

Gospel of Mark 6 – Chapter 3, verses 7 – 35 - The appointment of the Twelve and another Confrontation:-

The passage this week includes two important themes – the “Call of the Twelve” and the events including another confrontation with the scribes and a ‘difference of opinion’ with his friends (verse 21) and family (verses 31 – 35). Remember that throughout the Bible, the Devil, Satan is referred to as the enemy of the Lord God and the Lord’s people. He is real and is in permanent opposition to all that is good and true. He has been a murderer and liar from the beginning – read John, chapter 8, verses 42 – 47.

More pressure on the Lord Jesus – Chapter 3, verses 7 - 12:- In his “*withdrawal to the sea*” (Chapter 3, verse 7), Jesus leaves behind the immediate threat from the Pharisees and Herodians to destroy him. However he did attract “*a great multitude*” of people from all the surrounding areas where Jews had settled. Idumea was the Old Testament country of Moab (see Ruth chapter 1, verse 1) Tyre and Sidon were trading centres on the Mediterranean coast. His reputation as a healer was the great attraction on this occasion rather than his teaching.

The fishermen would have access to a boat (compare Matthew chapter 13, verses 1 – 2). Mark describes the crowd as pressing in on Jesus – literally “*they fell upon him*” (verse 10). The sick were healed by simply touching the person of the Lord Jesus Christ! See Mark chapter 5, verses 24 – 34 and chapter 6, verse 56.

In his dealing with the “*unclean spirits*” the Lord Jesus Christ continues with his battle against the ‘kingdom’ of Satan – this is described in detail in verses 22 – 30. Mark again notes the reluctance of Jesus to have his Messiah-ship publicised although he has already laid claim to the title “*the Son of Man*” (chapter 2, verse 10) which had aroused the enmity of the Pharisees.

The calling of the Twelve – Chapter 3, verses 13 - 19a:- It appears that Jesus asked a larger group of followers to accompany him to the hill country – probably around Capernaum. After spending all night in prayer (see Luke chapter 6, verse 12) he “*called to him those whom he wished*”. The selection of twelve probably reflects the thought that this was the beginning of a new Israel. That they were selected after an all night of prayer points up the importance of careful choice – especially as one – Judas Iscariot was to betray him! A real mixed assortment of characters, spiritualities and capabilities! e.g. Simon the Cananaean was most likely a member of the ‘Zealots’, the independence from Rome party who objected to paying tribute to Rome (see Mark chapter 12, verse 14 – 17) and were in favour of an immediate revolt against Roman overlord-ship. Under the authority of Jesus he had to live and work alongside Matthew who had been a tax collector for the hated Roman occupiers! The Lord Jesus Christ was willing and able to use all those who would give themselves whole heartedly to following him.

Jesus rejected by his own people – Chapter 3, verses 19b – 35:- The main theme of this passage shows how, when the Son of God “came to his own home, his own people received him not” (John, chapter 1, verse 11). again the section begins with the crowd pressing round Jesus so that he had no chance to have a meal. In verse 21 “*his friends*” or “*his family*” is better translated as “*his people*” meaning relatives and friends. Those closest to Jesus thought that “*he was mad*” literally “*beside himself*”! The religious leaders from Jerusalem accused him of being demon possessed. They considered his authority came from the “*Ruler of demons*”. This accusation is repeated throughout the Gospel, leading finally to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. (c.f. Mark chapter 11, verses 27 – 28). The logic Jesus uses in answering the scribes is simple. If it is agreed that demons are Satan’s servants, then it illogical to assert that he is casting out his own servants!

In verses 23 – 26 we read the first teaching parable in the Gospel of Mark. A brief explanation is given in verse 27. The world is seen as “*his (Satan’s) house*”. Jesus has come to “*bind the strong man and plunder his goods*”. The Lord Christ was in combat with Satan and engaged in plundering his goods, setting people free from sin and death by giving up himself on the cross. See John chapter 12, verses 31 – 32

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the act of slandering, reviling, speaking maliciously against the Holy Spirit of God. This must come from a fixed unrepentant state of mind that persists in defiant rejection of the overtures of the Holy Spirit – namely the attitude of mind of the scribes in their persistent denial of Jesus as the Sent One of the Lord God.

The family of Jesus come into the picture again in verse 31. Note that they were “*standing outside*” (verse 31). Not only outside the house but in contrast to “*those who sat about him*” (verse 34) outside of the fellowship. Jesus emphasises the importance of being spiritually related to himself. The entrance into God’s family is gained by doing the will of God and such obedience begins by hearing, believing and following the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.