

The Gospel According To MARK

Chapter 3

“STEP FORWARD!”

Insight: Who are the PHARISEES? A religious party or school among the Jews at the time of Christ, so called from *perishin*, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word *perushim*, "separated." The chief sects among the Jews were the *Pharisees*, the *Sadducees* and the *Essenes*, who may be described respectively as the Formalists, the Freethinkers and the Puritans.

1. The fundamental principle all of the of the Pharisees, common to them with all orthodox modern Jews, is that by the side of the written law regarded as a summary of the principles and general laws of the Hebrew people there was on oral law to complete and to explain the written law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai and transmitted by him by word of mouth. The first portion of the Talmud, called the Mishna or "second law," contains this oral law. It is a digest of the Jewish traditions and a compendium of the whole ritual law, and it came at length to be esteemed far above the sacred text.

2. While it was the aim of Jesus to call men to the law of God itself as the supreme guide of life, the Pharisees, upon the Pretence of maintaining it intact, multiplied minute precepts and distinctions to such an extent that the whole life of the Israelite was hemmed in and burdened on every side by instructions so numerous and trifling that the law was almost if not wholly lost sight of.

3. It was a leading aim of the Redeemer to teach men that true piety consisted not in forms, but in substance, not in outward observances, but in an inward spirit. Indeed the whole spirit of their religion was summed up not in confession of sin and in humility, but in a proud self-righteousness at variance with any true conception of man's relation to either God or his fellow creatures. Finally, instead of endeavoring to fulfill the great end of the dispensation whose truths they professed to teach, and thus bringing men to the Hope of Israel, they devoted their energies to making converts to their own narrow views, who with all the zeal of proselytes were more exclusive and more bitterly opposed to the truth than they were themselves. Matt 22:15. Their number reached more than six thousand under the Herods. (From Smith's Bible Dictionary)

- **Who are the HERODIANS?** — A Jewish political party who sympathized with the Herodian rulers in their general policy of government, and in the social customs which they introduced from Rome. They were at one with the Sadducees in holding the duty of submission to Rome, and of supporting the Herods on the throne. (Comp. Mark 8:15; Matt 16:6.) Although the Herodians should not be equated with the SADDUCEES, they sided with the Sadducees in their pro-Roman sympathies and opposed the PHARISEES, who were anti-Roman. The Herodians joined forces with the Pharisees, however, in their opposition to Jesus (Mark 3:6; 12:13; Matt 22:16; Luke 20:20.)

> Chapter 3 - STEP FORWARD AND: (4 points)

#1 – **BE HEALED! (v1-12)**

- As a Christian we must “step forward” and do “GOOD!” (We live in a culture of evil.)
- As a Christian we must “step forward” and “SAVE LIFE!” (We live in a culture of death.)
- As a Christian we must “step forward” and “STRETCH OUT OUR HANDS!” (We live in a culture of self-centeredness.)

(Once again, Jesus teaches us not to follow man’s religious systems and hard heartedness, but to follow Him and help others!)

(v11-12) - **Insight on “unclean spirits,” these are demons, these people are demon possessed!**

Demons are spoken of as spiritual beings (Matt 8:16; 10:1; 12:43-45) at enmity with God, and as having a certain power over man (James 2:19; Rev 16:14). They recognize our Lord as the *Son of God* (Matt 8:20; Luke 4:41). They belong to the number of those angels that "kept not their first estate," "unclean spirits," "fallen angels," the angels of the devil (Matt 25:41; Rev 12:7-9). Paul states they are the "*principalities and powers*" against which we must "wrestle" (Eph 6:12.)

#2 – BE CHOSEN! (v13-19)

(Luke shares Jesus' time of prayer before choosing the twelve in Luke 6:12-16 - *Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to **pray**, and continued all **night in prayer to God**. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.*)

> **May our lives follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, let's be a people of PRAYER!** - The Psalmist declares, **"But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, hear me in the truth of Your salvation."** (Ps 69:13).

- **Jesus said in John 14:12-14** - *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."*

- **Paul shared in Philippians 4:6-7** - *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the **peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

> **Observe the apostles three-fold ministry in verse 15 – (1) to Preach; (2) to have power to heal sicknesses; (3) to cast out demons.**

#3 – BE WARNED! (v20-30)

(v22) The antagonistic religious leaders (scribes) said that Jesus was filled with Beelzebub; who is **Beelzebub?** (Gr. *form Beel'zebul*), this is a name given to Satan, and found only in the New Testament (Matt 10:25; 12:24,27; Mark 3:22); the god of Ekron, meaning "the lord of flies," or, as others think, "the lord of dung," or "the dung-god."

(v23-27) **Jesus gives four illustrations of sound logic: (1) How can Satan cast out Satan; (2) a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; (3) a house divided against itself cannot stand; (4) Jesus is stronger than Satan ("unless he first binds the strong man and then will plunder his house"); the demons house is the human body; Jesus said at the beginning of His ministry, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."** (Luke 4:18-19)
(v28-30) Notice that **"all sins and blasphemies will be forgiven"; "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"**

> **Question: What does it mean to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit?** - A sin that is often referred to as the "**unpardonable sin**" because, in the words of Jesus, "He who blasphemes [speaks evil] against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" (Mark 3:29). The context of Jesus' words about the sin against the Holy Spirit provides a clue to its nature. When a demon-possessed man came to Jesus, He was healed. The multitudes were amazed. But the scribes and Pharisees said He was healing through Satan's power (Matt 12:24). Jesus had cast out the demons by the power of the Holy Spirit; His enemies claimed He cast them out by the power of the devil. Such slander of the Holy Spirit, Jesus implied, reveals a spiritual blindness, a warping and perversion of the moral nature, that puts one beyond hope of repentance, faith, and forgiveness. Those who call the Holy Spirit Satan reveal a spiritual cancer so advanced that they are beyond any hope of healing and forgiveness. (Nelson's Bible Dictionary)

> **Observe sound doctrine in verse 29 "but is subject to eternal condemnation" – Jesus, the Bible does not teach "purgatory" (Roman Catholicism) or "annihilation" (Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah Witness).** The Bible says HELL is real and **ETERNAL!** - The word *Gehenna* occurs 12 times in the New Testament. Each time it is translated as "hell." With the exception of James 3:6, it is used only by Jesus (Matt 5:22,29-30; 10:28; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5). In Matt 5:22; 18:9; and Mark 9:47, it is used with "fire" as "hell fire." So the word hell (*Gehenna*) as a place of punishment is used in the New Testament by Him who is the essence of infinite love. In Mark 9:46 and 48, hell is

described as a place where **"their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched."** Repeatedly Jesus spoke of outer darkness and a furnace of fire, where there will be wailing, weeping, and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12; 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). Obviously this picture is drawn from the valley of Gehenna. The Book of Revelation describes hell as *"a lake of fire burning with brimstone"* (Rev 19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8). Into hell will be thrown the beast and the false prophet (Rev 19:20). At the end of the age the devil himself will be thrown into it, along with death and hades and all whose names are not in the Book of Life. **"And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever"** (Rev 20:10b).

#4 – BE FAMILY! (v31-35)

> Observation: Here we are told that Jesus had brothers; in Matt 13:55-56 we have names of his brothers and Jesus had sisters, *"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?"* Mary was not a perpetual virgin, nor is she the "Queen of Heaven." (Again, these are false teachings in Roman Catholicism.)

- **One is of the family of God according to Jesus words, "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."** The word "will" in Greek is *thelema*, this speaks of choice, inclination, desire, pleasure, what one wishes. The will of God produces the purposes of God to bless mankind through Christ; it also speaks of what God wishes to be done by us, which includes His commands and precepts. Listen to John the beloved in John 1:10-14 - *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Paul writes in Romans 10:9-13 - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." And Romans 12:1-2 - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**