

Mark 2:1-3:6 - The Conflict Begins

As Jesus' ministry grows, so does the opposition which is reflected in the five questions below.

Challenge 1. Who can forgive sins but God alone? READ Mark 2:1-12

- How does Jesus demonstrate His divine omniscience, authority, and power in the healing of the paralyzed man?
- What title does He use for Himself and why is this significant? (see notes on back)
- How were the teachers of the law theologically correct but spiritually blind? How is that a warning for the church in every age?

Challenge 2. Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners? READ Mark 2:13-17

- How is the calling of Levi a remarkable illustration of the grace of God? (see notes on back)
- How should Jesus' reply in verse 17 shape our understanding of the mission of the church?

Challenge 3. How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting but yours are not? READ Mark 2:18-22

- What does Jesus' reply to this question reveal about the true nature of His coming?

Challenge 4. Why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath? READ Mark 2:23-28

- What point is Jesus making by appealing to David and the bread of the Presence? How does He connect it to the purpose of the Sabbath law?
- Since God established the Sabbath, what is Jesus claiming about himself in verse 28?

Challenge 5. Which is lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill? Mark 3:1-6

- Why was Jesus disgusted with the Pharisees and why were they disgusted with Him?
- Why do you think Jesus and His ministry created such opposition? How is that true today?

Digging Deeper (adapted from: *Mark* commentary | Mark L. Strauss | The Gospel Coalition.org)

The title Son of Man.

- was used here (2:10) for the first time in Mark's gospel
- was Jesus' favorite messianic title for himself
- The background is Daniel 7:13-14 where an exalted messianic figure—one like a human being—comes before the Ancient of Days—that is, God himself—and is given authority, glory, sovereign power, and an eternal kingdom.

Tax collectors in Jesus' day.

- had a reputation for dishonesty and collusion with the hated Roman authorities in a system ripe with corruption
- Jesus' call of Levi would have been viewed as shocking by the religious establishment (common fishermen were bad enough, but a tax collector was unthinkable!)

Fasting.

- was practiced for various reasons: sorrow, repentance, self-denial, devotion and often linked with prayer
- The Day of Atonement was the only fast established in OT law (Lev 16:29, 31: 23-27-32; Num 29:7).

A wedding feast.

- was the most extravagant celebration in common village life
- was a time of joy and feasting (not sorrow and fasting)
- The OT [and NT] sometimes describes God's final salvation as a great banquet feast.
- See Isaiah 25:6-8; 65:13-14; Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:29; Revelation 19:6-9

Old garment and wine skins.

- [These parables have been variously interpreted but] the old likely represents Judaism and the Mosaic covenant. Jesus' mission is not simply to reform Judaism but to fulfill it. The kingdom of God is arriving in his words and deeds, and with it, the new covenant and a new creation

The alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians.

- exemplifies "strange bedfellows"
- The Herodians were supporters of the Herodian dynasty and pro-Roman.
- The Pharisees despised the Roman authorities and longed for the coming Messiah who would destroy Israel's enemies.
- The two groups join together here against their common enemy [Jesus].