

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

H. Christ's Work To Minister Independent Of Extrabiblical Ritualism

(Mark 2:18-22)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright Christian service from personal failure.
- B. At times such failure arises from the tendency to follow long-term, extrabiblical religious rituals that can even counter Scripture, but Mark 2:18-22 tells of Jesus' work to minister independent of such extrabiblical rituals:

II. Christ's Work To Minister Independent Of Extrabiblical Ritualism, Mark 2:18-22.

- A. John Mark's choice to leave the mission field in Acts 13:13 is held by some to have been caused by his being offended as a Jerusalem Jew (cf. Acts 12:12) at Paul's new emphasis in leading the missionary team to reach Gentiles and not Jews in the Acts 13:4-12 ministry on Cyprus, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 388.
- B. However, Christ had told the Church to disciple not just the lost sheep of the house of Israel as He had initially told His Hebrew disciples to do in Matthew 10:5-6, but to disciple **all** the nations (Matthew 28:19-20), a move that rubbed against the long-developed religious traditions and practices of Judaism (cf. Acts 22:18-22).
- C. Jesus faced such deeply-seated, extrabiblical ritualism in Mark 2:18 on the realm of fasting (as follows):
 1. Israel's scribes and Pharisees (Mark 2:16) asked Christ why the disciples of John, a godly Old Testament prophet who had presented Jesus as Messiah and Son of God (Mark 1:2-11; John 1:29-34), and with him the Pharisees often fasted, but that Jesus' disciples did not, Mark 2:18.
 2. In reality, (a) the Old Testament required fasting only on the Day of Atonement to signify repentance (Lev. 16:29; *Ibid.*, p. 114), but (b) Israel had added two more extrabiblical fasts, one for the day before Purim (Esther 9:17-22; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, ftn. to Esther 9:17-22) and the other for the 9th of Ab to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem, *Ibid.*, ftn. to Matt. 9:14. (c) The Pharisees also "promoted voluntary fasts on every Monday and Thursday (cf. Luke 18:12) as an act of piety," *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.
 3. Jesus was under the Mosaic Law (Galatians 4:4), so He kept the Day of Atonement fast, but the religious leaders asked why He did not promote the many other fasts of the Pharisees and John the Baptizer!
- D. In answering them, Christ revealed He needed to minister independent of extrabiblical ritualism, Mk. 2:19-22:
 1. Jesus said it was not right that the children of the Bridegroom, believers in Himself as Messiah, fast if He the Messiah was with them in anticipation His joyous Messianic Kingdom, Mark 2:19.
 2. However, the days would come when, at His death and burial, He as Messiah and their Bridegroom would be taken away from them, and they would fast in those days, Mark 2:20.
 3. Yet, beyond the issue of fasting itself, in the matter of any extrabiblical, long-established religious ritual, Jesus used two illustrations to support His stand to act independent of such a ritual if needed to obey God:
 - a. First, no man sews a piece of new cloth as a patch onto an old garment lest the new cloth shrinks when worn and washed and pulls away from the old, making the old garment tear even worse, Mark 2:21.
 - b. Second, no man puts new wine into old wineskins that are already stretched by the fermentation of previous wine lest the new wine's expansion upon its fermentation bursts the old skins, Mark 2:22; *Ibid.*
 - c. Thus, Christ's divinely directed ministry to present the joyous future Kingdom was not compatible with the extrabiblical rituals of many fasts in Judaism; *Ibid.* Applied even to the godly John the Baptizer's ministry, John served the Lord under the Old Testament era, and he had innocently adopted extrabiblical fastings as a typical effect of the Judaism of his era. However, Jesus needed to function independent of even John's ministry in light of the ministry of the Kingdom that the Father wanted Him to present.

Lesson: *Jesus revealed He needed to function independent of extrabiblical rituals when the Biblical plan of God directed that He do so. Christ did not view such rituals as sin or He would have critiqued John of sin in observing them (cf. John 14:2b) and He would not have observed the extrabiblical Feast of Dedication (cf. John 10:22; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to John 10:22). Yet, He taught and practiced living INDEPENDENT of them if necessary to obey God.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ as the sinless Son of God, Mark 1:1, 15. (2) Though not treating their observance as sin in themselves, may we function INDEPENDENT of extrabiblical rituals when obedience to Scripture demands it that we might please the Lord.*