesus to death, proving that theological knowledge without spiritual transformation leads to perdition.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How can someone be 'not far from the kingdom' yet ultimately lost? What distinguishes proximity from possession?
2. What would it have cost this scribe to move from affirming Jesus' wisdom to confessing Him as Lord?
3. In what areas of life might you possess accurate theological knowledge without corresponding personal surrender and obedience?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἴδων αὐτὸν ὅτι νουνεχῶς ἀπεκρίθη  
And G3588 when Jesus saw him that discreetly he answered  
G2532 G2424 G1492 G846 G3754 G3562 G611

εἶπεν αὐτὸν Οὐ μακρὰν εἰ ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ  
he said him not far Thou art from the kingdom G3588  
G2036 G846 G3756 G3112 G1488 G575 G932 G3588

θεοῦ καὶ οὐδεὶς οὐκέτι ἐτόλμα αὐτὸν ἐπερωτῆσαι  
of God And no man after that durst him ask  
G2316 G2532 G3762 G3765 G5111 G846 G1905

## Additional Cross-References

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**Colossians 4:6** (Parallel theme): Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

**Luke 20:40** (Parallel theme): And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.

**Matthew 22:46** (Parallel theme): And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

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