

# The Restored Kingdom

## Galilean Ministry Part 15

Mark 3:7-14 (Mt.12:15) 3/3/2018

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Summary: This summary passage depicts the scene in ways that show Jesus to be the one who will bring the promised ingathering and reunification of the kingdom. But instead of repenting or seeking forgiveness from Jesus, all they do is mob him to get healing. So what form will the restored kingdom take? Jesus appoints 12, recreating the ancient people of God on new foundations. Now it will be a matter of being called and responding as a follower of Christ, rather than being physically descended from Israel.

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**Mark 3:7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8 When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. 9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. 10 For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.**

**11 Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." 12 But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was. 13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles**

## Introduction

Tonight we begin a new section of the book of Mark. The last section, with the 5 conflict encounters, ended last week in 3:6, where the Pharisees decide to kill Jesus.

## Review

We are one paragraph into ch.3, and the Jewish authorities have already completely and decisively rejected Jesus. In this section we just finished, Mark described five run-ins Jesus had with the authorities that got progressively worse. That section is like a time lapse photography where Mark sets the camera out over a period of time and we can clearly see the progress of the Scribes and Pharisees rejecting Jesus.

It started at the beginning of ch.2, and it climaxes here in v.6 of ch.3 where Pharisees go out of the synagogue in a rage and go get the Herodians to help them kill Jesus. And so Jesus gets out of Dodge.

### **Mark 3:7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake**

Jesus knew they were planning to kill him,<sup>1</sup> it's not time for him to die yet, so instead of waiting around for Herod's forces to arrive, he leaves the synagogue and leaves town and once again goes out to the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

So once again we see this pattern, where Jesus does something in town that attracts attention, and so he has to leave town because of the reaction.

Now, when Jesus gets out there to the lake, Mark gives us another one of those big picture summaries of Jesus' ministry. Mark does that – he'll describe several specific events, a close up of a few specific trees in the forest, then he backs up and gives us a view of the whole forest of Jesus' ministry.<sup>2</sup> This one is the most detailed of the summaries in Mark.

And at first glance, this one sounds just like the other summaries he's given us. Jesus goes to the lake and large crowds come to him – we've seen that before. He heals all the sick – we've seen that. And he orders the demons to be silent – we've seen that. So it seems like nothing new.

## **Signs of the Last Days Restoration**

### **The Other Withered Hand**

But if we look a little more closely, we'll see that Mark is actually adding a whole new dimension and another level of complexity to the unfolding story of who Jesus is and what he came to do. Verse 7 begins a whole new section of the book. So far the focus has been on who Jesus is, his awesome power, his absolute authority, his deep compassion, and his mission to heal the spiritually sick and bring forgiveness of sins. And the more Jesus revealed who he was, the more the Jewish authorities rejected him.

And that rejection sets up this next section. In order for the next section of Mark to make sense, you need to understand that rejection, because this next section of the book reveals the nature of this kingdom Jesus has been preaching. In ch.1 the first thing we were told about Jesus' ministry was that he went around preaching about his coming kingdom. When the Messiah finally arrives to restore the kingdom of Israel, the last thing you would expect would be that Israel would reject him. How can he have a kingdom if his subjects reject him as king? The answer to that question is going to begin to unfold starting right here.

We're going to learn about the kingdom, and he already gave us a hint of that in this last miracle. Remember, Jesus' miracles were not random acts of power. Each one was specifically designed to teach

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 12:15.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 1:14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

1:38 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

3:7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8 When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. 9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. 10 For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. 3:11 Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." 12 But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

6:6 And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

6:56 And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

us something. For example, cleansing a leper was a picture of spiritual cleansing. So what is the significance of healing a withered hand?

There is only one other time in the Bible where someone has a withered hand. And in that instance, the man's hand was also miraculously healed – but not like Jesus did it. Jesus often did miracles that were styled after some famous OT miracle, but then Jesus does it in a much greater way to show that he is more powerful than even the greatest miracle workers of the OT. In this case, the OT prophet had to pray and ask God to heal the withered hand, whereas Jesus doesn't have to do that. He just heals it with an act of his will.

But what's really interesting is when that withered hand incident happened in the OT. It happened at a moment in OT history that was very significant with regard to the kingdom. And I'll tell you what that was in just a minute. But first, let's look at what's different about this summary statement in v.7. It's not just a repeat of what we've seen before – there's something new.

## **The Ingathering**

So far in Mark we've seen news about Jesus spread throughout Galilee. But now look what happens.

**7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8 When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.**

That's a huge area. Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem – that's the entire nation of Israel. The rest of those places are outside of Israel's borders, surrounding the nation of Israel. Tyre and Sidon are 50 miles to the north in Phoenicia, and Idumea is 120 miles to the south. These are Gentile nations surrounding Israel, and they are all places that have a large Jewish population.<sup>3</sup> So the picture here is of this mass pilgrimage from throughout Israel and the surrounding countries converging on this one spot in Israel. Such a stark contrast – right when the Pharisees are going out to find a way to kill Jesus, the masses of broken humanity are streaming toward him for healing and restoration and life.

### *Promises of the Ingathering*

If you know OT prophecy, that is a striking image. Ever since the Jews were scattered among the nations in the exile, God has been promising that one day he would gather them all back from all the nations. That's one of the most often repeated promises in the OT. There would be a great ingathering of the Jews, who had been scattered among the nations, followed by the Messianic Banquet.

**Isaiah 43:5 Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. 6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."**

God is going to re-gather his people, and call them from all directions of the compass. **7 ... Galilee ... 8 Judea, Jerusalem** - that describes the entire nation of Israel. **8 ... Idumea** – that's south, **... the regions across the Jordan** – that's east, **... and around Tyre and Sidon** – that's north. And Isaiah said when this happens, there will be mass healings.

**Isaiah 35:5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. ... 10 and the ransomed of the LORD will return.**

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<sup>3</sup> The Decapolis and Samaria are conspicuously absent, perhaps because they didn't have large Jewish populations.

It looks like it's happening! Jesus is performing mass healings unlike anything that's ever been seen before, and people are streaming to him from everywhere, from all points of the compass – this looks like this is it, the great last days ingathering of God's people from all the nations!

## Reunited Kingdom

And that's not all. One of the key features of that ingathering will be the re-unification of the kingdom. The kingdom of Israel started out united under King Saul, then King David, and then King Solomon. The whole nation was under one king. But after Solomon died, the kingdom was divided. This was like the first church split, except it was a kingdom split. The king who took over after Solomon was a bad, oppressive king, so the 10 northern tribes rebelled against the house of David and went off to form their own country with their own king – a guy by the name of Jeroboam. He was the first king of that bogus northern kingdom of Israel.

But there was a problem. There was only one Temple, and it was in Jerusalem – in the southern kingdom. Jeroboam's advisors said, "If our people up here keep going down to Jerusalem to the Temple for worship, eventually they will be won over and rejoin the southern kingdom." Jeroboam said, "No problem. We'll just set up our own worship system." So he set up two golden calves – one on each end of his territory for convenience, and he set up shrines and high places and told the people, "Now you don't have to make that trip all the way down to Jerusalem anymore. You can just offer sacrifices right here in the north." He appointed his own festival, and created his own priesthood, and the whole works.

Well, as you can imagine, that aroused the anger of God, so God sent a prophet up there. And the prophet said, "God is going to smash these altars you set up." And Jeroboam pointed at that prophet and told his guards, "Arrest him," and guess what happened? And the moment he did that, the hand he used to point at the prophet was instantly withered. At that point he asks the prophet if he wouldn't mind praying for him to be healed. "I realize I was just now trying to have you arrested, but could we just let bygones be bygones, and you could just ask God if he would heal my shriveled hand? So the prophet agreed, prayed for Jeroboam, and God healed his hand.

That is the only other place in the Bible where someone has a withered hand, and it's the same word for **withered** in the Greek translation as we have here in Mark 3. The one other place in the whole Bible where there is a withered hand is right at the moment that the kingdom of Israel divided.

In Ezekiel 37, God promised that one day he would reunite the kingdom under a single king – the great son of David (the Messiah). And that promise is connected with the great ingathering of God's people from the nations. God tells Ezekiel to get two sticks – one to represent the northern kingdom and one for the southern kingdom. And then he took those two sticks and join them together as one.

**Ezekiel 37:17 Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand. 18 "When your countrymen ask you, 'Won't you tell us what you mean by this?' ... 21 and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. 22 I will make them one nation in the land ... There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. 24 "'My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd.**

That's talking about the Messiah – the Son of David. So you can see it's all connected – the reunification of the kingdom and the ingathering of the people from all the nations; it's all going to happen when the Messiah arrives and sets up his kingdom. Here's how the prophet Amos described it.

**Amos 9:8 "Surely the eyes of the Sovereign LORD are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth— yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," declares the LORD. ... 11 "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent.**

The monarchy and the royal line of David, that God said would reign forever, had fallen – like a tent that has been knocked down. The house of David had collapsed, and God promised to restore it one day.

**Amos 9:11 “In that day I will restore David’s fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, 12 so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,”<sup>4</sup> declares the LORD.**

So not only will he re-gather the people and restore David’s throne and re-unite all twelve tribes of Israel under one king, but also over Edom and the nations. So then along comes Jesus, the descendent of David, and by healing this guy’s withered hand he replicates a miracle that took place right at the moment when the kingdom of Israel was divided (so he’s calling attention to that), and immediately after that, Mark gives us this snapshot of what looks like the great re-gathering of God’s people, with people steaming to Jesus even from surrounding nations. And the nation Amos specifically mentioned was Edom, which, in Jesus’ day was called Idumea. And that’s one of the places Mark says these people were streaming from. I don’t know about you, but I have a hard time believing all that is coincidence. I believe the Holy Spirit is showing that Jesus is the one who will re-unify the kingdom. He’s been proclaiming, “The kingdom of God is near,” and now he’s going to teach us about what that kingdom will look like in this next section of Mark, and he introduces that section with the healing of a withered hand, calling to mind the moment the kingdom was first broken, and then this picture of people streaming into Israel from the nations. And it’s all in a context of mass healings by the Son of David.

## **New Temple**

One other observation. This isn’t the first time the people would have seen this phenomenon of masses of Jews streaming in from various nations and all over Israel. That kind of mass pilgrimage happened every year – at Passover. It was a very familiar scene. People came from all over Israel, and Jews who lived in other countries travelled to Israel – why? Because you had to celebrate Passover at the Temple, and there was only one Temple. It was in Jerusalem. The Temple was the center of religion for the people of God, and so all Jews would travel there for the various festivals.

Now you have people from all over converging on one spot in Israel, but the point of convergence isn’t the Temple. Those people coming from Idumea in the south walk right past the Temple. In fact, the people who already lived in Jerusalem, right by the Temple, leave there to make this pilgrimage. Where is the point of convergence? Jesus. Remember, Mark writes with a brush instead of a pen. He’s painting a picture here of a truth that Jesus will spell out in explicit terms later when he teaches that he is the new Temple.

In the renewed, revived, unified kingdom, Jesus would sit on the throne, and Jesus would be the Temple – the center of all worship. He is the new center of all true religion. If you want to meet God, if you want to worship God, if you want to serve God, if you want grace from God, instead of travelling to Jerusalem, you travel to Jesus.

## **Followers or Fans?**

### **Reaching People vs. Drawing a Crowd**

So all that to say, this is looking pretty hopeful, right? Everything is coming together. Is this the moment the Messiah is going to bring all the end times restoration promises to fruition and restore the kingdom and bring about the final, glorious paradise promised all through Isaiah and the prophets? Almost all the pieces are in place. All that’s left is the part where the people who are streaming to the Messiah repent of their sins and fall down and worship him and become his followers.

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<sup>4</sup> Amos mentions the involvement of the Gentiles in this restoration, and for that reason this verse is quoted in Acts 15:16 in support of the idea that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles by requiring circumcision.

**Ezekiel 37:21 I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land (there's the ingathering). 22 I will make them one nation in the land ... There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. (there's the reuniting of the kingdom) 23 They will no longer defile themselves ... with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. 24 " 'My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.**

That's all that's left for the picture to be complete – for all these people who are streaming to Jesus to repent and be cleansed and follow the Messiah and obey him. And Jesus has been crystal clear that that's what he is here for, right? Not just physical healing, but spiritual healing. John prepared the way by calling people to repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Then Jesus arrived and preached repent and believe because the kingdom is at hand. Then he starts calling people to leave everything and follow him. He cleanses the leper as a picture of spiritual cleansing. He forgives the paralytic's sins, and then does a miracle to prove he has authority to forgive sins. Then he forgives Levi and then has a big party with tax collectors and sinners because he came into this world as a spiritual doctor for the spiritually sick. The spiritual restoration of the people is what Jesus came for.

Everything else is in place. The only thing left to happen is for the people to fall at his feet, repent of their sins, seek forgiveness, and become his followers. Is that what happens? Do the people come to Jesus in repentance, clamoring to receive spiritual cleansing and forgiveness of sins? Hardly.

**9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. 10 For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.**

There's not even a hint that a single one of these people came seeking forgiveness or salvation or spiritual cleansing. They want one thing: physical healing.

And are they worshipping him? No, they are about to crush him. There's nothing even a little bit reverent about their attitude. The NIV uses the terms **crowding** and **pushing forward** – those are actually pretty strong terms. The first word can mean *to crush*. Several of the scholars believe that Jesus wanted that boat ready because he was in serious physical danger. The other term means that the crowd was falling upon him. To be trampled by a frenzied crowd can easily be lethal.

It's a very dangerous scene here. Not to mention all the demonized people in v.11. Right in the middle of all this chaos you have the demons going off. Once again the demons know who Jesus is.

**11 Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."**

They knew the truth about him, but demons can't be trusted with the truth. They are always up to no good, and will use the truth to deceive people, so Jesus shuts them up again.

**12 But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.**

He had done this before back in ch.1, but not all the demons were there then, and so some of them didn't get the memo and Jesus has to do it again here.

The crowds, in Mark, are never portrayed in a positive light. They are always a problem. If your idea of Jesus' ministry is that kind of folksy image of Jesus sitting around on a rock with a little kid on his lap and a few people standing around and a soft little lamb in the background – that's not how it was for Jesus. The scene around Jesus most of the time was not peace; it was *pandemonium*. Lots of pushing and shoving. Jesus was not some long-haired guru sitting on a rock in the lotus position all day. His life was a busy, harried, high pressure existence. It was demanding, it was dangerous, it was relentless, it was invasive – the crowds would follow him right into his house so that he couldn't even eat.

So he has the disciples get a boat ready. It never says whether he ended up needing the boat or not, he just wanted it ready. Kind of like when bank robbers have an escape vehicle sitting out back with the engine running. Jesus has an escape boat ready.

That's interesting to me. The Son of God took precautions in a dangerous situation. That's a wisdom principle.

**Proverbs 27:12 The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.**

## Fans vs Followers

Anyway, the point here is that these crowds only want one thing – physical healing, and they don't even care about Jesus. They just want to get what they want. They are not interested in following Jesus; they just want to use Jesus to get what they want – even if it kills him in the process.

So they are not followers? No. There is a very clear distinction, not only in this passage, but throughout the gospel, between the crowds and the disciples, or followers of Jesus. Two very different groups. Some people have described it as the difference between fans and followers. These people are fans. Jesus was a celebrity, and he had lots of fans – nationwide and beyond. Fans clamor around celebrities because they want something from them. They claim to love the celebrity, but really they just love what the celebrity provides for them. Once that stops, there's no love at all. They love their favorite sports star until he has a bad season, and all his adoring fans are shouting, "Get that bum out of here!" And that's exactly what is going to happen with these crowds.

## The Right Attitude about Crowds

Crowds are a major theme in the book of Mark, and it's good because Jesus teaches us the right way to think about crowds. He teaches us to avoid two common errors.

### *Crowd haters*

One way to get it wrong is to be a crowd hater. Crowd haters get irritated by large crowds. They feel uncomfortable, they feel lost in a crowd, they don't like the noise, they don't like the mess, they don't like the lines. They don't like not knowing people, and being around so many strangers. So they would rather just keep the church small.

Churches like this become a clique. Everyone knows each other, deep, long-term friendships, things are stable, comfortable, nothing rocking the boat. And when new people come, it's impossible for them to break into the clique. They always feel like outsiders, and eventually they drift away.

And crowd haters can get real sanctimonious about their attitude. If the pastor is trying to reach more people they get all critical and condemning: "All he cares about is numbers, numbers, numbers." I always wonder what those people think when they read the number reports in the book of Acts, where Luke keeps mentioning how many were being added to their number. One pastor said, "We count people because people count." That's right on.

Jesus was not a crowd hater. When he tries to get away to a secluded place for a day off in ch.6, and he finds a huge crowd waiting for him when he arrives, he doesn't get irritated. It says, **He had compassion on them**, and he spends his whole day off teaching them. He came not just to welcome the lost, but to seek and to save the lost. He wanted to reach the masses. Jesus traveled from village to village to village with an exhausting, unrelenting pace because he wanted to reach as many as possible. We saw that right off the bat in ch.1, didn't we?

**Mark 1:38 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else-- to the nearby villages-- so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come." 39 So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues**

## *Crowd Lovers*

So we learn from Jesus – don't be a crowd hater. Our mission is to make disciples of all nations – not just the same handful of people we've known for years and are comfortable around. But there's another group of people who also get it wrong, and that's the crowd lovers. These are the people who think the more people you get into the building, the better.

So they do whatever it takes to get more people, then then have to do whatever it takes to keep those people, because they have to keep paying for all the new facilities and staff and everything.

## *Make Disciples*

Did Jesus want to reach as many people as possible? Absolutely! The more the better. But there is a huge difference between reaching people and attracting a crowd. Just because you get people to come to a church building on Sunday mornings and sit through a sermon doesn't mean you've reached them with the gospel.

In ch.4 Jesus is going to teach about the various responses to the gospel (in the parable of the soils). We're going to find there that the objective is not just to have people hear the Word. The objective isn't even to have people hear it and accept it. The objective is for them to hear it, accept it, and persevere in it so they bear fruit.

Having lots of people in church is good, but what we learn from Jesus is that it matters which people, it matters why they are there, and it matters how they are responding. If you have lots of people who are receptive to the gospel and follow Christ, that's great. The more the better. But gathering a bunch of unreceptive people does more harm than good. All that does is monopolize all the time and resources, and get in the way of the people whose hearts really are receptive.

One thing we learn from the ministry of Jesus is that attracting a huge crowd of curious people, amused people, and people seeking to have their physical needs met – even if you preach the gospel to them, it doesn't translate into lots of disciples. All it does is hinder the work of making disciples.

It's a mistake to think that the more people coming to church the better. One church was offering free iPads on Easter. They had a drawing for free iPads, and they packed the place out. You hear it over and over from those church growth gurus – it doesn't matter why they come; it only matters that they come. The idea is that if you just trick people into coming for whatever reason, once they are there, you can sneak the gospel in on them. Missions will do that with homeless people – give them a free meal, but first they have to listen to the gospel.

It's like the time when we tried to get our dog to take a pill. She wouldn't take it, but she loved peanut butter, so we put it inside a big glob of peanut butter. She wolfed down that peanut butter, and then spit out the pill. That's what people will do with the gospel. They will take the iPad, they'll enjoy the smoke machine and the concert, they'll eat the free food and take the handouts, and then spit out the gospel.

What those people fail to realize is what you win them with is what you win them to. If you win them with free goodies, that's what you win their hearts to. And the moment there are no more goodies, they lose interest. If you draw them with entertainment, that's what you win their hearts to – entertainment. So as soon as it stops being entertaining, they leave.

## **Election and Drawing**

The contrast that we see in this passage between the crowds in v.10 and the disciples in v.13 is stark. And one of the biggest differences is their reason for coming. Why did the crowds come? Because they want physical, temporal benefits from Jesus. But why do the disciples come? What does it say in v.13?

**13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him.**



Why does he say he called **those he wanted**? Obviously he wanted them, or he wouldn't have called them. Why state the obvious. He states it to emphasize it. He wants to draw attention to it, because that's the point he's making. These men came to Jesus because Jesus chose them. He chose them, and then called them, and they all came. Those are the only people who will ever come to Jesus.

### **John 6:44 No-one can come to me unless the Father ... draws him**

If you attract someone to your church who isn't drawn by the Father, that person will never become a believer. Those are not the people we are to spend our time and resources on.

Rick Warren said that you can make anyone a Christian if you just figure out the key to his heart. Use the right technique, and you can get anyone to make a decision for Christ. And Warren is the master at getting people by the thousands to make decisions for Christ. But our task is to make disciples, not decisions. And no technique will ever make a disciple out of someone who isn't being drawn by the Father.

The whole seeker friendly movement was all about drawing the unchurched. That was their constant mantra – draw the unchurched. But what they ended up doing in many cases was to just church the undrawn. Huge crowds, no disciples. Thousands of Jesus fans, very few followers.

Someone might ask, "If Jesus attracted these crowds of fans by taking care of physical needs, shouldn't we?" No, because Jesus didn't do the miracles for the purpose of drawing crowds. He did them to prove who he was and to give previews of what the new earth would be like. And when the crowds came, he would very often leave. Either that, or he would preach such an offensive message that they would leave. But what he didn't do was continue to feed their temporal desires. In John 6, after Jesus fed the multitude and they came back the next day for more, Jesus rebuked them because they were there for food, not for him. And he refused to give them any more food.

What is our target audience? What's our target demographic we're looking to reach? Very simple: the drawn. Those who are being drawn by the Father to faith in Christ. The more of those, the better – never be content with just a few. But no one else. We don't need anyone else coming into our churches – just the drawn.

And how do you go about finding them? Easy. Preach the gospel. That will attract the elect – and will repel everyone else. The undrawn will get offended by it and leave, which is exactly what eventually happens with all Jesus' adoring fans in the gospels.

## **Conclusion**

So was this the great ingathering? Nope. All the pieces were there except the most important one – repentance and salvation. But it was definitely some very clear symbolism.<sup>5</sup> Jesus was indeed there to establish the restored kingdom. But how does that work if the leaders in Israel are rejecting him, and the population in general is refusing to repent and follow him? How is this restored kingdom going to take shape? It's going to look a lot different from what the people ever imagined. It's going to involve individual calling and following Jesus. It's going to involve the Gentiles to a degree the Jews never imagined. It's going to start very small and then grow. And it's going to be built on a whole new foundation.

And that's the very next thing Mark shows us.

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<sup>5</sup> So many of the things Jesus did in his first coming were symbolic of what he would do in a partial way after his resurrection, and in a complete way at his Second Coming. He heals the leper as a symbol of the spiritual cleansing of his followers throughout the church age, and final, total cleansing at his Second Coming. We could go one by one through his miracles and show how they are all previews of coming attractions. And this snapshot we have heard of all the people thronging from the nations and converging on Jesus – that's a picture of the spiritual ingathering of God's people to himself throughout the church age, and the final ingathering at the last day.

## The New Israel

### 14 He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles

That might be the most earth-shattering verse in the gospel so far. Jesus appoints 12 leaders? That number is not incidental. I'm not one who tries to find a symbolic meaning behind every number in the Bible. But if any number in the Bible has importance, this one does. Twelve was not a typical number in Jewish fellowships. You would often see them appoint a group of 7 leaders, or 10, or 15, but not 12. One reason we know that the number is meant to be significant is that the number quickly becomes a title. Throughout the rest of Mark you'll see these men referred to as "The Twelve." What's important about them? What's important is the fact that they are 12 in number. The one great, obvious point of significance of the number 12 is the 12 tribes of Israel, who were descended from the 12 sons of Israel. Now, when Jesus comes to restore the kingdom, the first thing he does is appoint 12 leaders. The significance of that is massive. Jesus is recreating the ancient people of God on completely new foundations. Israel after the flesh rejected him, and now he's creating a new Israel.

**John 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- 13 children born not of natural descent ... but born of God**

So the new people of God is not made up of being the physical descendants of 12 patriarchs anymore. Now the people of God will be the spiritual descendants of 12 men who were chosen and believed the gospel and followed Jesus Christ.

Does this mean ethnic Israel is set aside forever? No. Is it somehow anti-Semitic to say that most of the Jews rejected Jesus? No, not any more than it would be anti-Gentile to say that most Gentiles rejected Jesus. The issue is no longer whether you are Jew or Gentile; it's whether or not you are a follower of Christ.

So how is this kingdom going to take shape? That's what is going to unfold in this new section of Mark. And next week we will discover some more very dramatic and exciting things about not only the kingdom of God, but the family of God. That's one of the most encouraging truths in the whole book. I really hope you can make it for that.