Author, Date, and Recipients

The apostle Peter passed on reports of the words and deeds of Jesus to his attendant, John Mark, who wrote this Gospel for the wider church as the record of Peter’s apostolic testimony. The book was likely written from Rome during the mid- to late-50s a.d. (though the mid- or late-60s is also possible). Mark’s audience, largely unfamiliar with Jewish customs, needed to become familiar with such customs in order to understand the coming of Jesus as the culmination of God’s work with Israel and the entire world, so Mark explains them.

Purpose and Theme

The ultimate purpose and theme of Mark’s Gospel is to present and defend Jesus’ universal call to discipleship. Mark returns often to this theme, categorizing his main audience as either followers or opponents of Jesus. Mark presents and supports this call to discipleship by narrating the identity and teaching of Jesus. For Mark, discipleship is essentially a relationship with Jesus, not merely following a certain code of conduct. Fellowship with Jesus marks the heart of the disciple’s life, and this fellowship includes trusting Jesus, confessing him, observing his conduct, following his teaching, and being shaped by a relationship with him. Discipleship also means being prepared to face the kind of rejection that Jesus faced.

Key Themes

1. Jesus seeks to correct messianic expectations and misunderstandings (1:25, 34, 44; 3:12; 4:10–12; 5:18–19, 43; 8:30; 9:9).
5. Jesus as the Son of Man must suffer (8:31; 10:45; 14:21, 36).
7. Jesus calls his followers to imitate him in humble service, self-denial, and suffering (8:34–38; 9:35–37; 10:35–45).
8. Jesus teaches on the kingdom of God, and implies that God continues to call a people to himself (compare 1:15; 9:1; 14:25; 15:43).

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–15)
II. Demonstration of Jesus’ Authority (1:16–8:26)
   A. Jesus’ early Galilean ministry (1:16–3:12)
   B. Jesus’ later Galilean ministry (3:13–6:6)
   C. Work beyond Galilee (6:7–8:26)
III. Testing Jesus’ Authority in Suffering (8:27–16:8)
   A. Journey to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52)
INTRODUCTION TO MARK

B. Entering and judging Jerusalem (11:1–13:37)
C. Death and resurrection in Jerusalem (14:1–16:8)
[D. “Longer ending of Mark” (16:9–20; see note)]

The Setting of Mark

The events in the book of Mark take place almost entirely within Palestine, from Caesarea Philippi in the north to Beersheba in the south. During this time Palestine was ruled by the Roman Empire. The book opens with Jesus’ baptism by John during the rule of Pontius Pilate and the tetrarchs Antipas and Philip. It closes with Jesus’ death and resurrection about three years later.
The central message of Mark’s Gospel is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come to earth (Mark 1:1), that “the kingdom of God is at hand,” and that all should “repent and believe in the gospel” (1:15).

Mark establishes early in his Gospel that Jesus is indeed the very Son of God—as we see when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. When Jesus came up from the water, immediately the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, and the voice of God the Father spoke from heaven saying, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:9–11). These verses show clearly that the One True God of the Bible exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Other books of the Bible also show that Jesus is the Creator of everything in the universe, including this earth and every human being on it (John 1:1–3). The apostle Paul writes that Jesus “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him” (Col. 1:15–17).

The global significance of this is massive. Because Jesus created everything, he is the rightful ruler of everything. But the tragic reality of human existence is that life on this earth is deeply damaged by cruelty and suffering, by evil and injustice, by sickness and finally death.

Global Good News

Mark’s Gospel starts off with global good news—the triumphant announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of God: “Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14–15). The long-awaited worldwide kingdom—in which all would be put right and justice would prevail—dawned when Jesus came into the world. Though injustice and evil still ravage this world, the King of creation, the rightful righteous ruler has landed! Evil’s defeat is certain and imminent. God’s cosmic, global restoration has begun—in the coming of Christ, in his life and death and resurrection.

Immediately after announcing that the “kingdom of God is at hand,” Jesus calls his first disciples from among a group of fishermen (Mark 1:16–20). Here we see a pattern that has been reflected in Christianity around the world throughout history and down to the present. It is not the social elites that Jesus calls to leave everything and follow him, but common people from every walk of life. More broadly, Mark signifies that the gospel is for all peoples, not limited to a select few who outwardly observe a list of rules (7:3–4). Furthermore, Jesus underscores the inclusion of people from every nation—by showing mercy to the Gentiles (e.g., 7:24–30) and by welcoming “whoever does the will of God” into his own family (3:35).

We also learn, right from the start of Mark’s Gospel, that Jesus cares deeply about physical suffering—as he heals a leper, a paralytic, and a man with a withered hand (1:40–45; 2:1–12; 3:1–6). Later on Mark says that wherever Jesus went “in villages, cities, or the countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces,” and all that touched “the fringe of his garment” were made well (6:53–56). Likewise, Mark’s Gospel tells how Jesus miraculously fed a great crowd of five thousand, having “compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd” (6:34). On another occasion he fed a crowd of four thousand who had been with him three days and now had nothing to eat (8:1–10). Many other times throughout Mark we see Jesus caring for people’s physical needs (e.g., 7:31–37; 8:22–26). While spiritual sickness is the fundamental disease that Jesus came to heal (2:5, 17), Jesus cared deeply about the physical well-being of people as well, because all are made in image of God. Thus the “proclaiming of the gospel of God” in word (1:14) was likewise demonstrated in deed.
Mark also has much to say about global poverty. On the one hand, Jesus encourages his followers to be generous toward the poor, even exhorting one wealthy man to sell all that he has and give it to the poor (Mark 10:21). Such generosity is not only for the rich, for Jesus makes a point to praise the generosity of the poor widow who gives a tiny amount, which was “all she had to live on” (12:41–44). Sacrificial giving to alleviate the poverty of others is not restricted to a certain class but is something to which all believers are called. At the same time Jesus makes clear that he himself is the greatest treasure (14:7; compare 2:19). While material poverty is close to Jesus’ heart, and is something that global Christians are called to alleviate, Jesus himself—not money or anything else—is the fundamental need of every human heart. Jesus is our supreme treasure, and release from spiritual bondage and poverty is our greatest need.

Lastly, Jesus teaches the divinely ordered relationship between people and government. When the religious officials of the day tried to trap Jesus in his teaching, he astonished them with his answer: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17). Thus Jesus teaches the appropriate submission to government that helps ensure social well-being while also indicating, more deeply, that God’s kingdom transcends earthly kingdoms, and that the Christian’s deepest loyalty must be to God.

**The Global Message of Mark for Today**

What then is the global message of Mark’s Gospel today? Clearly the kingdom of God has come near in Jesus’ ministry of word and deed. Clearly Jesus calls all who believe in him and call him Lord to “proclaim the gospel of God” and to demonstrate the fruit of the gospel in all of life. “If anyone would come after me,” Jesus said, “let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34). If Christ is the Lord of life, he must be the Lord of all of life. The first great commandment, Jesus said, is, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (12:29–31).

It is not a matter of either/or. If we truly love the Lord with all our heart, we will love our neighbor as ourselves. Thus the grave questions that face the global church are at the heart of our calling as Christians—not only to bring the gospel to every corner of the earth but also to care for orphans and widows; to uphold the dignity of each individual; to defend the sanctity of every life; to feed the hungry; to relieve poverty; to work for justice; and to care for the creation that God has entrusted to us.

We do these things because Christ is Lord of all. But we also do this knowing that we can do nothing in our own strength (John 15:5). So we look to Christ as our strength and our salvation. We trust in his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins and for our redemption. And we look to the day when he will come “with great power and glory” to gather his own “from the four winds, from the ends of the earth” to establish his eternal kingdom (Mark 13:26–27).
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MARK

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,
3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’

4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming: “A baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem went out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John wore camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, ‘After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

The Baptism of Jesus

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And “a voice came from heaven,” “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

The Temptation of Jesus

12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God.

Chapter 1

1:1-15 Introduction. Mark begins his account with the public ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus.

1:1 Rather than beginning with the genealogy of Jesus (as do Matthew and Luke) or offering a theological background to the gospel (as does John), Mark focuses on the actual beginning of the gospel in the life and ministry of Jesus. The “gospel” is the good news of the fulfillment of God’s promises.

1:2-3 Mark identifies John the Baptist as the predicted one who prepares the way of the Lord (see Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1). Isaiah the prophet is named because he was more prominent than Malachi, and more of the quoted material comes from him.

1:4 John prepares the way for Jesus by calling people to repentance, which means turning to God for forgiveness of sins. Baptism was not the means by which sins were forgiven but rather was a sign indicating that one had truly repented. Wilderness. See Isa. 40:3.

1:5 All the country of Judea and all Jerusalem. John’s ministry fulfills the promise of a “new exodus” in which Israel is delivered from the wilderness and symbolically enters into the river Jordan again to receive God’s promises of end-time salvation.

1:6 John’s clothing and food are like that of other preachers in the desert (see 1 Kings 17:4, 9). On locusts, see note on Matt. 3:4.

1:7-8 The one for whom John is preparing the way (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1) will baptize . . . with the Holy Spirit (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Joel 2:28; see note on Matt. 3:11). Untying the straps of sandals could be the responsibility of a low servant, but it was something that a Jewish person was not supposed to do.

1:9 was baptized. Jesus identifies with the sins of his people, even though he himself is free from sin (10:49). Galilee is the region west of the Jordan.

What is a “Gospel”? “Gospel” literally means “good news.” The “Gospel according to Mark,” along with the other three Gospels, reports the good news of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This salvation is freely available to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, everywhere in the world.

F A C T

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

1 Some manuscripts omit the Son of God. 2 Some manuscripts in the prophet:

3 Or “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

4 John appeared, baptizing . . . with the Holy Spirit: “A baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem went out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, ‘After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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The Temptation of Jesus

12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and the Sea of Galilee and north of Samaria. In the NT era Galilee was ruled by Herod the Great (see note on Matt. 2:1), then by his son Herod Antipas (Matt. 14:1; Mark 6:14), and then by Herod Antipas’ nephew Herod Agrippa I.

1:10–11 Mark uses the word immediately 41 times in his Gospel. It suggests a sense of urgency and often introduces a new incident or a surprising turn of events. The Spirit of God descends upon Jesus at his baptism (see note on Luke 3:22). Jesus is thus commissioned for a unique service (see Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1). Mark quotes from the OT to show that Jesus is the Son of God (Ps. 2:7) and the servant of God (Isa. 42:1). The heavenly voice confirms the eternal sonship of Jesus. All three persons of the Godhead—the Spirit, the Father, and the Son—are involved here.

1:12-13 tempted by Satan: See note on Matt. 4:1. “Being tempted” indicates that the temptations happened over the 40-day period and were not limited to the three temptations mentioned by Matthew (Matt. 4:1–11) and Luke (Luke 4:1–13).

1:14–15 The gospel is the “good news” that “the kingdom of God is at hand. God’s rule over people’s hearts and lives is now being established, and people should repent and believe in the gospel. The kingdom will ultimately include the restoration of all creation (see Rev. 21:1), but that will come in stages.
saying, "‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’

Jesus Calls the First Disciples
16 Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19 And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

Jesus Heals a Man with an Unclean Spirit
21 And they entered into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. 22 And immediately they were astonished at his teaching, for they taught as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? 25 I know who you are— the Holy One of God." 26 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 27 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. 28 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 29 And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Jesus Heals Many
29 And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 32 That evening at sundown they brought to him

Reclining at the table. During formal dinners in NT times, guests reclined on a couch that stretched around three sides of a room (2:15). The host took the central place surrounded by a U-shaped series of tables. The most honored guests reclined on either side of the host, with the guests’ heads toward the tables and their feet toward the wall.

1:16–8:26 Demonstration of Jesus’ Authority. The first half of Mark’s Gospel shows that Jesus has authority over sickness, over the laws of nature, and over the demonic world. It also highlights Jesus’ unique and authoritative teaching, and his sending out of his disciples.

1:16–3:12 Jesus’ Early Galilean Ministry. The call of the disciples is intertwined with descriptions of Jesus’ authority over demons and sickness, as well as with authoritative teaching.

1:20 they left their father . . . with the hired servants. Several of Jesus’ first disciples were not poor but were self-employed fishermen. As seen here, James and John were part of a family business. Levi (2:14) was a fairly well-to-do tax collector.

1:22 The main purpose of Jesus’ earthly ministry was teaching rather than performing miracles or casting out demons, although these actions showed that God was with him. The scribes mentioned here may have been a local group of men who taught in the synagogues, rather than the scribes who “came down from Jerusalem” (3:22). Jesus taught with his own divine authority, not simply repeating the traditions of others.

1:23–25 By naming Jesus as the Holy One of God, the demon may have been trying to exercise power over Jesus.

1:26–28 they were all amazed. Casting out this demon confirms Jesus’ authority to teach. See note on Matt. 12:27.

1:32–34 Sundown marks the end of the Sabbath (roughly 6:00 P.M. Saturday). People are now permitted to come to Jesus with their needs.

Jesus’ Ministry in Galilee
Jesus spent most of his life and ministry in the region of Galilee, a mountainous area in northern Palestine. Jesus grew up in the hill town of Nazareth, about 3.5 miles (5.6 km) south of the Gentile administrative center of Sepphoris. Soon after he began his public ministry, Jesus relocated to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. By Jesus’ time, a thriving fishing industry had developed around the Sea of Galilee, and several of Jesus’ disciples were fishermen.
all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee
And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper
And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeing said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, saying, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

Five Controversies from Mark 2:1–3:6

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1 Leprosy was a term for several skin diseases; see Leviticus 13. 2 Greek he; also verse 45.

1:44 say nothing. This is Mark’s first report of Jesus telling a healed person not to tell anyone of his being healed (see note on Matt. 8:4). Show yourself to the priest is commanded so that the healed person may know that he is clean and may return to the community. The people often miss the true purpose of Jesus’ ministry by focusing too much on his miracles.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic
And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and go’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

Jesus Calls Levi
He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s place; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he arose and followed him. And Jesus went again by the sea; and all the crowd came to him, and he taught them. And as he passed by he saw Zacchaeus the publican, and said to him, “Do you wish me to come and stay at your house?” And he said, “Do whatever you wish, master.” And he said to him, “Stay at your house today, for thus it is proper for me to come to one who shows me such honor. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
of Alpheus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

15 And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

A Question About Fasting

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. 21 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins." 1

1 Some manuscripts and 2 Some manuscripts add and drink. 3 Some manuscripts omit But new wine is for fresh wineskins. 4 Or in the passage about 5 Greek him

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

23 One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

25 And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, and he and those who were with him: 26 how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him? 27 And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

A Man with a Withered Hand

3 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. 4 And when they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 5 And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." 4 And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" 5 But they were silent. 6 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." 7 He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 8 The Pharisees went

2:21–22 unshrunk cloth . . . new wine . . . new wineskins. The kingdom of God is not merely a patch over the Mosaic law and Jewish traditions. Jesus brings a new era, with new ways.

2:23–24 Deuteronomy 23:25 implies that, if a person is hungry, he is permitted to eat heads of grain from any field he might pass by. However the Pharisees decreed that, since plucking the grain involves "work," it could not be done on the Sabbath.

2:25–26 The fact that David ate the bread of the Presence (1 Sam. 21:1–6) means that, if there is a serious need, actions are allowed on a Sabbath that otherwise might not be permitted.

2:27–28 Son of Man. See note on Matt. 8:20. If the Sabbath is for the benefit of mankind, and if the Son of Man is Lord over all mankind, then the Son of Man is surely Lord even of the Sabbath.

3:2 The scribes believe that healing is a form of work and thus is not permitted on a Sabbath. Accuse is a technical term which means they are looking for legal evidence against Jesus.

3:3–5 To do good on the Sabbath would not violate the OT law, but it would violate the opponents' Pharisaic tradition. Their tradition misses the point of the Mosaic law: to love God and one's neighbor (see 12:29–31).


3:6 The Pharisees were quite different from the Herodians, who were friends and supporters of the Herodian family dynasty (see note on Matt. 22:16). However, these two groups held counsel together (see Ps. 2:2) in order to destroy Jesus, who was their common enemy (Mark 14:1–2).

3:7–8 Idumea. The region south of Judea. beyond the Jordan. The region east of the Jordan River. Tyre and Sidon. The region north of

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**FACT**

- 2:13 suggests that the *tax booth* was by the Sea of Galilee and was used for taxing fishermen.
- 2:15–16 To recline at table indicates personal friendship. When dining formally in a home, guests reclined on a couch that stretched around three sides of a room. The guests’ heads were toward the tables and their feet toward the wall. *tax collectors and sinners*. According to the Pharisees (see note on John 1:24), Jesus should keep himself “clean” from such people (see Lev. 10:10).
- 2:17 Jesus compares those who are well to those who are righteous, and those who are sick to sinners.
- 2:19–20 Jesus refers to himself as the *bridegroom*. In the OT, God the Father was the bridegroom (see Isa. 62:5; Hos. 2:19–20), then they will fast. When Jesus is taken away from his disciples (when he dies), they will return to fasting in order to seek God’s presence. But they do not need to do that when he is still with them (see Isa. 53:8).