

1. In the earlier chapters (1-5) Mark has built up a picture of Jesus' power and authority. He's shown us various miracles: healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead, calming a storm.

Following those events,

(a) Mark 6:32-44 shows Jesus multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish, using them to feed the 5000 people who followed him and his disciples. On top of all that, there was even a residue of 12 baskets of broken pieces and of the fish left over. This shows another one of Jesus' miracles, not in the healing or raising from the dead sense, but still something extraordinary nonetheless.

(b) In Mark 6:47-48, the scene depicted Jesus walking on water during when that evening his disciples were out on the sea on a boat without him. Again, this is another spectacle no man can simply just do.

(c) Jesus heals a deaf man in Mark 7:31-37. Previously, Jesus had healed untreatable diseases, leprosy and paralysis. While the events here can still consider Jesus healing an untreatable condition, this marks him being able to get a deaf man to hear and speak again.

(d) Mark 8:1-10 shows a similar miracle to that in Mark 6:32-44. Here, however, Jesus manages to feed 4000 people who had nothing to eat during when they gathered with him, with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. After the crowd was satisfied, there were seven baskets full of broken pieces left.

(e) Jesus heals a blind man this time in Mark 8:22-26. Jesus took the blind man out from the village, spat on his eyes and laid his hands on him. Upon being able to see again, Jesus sent him home, telling him not to enter the village.

2. Jesus saw the large crowd in Mark 6:34 as "sheep without a shepherd". Instead of sending them off to go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy something to eat as suggested by his disciples, Jesus told them to feed the crowd themselves. This reflects the way similar to how a shepherd is to treat the sheep he/she has to guard; a good shepherd ought to show care towards his/her sheep, and Jesus shows an example of being one to the crowd of 5000 people he drew out.

Jesus would probably do the same to anyone in a busy town today; it is worth noting that He has not shown selective care towards anyone from the crowd of 5000, so he would probably not mind the faces he see from a modern town of today or treat them differently in any way.

Q: Do I feel the need to have Jesus as my shepherd? 😊



3. Reactions to Jesus' preaching and miracles:

(a) in his home synagogue (Mark 6:1-6).

The passage did mention that Jesus had laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. However, since he was already recognized in his hometown and people there were able to associate Him with His earthly relatives (ie. Mary; His brothers — James, Joseph, Judas, Simon; His sisters), all they had was disbelief and took offense in Jesus.

Mark 6:1-4 (ESV)

And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."

(b) among people generally (Mark 6:14-15, 53-56; 7:37)

Mark 6:14-15 → Jesus was generally mistook as another person/prophet. Some claimed that Jesus was Elijah or one of the prophets of old. Others including King Herod believed it was John the Baptist, reason being Jesus possessing miraculous powers at work in Him. It can be noted here that King Herod had already beheaded John the Baptist over a separate incident (ref. Matthew 14:1-12, Mark 6:14-29). Herod is perplexed by Jesus → Luke 9:7-9)

Mark 6:53-56 → At Gennesaret, the people there seemed to already recognize Jesus as He and His disciples arrive at shore, and they quickly brought out all the sick people in beds for him to heal in wherever he came, be it villages, cities or the countryside.

Mark 7:37 → At Decapolis, Jesus heals a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. Upon this being revealed by the same man Jesus healed despite being charged to tell no one, the people there were astonished beyond measure.

(c) from the disciples (Mark 6:57-52)

Taking after the disciples witnessed Jesus walking on water, they were astonished, but their hearts were hardened. This could indicate that the disciples still doubt what they had seen at that time.

John 12:40 (ESV) — ref. Isaiah 6:10, Matthew 13:14

"He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes,
and understand with their heart, and turn,
and I would heal them."

Romans 11:7-8 (ESV)

⁷What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, ⁸as it is written,

"God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that would not see
and ears that would not hear,
down to this very day."

2 Corinthians 3:14 (ESV)

But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.

(d) from the religious leaders (Mark 8:11)

Simply put, the Pharisees wanted to force a sign from heaven out of Jesus to test Him, arguing with Him on top of that. This can show that despite what Jesus had done prior to this, the Pharisees may altogether be ignorant of those and continue to be that way, being offended over Jesus' preachings and miracles.

Mark 8:11-13 (ESV) — The Pharisees Demand a Sign

"The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. ¹²And he sighed deeply in spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." ¹³And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

The people responded differently in each of these cases, varying in their openness to accepting Jesus. It can be noted that the ones who had negative responses to Jesus' preachings and miracles already had already got their own perception of who Jesus was and/or the scriptures already available at that time. These people have shown to stand by what they know and not accept what Jesus does as part of it.

Mark 2:17 (ESV)

And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Q: Do I identify particularly with one of those groups?

4. Jesus' question in Mark 8:29 (ESV): "But who do you say that I am?"

How would I have answered this before I started Christianity Explored?

Now that I am halfway through Mark's Gospel, and have read about the amazing things that Jesus said and did, has my answer changed?

CHAPTER VI

- 27) Jesus Rejected at Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6)
- 28) Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles (Mark 6:7-13)
- 29) The Death of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29)
- 30) Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-44)
- 31) Jesus Walks on the Water (Mark 6:45-52)
- 32) Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret (Mark 6:53-56)

CHAPTER VII

- 33) Traditions and Commandments (Mark 7:1-13)
- 34) What Defiles a Person (Mark 7:14-23)
- 35) The Syrophenician Woman's Faith (Mark 7:24-30)
- 36) Jesus Heals a Deaf Man (Mark 7:31-37)

CHAPTER VIII

- 37) Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand (Mark 8:1-10)
- 38) The Pharisees Demand a Sign (Mark 8:11-13)
- 39) The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod (Mark 8:14-21)
- 40) Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
- 41) Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ (Mark 8:27-30)