

# Mark

## Lesson 3

### Chapter 2:1-3:6

## Leader Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies

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# Lesson 3: Mark 2:1-3:6

## Jesus the Son of God and Son of Man

### Opening Prayer

### Introduction

In the second chapter, Mark introduces another title for Jesus, the Son of Man. These titles are used in specific contexts in the scripture even though we tend to think of the titles interchangeably. Son of God describes Jesus' deity with the Father, as the Christ, and as King. Jesus is the Son of God, a title proclaimed first by the angel Gabriel, then by Peter, Martha, his disciples, and the Centurion at the cross. Son of God was the title used by Satan to tempt Jesus in the wilderness; it was the testimony of demons, and was the title for Jesus the Pharisees used as a death sentence by crucifixion.

Son of Man was the title Jesus used most often for himself. The Son of Man was born of woman to serve, to suffer, to be rejected, killed, buried, to rise from the dead, and will return with power and glory. Jesus was the fulfillment of scripture the Messiah would be from David's line and of Daniel's vision of the son of man who was led into the presence of the Ancient of Days to be given authority, glory, sovereign power, and to be worshipped by nations and people of every language. His kingdom will be everlasting.

### Read Mark 2:1-12 Jesus Heals a Paralytic, The Son of Man has Authority to Forgive Sin

Mk 2:1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home.

[Lk 5:17 One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the Law, who had come from every village of Galilee, and Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.]

Mk 2:2 So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.

Mk 2:3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them.

Mk 2:4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.

Mk 2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, **"Son, your sins are forgiven."**

Mk 2:6 Now some teachers of the Law were sitting there, thinking to themselves,

Mk 2:7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Mk 2:8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, **"Why are you thinking these things?"**

Mk 2:9 **Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?**

Mk 2:10 **But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ."** He said to the paralytic,

Mk 2:11 **"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."**

Mk 2:12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

1. Luke 5:17 includes the detail that Pharisees from all over Galilee and Judea had come to see Jesus' miracles. Not surprisingly, Jesus chose this time to challenge their thinking and actions by forgiving the paralyzed man's sins. Compare their reaction to the other people who were witnesses.

**The people were amazed and praised God for Jesus' miraculous work. The Pharisees sat grumbling and accused Jesus of blasphemy without regard to the display of mercy and God's healing he demonstrated.**

2. The Pharisees spoke a great truth – only God can forgive sin. See the following references from the Law, Psalms, and Prophets. In addition to forgiveness, what are some other attributes of God and discuss how Jesus possessed those attributes too:

Exodus 34:6 And he [the LORD] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Psalms 103:2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits— <sup>3</sup> who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, <sup>5</sup> who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Isaiah 43:25 “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

**In addition to forgiveness, other attributes of God include compassion, grace, long-suffering, love, faithfulness, healing, redeemer of life, blessing, and mercy – to name a few!**

3. How does Jesus address the paralyzed man's spiritual needs before his physical needs?

**Jesus forgave the man's sin before he healed him.**

4. The healing of the paralytic man occurs in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. What makes this healing so significant?

**The healing is significant because it is a miracle demonstrating God's power and compassion. It also shows Jesus' claim to have the power to forgive to sin, a claim the Pharisees rightly understood that only God could do.**

**Read Mark 2:14-17 The Calling of Levi**

Mk 2:13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them.

Mk 2:14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth.

**"Follow me,"** Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

[Luke adds] Lk 5:29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.

Mk 2:15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

Mk 2:16 When the teachers of the Law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

Mk 2:17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, **"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."**

5. How is Levi's response to Jesus' call similar to other accounts we have read in Mark?

**Levi immediately answered Jesus' call and followed him. Then he hosted a party and invited his friends so they might also follow Christ. Levi's immediate response was similar to Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael (well, so of), and Peter's mother-in-law.**

6. What can we infer about Matthew's wealth and education as a tax collector and what he left behind to follow Jesus?

**Matthew left a lucrative position in a populous town on a major Roman road. We can assume he was wealthy, educated, a person of influence, and likely spoke Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Matthew left it all. Unlike the disciples who were fishermen, Matthew could not return to his position when he went to follow Jesus.**

7. The Pharisees arose as a distinct Jewish sect after the Jewish exile from Babylon. They intended to live in complete obedience to the Law and to the 400 years of traditions established since the exile. Pharisee means "Separate One." Compare Jesus' ministry style to the Pharisees.

**The Pharisees were the "Separate Ones." They looked at the poor, the sick, and sinners and with disdain, believing God punished them for their sin.**

**Jesus longed to be with people and usually healed with a touch and always with love and compassion. Jesus' mission was to redeem people and bring them to God. He could not be separated from people to do this. Can you imagine how God wanted to be physically with his people? Something he had not enjoyed since creation during his walks with Adam in the garden.**

**Read Mark 2:18-22 Jesus Questioned About Fasting**

Mk 2:18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?" [yours go on eating and drinking, Lk 5:33]

Mk 2:19 Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. <sup>20</sup> But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast. <sup>21</sup> "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. <sup>22</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins."

8. Fasting was a common practice. The Law required fasting only one day of the year, on the Day of Atonement for the forgiveness of sin. On other occasions, fasting was for mourning, sorrow, or repentance, and was associated with wearing sackcloth and ashes. Fasting was also a sign of humility, seeking God's provision, or supplication to escape God's wrath or pending judgment. Fasting can be a sign of true repentance: "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning" (Joel 2:13). By their tradition, the Pharisees fasted twice a week. What issue did Jesus have with regards to fasting?

**There was a legitimate time and place for fasting – but this not it! Jesus told the Pharisees that it a time for celebration, not mourning – the kingdom of God was at hand!**

9. Compare Jesus' comments to other verses on fasting:

Joel 2:13 "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."

Joel 2:13 Rend your heart and not your garments.

Isaiah 58:5 Is this the kind of **fast** I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a **fast**, a day acceptable to the LORD?

Isa 58:6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

Isa 58:7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

**There is a saying that actions speak louder than words, but with God, motives speak louder than actions! Jesus saw through the false humility of the Pharisees' traditions. Fasting accompanied by charity, acts of kindness, repentance, humility, love, and worship is the act that pleases God.**

10. The parables of the patch and wineskins are the source of speculation. Discuss the basic ideas of the following interpretations:
- The Law and legalism (the old wineskin) versus Grace (the new wine)
  - Old Covenant versus a New Covenant
  - A spiritual outlook of keeping laws and traditions versus a new spiritual outlook led by the Holy Spirit.

**Jesus did not come to be a patch on the old covenant. He came as the fulfillment of the old covenant and established a new covenant of how people would relate to God and how God would bless his people. The new relationship would be through faith in Jesus Christ.**

**The covenant of the Law was beyond fixing by patches and revisions. Jesus came to establish a new covenant with all people. The new covenant was one of grace, established through the body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. The Holy Spirit would write the Law on the hearts and minds of all those who believed in Jesus as their Lord, and God would call them his children.**

#### **Read Mark 2:23-3:6 Lord of the Sabbath (Merged with additions from Matthew)**

Mk 2:23 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain.

Mk 2:24 The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

Mk 2:25 He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? <sup>26</sup> In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." [Matthew 12:4-7 —which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests.

Mt 12:5 Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? <sup>6</sup> I tell you that one greater than the temple is here.

Mt 12:7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. (Hosea 6:6)].

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Mk 3:1 Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. <sup>2</sup> Some 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.

Mk 3:3 Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."

Mk 3:4 Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"

[Mt 12:11 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out?]

But they remained silent. <sup>5</sup> He 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.

Mk 3:6 Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

11. Picking grain along the margins of a field was a provision for the poor and hungry in the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 23:25). The Pharisees had 613 laws and 39 categories of Sabbath laws – and picking grain for food was not on the approved list! Jesus confronted them with the account of David and Abiathar. What concept did Abiathar the priest understand concerning the bread of Presence and David's starving men?

**Abiathar, the priest, saw starving men and fed them bread. The Law provided the bread of the Presence as food for the priests, but Abiathar understood that love and charity toward others was the perfection of the Law.**

12. Mathew includes another response to the Pharisees from Jesus, who quoted Hosea 6:6: **'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'** Hosea was a prophet from the northern kingdom who wrote to Judah following the fall of Israel. See Hosea 6:1-3 and discuss the broader meaning of Jesus' quote:

Hos 6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. Hos 6:2 After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.

Hos 6:3 Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

**Hosea had seen the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel because of the people's idolatry. With hardened hearts, they would not turn and seek God. Now Jesus confronted the Pharisees whose hearts were set against the people they should have been serving and against Jesus, God in the flesh, who they would need to come to place their faith in or perish. Little did the Pharisees know as they planned to kill Jesus, he was speaking to them prophetically about how he would be the Savior of all men and would rise from the dead on the third day as proof he was God's Son, the Messiah.**

13. Already by the beginning of the third chapter of Mark, the Pharisees are plotting to murder Jesus. What were some of the things done and said by Jesus that caused the Pharisees to plot against him?

**The Pharisees were on hand where John was baptizing and did not like that John testified that the Spirit of God descended on Jesus like a dove and that God spoke, this is my Son whom I love! (Mark 1:10-11)**

**The Pharisees did not like Jesus preaching that people should repent and believe in him because God's kingdom was near (Mark 1:15).**

**They did not like that he taught with authority, and crowds were flocking to hear him (Mark 1:22, 28).**

**They did not like that Jesus healed all manner of sickness and cast out demons who exclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God (Mark 1:24-34, 3:10-11)**

**They did not like that Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic and then healed him because, after all, only God had the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:1-12).**

**They did not like that Jesus enjoyed the company of the sinners who followed him (Mark 2:13-17).**

**They did not like Jesus putting himself above their traditions of fasting and hard-hearted legalism declaring he was the Son of Man. Declaring he was the Son of Man fulfilled Daniel 7:13, making himself equal to God**

**Jesus made himself equal to God again by declaring he was the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:18-3:6).**

**And there would more the Pharisees could not abide by as the testimonies about Jesus grew, and his miraculous proofs became self-evident that he was the Messiah.**

14. **Why is it so important to remember Jesus' lessons to the Pharisees in our own lives?**

**Like the Pharisees, we continually fall into the trap of focusing on our behavior and actions as if they are a divine scale of our walk with Christ. As a result, we are looking to ourselves, living with the burden of failure and guilt, and not to the joy found in Christ. Jesus did it all; our sins are completely forgiven. God loved us before we knew Christ while we were yet sinners and continues to love us after giving us the gift of faith in Christ.**

**Closing prayer**