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Mark 3

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Mark 3.

Topics.

- Jesus heals a man with a withered hand.
- The three changes the Pharisees made to Judaism
- Unclean spirits cry out, "Are you are the Son of God?"
- Jesus appoints the twelve disciples.
- Beelzebub the prince of demons.
- If Satan cast out Satan
- Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus family and the will of God.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Jesus returned to his family home in Capernaum and healed a paralytic man who four men lowered through the roof of the home of Jesus' own family. Jesus invited Levi to join him and his disciples and many sinners who had gathered in his family's home, Levi followed him and Jesus taught those who had gathered in his family's home (Mark 2:14-16).

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

MARK 1:1-6

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Jesus Heals a Man with a Withered Hand.

- **Mark 3:1-6:** Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand.²And they (the Pharisees) (v6) watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." ⁴And he said to them (the Pharisees) (v6) "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

The Pharisees (the religious leaders of Jesus generation) are so legalistically twisted and their hearts are so hardened and bound by the law that they are actually watching Jesus for the sole purpose of accusing and condemning him for healing a suffering man from his crippling disability. The Pharisees no-doubt would have had a great knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, but they had no idea of what was important to the heart of God. Jesus asked the religious leaders, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to save life or to kill life?"

The Lord was brilliant at asking the Pharisees questions they couldn't answer. If they said it was lawful to do-good, they would be agreeing with Jesus, but if they said it was lawful to do harm, they would condemn themselves so they remained silent. Saving a human from harm overrides the ceremonial law and religious rites, even on the Ark of the Covenant the Mercy Seat is over the law, thus mercy overrides ceremonial law and religious practises, (i.e. holy days, feasts, sacrifices etc.). Lack of knowledge was not the Pharisees problem it was lack of mercy compassion and grace.

A practical application of this principal today: if a Christian and their family was on their way to Church and they pass an accident in which a person is lying badly injured on the road, the heart of God would be crying out for that Christian family to forget the church, stop the car and help the injured person, but the heart of the Pharisees was so hardened and twisted by legalism that if they were the ones driving the car they would continue on their way to the synagogue.

Pharisees: means the separated ones, they were rulers of the Jews and the most-strict and by far the most influential sect of the three prominent societies of Judaism that were around at the time of Christ (the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essences). Pharisees loved to wear distinguishing garb so as to be easily recognised and were found everywhere in Palestine not only in Jerusalem. They made three contributions to Judaism so that ultimately Pharisaism and Judaism became almost synonymous. The changes the Pharisees made to the Jewish faith began in earnest after the Babylonian Captivity, the temple worship and the sacrifices had ceased so the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees began to centre the activities of Judaism in Jewish law, tradition and in the religious rites of the Synagogues.

The three changes the Pharisees made to Judaism:

1. **Jewish legalism:** The Scribes who were considered experts in interpreting the Scriptures studied the traditional exegesis of the Law which resulted in it becoming a major part of Jewish thought and giving Jewish legalism a great impetus during the New Testament era. The Pharisees closely associated with the scribes organised the followers of the scribes teaching in the Synagogues thus legalism became widespread in the Jewish faith.
2. **Formalised religion:** the Pharisees formalised the religion of the scribes and their interpretation of the law they placed it into the mind of Jewish faith and the practice of it in the synagogues and religious ceremony. The reason the scribes and Pharisees are often mentioned together in the New Testament is because though the Pharisees were not practical politicians like the more liberal Sadducees, they were the religious leaders of the Jews and the highest qualification for membership into the Pharisees was strict adherence to the Law (Oral or written).
3. **Organisation of Jewish religion:** after the seventy-year Babylonian captivity and the Maccabean Revolt (165 BC) the scribes increased tradition and adapted it with the Mosaic Law, but it was the Pharisees who formulated, developed and organised the scribes' teachings into Jewish religion itself. This increased focus on law and tradition resulted in separatism and an almost new religion, because much of it was the opposite from what had been handed down in the Covenant by the prophets.

The Pharisees became a closely organised group: the Pharisees were very loyal to their own society and to each other, but separate from others and even their own Jewish people, they pledged themselves to obey all facets of the traditions to minutest detail and were sticklers to ceremonial purity. This developed into a feeling of superiority over other nations and people. From this superior feeling as well as religious emotion, pride found its most extreme expression. The Pharisees were haughty and arrogant because they believed they were the only interpreters of God's word. They made life difficult for themselves and bitter for others, and despised those whom they did not consider their equals. The Pharisees cultivated a national and religious consciousness, which has hardly been equaled. Their teaching that salvation came by maintaining tradition and keeping the law had such a strong influence on the minds of their followers that God's grace was thought to come from self-effort rather than grace so it was only natural that such a religion would ultimately become a matter of externals and not a faith of the heart. For further information see title:

- Sanhedrin in, Bible Dictionary (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Herodians: were Jews who supported the dynasty of Herod, and therefore the rule of Rome. They are seen joining with the Pharisees to oppose Jesus nothing more is known about them other than what the Gospels State. It appears that they were neither a religious sect nor a political party. They are only mentioned three times in Scripture and each time they are aggressively trying to trap and destroy Jesus (Matt. 22:16) (Mark 3:16) (Mark 12:13).

MARK 3:7-12

Unclean spirits cry out, "You are the Son of God."

- **Mark 3:7-12:** Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea ⁸and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. ⁹And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him ¹⁰for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. ¹¹And whenever the unclean spirits saw him they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹²And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

Galilee: (called Galilee of the Nations and Gennesaret) is a region in northern Israel on the West Side of the lake or Sea of Galilee, much of Jesus public ministry took place along its north shore. It was the place of Jesus family home and many of his disciples were from Galilee.

Sea of Galilee is also called:

- The Sea of Tiberias.
- The Lake of Gennesaret.
- The Sea of Chinnereth.
- The Sea of Cinneroth.

This is an amazing scene the crowds, some travelling great distances to see Jesus were so great that to avoid being crushed by them Jesus got into the safety of a boat and taught from there. Sadly, many within the crowds are only coming to Jesus to be healed of their sicknesses rather than hear the Gospel that has the power to heal them to eternal life.

Unclean Spirit's Cry out, "Are you are the Son of God?"

Unclean: (akathartos) from Strong's Concordance means, impure, evil, disgusting, offensive, repulsive, gross and nasty. In a moral sense it carries the idea of being unclean in thought and life and in a ceremonial sense it refers to the things which must be abstained from according to Levitical law. Unclean spirits in the context of these verses most likely refer to people that were living a corrupt lifestyle or who had some kind of mental illness. The people of Jesus generation believed people who had a mental illness or sickness they did not understand, including deafness and blindness were caused by evil gods called demons possessing the sick person. This belief was strongly held amongst the Jews and the surrounding pagans and therefore those who were sick with these kinds of illnesses would also have believed that they were possessed with these evil gods. No-doubt many of the people with these kind of sickness had heard that Jesus could heal them and that he was the Son of God, but unlike many amongst the crowd who were only interested in being healed they believed Jesus was who he claimed to be, that is why they humbled themselves and fell down before Christ's feet. These people had no embarrassment or fear in crying out, "Jesus is the Son of God." At various times throughout the New Testament Jesus told those who he had healed not to tell anyone or make it known for the following two reasons:

1. Because the crowds were so great that he had no leisure time to pray, eat, sleep or teach his twelve disciples the Gospel which was his primary ministry.
2. He did not want to stir up the anger of the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes and Romans as it was not yet his time to lay down his life.

Unclean Spirits and Old Testament Prophecy: various Old Testament prophecies speak about God's messenger, a Holy One coming to the temple to judge and refine the wicked like silver (Malachi 3:1-3). The people in Jesus era who believed they had unclean spirits or demons also believed Jesus was the Son of God and therefore most likely believed he was the Holy One prophesied to come from God to strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips condemn the wicked to death (Isaiah 11:1-4). Jewish people who did not understand the cause of their sickness or illness believed they were possessed by evil gods called unclean spirits or demons. Because they believed Jesus was the Son of God it is more than likely that they would have also believed he was coming to condemn the wicked thus the reason those who are said to have unclean spirits humbly fell down before the Lord and confessed who he was.

Just prior to this story Jesus healed a man on a Sabbath Day which angered the Pharisees so much that they set about planning how to kill him, so Jesus took his disciples and withdrew from the Pharisees. One of the primary reasons (there are many others) the Pharisees crucified Jesus was because he claimed to be the Son of God which is probably one of the reasons Jesus tells those who believed they were possessed with unclean spirits or evil gods called demons to stop telling people that he was the Son of God because he did not want to stir up the Pharisees wrath, as it was not yet his time to be crucified.

MARK 3:13-19

Jesus Appoints the Twelve Disciples.

- **Mark 3:13-19:** And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵and have authority to cast out demons (daimon) (Devils in KJV) ¹⁶He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.
- Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter).
- James and John the sons of Zebedee.
- Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas.
- James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus.
- Simon the Cananaean and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

NOTICE: Jesus gave the twelve authority to cast out demons which means Judas Iscariot, also had power to heal the sick of all types of illness, and diseases, showing us that even though a person has amazing gifts it is not a guarantee that they are being led by the Spirit. Regardless of how great a person's ministry or gift is they can still be led by self, ego, pride and greed etc., as was Judas. For further details of the apostles see:

- Apostles (the Twelve Apostles).
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Beelzebul the Prince of Demons.

- **Mark 3:20-22:** Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. ²¹And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind." ²²And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."

Ponder the scene for a moment, Jesus after selecting his twelve apostles begins to journey home, but on their way the multitudes by their masses crowd him and the apostles so much so that they could not even eat. His own family when they looked out and saw the vast sea of people surrounding them were probably concerned that he was in danger of being crushed, no-doubt the crowds were in a frenzy pushing each other so they could touch Jesus or get close enough so they could ask him or one of the twelve to heal them. The danger of them being crushed by the crowd is most likely the reason Jesus family thought he must be out of his mind especially since he continued on ministering and the reason they went out and pulled him into the safety of their home.

Jesus is accused of being possessed by Beelzebul the prince of demons: The scribes who came down from Jerusalem after seeing the vast crowds surrounding Jesus and the twelve accused Jesus of not only being possessed by Beelzebul the prince of demons but also casting out the demons by his power. Beelzebul was the dung-god and the Baal of the fly he was a special deity of the Ekronites (Baal-Zebub) and a god of the Philistines. Later he was believed to be the prince of devils and the name Beelzebul was used as a name for Satan. The Jewish scribes of Jesus generation believed Jesus was possessed by the chief of demons called Beelzebul and also demon possessed (John 7:20) (John 8:48-49) (John 10:20-21). The chief priests, Pharisees and scribes also believed John the Baptist was demon possessed (Matt. 11:18) (Luke 7:33) which we clearly know is a totally wrong diagnosis of both John the Baptist and Jesus. If the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus generation believed Jesus and John were possessed by a demon and we know that is a wrong diagnosis why would we believe that their belief that other people were possessed by demons is a correct diagnosis? (Mark 3:22). The people of Jesus generation believed any mental illness or sickness they did not understand including deafness and blindness was caused by evil gods called demons possessing the mind or body of the sick person and taking control of them or causing them some kind of physical sickness like deafness, blindness or paralysis and such like. But if the Jews could be so extremely wrong in believing Jesus and John the Baptist were also demon possessed and ministering by the power of demons why would their diagnosis of the mentally or physically sick be taken or believed to be correct and true?

Demons: (daimon) means and inferior god especially and evil one and in the New Testament is always used in relation to sickness. The Jews falsely believed mental sickness and physical sickness' they didn't understand was a result of demon possession, but the fact that the Pharisees and scribes believed mental sickness was a result of demons does not mean it is true. Many in the New Testament are spoken of as being lunatics meaning their mental illness was caused by the moon. Today we know that the moon does not cause illnesses. In some regions of Tibet blind people are believed to be possessed with demons and are therefore rejected by their families and their society. In 2005 an English blind girl about twenty-five years old heard how the blind were treated in Tibet. She was so horrified at the rejection and cruelty they suffered because of the people's wrong belief that she pioneered schools for the blind in Tibet. Her schools would take the blind in and show them love, kindness and care contrasted to the constant rejection they experienced by the people of that country because of their erroneous belief that blindness is a result

of evil gods called demons possessing people. The generation of Jesus era had adopted the pagan beliefs of the surrounding nations and therefore credited anything they did not understand to be caused by inferior evil gods called demons. The Bible is written in the language and belief of that time. If the Bible were being written today it would contain words like, 'virus', bi-polar disorder, bacteria, ellipse etc. Jesus did not try to explain the medical science or psychology of people's sickness, rather he spoke to the people in the language they understood and simply showed them that the miraculous power he healed the multitudes with was far greater than the power of any god the people of his era might have believed in. Once the people saw the power of God working through Christ there was obviously no reason left to believe in their weak and inferior gods.

MARK 3:23-27

If Satan Cast Out Satan.

- **Mark 3:23-27:** And he called them (the Scribes) to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan (Satanas) cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. ²⁷But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

Jesus points out a simple and obvious principle that applies to, a business, an organisation, a family, a friendship and a marriage which is, "If two people are warring against each other how, will their relationship hold together?" Jesus applies this obvious principal of division to Satan and his kingdom by telling the scribes that if Satan is warring against himself then his kingdom will fall apart so why would Satan be casting out his very own demons and stopping them from achieving their destructive work.

THE PARABLE: Jesus is saying, if a strong man lives in a house no one can enter that house because of the strong man, first someone must tie up the strong man and then people are able to enter that house. The influence of Satan works through humanity so the strong man in this parable represents the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees and the entire Levitical ceremonial law and priesthood and the house represents the Kingdom of God. The Pharisees, scribes and priests had become so legalistic and added so many laws to the law of Moses that they had made it almost impossible for the common people to enter into the Kingdom of God, thus Jesus is the man who has come to bind up the strong man (the religious leaders and the entire Levitical ceremonial law and priesthood). Jesus achieved this through his death and resurrection because he became the immortal and eternal High Priest for everyone who is searching for God. Christ's resurrection destroyed any need for a human priest to intercede for any person seeking God. No-one needs a human priest simply because everyone who belongs to Christ can go straight to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the only High Priest anyone needs today.

MARK 3:28-30

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

- **Mark 3:28-30:** "Truly, I say to you (the scribe's) (v22), all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— ³⁰for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Jesus is speaking to the religious leaders of his generation who not only believed Jesus was demon possessed and had an unclean spirit but was also healing the sick by the power of Beelzebub the prince of demons.

The Holy Spirit in this context refers to the holy, righteous and sinless spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. The statement:

- Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness.

Means, no matter what humans call each other or even what sins they may have committed they can be forgiven, but as long as they remain in a state of speaking against Christ and denying him in any way they can never be forgiven, simply because they are speaking against the only one who can save them to eternal life. A brother or sister in Christ in difficult circumstance many speak against other humans or sadly in troubled moments even against their brothers and sisters in Christ, but they are still forgiven and still saved, but they cannot deny and turn against Christ and aggressively speak against him, as long as they are in this state they can never be forgiven.

NOTE: this does not refer to a simple moment of anger or frustration expressed toward the Lord because of a crisis and hardship in life. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that never has forgiveness is deliberate, calculated, ongoing and purposed in the mind and the heart. Those who receive eternal damnation in this context are those who speak against Christ and deny him. Eternal damnation means they are judged and condemned to eternal death in the Lake of Fire (a symbol of utter extinction).

MARK 3:31-35

Jesus Family.

- **Mark 3:31-35:** And his (Jesus) mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. ³²And a crowd was sitting around him and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you. ³³And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

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The crowd tells Jesus that his mother and brothers are looking for him and Jesus asks them who is my Mother and who are my brothers and sisters? I wonder if he paused there for a moment and allowed the crowd to wonder, "Does this man not know his own Mother, brothers and sisters?" Jesus then looks at the crowd and says, "Everyone who does the will of God, is his Mother, brother and sister."

The will of God: in this context is to:

- Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and to love our neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22:37-39).

This is the will of God simply because if a person loves God and their neighbour as themselves, they will never hurt or harm another human in anyway therefore no other law or commandment would ever be broken. Love your neighbour as yourself means, do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land. Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves. To

love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. The will of God is to maintain the general law of justice (fairness) to all mankind, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

NOTICE: Jesus mentions his mother, his brothers and his sisters, but there is no mention of a father, because God, not Joseph was the father of Christ. The fact that Jesus had brothers and sisters clearly shows us that Mary had other children to Joseph after Jesus was born.

For further information see:

- Beelzebub.
- Devil.
- Demons.
- Unclean.
- Satan.

All titles are in, Satan and his Family (ONE WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.