


WEEK 21



Mark 2:1-3:6 Controversy & Conflicts in Galilee Five Narratives

Controversy & Conflict in Galilee | Mark 2:1-3:6

2:1-17 Sin, sinners and forgiveness

1. 2:1-12 | The authority to forgive sins
2. 2:13-17 | The call of a tax collector

2:18-3:6 Fasting, the sabbath and the intention of God

3. 2:18-22 | The new situation
4. 2:23-28 | The Lord of the sabbath
5. 3:1-6 | The Good must be destroyed

The 5 combative narratives in this passage share common pattern.

- *Jesus performs a revolutionary action.*
- *The Pharisees or their scribes rebuke him.*
- *Jesus makes a pronouncement by which they are silenced.*

1. The authority to forgive sins | 2:1-12

- *Jesus' preaching is interrupted by a small party carrying a man on a mattress. The fact of pardon is announced in verse 5, questioned in verses 6-9, validated by the healing in verse 11, and recognized by the crowd in verse 12.*
- *Jesus' response was unexpected "Son, your sins are forgiven!"*
- *Here come the scribes.*
- *Jesus was purposefully ambiguous consistent with his ministry (2 Cor 4:1-14). People of faith always reasons from the invisible to the visible (Heb 11:3).*
- *"Son of Man" revelation appears to be a notation to readers, not directly to the scribes.*
- *Jesus always heals the whole person.*



Christ and the
Pharisees

by Ernst
Zimmerman

2. The call of a tax collector | 2:13-17

- *Jesus again returns to the wilderness “by the sea”*
- *No details, only focus on the radical character of Jesus’ call.*
- *Levi was a Jewish tax official in the service of Herod Antipas.*
- *As a spontaneous expression of joy, Levi throws a party and invites his fellow tax officers, who are also regarded as “sinners”.*
- *Christ answered with a maxim “The healthy have no need of a physician, but the sick.”*
- *The indication is that Jesus, not Levi, is the host of the table.*

3. The new situation | 2:18-22

- *The disciples of John and the Pharisees were not like proper disciples (the Pharisees did not have disciples though the scribes did), but rather followers of their teaching.*
- *Fasting appeared significant to that local community.*
- *In response to the people’s question, Christ counter-questions (typical) – “Can the bridal guests morn during the bridal celebrations?”*
- *The parable of the wine in the wineskins and the patch in the garment included here to continue the point about fasting.*

4. The Lord of the sabbath | 2:23-28

- *The action of the disciples was completely legitimate.*
- *Jesus again answers with a question. And an appeal to Scripture. “Have you not read what David did . . . in the days of Abiathar the High Priest.*
- *The emphasis is on David and his men in parallel to Christ and his men.*
- *Verse 28 is again a message for the reader, not likely for the Pharisees.*

5. The Good must be destroyed | 3:1-6

- *This last narrative logically follows the previous and again demonstrates that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. The emphasis is on the act of healing rather than the conflict.*
- *It is striking that Jesus takes the initiative in asking what is permitted on the Sabbath. And that the Pharisees are left silent before Christ’s question.*
- *The Pharisees were convinced Jesus was a violator of the Sabbath.*
- *The rhetorical question “Is it permitted on the Sabbath to do good . . .”*
- *The anger of Christ over their silence expressed the anger of God.*
- *The decision of the Pharisees to conspire with the Herodians to destroy Jesus shows the seriousness of the conflict.*