

Mark Chapter 10

Verses 1-52: Jesus' ministry shifts from the north to the area of Jerusalem in the south.

Mark 10:1 "And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again."

“Farther side of Jordan”: This region was known as Perea. Jesus was to minister there until leaving for Jerusalem shortly before Passion Week (see note on Matt. 19:1).

“Jordan” (see note on 1:5). “Wont” means accustomed.

They departed from Capernaum (9:33).

Many of the things Jesus taught, like in the last lesson, was taught to the disciples. We see here, that Jesus had come back out among the people near Judea. It was on the other side of Jordan from where He had been at Peter's home in Capernaum. The people saw Him and came to Him to be taught.

Mark 10:2 "And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away [his] wife? tempting him."

“Pharisees” (see note on 2:16).

“Came ... tempting him”: The Pharisees hoped to publicly discredit Jesus' ministry. The resulting loss of popularity, they hoped, would make it easier for them to destroy Him.

Also Perea (see note on verse 1), was ruled by Herod Antipas, who had imprisoned John the Baptist for his views on divorce and remarriage (6:17-18). The Pharisees no doubt hoped a similar fate would befall Jesus.

“Is it lawful ... to put away his wife?” The Pharisees attempted to entrap Jesus with a volatile issue in first-century Judaism: divorce.

There were two schools of thought, one allowing divorce for virtually any reason, the other denying divorce except on grounds of adultery (see note on Matt. 19:3). The Pharisees undoubtedly expected Jesus to take one side, in which case He would lose the support of the other faction.

The Pharisees wished to trap Jesus in His answer.

The Pharisees were always there to agitate. Their desire was to trap Him. This is a question that many are asking even today. There were provisions made in the law for divorces under certain circumstances. Many take advantage of the provision made for special cases and decide that you

can divorce for any reason at all. Either way Jesus would have answered, someone would be unhappy.

Mark 10:3 "And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?"

“What did Moses command you?” Jesus set the proper ground rules for the discussion. The issue was not rabbinical interpretations, but the teaching of Scripture.

When they tried to trap Jesus, He answered their questions with a question, and that was just what He did here. They were so caught up in the law that Jesus asked them what Moses had commanded.

Mark 10:4 "And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put [her] away."

“Suffered”: The Mosaic law, as the Pharisees were forced to concede, nowhere commanded divorce. The passage in question (Deut. 24:1-4), recognized the reality of divorce and sought to protect the wife’s rights and reputation and also regulated remarriage.

“Bill of divorcement”: In this document, the husband was required to state the reason for the divorce, thus protecting the wife’s reputation (if she were, in fact, innocent of wrongdoing). It also served as her formal release from the marriage, and affirmed her right to remarry (assuming she was not guilty of immorality).

The liberal wing of the Pharisees had misconstrued (Deut. 24), to be teaching that divorce was “permitted” for any cause whatsoever (citing as legitimate grounds such trivial events as the wife’s ruining dinner or the husband’s simply finding a more desirable woman), providing the proper legal paperwork was done. They thus magnified a detail, mentioned merely in passing, into the main emphasis of the passage.

In the account of this same thing in Matthew, Jesus said that marriage was God's plan for one man and one woman to marry and be one flesh. Divorce was not part of God's plan. Multiple marriages were not His way either. Moses gave them the bill of divorcement, because of their short comings. It is better not to marry in haste, and regret at leisure.

Mark 10:5 "And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."

“For the hardness of your heart” (see notes on 3:5; 6:52). This refers to the flagrant, unrepentant pursuit of sexual immorality, divorce was to be a last resort in dealing with such hard-heartedness. The Pharisees mistook God’s gracious provision in permitting divorce (under certain circumstances) for His ordaining of it.

"Precept" means rule, injunction, or doctrine. Possibly this whole questioning came about to make Jesus look bad in Herod's sight. Herod had married Herodias, his brother's wife. If Jesus

came against divorce, it would make Him look bad to Herod. Jesus put the blame quickly on them for desiring a divorce, because of their hard hearts.

Mark 10:6 "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female."

“From the beginning”: Divorce formed no part of God’s original plan for marriage, which was that one man be married to one woman for life (Gen. 2:24).

“Male and female”: Literally “a male and a female,” Adam and Eve. Mark quoted from (Genesis 1:27; 5:2; see also Genesis 2:21-25).

We see here, that Jesus reverted back to the original plan of God when He made mankind: male and female. The plan of God, as we said before, was for these two (a man and his wife), to become one flesh. They were now a family.

Children who came from this marriage were from them both. Marriages should be made in heaven. We should pray and ask God for our mate. If God is not the center of the marriage, it will not work.

Mark 10:7-8 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;" "And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh."

Jesus took the issue beyond mere rabbinical quibbling over the technicalities of divorce to God’s design for marriage. The passage Christ quotes (Gen. 2:24), presents 3 reasons for the inviolability of marriage:

- (1) God created only two humans (see note on verse 6), not a group of males and females who could configure as they please or switch partners as it suited them;
- (2) The word translated “become one” literally means “to be joined” or “to glue,” thus reflecting the strength of the marriage bond;
- (3) In God’s eyes a married couple is “one flesh,” forming an indivisible union, manifesting that oneness in a child.

Mark 10:9 "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

“What therefore God hath joined together”: Jesus added a fourth reason for the inviolability of marriage (see notes on verses 7-8): God ordains marriages and thus they are not to be broken by man.

Each should seek the happiness of his partner before his own. There is nothing more wonderful than a marriage where two people love each other and love God, but there is nothing worse than a bad marriage.

Mark 10:10 "And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same [matter]."

The disciples, like the Pharisees, had not received a clear message on this matter, so they asked the Lord again.

Verses 11-12: Remarriage after a divorce, except for legitimate biblical grounds, proliferates adultery. The innocent party, one whose spouse has committed prolonged, hard-hearted, unrepentant adultery, may remarry without being guilty of adultery, as may a believer whose unbelieving spouse has chosen to leave the marriage (see note on 1 Cor. 7:15).

See also (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).

Mark 10:11-12 "And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her." "And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

These Scriptures here, show that wives and husbands have equal rights in divorce. She is the sinner if she puts away her husband, and he is guilty if he puts away his wife.

Mark 10:13 "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and [his] disciples rebuked those that brought [them]."

“Children” (see note on 9:36).

“That he should touch them”: I.e., lay His hands on them and pray for them (Matt. 19:13). Jewish parents commonly sought the blessing of prominent rabbis for their children.

Whether this touch of Jesus was so that He might pray for them, or whether it was like a Patriarchal touch is not clear. At any rate, it would be a blessing to be touched by the Lord Jesus.

The disciples rebuked them, because they felt Jesus was wasting His time on these youngsters. They probably thought Jesus should be taking care of more weighty matters.

Mark 10:14 "But when Jesus saw [it], he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

“Forbid them not”: Jesus rebuked the disciples for their attempt to prevent the children from seeing Him (verse 13). They were not the ones to decide who had access to Jesus (Matt. 15:23).

“For such is the kingdom of God”: Most, if not all, of these children would have been too young to exercise personal faith. Jesus’ words imply that God graciously extends salvation to those too young or too mentally impaired to exercise faith (see note on Matt. 19:14).

Mark often stresses Jesus’ showing of strong feeling (see 1:41, 43; 3:5; 7:34; 8:34; 9:19).

“Suffer” here means “allow.”

Jesus was disturbed by what the disciples said and quickly said in answer, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not". Small children I believe, should be encouraged, not discouraged, to come to God.

If a child makes a commitment to God early, it can save him from much sin in his life. Sometimes, if a child is turned away early, it causes him to stray, and sometimes he never comes back. The Lord loves the innocence of children. A child receives the Lord humbly.

Mark 10:15 "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

“Verily I say unto you” (see note on 3:28).

“As a little child”: With humble, trusting dependence, and the recognition of having achieved nothing of value or virtue.

That is what we must do also. We must humble ourselves and realize that we must depend entirely upon the Lord if we make it to heaven. The simplicity of children's faith is what we must have. We must not complicate our lives with things of the world, but must receive Jesus as our Lord as well as our Savior.

Mark 10:16 "And he took them up in his arms, put [his] hands upon them, and blessed them."

“Blessed them” (see note on verse 13).

Every parent knows that no child is perfect. But Jesus sees in their refreshing openness to new things, their eagerness to learn and follow, a welcome contrast to adult self-dependence and cynicism.

This is what the Lord wants to do for all of us and especially the children. He wants to touch us and bless us.

Mark 10:17 "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

“There came one running”: The other synoptic gospels reveal that he was young (Matt. 19:20), and a “ruler”, probably in the synagogue (Luke 18:18). He was also wealthy (verse 22).

“What shall I do”: Steeped in the legalism of his day, the young man naturally thought in terms of some religious deed that would guarantee him eternal life. His lack of understanding about the true nature of salvation, however, does not mean he was insincere.

“Eternal life”: More than just eternal existence, it is a different quality of life. Eternal life is in Christ alone (see notes on John 3:15-16; John 10:28; 17:2-3; Rom. 6:23; 1 John 3:14; Ephesians 2:1-3). They have died to sin and are alive to God (Rom. 6:11); they have the very life of Christ in them (2 Cor. 4:11; Gal. 2:20); and enjoy a relationship with Jesus Christ that will never end (John 17:3).

This man was probably waiting to catch Jesus as He left the house. He immediately humbled himself (kneeled).

His question was sincere. He called Jesus "good master" out of respect. His question is one that man has asked for thousands of years, "What should I do that I may inherit eternal life?" We are all aware of the temporary condition of this life.

Mark 10:18 "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God."

“Why callest thou me good?” Jesus challenged the ruler to think through the implications of ascribing to Him the title “good.” Since only God is intrinsically good was he prepared to acknowledge Jesus’ deity? By this query Jesus did not deny His deity; on the contrary, He affirmed it.

“Goodness of God”: Only God is completely good in His nature and actions. His goodness includes all the positive moral attributes, such as grace, patience, and kindness.

When the rich young ruler called Jesus “Good Master,” Jesus reminded him that only God could be properly referred to as “good” (verse 18). The good that exists in the world around us truly reflects or expresses the goodness of God (Gen. 1:10). There is no other source of true “good.” When God revealed His name to Moses, He described Himself as being “abundant in goodness” (Exodus 34:6).

The goodness of God is illustrated daily in our lives by the many good things that add comfort and enjoyment (James 1:17). Christians should be careful not to take these gifts for granted.

Jesus knew that the man addressed Him as only a religious teacher. He reminds him that no mere man merits the title “good,” for that term applies only to God. As the Son of God, Jesus does of course merit highest praise.

We know that Jesus was good and is good, but we also know that He is God the Son. Perhaps, Jesus was saying here, do you believe that I am God in the flesh? Jesus was trying to get him to focus on God and his need for God.

Mark 10:19 "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother."

Quoted from (Exodus 20:12-16).

“Defraud not”: This was not the wording of any of the Ten Commandments, and is unique to Mark’s account. It seems to be a paraphrase for the command against coveting.

Jesus did not stop by telling him that only God was good, but went immediately into the commandments. Jesus was aware this young man knew of these laws of God.

Mark 10:20 "And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth."

“Master” is here literally “teacher.”

“All these have I observed from my youth”: His answer was no doubt sincere, but superficial and untrue. He, like Paul (Phil. 3:6), may have been blameless in terms of external actions, but not in terms of internal attitudes and motives (Matt. 5:2:21-48).

We see from this, that this young man was of good morals. Just good clean living will not get us into heaven though. There is more than just good clean living that gets us to heaven.

Mark 10:21 "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

“Jesus beholding him loved him”: I.e., felt great compassion for this sincere truth-seeker who was so hopelessly lost. God does love the unsaved (see notes on Matt. 5:43-48).

Sell whatsoever thou hast”: Jesus was not making either philanthropy or poverty a requirement for salvation, but exposing the young man’s heart. He was not blameless, as he maintained (verse 20), since he loved his possessions more than his neighbors (Lev. 19:18). More importantly, he refused to obey Christ’s direct command, choosing to serve riches instead of God (Matt. 6:24).

The issue was to determine whether he would submit to the Lordship of Christ no matter what He asked of him. So, as he would not acknowledge his sin and repent, neither would he submit to the Sovereign Savior. Such unwillingness on both counts kept him from the eternal life he sought.

“Treasure in heaven”: Salvation and all its benefits, given by the Father who dwells there, both in this life and the life to come (Matt. 13:44-46).

Jesus identifies the one area that revealed the man’s true lack of devotion to God. A clear-cut issue must be decided.

We see from this, that this young man had a god that he must lay on the altar to receive Jesus as his Savior. This statement here, is not for everyone to do but just for those who are in love with their money. Whatever your god happens to be is what you are required to lay down. Jesus invited him to follow Him. If we follow Jesus, there is a cross to bear.

Mark 10:22 "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."

“Went away grieved”: It was purely a worldly disappointment since he didn’t receive the eternal life he sought because the price of sacrifice was too high. He loved his wealth (8:36-37).

(Matthew 19:20), reveals that this rich man was still young. (Luke 18:18), shows that he was a ruler.

You see, this man's possessions were his god. He gave up eternal life for his worldly possessions. God would not have required his money, if he had not been in love with his money.

Mark 10:23 "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

“How hardly ... they that have riches” (see note on verse 27). “Hard” in this context means impossible (verse 25). “Wealth” tends to breed self-sufficiency and a false sense of security, leading those who have it to imagine they do not need divine resources (see Luke 16:13; 1 Tim. 6:9; 17-18).

Pride goes many times with riches, and love of money causes men to sin. The lust for money is of the flesh, and to love the things of this world drives heaven farther away.

Mark 10:24 "And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"

See note on (verse 26).

It was assumed that whoever was rich was in God’s favor.

Notice (in verse 24), exactly where the sin is. The trust in riches instead of God is the sin. Putting anything ahead of God could cause a person to miss heaven.

Mark 10:25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

“Camel ... eye of a needle”: The Persians expressed impossibility by saying it would be easier to put an elephant through the eye of a needle. This was a Jewish colloquial adaptation of that expression denoting impossibility (the largest animal in Palestine was a camel).

Many improbable interpretations have arisen that attempt to soften this phrase, e.g., that “needle” referred to a tiny gate in the Jerusalem city wall that camels could enter only with difficulty (but there is no evidence that such a gate ever existed).

And if it had, any sensible camel driver would have simply found a larger gate); or that a copyist's error resulted in kamelos (camel), being substituted for kamilos (a large rope or cable). But a large rope could no more go through the eye of a needle than a camel could, and it is extremely unlikely that the text of all three synoptic gospels would have been changed in the same way.

Jesus' use of this illustration was to explicitly say that salvation by human effort is impossible; it is wholly by God' grace. The Jews believed that with alms a man purchased salvation (as recorded in the Talmud), so the more wealth one had, the more alms he could give, the more sacrifices and offerings he could offer, thus purchasing redemption.

The disciples' question (verse 26), makes it clear that they understood what Jesus meant, that not even the rich could buy salvation (see note on Matt. 19:24).

God will not cause you to miss heaven because you are rich, but He will cause you to miss heaven, if you put your money ahead of God.

Mark 10:26 "And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?"

“Who then can be saved”: Jesus' teaching ran counter to the prevailing rabbinical teaching, which gave the wealthy a clear advantage for salvation. Jesus' emphatic teaching that even the rich could not be saved by their own efforts left the bewildered disciples wondering what chance the poor stood (see notes on Rom. 3:9-20; Gal. 3:10-13; Phil. 3:4-9).

It was thought by the Hebrews that a wealthy man was wealthy because God blessed him as He did Abraham, David, and Solomon. You can see how they would be so amazed.

Mark 10:27 "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men [it is] impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."

“With men it is impossible, but not with God”: It is impossible for anyone to be saved by his own efforts (see note on verse 25), since salvation is entirely a gracious, sovereign work of God (see notes on Rom. 3:21-28; 8:28-30; Gal. 3:6-9; 26-29).

You see, Jesus did not say a rich man could not be saved, He said it would be hard. God looks at the heart. Rich and poor who have pure hearts and who depend on Jesus Christ as their Savior will be saved.

Mark Chapter 10 Questions

1. As soon as Jesus came to Judaea, what did the people do?
2. Why did they come to Him?

3. What question did the Pharisees ask Him?
4. Why did they ask Jesus this?
5. What question did Jesus ask them in answer?
6. What way out had Moses given to them?
7. Man and woman married are to be one _____.
8. Why did Jesus say Moses had allowed divorce?
9. A man shall leave his mother and father and _____.
10. Why did the disciples ask Jesus the same question?
11. In verses 11 & 12, we find that man and woman are equal in what?
12. Why did they bring the young children to Jesus?
13. What did the disciples do about the children?
14. How did Jesus feel about the disciple's attitude?
15. Jesus said, if you are to enter the kingdom, it must be as a _____.
16. Why is it important to come to Jesus at an early age?
17. In verse 16, Jesus did what to the children?
18. The man, who ran and knelt at Jesus' feet, asked what of Jesus?
19. What shows that he humbled himself?
20. Who is the only one good?
21. What did Jesus tell the young man at first?
22. What did the young man answer?
23. What did Jesus tell him he lacked?
24. Why was this required of him?
25. What did the young man do?

26. What did Jesus say that astonished the disciples?
27. In verse 24, what one word was added to clarify what Jesus meant?
28. What is it easier for a camel to do than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven?
29. What question did the disciples ask Jesus?
30. With God _____ things are possible.