

The Gospel of *Mark*

The Servant Leadership of Jesus

The Servant's Ministry in and around Galilee (cont) (1:14 – 9:50)

Jesus' miracles (healing, resurrections, nature) were performed to authenticate His identity as the King (Matthew), the Servant (Mark), the Man (Luke) and God (John) ^{John 14:9-11, 15:36, 20:30-31}.
Most of His miracles were not recorded ^{Matthew 4:24, 15:29-31, Mark 6:53-56, Luke 4:40, 6:17-19, John 21:25}.

A Period of Popularity: *Jesus is Questioned about Fasting* (2:18-22)

2:18 The disciples of John joined the Pharisees in fasting, perhaps in response to Jesus eating with the friends of Levi (tax collectors and sinners) ^{v.15-17}. Matthew stated that John's disciples questioned Jesus ^{Matthew 9:14} why his disciples weren't fasting. Jesus moved to Capernaum after John was put in prison ^{Matthew 4:12-13}, so these were John's disciples who chose not to transfer allegiance to Jesus.

The OT Law only prescribed one fast a year ^{Leviticus 16:29-31}, on the Day of Atonement; however, in the NT time, Jewish orthodoxy defined a fasting schedule of twice-a-week ^{Luke 18:9-14}.

19-20 Jesus made the point that fasting was usually associated with mourning or other times of great spiritual need, but joy was much more appropriate while Jesus (the Messiah/bridegroom) was with them ^{John 3:29}. However, fasting would be applicable at the time of Jesus' arrest/crucifixion ^{Luke 17:22}.

Jesus mentioning the bridegroom leaving was the first indication in Mark of His eventual death.

21 When washed, a new patch will shrink on an already shrunken old garment, creating a bigger tear.

22 Old wineskins have lost elasticity and will burst with new wine that continues to ferment & expand.

Each of the last two verses are mini-parables Jesus offered to illustrate that it is not possible for the "New" Covenant (the spiritual gospel of repentance and forgiveness) to be associated with or function within the framework of the "Old" Covenant (the external traditions of ritual and self-righteousness). Some key details of the transition from the "Old" to the "New":

- Jesus established the New Covenant with His blood ^{Luke 22:19-20, Hebrews 9:15},
- The Law is written on human hearts/minds and not on stone ^{2 Corinthians 3:1-3, Hebrews 10:15-16},
- The Holy Spirit enables believers to fulfill the righteousness of the Law ^{Romans 8:1-4},
- Salvation is not patching up the old, but the beginning of a new creation ^{2 Corinthians 5:17}.

A Period of Popularity: *Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath* (2:23-28)

23-24 As Jesus and His disciples were traveling along on a Sabbath, they began picking grain for food. Accompanying Jesus as observers/spies, some Pharisees confronted Him that the act was unlawful.

Mark E Chapter 2b-3a

When off main roads, travelers would move along paths between pastures and grain fields.

Sabbath: Greek *sabbatōn*, and transliterated from the Hebrew: *shabbâth* : intermission, rest.

The original Sabbath law (4th of the Ten Commandments) required a rest from work on the seventh day ^{Exodus 20:8-11}; however, even Mosaic Law allowed the picking of grain to meet an immediate need for food ^{Deuteronomy 23:24-25}. Nevertheless, years of rabbinical teaching had added many unnecessary restrictions to this law, including that the rubbing of grain was a form of threshing ^{Luke 6:1}, because the Law of Moses had made threshing illegal ^{Exodus 34:21}.

The Pharisees tried to say Jesus and His disciples were breaking the law, but in fact their actions were sinful, because they elevated their traditions to be equal to the Mosaic Law.

While correct doctrine is critical, in the end, the main mark of a Christian is love ^{1 John 4:7-12}.

25-26 Jesus responded by challenging the Pharisees about their supposedly superior understanding of Scripture, because they acted ignorant of many aspects of what it taught ^{Romans 2:17-24}. For example, once when David and his men were fleeing from Saul, they stopped at the Tabernacle on a Sabbath to ask for food. Recognizing their great hunger, the high priest, Ahimelech, gave David and his men the showbread ^{1 Samuel 21:1-6}, even though that violated the Law, because it was only supposed to be eaten by priests ^{Leviticus 24:5-9}. However, nowhere does Scripture condemn David for eating the bread.

When someone claims to know and then teaches the Scriptures, they should be careful about what they teach, because Jesus will hold them to a higher standard ^{Romans 2:17-24, James 3:1}.

The question Jesus asked the Pharisees (“Have you never read...?”) conveyed the same message included in the principles He spoke to Christians ^{Matthew 24:35, Luke 6:46-49, 9:26, John 5:24}.

After Shiloh was destroyed ^{Jeremiah 7:12}, the tabernacle was at Nob, a mile NE of Jerusalem.

Jesus said the event involving David occurred “In the days of Abiathar...”; however, the high priest who gave the bread to David was Ahimelech ^{1 Samuel 21:1}, but he died shortly after the incident ^{1 Samuel 22:19}, and his son, Abiathar, ^{1 Samuel 22:20} became the high priest ^{2 Samuel 15:35}.

The “consecrated bread” (also called the “bread of the Presence” ^{Exodus 25:30} and traditionally referred to as the ‘showbread’) was twelve loaves of bread set out each Sabbath ^{Leviticus 24:5-9} on the golden table ^{Exodus 25:23-29} in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle ^{Hebrews 9:2}.

27 The Sabbath day of rest (from work ^{Exodus 23:12}) was instituted by the Lord as a blessing for man.

The Pharisees made it a legalistic burden, and man a slave to the Law ^{Galatians 5:1, Colossians 2:16}.

Mark E Chapter 2b-3a

The formal Sabbath day will always be on Saturday (the seventh day of the week ^{Exodus 20:8-11}). Christians have been freed from the legalism of the formal Sabbath ^{Colossians 2:16-17}, but all people are encouraged to follow the advice of God to take a Sabbath day of rest each week.

Curiously, the Sabbath day will be very important in the Millennium. The worship of the Lord will be associated with the Sabbath ^{Isaiah 66:23} and the only times the Millennial Temple will be open will be on “the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon” ^{Ezekiel 46:1}.

28 Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, because He is “the Lord of all the earth” ^{Psalms 97:5, Acts 10:36}. By saying He is the Sabbath Lord, Jesus was stating He was over the Law and therefore He was God. Sabbath is an important concept, but the believer has liberty in Christ ^{Romans 14:5, Colossians 2:16}.

A Period of Popularity: *Jesus Illustrates that He is Lord of the Sabbath* (3:1-6)

3:1-2 On a later Sabbath, Jesus went to the synagogue ^{Mark 1:21} and saw a man with a withered hand. Some men (noted as Pharisees and scribes in other Gospels ^{Luke 6:7}) were watching Jesus to see if He would heal the man, which was not a violation of the law, but was against the Rabbinical traditions.

Notice the question in the minds of the Pharisees was not “could”, but “would” Jesus heal. Even though they believed Jesus could heal, they watched ^{Luke 14:1} to accuse, not to learn.

Note: The synagogue in Capernaum was actually “built” by a Roman centurion ^{Luke 7:1-5}.

- 3** Jesus directed the man to “stand up” ^{Luke 21:28} in plain view of all who were in the synagogue.
- 4** Discerning the Pharisees’ thoughts ^{Mark 2:6-8}, Jesus asked them a question that added a moral aspect to the issue of law. He framed his inquiry in terms of clear-cut, extreme morals: “good” vs “evil”, “save life” vs “kill”, which forced them to compare their Sabbath traditions with the Mosaic Law. Answering correctly ^{Psalms 34:14, 37:27} would have embarrassed the Pharisees, so they “remained silent”.
- 5** Indicating His divine nature as the righteous Son of God, Jesus reacted to the sin and hypocrisy of the Pharisees with holy indignation ^{Luke 19:45-48, John 2:14-16}. Jesus recognized that because of their “stubborn hearts” ^{Psalms 95:8, Hebrews 3:8,15}, the Pharisees were unwilling to agree with Him even when He was right. However, Jesus answered His own question by healing the man’s hand on the Sabbath. “Stubborn heart” refers to the inability to understand due to a rebellious attitude ^{Hebrews 3:7-11}.
- 6** The Pharisees preferred darkness to light ^{John 3:19}, so they put their minds together with their rivals, the Herodians to plan the best approach to get rid of the One who brought the light into the world. The Herodians were a pro-Roman, secular political party, named after Herod Antipas.