
Isaiah in Mark

Lesson 3

“Mark 2:1-3:6”

Objective: To understand how Isaiah is used by Mark to proclaim the good news to his original audience and to understand how this should be understood by us today. How should the gospel message impact our lives. The historical and cultural barriers often cause us to miss, or even misinterpret the message of Mark. This then inhibits transformation into the image of Christ.

Materials: Books, Journal articles, Targums, the Syriac Peshitta and interviews.

Procedures: To outline the issues that confront us as we seek to comprehend more fully the powerful ways that the Old Testament, and in particular Isaiah challenged and transformed the world-view and the lives of first century believers. In doing this, it is hoped that we can then transform that understanding into a contextual milieu that will allow our lives to be impacted by the Gospel in the powerful, transformative way that it impacted that first audience.

The narrative pericope of Chapter 2 of Mark actually continues on to 3:6. We need to remember that the chapter and verse markings for the New Testament can be traced to Stephen Langton (1150-1128), who was the Archbishop of Canterbury. He added the chapter divisions to the Latin Vulgate while Stephanus added the verse divisions in 1551 while he was traveling from Paris to Lyons (some say that he was traveling on horseback while doing this). The Geneva Bible (1560) was the first English Bible to have chapter and verse divisions. Mark 1 characterizes the ministry of Jesus as a conflict between spiritual powers: the reign of God has begun to displace the reign of Satan. Angels attend Jesus, demons invade humans and are driven out by him. Jesus exercises his power to silence and banish these evil spirits.¹ The various characters in this conflict are beginning to line up, with their allies who are at many times under the illusion that they are in control, or even on the side of God.

In 1:16-45 Jesus is portrayed as battling demons and disease, while his relations with others seem to be remarkably peaceful, if not

¹ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, in the Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary series (Macon GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), p. 73.

even idyllic. As we come to Mark chapter 2 all of this changes rapidly and decisively.² In Isaiah, Yahweh is portrayed as declaring war on all the nations in order to establish his kingdom, a reign of universal peace (Isaiah 13-27). Mark portrays Jesus and his conflicts with the power structures in history as signs that the promised reign of Yahweh has indeed drawn near. In Isaiah, the people of Yahweh are not exempt from judgment; judgment falls upon Jerusalem as surely as it does upon Assyria and Babylon. In order for Yahweh to reign, all other powers must either abdicate, or be defeated, and this includes even the powers that claim to represent Yahweh. In Mark's Gospel, it is clear that not only does the government of Rome stand to lose when the kingdom that Jesus announces comes, but so also do the Jewish leaders. In light of this, they oppose Jesus.³ Mark will convey that from the beginning there is resistance to the kingdom of God coming, and it should be no surprise to us today that there is still resistance to the coming kingdom of God.

² Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, The Anchor Bible series, Vol. 27 (New Haven CT: The Anchor Yale Bible, 2005), p. 213.

³ Sharyn Dowd, *Reading Mark* (Macon GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), pp. 23-24.

In the midst of all of this resistance we have the kingdom of God continuing to push back the the authority and the power of Satan along with all who would oppose the coming of the kingdom. It is important to note that the continual pushing that Jesus gives does not depart from his plan, or pace, in spite of the opposition. As we begin this section, he speaks the word of God to people; and when the opportunity is presented to him Jesus not only heals a man, but more importantly forgives his sins. Jesus is not going to fight the enemies of the kingdom of God with traditional weapons and tactics. The kingdom of God has no need to fear that it can be delayed, hindered, or stopped. The tactics and methods of those opposed to the rule of God will not even cause a ripple in God's plans. The two converse stories that are in this section (2:1-12 and 3:16) that include healing miracles foreshadow the two trials that will come to Jesus in Mark's Gospel account. The healing of the paralytic foreshadows the trial before the Sanhedrin, where Jesus publicly makes the claim that he is the Son of God. The response to this claim is to accuse him of blasphemy (14:64). This is not a new charge for Jesus, this claim is

also made here in 2:7 as Jesus assumes the divine prerogative of forgiving sins (Isaiah 43:25-28).⁴

Throughout 2:1-3:6, the theme of the new age of the kingdom of God remains prominent. The lame are restored, sins are forgiven, table fellowship with those who are considered outcasts confirms the beginning of a new, inclusive community, where the needs of human beings take precedence over religious tradition (Ezekiel 34:4).⁵ In Isaiah 33:24 the mark of the reign of God in Zion is that “no inhabitant will say, “I am sick”; the people will be forgiven their iniquity. In Isaiah 65, especially at verse 20 and following, there is a clear and powerful indication that the coming rule of God will dramatically and powerfully change things. With Mark’s clear proclamation that the words he writes are proclaiming that story, as proposed by Isaiah the prophet it seems most likely that his audience will have seen his words as written on the backdrop of Isaiah throughout. Here in chapter 2, there are no direct quotes of Isaiah, there are only perhaps faint allusions, but the overall thrust of the

⁴ Sharyn Dowd, *Reading Mark*, p. 24.

⁵ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, p. 75.

message should be viewed as being under the umbrella of Isaiah's prophecies.

Mark demonstrates in this section that the religious authorities prefer their own traditions (2:7ff., 16, 18, 24; 3:4) over Yahweh's purposes. In holding to this preference of their own traditions they continue to reject Yahweh's purposes and act as enemies of his coming kingdom. It is hard for the religious authorities to respond appropriately to the new thing that God is doing in Jesus, when all along, in the name of piety and devotion they have been avoiding the requirements of God's law. The results of the judicial hardening prophesied in Isaiah 6:9 ff. and 29:9-14 are being introduced in Mark 2 and we will see them continuing to be worked out as we proceed through the narrative.⁶ This narrative of judicial hardening is a difficult one for us to deal with, but it is a continual theme in the Old Testament and as we come into the New Testament to leave it aside is to remove a portion of the foundation upon which the New Testament is built. Such a move will virtually insure that our potential for a proper understanding of Mark's message is greatly reduced.

⁶ Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2000), pp. 217-218.

Mark's narrative here seems to take for granted that his audience will understand this idea of hardening without further explanation. This is set in contrast to the faith of those who have brought the paralytic on the mat before Jesus.

This first encounter with the religious officials shows this sharp contrast between people of faith and those who are religious and very often, these are not the same people. This is the same contrast that we so often see in the Old Testament between those who keep the covenant, those who act in faith and those who pay lip service and perhaps put on a good show, but do not follow through with covenant loyalty. Jesus challenges his audience here in 2:5, 9 by telling the paralytic that his sins are forgiven. Note how Jesus says they are questioning in their "hearts." It is important for us to remember that in the period of Jesus there was very often perceived to be a connection made between sin and sickness. For us today, this seems hard to comprehend, and we are not sure whether Jesus intends to make any connection here, or not. The accusation made against Jesus was that he had committed blasphemy. Blasphemy, by the time of Jesus, had become something other than cursing God, it

had become usurping a divine prerogative; and was a violation of the power and majesty of God. The scribes heard in Jesus announcement of forgiveness, or even calling upon the sins to be forgiven, a usurping of the place of God. According to Levitical law (Leviticus 24:15-16), anyone who blasphemes is to be stoned. The question of the scribes, in verse 7, regarding who can forgive sins advances one of the Gospel's main themes by focusing on the issue of Jesus' identity.⁷ He can forgive sins. Notice he does this and has this authority even before the cross.

Notice how in verse 8 Jesus does not have to be told what they were discussing, he “perceives in his spirit,” (ἐπιγινούσ ...τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ). It is here that he indicates that he knows their heart and even at this point in the ministry of Jesus it is plain to see that he is extraordinary. Both to confirm his right, and his power, Jesus at verses 10-11 ratchets up the pressure by not only claiming the right to forgive sins, but by demonstrating the power to heal the body. At verse 12, we have the man standing up, taking up his mat and leaving in front of all of them. They are astonished (ἐξίστασθαι) and indicate

⁷ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, p. 79.

that they have never seen anything like what has just happened. This ends the first encounter with those in authority and he leaves them stunned, apparently in silence.

In 2:13 we have then next scene with Jesus going out beside the sea with a whole crowd gathered around with him teaching them. It does not take long before Jesus sets the scene for an encounter with the scribes and Pharisees. He sees Levi, a tax collector and he calls upon him to follow Jesus. In the Mishnah⁸ it says, “If tax gathers entered a house (all that is within it) becomes unclean What do they render unclean? Foodstuffs and liquids and open earthenware vessels; but couches and seats and earthenware vessels having a tightly stopped-up cover remain clean. If a gentile or a woman was with them all becomes unclean.”⁹ Needless to say the perception of the Pharisees and the scribes was that you would definitely not eat in the house of such a person as everything would be contaminated; including any person entering that house. Tax collectors were considered traitors to their own people, they worked

⁸ The word *Mishnah* (משנה) comes from the Hebrew verb *shanah* (שנה) and means to study by repetition. The *Mishnah* is the first major written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions. It is also the first major work of what is called Rabbinic literature.

⁹ *Mishnah Tohoroth* 7.6. Herbert Danby, trans., *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).

for the pagans, the Romans, the oppressors. Jesus once again courts controversy and uses this controversy as a way to convey the intent of his mission. This is the first time that we will meet the Pharisees in Mark's Gospel. Jesus will now fully clarify his mission.¹⁰ "...I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."¹¹

Not only does Jesus overturn the idea of purity-by separation, which was the etymological basis for the very name of the Pharisees (the Separated ones), but he also provides a significant challenge to the rest of Mark's audience. Jesus uses a proverb whose sentiment was popular among a variety of ancient philosophers usually associated with physicians. When he says, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick ..." Those who consider themselves to be among those that Jesus came to call have to be willing to place themselves in the category of "sinners," the sick. If they see themselves in the category of the "righteous," the well, then then they are not included in those that Jesus came to help.¹²

Jesus makes it clear that his ministry is directed to those who realize

¹⁰ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, pp. 84-85.

¹¹ Mark 2:17 - NRSV

¹² Sharyn Dowd, *Reading Mark*, pp. 25-27.

that they need help. Those that have become so blind and deaf as to not recognize their need for the coming of the Messiah are outside the scope of the ministry of Jesus through their own arrogant self-righteousness. This once again seems harsh and direct, but even today, those who do not recognize that they are sick do not even ask for help.

In verses 18-22, there is an account bracketed on either side by two stories focused on eating and yet here the controversy is on not eating. Jesus is asked why if John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting his disciples did not fast. The reply of Jesus is an oblique reference to his crucifixion and exaltation.¹³ You have to wonder what they thought Jesus was saying here? Fasting held various meanings in first-century Judaism. Generally it was associated with mourning, as in mourning for the dead (1 Samuel 31:13), and with contrition and submission to God (Psalm 35:13; 1 Kings 21:27). Fasting was also practiced on the Jewish holidays of *Yom Kippur* (The Day of Atonement: Leviticus 16:31; 23:27) and Purim (Esther 4:16). By the first century we are aware that the Pharisees fasted twice a

¹³ Sharyn Dowd, *Reading Mark*, p. 28.

week (Luke 18:12; *Didache* 8.1,¹⁴ on Mondays and Thursdays. Jewish ascetics, like the Essenes, the Therapeutae, Hananiah ben Dosa, and John the Baptist (Matthew 11:18, were also know for their fasting. It is highly probable that fasting had a different meaning among each of these various groups. John’s disciples likely fasted as an expression of their repentance and preparation for the coming judgment announced by John.¹⁵

The question is, were the disciples of Jesus less pious than the disciples in these other groups? In the context of Isaiah we must remember that there was a great expectation of the coming of the Messiah. It seems highly likely that Mark’s audience will have understood the coming of Jesus as associated with the coming of the Messiah. Fasting is not condemned, or is it really clarified here. Jesus simply indicates that now is not the time for fasting, but there will come a time when it is appropriate; when the bridegroom is taken from them. After the departure of Jesus, fasting is considered an

¹⁴ “But do not let your fasts coincide with those of the hypocrites. They fast on Monday and Thursday so you must fast on Wednesday and Friday.” Michael W. Holmes, editor and translator, *The Apostolic Fathers*, third edition (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2007), p. 355.

¹⁵ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, pp. 86-87.

appropriate Christian practice.¹⁶ Fasting is not something that is generally popular today nor do you hear much teaching on it and yet in the history of God's people it has played an important role. Jesus will address it further in other places (Matthew 6:16-18) and it must be remembered that Jesus' own ministry began with a forty day fast (Matthew 4:2). It is also a topic that is picked up in the church (Acts 13:1-3; 14:23) as something that was practiced. Jesus teaches here that it is simply not the correct time.

Jesus then gives two examples that indicate something about the nature of the community he will create: it will be like fermentation and disruption. For Dowd, this seems to be an indication that the churches that are the audience of Mark's have broken with the synagogue.¹⁷ This may have been the case, but it seems that to apply the saying of Jesus here so precisely must certainly go beyond the scope of interpretation and into the area of conjecture. Certainly the passage about fasting in the *Didache* would indicate that there has been a break, but we are not sure when that work reached the form that we have today. Some might say the first

¹⁶ Sharyn Dowd, *Reading Mark*, p. 28.

¹⁷ Sharyn Down, *Reading Mark*, p. 28.

century, but more would place it in the second century. What can be said of the two proverbs of Jesus are that they underscore the incompatibility of the old with the new. In the context of Mark's Gospel these two proverbs indicate that fasting is inappropriate in the context of the celebration of the new era that has begun with the coming of Jesus.¹⁸ We must continue to hold in our minds the words of Mark about this being the "good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah..." This is a message that can be described as good news, and in context, Jesus is the bringer of that good news. This is a time of rejoicing and celebration, not a time for mourning and introspection.

What we would perhaps consider to be a minor incident in a grain field allowed Jesus the opportunity to define his priorities (2:23-28). This is now the fourth controversy in this series, and continues with the theme of eating. In verse 23 we have the setting which is an grain field and the disciples of Jesus are plucking grain. No big deal, except that they are doing this on the Sabbath (Saturday). Verse 24 poses the accusation brought by the Pharisees

¹⁸ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, p. 88.

as they ask why the disciples of Jesus are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath. In the remaining verse Jesus offers three responses: 1. an appeal to the example of David (25-26); 2. a pronouncement regarding the purpose of the Sabbath (27); and finally a pronouncement of his authority over the Sabbath (28). The great challenge for the interpreter is how are we to understand the relationship among these three responses. Some such as Culpepper consider the last two sayings to be additions added by either Mark, or a pre-Markan compiler and not part of the original incident.¹⁹

To me this seems to throw in the towel all too easily and to fail to fully understand the impact that all three of these examples could have on an opponent. Marcus points out that the Pharisees' challenge in 2:24 receives two answers (2:25-26 and 2:27-28), each one being in a different form. The first provides Scriptural prove that what his disciples are doing is not wrong (2:25-26) while the second is a pronouncement. The two answers deal with two different issues: eating forbidden food (2:25-26) and the relationship of humanity to

¹⁹ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, p. 89.

the Sabbath (2:27-28).²⁰ Adela Yarbro Collins actually deals with the Scripture as it stands and recognizes that all the elements are indeed important in dealing with the objections of the Pharisees. First, Jesus gives the example and then he readily admits that what David did was not permitted under the law. They did what they did because they were hungry and in need. That does not truly settle the argument. The argument is settled in verse 27 when Jesus declares the reason for the Sabbath, is for mankind and not mankind for the Sabbath.²¹

The positive part of the saying of Jesus in verse 27 is that God created the Sabbath for human beings. The implication then being that if the Sabbath was created for human beings it is meant to benefit human beings and not to do them harm. There is a great likelihood that that most of the Jews at the time of Jesus and afterward would agree with that principle. Indeed in the Talmud it says as much (*Yoma* 85b²²). Certainly, there were likely those who

²⁰ Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, in The Anchor Bible series, Vol. 27 (New Haven CT: The Anchor Yale Bible, 2005), p. 243.

²¹ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, in the Hermeneia A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible series (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2007), pp. 202-203.

²² When speaking of the Sabbath R. Jonathan b. Joseph says, "For it is holy to you' - it is given into your hands, you are not committed into its hands." Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud*, Vol. 5 Tractate *Yoma*, Tractate *Sukah* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), p. 334.

disagreed with how Jesus applied this principal. Seldom, if ever is there total agreement among human beings on anything at all. The implication of the words of Jesus would seem to be, especially in light of the example of David, that human beings are free to interpret the prohibition of work on the Sabbath in ways that meet basic human needs, that is, in ways that bring benefit and not harm.²³ With this implication in place, and since Jesus is indeed human, he is then “lord” (κύριος): Here having the meaning of “master.” We are not given any indication of their response back to this, but we can be certain that at this point Jesus was not stoned to death. Perhaps they are left in a state of confusion to ponder the matter until a later time, or perhaps they even begin arguing among themselves. There is even the possibility that they agreed as did a number of their own rabbis.

Chapter 3:1 then picks up on this same issue of the Sabbath, which would seem to indicate that there were some who did not agree with the interpretation that Jesus gave in the previous section of the needs of humankind being more important than the Sabbath regulations. Verse 2, indicates that “they,” likely the Pharisees, but

²³ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, pp. 203-204.

certainly those that were in the synagogue, were keeping a watchful eye on Jesus to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. They may have even set the stage for this conflict. Jesus, however, does not miss the opportunity to make his point in challenging them. He says to them, “Is it lawful (or right) to do good on the Sabbath, or evil, to save life, or to kill? But they were silent.” The response of Jesus here stands in great contrast to that of his audience. They were more interested in being right, safe, and what they perceived as lawful than they were in bringing comfort and life. Jesus puts this in a context that should challenge us all. Are we going to do “good,” or “evil” (κακοποιῆσαι). The word that I have translated here as “evil” could also be translated as to do “harm,” to do “mischief,” or to “maltreat.”

This is how God sees our insistence upon following a rule, or regulation in the face of human suffering and pain. It is a contrast between “good” and “evil;” between light and darkness. When we choose not to help, when it is within our power then we have made a choice. The response of Jesus is a response that each of us should have when this happens, we should be angry. This anger should draw us to action in the same way that it does Jesus. This incident, more

than any that we have encountered thus far in the Gospel of Mark, conveys to us contrast between the heart of Jesus and the heart of the religious and political rulers. Their ambitions, and their entrenched beliefs, blind them to the reality of what they have just seen, a miracle. There are a number of passages that deal with this type of blindness in the writings of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 29; 42; 43; 56). Isaiah 56:10-12 is particularly poignant:

Israel's sentinels are blind,

they are all without knowledge;

they are all silent dogs

that cannot bark;

dreaming, lying down,

loving to slumber.

11 The dogs have a mighty appetite;

they never have enough.

The shepherds also have no understanding;

they have all turned to their own way,

to their own gain, one and all.

12 "Come," they say, "let us get wine;

let us fill ourselves with strong drink.

And tomorrow will be like today,

great beyond measure.”

Verse 6, of Mark chapter 3 shows us the heart of the Pharisees as they act contrary to the principle of saving life on the Sabbath and their focus is upon their professed concern for that day’s sanctity. They however, seem to have no qualms about desecrating the Sabbath by using the Sabbath day to plot the murder of Jesus. Jesus clearly, knew their heart when he asked them the question regarding choosing “good,” or “evil.” The Pharisees here show their true nature and their true master. They are servants of evil, servants of Satan; they are tools in his hands and not true followers of Yahweh.²⁴ As we wrap up this section of the Gospel of Mark it is crucial that we continue to hold in view the context of the beginning. Isaiah continues to be critical in our understanding of the background and conflict that is taking place as well as the mission of Jesus in bringing the kingdom of God to earth. That is after all the good news, the kingdom of God is breaking into the midst of the kingdom of this

²⁴ Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 254.

earth. The change, though by our standards seems slow, has begun and the stage is being set for the return of Christ and the fulness of the reign of God. It is inevitable, and it has begun, though we are so often blinded to this reality.

Synopsis

As we begin this section it is important to note that it does not follow the chapter and verse markings exactly: We will go from 2:1-3:6. In the previous section, Jesus is portrayed as battling demons and disease and there is no indication of conflict with human beings, or human institutions. In chapter 2, it becomes clear that the ministry of Jesus will bring him into conflict with other human beings and human institutions. As the kingdom of God comes into this realm in new, and powerful, ways it is inevitable that conflict will ensue. Rather than being discouraged by this we should be encouraged as this is a sign that the kingdom of God is alive and well, and the greater the conflict the more it is a sign that the kingdom of God is encroaching into territory claimed by the enemy. It is also a warning, as the conflict here is first with those who claim to be followers and disciples of Yahweh, but are shown to be otherwise. Jesus begins this phase of his ministry by casting light on the heart and motives of those who are in positions of leadership. These leaders are shown to be in opposition to the coming kingdom of God.

Jesus does not use physical force as a weapon to bring down those that oppose the kingdom of Yahweh, he uses different weapons such as forgiveness and healing. The weapons of the enemy will not be seen in the hands of Jesus instead he uses weapons that the world at large considers soft and weak and yet in reality they are heavenly, Godly, weapons that slice through the heart and soul of the enemies kingdom showing its falsehood and wrong-headed nature. As Jesus uses these weapons, even his enemies recognize that these are the prerogative of God and they accuse Jesus of blasphemy for stepping into areas that are God's purview. In spite of this Jesus continues bringing into being the vision of a new community that is inclusive of the weak, the sick, the outcasts, the unloved, and envelops them with hope. Jesus heals the sick, the lame walk, and the sinners are forgiven. There is a link with Isaiah and his message especially with Isaiah 65.

Despite there being no direct quotes of Isaiah in this section we should keep in view the prophecies of Isaiah, as Mark has informed us that the good news he is conveying is "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah ..." Jesus demonstrates his lordship over the

physical world through healings and proclaims his lordship over the spiritual with his proclamation of forgiveness. The kingdom of God is concerned with both areas and not just one or the other: Both are a part of the creation of Yahweh.

The conflict in this section centers on interpretation of the law and how that interpretation impacts daily life. Jesus makes it clear time and time again that the law was not intended to harm human beings. This is seen in this section in the practices and interpretation of the Sabbath laws. According to Jesus, “The Sabbath was begotten (γίνομαι) for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; ...” This section will leave the scene with the Pharisees showing their true colors as they plot the destruction of the one who brings the kingdom of God into this realm, and they do this while doing evil on the Sabbath. In this way they demonstrate their unrighteousness.

Questions

1. Why do you think we need verse and chapter markings in the Bible?
2. Are verse and chapter markings always helpful in augmenting our understanding of Scripture? Why or why not?
3. How do you think holding in mind the prophecies of Isaiah helps us as we navigate this section of Scripture?
4. What do you think it means for the kingdom of God to come into the realm of this world?
5. Why do you think people should want the rule of God to prevail?
6. What are some ways that you can be advocates for the kingdom of God today?
7. What are some things today that you think the church does that do not help promote the kingdom of God? Why do you think the church does not see this?
8. What are some things that challenge you personally about the story of the paralyzed man?
9. How do we feel today when we hear human beings talking about forgiving sins? How is it different from the time in which Jesus speaks personally?
10. What do you think it means to have authority (2:10)?

11. Why do you think Jesus eats with a tax-collector? What can we learn from this account about how we should live?
12. Who do you think the “sick” are that Jesus is talking about in 2:17?
13. In 2:18-2:20 what do you think the message of Jesus is meant to convey? Why do you think that?
14. What is the message of 2:21-2:22 meant to convey to the original audience? What do you think it says to us today?
15. Why do you think the issue of the Sabbath was important? What can we learn from these encounters?
16. Why do you think Jesus gets angry when they refuse to answer his question in 3:4?
17. What does it mean that the Pharisees and Herodians want to “destroy” (ἀπόλλυμι) Jesus?
18. What do you think is the most important message that we can take away from this section of Scripture? Why do you think it is the most important?