



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Seeing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God

"Spiritual & Physical Blindness"



Introduction: Spiritual Infirmary

Throughout Mark's gospel we have seen the relationship between physical infirmities and the spiritual condition of mankind. This follows the pattern of Scripture where being blind and deaf is used as a metaphor for the condition of mankind (Isa. 42:18-22). As Mark's gospel progresses, we see that it is not just Jesus' opponents who need their spiritual "eyes and ears" opened, it is also His followers.

Key Point: In spite of the disciples' inability to fully understand Jesus' true identity, His miraculous works demonstrated His power to eventually _____ their spiritual limitations.

The Demand of the Pharisees—Mark 8:11-13

- Having in all likelihood returned to Capernaum, Jesus once again found Himself opposed by the Pharisees after yet another miraculous feeding of a crowd.

Mark 8:25-26—¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. ¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." ¹³ And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

"sign"—σημεῖον (sēmeion)

⇒ The request is not simply for a miracle, but rather some sort of "sign" like those that accompanied the ministry of Moses or Elijah. In the other synoptic gospels, Jesus states that they would receive only "the sign of Jonah."

Observations:

1. The Pharisees request for a "sign" does not appear to have been made in good faith.

"argue"

"test"

2. Jesus' response to the Pharisees included a portion of an oath that anticipated that God's _____ would be upon them for their disbelief.

"This is Jesus' deliberate disengagement from discussion with the Pharisees and the [generation] they represent. He gets into the boat to leave Galilee and its crowds, in order to concentrate on the instruction of the disciples..." —R.T. France, *Mark*

Key Point: The demand of the Pharisees for a 'sign from heaven' was indicative of their spiritual blindness which had led to their disbelief and ultimately their _____ of Jesus.

The Disciple's Lack of Understanding—Mark 8:14-21

- After departing Galilee, Jesus used the journey as an opportunity to caution the disciples.

Mark 8:14-16—¹⁴ Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵ And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." ¹⁶ And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

"leaven"

Mark 8:17-18—¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?"

Observations:

1. It is unclear how many, if any, loaves are with them in the boat.

2. Jesus' questions to them are intended to lead them to _____ themselves and their hearts.

* They are an allusion Isa. 6:9 which Jesus quoted directly in 4:12 as an explanation for why He taught in parables.

3. Although the disciples think that they know Jesus' true _____, this account demonstrates that they have failed to understand who He truly is.

"Twelve"

"Seven"

- * Although they do not share the total unbelief of the Pharisees or Herod, the disciples must be warned that their own hearts could also be prone towards the sin of _____ — _____.

Key Point: The disciples concern about provisions was indicative of their _____ spiritual blindness which kept them from simply trusting in Jesus to provide for them.

"[Jesus'] question, "Do you not understand?" holds out hope that things will get better. Eventually they *will* understand. Unlike the Pharisees and Herod, their problem is not a refusal to see, but an inability to see." — David Garland

The Healing of the Blind Man in Bethsaida — Mark 8:22-26

- In Bethsaida, Jesus took aside a blind man outside and healed him in a unique manner.

Mark 8:23-25—²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴ And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Observations:

1. That the healing took place outside of the town pictured that God's judgment upon Bethsaida Julius (Matt. 11:21-24).
2. This healing is unique among His works because it occurred _____.
3. The presence of the disciples at this miracle serves to explain its greater meaning.

Key Point: This miracle serves as a testimony that there is _____ in Jesus for those who are physically and spiritually blind.

Seeing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God

- Mark wants his audience to recognize that spiritual blindness can come both through unbelief and misunderstanding and is only overcome by Jesus' power.

Concluding Thoughts

- Because of the noetic effects of _____, both believers and unbelievers are prone to embrace the leaven of Herod and of the Pharisees.

Rom. 1:21-25—²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

The leaven of the Herod → Self-reliance through _____ means.

The leaven of the Pharisees → Self-reliance through _____ religiosity.