

**v.7:1** *Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.*

Chapter six ended with Jesus on the plains of Genesaret healing the sick. Chapter seven begins with Jesus back in Capernaum near the house where He stayed when in the region. (v.7:17) The so-called Galilean ministry is rapidly coming to a close. Jesus will be crucified in about a years time.

- a) *Early on, Mark went to great lengths to show his readers the developing opposition against Jesus. In a series of stories he demonstrated that this opposition began with mere inward questioning (v.2:6-7) progressing to the point of an alliance being formed to kill Him. (v.3:6) The leaders from Jerusalem believed Jesus to be of the devil. (v.3:22)*
- b) *It is probable that these attacks against Jesus continued and increased in both frequency and intensity. In fact, everywhere a crowd gathered you can be sure the religious leaders were present. Mark relates an especially intense confrontation that took place between Jesus and religious leaders who had come from Jerusalem.*

*The scribes were specialists in the law. They studied how it had been interpreted over the centuries and passed down generation to generation as well as the traditions that had evolved in conjunction with the interpretations. The Pharisees were a sect that prided themselves in keeping all of the scribes teachings. Most scribes were Pharisees, but not all Pharisees were scribes.*

**v.7:2-4** *And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash [their] hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And [when they come] from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, [as] the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.*

*We discussed how the only chance these religious leaders had was to label Jesus a lawbreaker, and if a lawbreaker, then not of God. One gets the impression that they watched Jesus constantly just waiting for an opportunity to confront Him. In this particular instance some of His disciples eat without first washing their hands and they are there to levy the accusation.*

- a) *The Pharisees and the Jews in general are always washing their hands. It seems that the rule was, "If in doubt, wash your hands." Most, if not all, of the actual law in this area had to do with ceremony, but through tradition it had made its way into ordinary life and had become obsessive behavior.*
- b) *There were other washings that pertained to coming back from the marketplace where the food was purchased. Mark only touches upon a few of the rules saying there were "many other*

*things” they did that had to do with their cups, pots, vessels and tables. It is too cumbersome for Mark to get into the details. (Remember the 234 works defined in the Sabbath law)*

***v.7:5-7 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with [their] lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men.***

*With the intent to trap Him, they ask Jesus why His disciples do not wash their hands before eating. Is the question asked with a pretense of sincerity or in an accusatory manner? In this particular instance it was some of the disciples who had been “caught,” but Jesus himself did not adhere to these traditions. (Luke 11:37-38)*

- a) *In response Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah, in particular, the words of God directed against the hypocrisy of the people of that day. (Is. 29:13) Jesus says the prophet’s words ring true against the leaders of His generation. They were hypocrites, that is, how they appeared outwardly did not truly reflect their inward condition*
- b) *Outwardly they appeared to honor God in the supposed strictness of their lives and in the great care they took to exactly observe religious ordinances, however, inwardly God was the farthest thing from their mind. Whether they did it out of fear or out of habit, or to appear holy before others, they did not do it in honor of God.*
- c) *These things were not required of them by God. Their worship of God was vanity, that is, it was all for their own benefit; for their own glory or to appease their own conscience. Most of the things they did were imposed upon them by men and in doing them the merely pleased men.*

*“The Papists pretend to a zeal for the authority and antiquity of the church and its canons, and talk much of councils and fathers, when really it is nothing but a zeal for their own wealth, interest, and dominion, that governs them; and so it was with the Pharisees.” Matthew Henry*

*Catholicism places great importance on tradition and in fact has proclaimed its traditions to be equal in authority to scripture. It imposes many rules and rituals upon its people that were never instituted by God, but which in effect obscure and dilute the truth.*

***v.7:8-13 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, [as] the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:***

*But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, [It is] Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; [he shall be free]. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

*Jesus takes the argument a step farther stating that the traditions they held in such high esteem actually, in some instances, usurped or negated the laws of God. If there was a conflict between tradition and the law of God they would adhere to tradition while rejecting God's commandment.*

- a) *Whether they realized it or not is debatable. The intent of the law of God had long been lost in the writings and interpretations of rabbis who sought to make a name for themselves. This had been going on for about 400 years when Jesus came into the scene.*
- b) *He mentions the washings of pots and cups to emphasize the trivial matters they attached so much spiritual significance to. In Matthew's gospel Jesus tells them they strain at a gnat, but swallow a camel. This saying rightly describes their actions.*

*"Pharisees and scribes were guilty of placing mere human tradition above divine revelation, a man-made rule above a God-given command. The rabbis had divided the Mosaic law or Torah into 613 separate decrees, 365 of these being considered prohibitions and 248 positive directives. Then, in connection with each decree, by drawing arbitrary distinctions between what they considered 'permitted' and 'not permitted,' they had attempted to regulate every detail of the conduct of the Jews: their Sabbaths, travel, meals, fast, trade, relations toward others, etc." William Hendriksen*

- c) *Jesus provides a specific example of how their traditions made the word of God secondary and ineffective. He states that the word of God proclaims that a child should honor their father and mother. To honor includes much more than mere obedience. It means to love, respect, and if need be to provide for their needs. At that time provision in their later years was almost always necessary and could be quite burdensome.*
- d) *According to their tradition, a child would merely have to vow or proclaim that anything he owned that his parents might need was a gift or set apart for God's service. This relieved them of any duty as to supporting their parents in their old age. The things withheld from the parents usually were never used in the direct service of God.*
- e) *Jesus tells them that this is but one example. Many of their teachings and traditions invalidated the very word Of God, or at least robbed it of its power and intent.*

*v.7:14-16 And when he had called all the people [unto him], he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one [of you], and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*

*It is probable that when the delegation of Pharisees from Jerusalem came upon the scene the people withdrew. Such was the power and respect that they wielded. The crowd probably parted as they went "to the front of the line." Jesus spoke to them probably semi-privately and now He calls all of the people to come closer. In all probability the Pharisees left as Jesus called the crowd closer.*

- a) *"Listen, all of you, and understand." Jesus noticed the respect the people had for these leaders from Jerusalem and probably sensed the confusion in the peoples hearts. The Pharisees were the shepherds of these people and were themselves lacking in knowledge, understanding and integrity. Jesus calls them out of a sense of compassion, literally begging them to listen and to understand the truth He would tell them.*
- b) *The original topic was eating with unwashed hands. It is the accusation that was leveled against Jesus that He must now answer. He tells the crowd that it is not the things that enter into a man that make him unclean, but the things that come out of a man that show him to be unclean. They focused on the physical, but Jesus explains the spiritual.*
- c) *Jesus ends His address to them again urging them to hear His words and to understand them. This was an important truth that they must ponder and contemplate. They must see things with spiritual eyes and hear with spiritual ears. As Matthew Henry put it, "Corrupt customs are best cured by rectifying corrupt notions."*

***v.7:17-23 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, [it] cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.***

*So after a day marked by a confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem, Jesus and the disciples enter the house where Jesus stayed when He was in the area. His disciples inquire as to the meaning of His teaching to the people calling His saying a parable.*

- a) *Jesus was accustomed to explaining His parables to the disciples, but here He chastises them for their lack of understanding. Far from a parable His saying bordered on common sense. Maybe the leadership who were blinded by pride and vanity couldn't understand, or maybe the people who were preoccupied with miracles couldn't understand, but Jesus is beginning to expect more from those whom He has instructed for some two years.*

- b) Possibly it was not their lack of understanding as much as their reluctance to accept what He was saying. The Jews had long since put their faith in the actual physical act instead of its spiritual significance. They put their faith in the act instead of what it represented. Even after Pentecost Peter didn't understand that all foods were clean. (Acts 10:13-15)
- c) It is for these men to know however, so after the rebuke He instructs them. Any thing a man ingests goes into his stomach and is eventually expelled. It goes into the man and comes back out. It never enters his heart which is representative of the spirit and soul of the man.

*"Because food is only physical, it can only affect the physical. It cannot defile the inner person, represented by the heart, because the physical and the spiritual are of two different orders. Physical pollution, no matter how corrupt, cannot cause spiritual or moral pollution. Ceremonies, rituals, and other external practices cannot cleanse a person spiritually, and failure to observe them cannot defile a person spiritually. Ceremonial cleansing, even under the Old Covenant, never did more than picture spiritual cleansing." John MacArthur.*

- d) It is the heart of man that is wicked. It is in the heart where sin is born. Sinful actions are the result of corrupt thoughts, desires, attitudes and motives.
- e) Jesus provides a list of evil that is within the heart and its manifestations in which the man is defiled. The list begins with evil thinking defined by the next twelve items in the list. *Laciviousness* is a general term for immorality, while an *evil eye* is another term for covetousness. While the list begins with thinking it ends with foolishness, which is basically a term for not thinking.

*With the end of verse 23 what is called the great Galilean ministry comes to a close. From verse 7:24 through verse 9:33 Jesus and the apostles are away from Galilee for roughly a seven month period. During this time the emphasis shifts from the people to the apostles. He still addresses crowds, but for the most part He is in gentile lands where He can have more uninterrupted time with His apostles. When He does return to Capernaum in Galilee, He did so secretly. (v.9:30-31)*

*v.7:24-30 from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know [it]: but he could not be hid. For a [certain] woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast [it] unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.*

*From Capernaum in Galilee Jesus traveled to the gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon in Phoenicia. The cities are on the Mediterranean Sea and had long biblical histories. It was Tyre that had introduced Baal worship into Israel.*

- a) *This was a considerable journey and upon arrival they entered into a house. Was Jesus a guest of one of the locals or did they rent a place to stay? Jesus wanted to be alone with the apostles, but as usual, this was not to be.*
- b) *Although a gentile city word of Jesus had spread to this area. People from this region had traveled to Galilee to be healed by Him. (Luke 6:17) The language suggests that crowds soon gathered, however, and the story of a particular woman who came to Him is told.*
- c) *Matthew provides some extra background to the story. (Matt. 15:21-25) At first, Jesus does not answer this gentile woman who sought His help and her persistence annoys the apostles. Jesus' behavior was not unusual for a Jew, for the Jews would not even speak to a gentile. However, it was unusual behavior for Jesus who spoke to the gentile woman at the well and cast a demon out of a man who was probably a gentile in the country of the Gadarenes. As we saw above, He also had healed people from this region who had traveled to Galilee.*
- d) *The only answer as to why Jesus at first seemed to give this particular woman a hard time is that He treated every individual differently according to what He perceived as their unique needs. In this instance the woman was to make a great statement of faith brought about by the situation Jesus put her in. Was it a test of her faith or meant to be a lesson to the apostles?*
- e) *Jesus' first response to her is that He was sent to the Jews only. The Jews were God's people, His sheep, and those who held the promises. The gospel was to be offered or proclaimed to the Jew first and then the gentile.*
- f) *The woman remained undaunted. She ignored Jesus' supposed rejection of her request to heal her daughter who was possessed. She obviously had exhausted her faith in her pagan gods and according to Matthew's account, in calling Jesus the Son of David, was familiar with the prophecies of the Jewish Messiah (as was the woman at the well).*
- g) *She fell before Jesus. Matthew tells us she worshipped Him, that is, prostrating herself in total humility. Her simple plea was "Lord, help me." Jesus' response seemed cruel, but offered a glimmer of hope that the woman picked-up on.*
- h) *Jesus said first let the children be filled. There was an order of things that had to be maintained. The gentiles would not be forgotten. The word "dogs" referred to household pets. They would get the "people food," but only after the family had eaten.*

- i) *To her credit the woman understands the analogy Jesus draws. She is not offended, but finds hope in being compared to a house dog. She acknowledges the Jew as having a privileged position, but as a “house dog” knew that she also had certain privileges such as an occasional scrap.*
- j) *She understood the analogy and also knew there were exceptions to the established order for some people from this region had been healed. She answers Jesus according to His own analogy showing both her understanding and her faith.*
- k) *The leaders of Israel couldn’t understand the parables and analogies drawn by Jesus, or to His dismay even His own disciples, however, this gentile woman understood, and so, based on her great faith she was given a “scrap” from the children’s table. The demon was expelled at the word of Jesus.*

**v.7:31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.**

*It is not stated how long Jesus stayed in the region of Tyre and Sidon, but simply says that He was again on the move. He traveled to the Sea of Galilee through Decapolis which was a ten city area on the eastern or gentile side of the sea.*

- a) *This was a considerable journey. We are not told of the stops along the way or how long the journey lasted. In fact, we are not even told of the location of this story other than it was by the sea somewhere in Decapolis.*

**v.7:32-35 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.**

*The people of this region obviously knowing of Jesus’ reputation as a miracle worker or healer bring a man to Him. This is the same general area where Jesus cast the legion of demons into the swine and the man relieved from the possession was commissioned by Jesus to proclaim His works in this area. (v.5:19-20)*

- a) *“They bring unto him one that was deaf.” The impression is given that possibly this man was the “guinea pig.” They desire for Jesus to put His hand upon this man and to heal him. They want to see if Jesus indeed has the power.*

- b) *Being deaf, did the man have any idea of what was going on or did the crowd roust him from his home or off the street and physically bring him to Jesus? At any rate, the man is now before Jesus in the midst of a crowd.*
- c) *The man was deaf and had a speech impediment. This would suggest that the man was not deaf from birth for he could speak. He may have always had the speech impediment, but more than likely it was the result of his deafness.*
- d) *When miracles were demanded of Jesus, He usually did not comply whether it was in His hometown of Nazareth or later when He will appear before Herod, however, being before gentiles in a gentile land the situation is somewhat different.*

*The Jews had the law and the prophets. Jesus sought to reach them through His teaching, the purpose of the miracles was to show that He was from God; that He was God's spokesman. The gentiles did not have the word of God and the gospel message was not yet opened to them. The miracles simply pointed to the power of the God of Israel. It prepared them for the message that would eventually come their way.*

- e) *Nevertheless, this was not a circus. Jesus would heal the man, but on His own terms and not those of the crowd, and so, He takes the man aside from the multitude. I see the man as being terrified, not knowing why he is there or what is going to happen.*
- f) *Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears and spitting (probably on His finger) touches the man's tongue. Obviously Jesus did not have to include these physical signs to heal the man, and in fact, it was not these physical touches that did heal him. Being aside from the crowd, we know these things were done for the man's benefit. Maybe it was to calm him, reassure him, or being deaf to give him an idea of what was going to be done for him.*
- g) *It is the prayer of Jesus, indicated by the looking up to heaven and the sigh, that healed the man. Jesus commands the man's ears to be opened in his native tongue. Are these the first words the man hears, the miracle taking place as the command was spoken?*
- h) *His ears were immediately opened and his speech plain. Again, total and complete healing. There were no after effects. He did not need to learn to speak plainly, but the ability was given to him as part of the healing.*

***v.7:36-37 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published [it]; And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak,***

*Jesus told the crowd to tell no one. The impression is given that even while He was issuing the charge people were leaving the crowd and telling anyone who would listen. He continued to forbid them to tell anyone, but they continued to go and publish the miracle.*

- a) *Jesus did not desire a great gentile following. He did not want to get these individuals so “worked-up” that they would follow Him into Jewish territory in large numbers. This miracle was simply one more example of the “scraps” that fell from the children’s table.*
- b) *Furthermore, He had retreated to the gentile regions to avoid great fanfare in order to spend more time instructing the apostles.*
- c) *The reaction of the gentiles is the same as that of the Jews. They were “beyond measure astonished.” They had never seen anything like it, a man who could give hearing to the deaf and speech to the dumb.*

**v.8:1-3** *In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples [unto him], and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.*

*It is probable that with the start of chapter 8 Jesus is still in Decapolis on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. He and his apostles are probably in the wilderness region around the city where the deaf man was healed ending chapter 7.*

- a) *The probable scenario is that Jesus and the apostles made their “escape” out of the city and into the wilderness as His popularity in this gentile region grew. The man he had healed and those who had witnessed it did not heed the charge of Jesus to keep the healing quiet.  
(v. 7:36-37)*
- b) *The phrase “in those days” is vague. How long it took those individuals who were “beyond measure astonished” to find Jesus is not known, however, they eventually track Him down and He teaches them.*
- c) *The crowd was large. They had been with Him for three days and their food had run out. Jesus, aware of their physical needs, was concerned that if He simply dismissed them, returning to their homes would be a great burden.*
- d) *Jesus expresses His feelings of compassion for the crowd to His apostles. He does not ask them for assistance or to solve the problem as He had in a similar situation, but simply desires them to be aware of the needs of the people, to teach them to have compassion.*

**v.8:4-9** *And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these [men] with bread here in the wilderness? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. 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. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before [them]. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken [meat] that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.*

*The apostles had food and in their fullness they had failed to recognize the needs of those around them. They did not share Christ’s compassion even at His prompting. Was the fact that the crowd was mostly gentile harden their hearts?*

- a) *If the apostles had learned their lessons, if they were taking on the heart of their Master, they would have brought the problem to His attention. They would have asked him to feed the crowd as He had done in the recent past. They would have instructed the crowd to sit in faith and in anticipation of another miracle.*

- b) *Instead they ask a question, that terrible question that demonstrates their lack of faith and compassion. “Where can we get enough bread in this wilderness to feed all these people?”*

*Before we question the intelligence and the commitment of the apostles, let’s ask ourselves a few questions. Have we not seen again and again and experienced the Lord’s provision (at times miraculous) both in our lives and in the lives of others? Why then do we still view problems as insurmountable? Why do we fail to ask our Lord in prayer to provide for those around us in need? Why don’t we point those around us who have no spiritual food to Jesus instead of ignoring them in our own fullness?*

- c) *Jesus demonstrates great patience with His apostles as he ignores their question. He does not rebuke them, but once again takes over the situation. Their personal supply of food consists of seven loaves and a few small fish for which Jesus gave thanks, blessed, broke, and had His apostles distribute.*
- d) *Seven baskets of leftovers were collected after some 4000 men had eaten their fill. The word used for basket is different from the one used in the account of the feeding of the 5000. The word here literally means hamper. It is a much larger basket. Having met both the spiritual and physical needs of the people, Jesus dismisses them.*

***v.8:10-12 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 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.***

*After the miraculous feeding of the 4000 Jesus, with His apostles, immediately set out for Dalmanutha which was a region on the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The word “straightway” suggests that the miracle that had just taken place was performed near the sea. They are now crossing the sea once again to the “Jewish” side.*

- a) *Arriving in Dalmanutha, Jesus most likely begins to teach the people of that region. It doesn’t take long for the Jewish religious leaders to find Him. They begin to question Him, arguing with Him probably as to where He derives His authority. They demand a sign, specifically, a sign from heaven. They tempt Him, that is, tell Jesus that if such a sign is provided they will believe Him.*
- b) *Let’s read Matthew’s account which will provide additional insight into Jesus’ answer to their demands. (Matt. 16:1-4) Jesus points out to them that they can look at the sky and predict with a certain degree of success the weather which they knew nothing about and had*

no control over. Yet, the very things they prided themselves to be experts in, namely, the law and the prophets as well as in the general things of God; in the area of their supposed expertise they had missed all of the signs already given. They were living in the times they were waiting and longing for and didn't realize it.

- c) So they were hypocrites in their great claims; hypocrites as rulers of the people. Signs abounded. The blind were given sight. The lame walked. The deaf could hear and the dumb could speak. Things that were never seen before, which were unheard of, were happening all around them, but they failed to discern the signs of the times.
- d) They desired a sign from heaven. Make manna fall from the sky as Moses did! Make the sun stand still in the sky as did Joshua! Call fire down from heaven as did Elijah!
- e) They were a wicked and adulterous people who would receive no such sign. As Matthew Henry stated, "It is great hypocrisy when we slight the signs of God's ordaining, to seek for signs of our own prescribing."
- f) Jesus sighed deeply in His spirit. He loved them. He cared for them. They were His people and yet they had failed to acknowledge Him. Just being in His presence, seeing the way He lived, hearing the things He said, and observing the miracles performed at His hands, they had to know. He sighs at their stubbornness and pride while marveling at the hardness of their hearts.
- g) The sign of Jonah mentioned in Matthew's account is a prediction of His death and resurrection. As Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so would Jesus be in the earth.

*v.8:13-21 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side. Now [the disciples] had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and [of] the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, [It is] because we have no bread. 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? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?*

*Jesus and the apostles are again on the move. They get into a ship and travel to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to a place near the town of Bethsaida, where Jesus had fed the 5000. All of this*

*recent movement is by design to maximize His time with the apostles.*

- a) *During the voyage or shortly after they reach shore, Jesus warns them to watch out for the leaven or the yeast of the Pharisees and of the Herodians. Jesus is warning them of the thoughts and mindset of these groups that had undermined their faith, specifically their insatiable desire for signs which was characteristic of both groups.*
- b) *The warning is in the imperative, meaning, “continue to be on your guard; continue to watch out.” Much of Jesus’ instruction to the apostles was an attempt to wean them from the legalistic and hypocritical mindset of the Pharisees. They were a product of this system and were very vulnerable to their reasoning and arguments.*
- c) *With this statement of Jesus, it says that the apostles “reasoned among themselves.” In the original the word is stronger, in other words, they were arguing among themselves over the saying. They didn’t know what Jesus was saying to them. The fact that they had forgotten to bring bread with them came up. No doubt they argued among themselves as to who was responsible. Was Jesus now telling them to be careful from whom they would seek provisions seeing that they had forgotten to properly prepare for the voyage?*
- d) *I get the impression that the warning of Jesus starts an all out argument among the apostles who’s stomachs are once again getting the better of them. Once again, they jump into this thing without thinking or reasoning, but simply following their first impressions and instincts.*
- e) *Jesus enters into the fray. “Why are you arguing? Because you have no bread?” Jesus is telling them that they still don’t get it! His words convey both surprise and disappointment. Notice the word “yet.” Jesus knew they lacked spiritual vision. He knew that they lacked spiritual understanding. He knew their hearts were hardened, but at the same time with what they had seen, heard, and experienced, they should have been farther along. It was time to start putting two and two together. This was the purpose for now spending more time instructing them.*
- f) *Jesus questions their seeing, their hearing and their memory. At this point they probably had already been “shocked” into understanding, but He makes them answer the questions to their shame. Jesus wants this to make an impression on them that they will not soon forget. They observed the signs, the same ones as did the Pharisees, would they, His own hand picked men, also fail to understand? Matthew Henry*
- g) *In Matthew’s account, we are told that the apostles indeed had come to their senses and now understand. (Matt. 16:11-12)*

*v.8:22-26 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put [his] hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell [it] to any in the town.*

*Proceeding to the town of Bethsaida with His apostles, Jesus is met by a group of people who have brought a blind man to Him to heal. The number of individuals involved is not given, neither is the motivations of those who brought the man explained. Did they have a genuine concern for the individual or did they simply want to see a miracle?*

- a) Jesus takes the man by the hand and becomes his guide. He takes him away from the town and probably from the people who had brought him. This is possibly an indication that the intentions of those that brought him were not pure. Another possibility is that Jesus at this particular stage of His ministry was trying to avoid the crowds.*
- b) What did Jesus and the man talk about as they walked hand in hand? Was the man familiar with Jesus and seeking a healing, or simply brought to Jesus by the others? Was Jesus acting as a spiritual guide as well as a physical guide to the blind man? Were His apostles at all involved in the proceedings?*
- c) Jesus puts spit on the man's eyes, puts his hands upon the man and asks if he sees anything. From the man's answer it seems that his vision is such that he can simply make out movement without any detail. Describing men as walking trees tells us that the man had probably once enjoyed sight, but had lost it.*
- d) Jesus again, putting his hands on the man's eyes, restores his sight so that he could see every man clearly. Of all the detailed healings of blind men in the scriptures, no two are alike. Here we seemingly have a two-step process that many attribute to an initial lack of faith on the part of the blind man.*
- e) But, was it indeed a two step process? Could the man have been what we would call today legally blind? Was his vision so bad that it actually was a hindrance to him, and so, was in the practice of keeping his eyes shut? Many eye conditions cause secretions which when mixed with dirt and sand would have crusted over the man's eyes. Jesus' initial contact with the man could have simply been to clear the man's eyes and then with the question to assess the man's true condition.*
- f) The first time the man voluntarily opens his eyes, but the second time Jesus makes him look up. Wouldn't this indicate a lack of faith in the man and prove that this healing was not based on*

*faith at all? We simply do not have enough information to properly answer the questions the account of this healing raises.*

- g) Jesus instructs the man to go straight home, not to go into the town, or to tell anyone in the town. This miracle was for the benefit of this individual and in this instance for no one else. Were those in the town unbelieving? (Matt. 11:20-21)*

***v.8:27-28 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some [say], Elias; and others, One of the prophets.***

*From the town of Bethsaida on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and the apostles travel about 24 miles north to the city of Caesarea Philippi. It was a gentile city on the Mediterranean Sea.*

- a) The instruction of the apostles continues as Jesus puts a question to them. Luke adds that Jesus had been in prayer when he asked the apostles, "Whom do men say that I am?" Matthew tells us that they had already arrived at the coasts of the city when the question was asked.*
- b) The apostles were out among the people. The people often came to them with their questions as well as with their accusations as we have seen. They heard the rumors, were up on the gossip, while they held the unique position of being called out from among the people to be with Jesus. This particular exchange is to quiz them as to their conclusions from their unique vantage point.*
- c) The people didn't know what to make of Jesus, and so, everyone had an opinion. That he was John the Baptist or Elijah were two common thoughts. Matthew tells us Jeremiah's name was also mentioned, while Luke tells us the general consensus was that Jesus was one of the prophets of old who had risen from the dead.*
- d) Although different, the answers proclaim the common thought that Jesus was a forerunner of the Messiah. They knew the stories of these great prophets of the past and believed both the incorrect interpretations of scripture as well as the folklore that these men would return.*
- e) A great prophet, a forerunner, but certainly not the Messiah. The Messiah would be different in their minds. He would be of noble birth, a part of the leadership, and so, a man of power zealous to overthrow the yoke of Rome.*

**v.8:29-30** *And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.*

*It was now time in the divine plan to put the ultimate question to the apostles. They had now been with Jesus for some two and one half years, had observed the miracles, heard His teaching, watched His dealings with the people and had been personally instructed by Him. "Who did they think that Jesus was?"*

- a) *Peter, the usual spokesman of the group, answers that Jesus is the Christ, that is, the Anointed One of God, the Messiah and the One promised in the scriptures. (Matt. 16:16)*
- b) *The apostles knew and believed this fact from the start. John the Baptist had proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. (John 1:34) Both Andrew and Nathaniel had made this proclamation early on, (John 1:41, 49) but much had happened in the last two and one half years.*
- c) *Their concept of the Messiah, as Jews, was radically different from the truth of God. They believed Jesus was the Messiah, but as time passed there probably was this constant expectation on their part for Jesus to fit into their pre-conceived mold. Why was He at odds with the leadership? Why didn't He have any political aspirations? Why didn't He exert His power to further His position? Even the faith of The Baptist wavered when things didn't turn out as he had expected! (Matt. 11:2-6)*
- d) *Matthew, in his gospel, provides a more detailed version of the story. (Matt. 16:17-20) It was God that kept this truth strong in the apostles, again, even though everything didn't add up. The disciples expected Jesus to step into their idea of His role as Messiah till He was crucified. When would He "pull the trigger," so to speak, and use His power to usher in the kingdom?*

*"Since Jesus' day, much of the world has similarly wanted to speak highly of Jesus without recognizing His deity and lordship. Pilate said, 'I find no guilt in this man.' Napoleon said, 'I know men, and Jesus was no man.' Diderot referred to Jesus as 'the unsurpassed,' Strauss, the German rationalist, as 'the highest model of religion,' John Stuart Mill as 'the guide of humanity,' the French atheist Renan as 'the greatest among the sons of men,' Theodore Parker as 'a youth with God in his heart,' and Robert Owens as 'the irreproachable one.' Some in our own day have called Him the ultimate Superstar. But all those titles and descriptions fall short of identifying Jesus as He fully is – the Messiah, God in human flesh."*

*John MacArthur*

- e) *Jesus strictly instructs the apostles to tell no one that he is indeed the Messiah. It is because of the wrong perception held by all as to the physical kingdom they believed the Messiah would usher in. To proclaim this openly would accelerate Jesus' demise.*

**v.8:31-33** *And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be*

*rejected of the elders, and [of] the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*

*It was now time for Jesus to instruct the apostles plainly, that is, to teach them exactly what it meant to be the Christ. Up to this point, His words concerning His mission were veiled.*

*(v.2:20; Matt. 12:40)*

- a) *Jesus tells them that he must suffer many things. Among those things is that He must be rejected by the Jewish leadership and He must be put to death. Finally, He would rise again after three days.*
- b) *What He tells them is the exact opposite of what they believed and what they sought as to the Messiah. Jesus will not win over the leadership, but they will gain the upper hand. They will kill the Messiah whom they have waited for for thousands of years! The things Jesus was telling them were inconceivable. So inconceivable, that even though He would continue to speak to them plainly concerning His mission, they could not understand. (v. 9:31-32)*
- c) *Peter, again the spokesman of the group, actually takes Jesus aside and rebukes him! Matthew gives us Peter's words. "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Peter is instructing Jesus! Peter is telling Jesus the Messiah exactly what it is to be the Messiah!*
- d) *The prince of this world is Satan and all worldly thoughts can be traced back to him as he who deceives the world. Peter verbalizes the lie and basically offers the same temptation to Jesus that Satan himself had earlier put before Him, namely, to assume His rightful place in the world exercising His power of His own free will.*
- e) *Jesus turns his back on Peter and faces the other apostles as he delivers the stinging rebuke. Ignorance is not an excuse when the truth of God is questioned. Peter who was probably expecting another commendation falls from the top of the spiritual mountain he had been on and into the deepest valley.*

*"Peter seemed to mind more the things that relate to the lower world, and the life that now is, than those which relate to the upper world, and the life to come. Minding the things of men more than the things of God, our own credit, ease, and safety, more than the things of God, and his glory and kingdom, is a great sin, and the root of much sin, and very common among Christ's disciples." Matthew Henry*

***v.8:34 And when he had called the people [unto him] with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.***

*Probably still in the regions of Caesarea Philippi Jesus calls the people to teach them. How long Jesus had been in this region we do not know, neither do we know the size or make-up of the crowd. At any rate, Jesus is with his apostles, a crowd gathers and Jesus calls them over to instruct them.*

- a) *He tells them what they must do to become His true followers. The language “come after me” pictures individuals following behind a teacher whom they have decided to follow; whose ideas and philosophies they desire to incorporate into their own lives. It gives the idea of total commitment to an individual or a cause.*
- b) *The demands or pre-requisites to becoming His true follower, namely, self-denial and taking-up a cross must have been as foreign to these individuals as the term “born again” was to Nicodemus.*
- c) *Now we know through the Holy Ghost that self-denial is the total abandonment of one’s own ideas of righteousness and the worldly view of life. As Matthew Henry puts it, “mortification and contempt of the world; let him not pretend to be his own physician, but renounce all confidence in himself and his own righteousness and strength.”*
- d) *As the hymn says, “the cross is the emblem of suffering and shame.” Picking-up the cross is the acceptance of the pain, shame and persecution one will bring upon himself by living a life of self-denial and daring to separate oneself from the world.*

***v.8:35-38 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.***

*These verses represent divine truths spoken by Jesus proving that denying oneself, taking up his cross, and following Jesus is the path taken by the wise. It is right and also the only course of action.*

- a) *In opposition to denying oneself as explained above, if a man chooses to save his life, that is, embraces his worldly view of life pursuing his own self-satisfaction and righteousness, he will surely lose everything in death. However, the man that chooses to give up his life embracing the way of Christ and the gospel message will gain eternal life. He will have abundant life in his Lord both in this life and in the next.*

- b) *No one could ever gain the whole world, in fact, most individuals in His audience probably had a miserable existence, even those considered wealthy had to work hard to hang on to their possessions. Jesus, however, proposes that if one could reach the ultimate in self-satisfaction and indulgence gaining the whole world, but losing his soul in the process, what would be the advantage?*
- c) *Would a man trade the eternal for the temporary? The spiritual for the physical? Is there anything a man would exchange for eternal life?*
- d) *“Whosoever therefore,” or in light of what had just been said, those who do not heed His instruction; who are ashamed to accept what the sinful and rebellious world considers to be foolishness will in effect choose the temporary over the eternal and the physical over the spiritual. Make no mistake, Jesus will usher in the spiritual and the eternal. When that day arrives He will not acknowledge those who did not receive His instruction.*