

JESUS DIVIDES AND UNITES (MARK 3)

Mark 3:1-12. *Is Doing Good, Work?* Some of the knuckleheads were always looking to find Jesus doing something for which they could accuse Him. For example, when He went into the synagogue, they were watching to see if He would heal on the Sabbath. Speaking to a man with a shriveled hand, Jesus said "Stand up in front of everyone—let 'em get a good look at you." Then turning to the others He asked—

Which is a legal matter?

To do good or evil, to save a life or to kill?

The silence was deafening.

As He looked into their obstinate hearts, Jesus was livid, and acutely distressed. Turning to the man, He said *stretch out your hand*, and right there in front of God and everybody, the man's hand was completely restored! This was too much—their hearts weren't changed for they began to plot with the Herodians¹ on how they might kill Jesus. It would take more...

Jesus withdrew to the lake (Galilee), but a large crowd followed nonetheless. Folks from all over had heard—from as far south as Idumea, as far west and north as Tyre & Sidon, even Jerusalem itself. The crowd size necessitated a boat be used for Jesus so folk wouldn't crowd Him. He had healed so many that folk were pushing & crushing to get closer to touch Him. Interestingly, whenever unclean spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before Him crying "You are the Son of God." Jesus commanded them to keep their recognition to themselves.

- Q Why did folks want to accuse Jesus of evil, politically illegal, and spiritually illegal stuff?
- Q Why was the Christ so distressed and angry with the folks at synagogue?
- Q Why the boat? Why was it needed?
- Q If you had touched Jesus, would you have been healed?
- Q Why did He tell the evil/unclean spirits to keep their recognition of His status to themselves?

¹Herodians were influential Jews who favored the Herodian dynasty, meaning they were supporters of Rome, from which the Herods received their authority. This rather odd political alignment caused normal enemies to join because they feared Jesus might have an unsettling political influence on the people. They were correct. The Pharisees were ardent nationalists, opposed to Roman rule, while the hated Herodians supported the Roman rule of the Herods. Here, however, the Pharisees enlisted the help of the Herodians to trap Jesus. See also Matthew 22:15-17 where they posed the rhetorical trap—"Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" If Jesus had said "No," the Herodians could report Him to the Roman governor and He could be tried and executed for treason. If He had said "Yes," the Pharisees could denounce Him to the masses as disloyal to His nation.

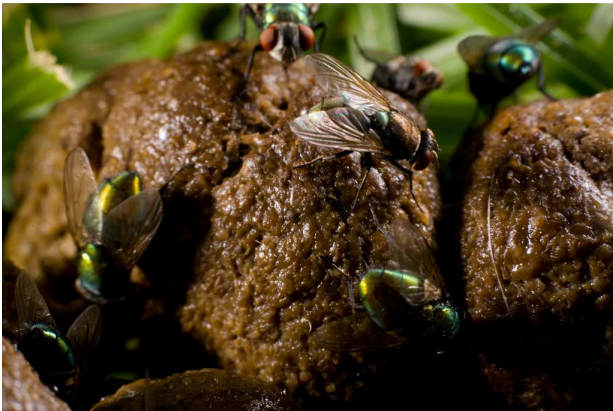
MARK 3:1-12

Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ²Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." ⁴Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. ⁵He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus. ⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹Whenever the evil [unclean, ἀκάθαρτα, a-ca-thar-ta; 169] spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹²But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

Mark 3:13-34. *The Galilean Baker Act*. After Jesus retreated to a mountain side, He called those He wanted and set aside 12 so they could preach and also cast out demons. Among them was Judas Iscariot who was to betray Jesus to the Herodian-Pharisee cabal.²

After this mountain top moment, Jesus entered a house, but a crowd was so large He and the disciples couldn't even eat. Word got to His family and they sought to kidnap Him for "He is *out of His mind*."

In the meantime, more professors showed up, this time from Jerusalem itself. "He's possessed by the *Lord of Shit* they charged; ...by the Prince of Demons He is driving out demons."



Jesus was not impressed; calling them over, He asked rhetorically—

How can Satan drive out Satan? A kingdom divided against itself can't stand; neither can a divided house. And, if Satan opposes himself, and is divided, he cannot stand—his end has come.

Think about it—no one can enter a strong man's house to steal without first tying up the strong man. I tell you truthfully, all the sins and blasphemies of people will be forgiven them. BUT, whoever blasphemes

²“Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵and to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.”

Note: Verse 14 uses the term *apostles*; rare in the gospels, found only here and Mark 6:30, Matthew 10:2, and six more times in Luke (6:13; 9:10; 11:49; 17:5; 22:14; 24:10).

MARK 3:13-34

[13-19 Mark lists the 12 disciples/apostles]

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

²²And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub [Persian/Aramaic for "Lord of the Flies" or "Lord of the Dung;" a Philistine god traditionally viewed as a demon by Abrahamic traditions]! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

²³So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. ²⁸I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. ²⁹But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."

³⁰He said this because they were saying, "He has an evil [*unclean*, ακαθαρτα, a-ca-thar-ta; 169] spirit."

³¹Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

³³"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

against Holy Spirit...he/she will never be forgiven—such is an eternal separator between people and the Lord our God.

During this time Miriam and at least two of His brothers (Joe Jr., James, Judas and/or Simon)³ arrived (from Nazareth, about 30 miles away). Standing outside the crowded mess, they sent someone inside to call Jesus outside. The crowd surrounding Him said your mom and brothers are calling You to come outside; they're looking for You.

Jesus was not impressed—Just who are My mother and brothers? Looking to those seated around Him in a circle, He said “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever fulfils God’s purpose is My brother and sister and mother.”

- Q Why was it useful to attribute the healing and cleaning and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth to the Satan, called here the Lord of the Flies (aka the Lord of the Dung, the Prince of Demons)?
- Q What was the Christ’s answer to their assertion that He was Satan?
- Q Why is “blaspheming Holy Spirit” unforgiveable? What is there about that act which the Lord our God will not tolerate?
- Q What evidence supports the claim that Jesus was “out of His mind” and should be “taken charge of?”
- Q Why didn’t Miriam and the boys understand that Jesus was not “out of His mind,” but fulfilling His calling by Father God? What was clouding their understanding, especially Miriam’s? [Hint: “Father” God. Joseph’s absence. Unbelief (see John 7:5).]
- Q What is particularly revolutionary about Jesus’ declaration in verse 35? [Hint: Sisters & Mother. Fulfilling God’s purpose dictates who is “in” and who is “out.” Contrast to the self-serving notion that if my ancestry is linkable to Abraham, then I am justified by the I AM.]

³The brothers did not believe in Jesus at this time (see John 7:5). Various interpretations concerning their relationship to Jesus arose in the early church: They were sons of Joseph by a previous marriage (according to Epiphanius) or were cousins (said Jerome). The most natural conclusion (suggested by Helvidius) is that they were the sons of Joseph and Mary, younger half brothers of Jesus. The four are named in Mark 6:3, where sisters are also mentioned. Since Joseph is not mentioned here, it is likely that he had died.