

Sunday, September 04, 2011—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 8:1-21: Beware the Leaven of the Pharisees

Mark 8:1-9

- *In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, 2) I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3) And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4) And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? 5) And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. 6) And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. 7) And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. 8) So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. 9) And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.*
- A few weeks ago we studied the feeding of the five thousand and observed that it was the only miracle recorded in all four of the gospels. In contrast, one should note that Matthew and Mark are the only gospel writers to record the feeding of the four thousand.
 - Matthew 15:32-39
- Both of these miracles are very similar to each other. In the feeding of the five thousands the disciples had five loaves and two fish, and picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. In this passage, there were four thousand men, seven loaves and four fish and they picked up seven baskets of fragments.
- Those interested in Bible numerology will find great significance in the fact that there were 12 baskets and 7 baskets of leftovers in each case. Twelve is the number of Israel and seven is the number of perfection. As we saw last week God's intention was to rule over the earth through the nation of Israel.

Mark 8:10-21

- *And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11) And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 12) And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.*
- Mark 8:10—immediately following the feeding of the four thousand Jesus departed into the region of Dalmanutha. The exact modern day location of Dalmanutha is unknown.

- Mark 8:11—when Jesus arrived the Pharisees came again to question Christ asking for a sign. What does it mean when it says that the Pharisees tempted Christ? It is important to realize that the word tempt does not always mean to entice one to sin. It also means to be tried or tested for the purpose of ascertaining his quantity, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself.
 - Hebrews 11:17-19—God tested or tempted Abraham when he instructed him to offer Isaac upon the alter.
- How are the Pharisees tempting Christ? By asking for a sign from heaven. Had they not already witnessed innumerable signs from heaven?
 - Matthew 12:22-24—they had seen enough signs to convince them if they had been willing to believe. We have seen throughout our studies in Mark that the Jews required a sign (I Corinthians 1:22, John 4:48). Jesus and the 12 Apostles provided ample proof of the authenticity of their message. As the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ unfolds the Pharisees are becoming more and more hardened, jealous, and deceitful.
- Mark 8:12—for the second week in a row we read about Jesus sighing. Last week we saw in Mark 7:34 that Jesus sighed when he healed the deaf man with the speech impediment. In addition, we compared the passage in Mark 7 with Matthew 15:29-31 and saw four specific types of miracles discussed: 1) the dumb to speak, 2) the maimed made whole, 3) the lame to walk, 4) the blind to see. In Isaiah 35:5-6 we saw how these miracles were a foretaste of the blessings that Israel would receive once the kingdom was established. Read verse 10 sighing and groaning shall also flee away.
- Was Israel wrong in seeking for a sign? No, as we have already seen the Jews required a sign. What they were wrong about was asking for more than what they were being given. So what then does Christ mean when he says, “There shall sign be given unto this generation.”
- Matthew 16:1-5—Matthew offers more details in his account of this encounter with the Pharisees.
 - Verses 2-3—Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for being able to discern the weather by reading the atmospheric conditions yet they are not able to discern the signs of the times.
 - Verse 4—after calling them a wicked and adulterous generation for seeking after a sign, Christ tells them that the only sign that will be given unto them is the sign of the prophet Jonas. This is not the first time that Christ told them this.
- Matthew 12:38-42—the only other sign that Christ is going to give them will be his resurrection from the dead. As we saw last Sunday, they don’t even accept or acknowledge that sign either.
- ***13) And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side. 14) Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one***

loaf. 15) And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. 16) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. 17) And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? 18) Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? 19) When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. 20) And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. 21) And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

- Mark 8:13—having nothing more to say to the Pharisees Jesus enters into a ship departs.
- Mark 8:14—the disciples had forgotten to take bread and they only had one loaf with them in boat.
- Mark 8:15—while they are on the boat with little food, Jesus charges them to beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod.
- Mark 8:16—they think that Jesus is talking about their lack of physical bread.
- Mark 8:17-21—frustrated by their lack of understanding Jesus asks them a series of questions. Christ’s questions are designed to get them to see that when he spoke of the leaven of the Pharisees, He was not talking about physical bread. If Christ could feed five thousand with twelve baskets of fragments left over from on five loaves or four thousands with seven baskets of remains from only seven loaves he is perfectly capable of feeding them from only one loaf. The Lord’s questions culminate in verse 21 when he said unto them, “How is it ye do not understand.”
- Matthew 16:11-12—Jesus tells them that he was not referring to the leaven of bread when he warned them about the leaven of the Pharisees but rather the leaven of their doctrine.
- Mark 7:7—what was the doctrine of the Pharisees? The traditions of men. The leaven of the Pharisees doctrine is still something that needs to be avoided.
 - Colossians 2:8, 16, 20-23
- Compare the faith of the Apostles with that of the Syrophenician Woman.
 - Matthew 16:8—“O ye of little faith”
 - Matthew 15:28—“O woman, great is thy faith”
- The gentile woman, who meets Christ once, understood his figurative language and said, “I am a dog.” The disciples after two years of teaching, failed to understand the figurative word leaven. Her faith was consequently great and theirs was little.