

Mark: The Mysterious Messiah

Week 14: Mark 6:53-7:23

Introductory Exercise: What does it mean to live according to the Bible?

When Jesus and his apostles/missionaries cross over to the "other side" (which in this case is still Jewish territory but away from Jesus's home of operations), what is the response of the people there? How does this relate to the response that Jesus gets in Nazareth (6:1-6:6) and in the deserted place away from Jewish population centers (6:30-6:44)? What particular mode of healing to the people there request, and what does that suggest about Jesus's fame at this point in the story?

What signs in the beginning of Mark 7 indicate that centers of power have taken notice of Jesus? What does the explanatory notes offered in 7:3-4 indicate about the audience of Mark's written gospel? Of what precisely do these agents from Jerusalem accuse Jesus and his disciples, and what source of authority to they imply for the accusation?

When Jesus responds to them, what source of authority does he cite, and in what way does he bring that authority to bear? How do the two approaches to Scripture differ, and what common ground does he share? What does Jesus imply about himself when he cites Scripture in this manner?

What technicality within Pharisaical and Temple law does Jesus cite as evidence of his opponents' disregard for the Torah, and in 7:14 and 7:15, how does Jesus follow up this bit of moral reasoning?

Does your Bible have a Mark 7:16? What editorial choices go into including or omitting that verse?

When Jesus explains his saying in Mark 7:18-23, how does he position himself relative to the Torah of Moses? For a first-century Christian audience, what impact would this explanation have for the way that she or he regarded the multi-ethnic gathering that stood (or sat) to hear this text read?