

MARK

COMENTARY

Mark Introduction.

Introduction To The Gospel Of Mark.

Mark's record is the shortest of all the Gospel accounts. This enables the reader to grasp more of an overall understanding of Jesus' life than is readily available in the other Gospels. Mark, unlike Matthew, did not write his Gospel to the Jews only. Explanations are given throughout this Gospel that would be unnecessary if all the readers were Jewish. For instance, when Mark mentioned Jordan in Mark 1:5, he referred to it as "the river of Jordan." Also, in Mark 2:18, he gave an explanation of some of the Pharisees' traditions, which occasioned their question. Mark 11:13 reveals that the time of figs was not yet. This would be unnecessary to say to a Jew who was familiar with the climate of Jerusalem during the feast of the Passover. All of these examples point to this Gospel being written to, or at least to include, a Gentile audience.

Authorship.

a. Internal evidence: There is no internal evidence that proves Mark's authorship. There is a reference to "a certain young man" who was present in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:51-52). It has been supposed that this seemingly insignificant event was recorded because it was about the author, Mark. Mark was the only writer who recorded this. We do know that Mark lived in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), and use of the word "certain" implies that this was a particular young man who was being pointed out. This reasoning is interesting and could be accurate, but it is not sufficient proof to establish Mark as the author of this Gospel.

b. External evidence: There is an abundance of evidence outside of the Gospel itself to indicate Mark as having written this Gospel. As with Matthew (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Matthew, Authorship, b. External evidence), such widespread acceptance of Mark as the author so close to his own lifetime and ministry shows that his family and converts did not contest his authorship and gives further credibility to this belief.

Eusebius (A.D. 330) quoted Papias (A.D. 130) as saying, "Mark, being the interpreter of Saint Peter, wrote down exactly whatever things he remembered, yet not in the order in which Christ either spoke or did them; for he was neither a hearer nor a follower of our Lord, but he was afterwards a follower of Saint Peter." Jerome, writing in A.D. 384, said, "Saint Mark, the interpreter of the Apostle, Saint Peter, and the first bishop of the Church of Alexandria, related what things he heard his master preaching, rather according to the truth of the facts, than according to the order of the things that were done."

Jerome went on to say that Mark wrote a short Gospel at Rome at the request of the brethren there. Peter approved of it and appointed it to be read in the churches by his authority.

These and other references show the early church's general acceptance of Mark as the author of the second Gospel, and so it is permissible for us to assume the same.

Date of Writing.

a. Internal evidence: Nothing within the Gospel itself points to a date when it was written.

b. External evidence: As has already been noted in the quote from Jerome, Mark is recorded as having written his Gospel in Rome. Scholars date that as being approximately A.D. 62-63. Different sources date this Gospel from A.D. 57-68.

About the Author.

a. Internal information: Mark is referred to in Scripture ten times. He is called Mark (Acts 15:39 and 2 Timothy 4:11); John, whose surname was Mark (Acts 12:12, 25; and 15:37); John (Acts 13:5 and 13); and Marcus (Col 4:10, Philemon 24, and 1 Peter 5:13). The names Mark, and John whose surname was Mark, and John all refer

to the one we now commonly call Mark, which is evident by comparing these references in Ac. It can also be shown that Marcus was this same Mark by comparing 2 Timothy 4:11 with Philemon 24. Marcus was simply the Greek form of Mark.

It is generally accepted that the Marcus spoken of in 1 Peter 5:13 is also Mark, and there is much external evidence to support this (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Mark, About the Author, b. External information, quotes from Papias and Jerome). Mark lived in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), and his mother's name was Mary. He is not mentioned in the Gospels, which might suggest he was converted after Jesus' crucifixion. This is a view supported by external sources (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Mark, Authorship, b. External evidence, quote by Papias).

It was at Mark's house that the early church met to pray for Peter's release from prison and where Peter first came after his miraculous release (Acts 12:12). There is no record to imply that Peter had been told where the saints were praying, so it is in order to believe that Mark's house was a common gathering place for the brethren.

The Scripture doesn't mention Mark as being present at any of these times, but it is probable that he was, and if not, he at least heard of them through his mother, Mary.

Colossians 4:10 reveals that Mary, Mark's mother, was the sister of Barnabas, Paul's companion. That made Barnabas Mark's uncle.

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey but left them suddenly at Perga and returned to Jerusalem for reasons not revealed in Scripture (Acts 12:25; 13:5, and 13). Because of this, Paul refused to heed Barnabas' counsel to take Mark with them on their second missionary journey, and this resulted in Barnabas and Paul parting company (Acts 15:36-40). Later, however, Paul mentioned Mark as being with him (Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24) and even requested Timothy bring Mark to him, saying, "He is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11).

Peter also spoke of Mark in 1 Peter 5:13 and said, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son." It is generally agreed that Mark was not Peter's natural son but that this is used in a spiritual sense even as Paul spoke of Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2). This scripture reveals that Mark was definitely close to Peter and was with him in Babylon.

b. External information: Two quotes have already been given (one by Papias and one by Jerome) that Mark was the interpreter of Peter. Irenaeus and Tertullian also used the same word to describe Mark's relationship to Peter. From this, it is surmised that Mark either translated orally or wrote for Peter.

Jerome, as has already been quoted, said of Mark that his Gospel was approved of Peter and appointed to be read in the churches at his authority.

Eusebius said that Mark wrote his Gospel under the eye of Saint Peter. These remarks, if correct, would give a natural explanation as to how Mark was able to record events in the life of Jesus from an eyewitness standpoint. One thing is certain; Mark enjoyed a close relationship with Peter and Paul, which should have uniquely qualified him to write this Gospel.

Jerome went on to say that Mark took his Gospel to Egypt and became the first preacher of Christ at Alexandria and is supposed to have established a church there.

Eusebius also stated that Mark became the first bishop of the church at Alexandria and that he founded a school there. Eusebius also stated that he died a martyr's death at Alexandria.

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Mark 6:5.

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed [them].

This verse says that Jesus could do (not would do) no mighty work, showing that He was hindered by "their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58) in doing what He willed to do. Some degree of faith must be present in the person receiving the miracle in order for God to do the work (see note 2 at Luke 7:13, note 1 at Luke 8:45, and notes 1-2 at Luke 8:50-51).

It is God's will that no one should perish (John 3:16 with 2 Peter 3:9), but many do because of unbelief. Likewise, it is God's will that we all be healed (3 John 2 and see notes 1-2 at Matthew 8:16-17), but not all are healed, because we fail to believe (Hebrews 4:2). It is a mistake to assume that whatever God wills will automatically come to pass. We play a part in receiving from God. If Jesus, who had no limitations, couldn't do all the mighty works He desired to do because of other people's unbelief, then most certainly we have to take into account the level of the peoples' faith that we minister to. This is the reason Jesus sought seclusion when performing certain miracles (see note 2 at Luke 8:51).

Compare this with Deuteronomy 7:17 where the Lord told the children of Israel that if they doubted in their hearts, He could not perform His promises to them (Numbers 33:53) of dispossessing the nations in the Promised Land.

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Mark 6:13.

And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed [them].

This is the first time in the New Testament that we see Jesus' followers given His miraculous power to heal the sick. It is implied here and clearly stated in Acts 5:16 that just as Jesus did, they healed everyone who came to them for healing. Later, Jesus gave this same power to seventy of His disciples (Luke 10:1 and 9). Jesus taught that all things are possible to those who believe (Mark 9:23) and that those who believe would do the same works that He had done (John 14:12), including healing the sick. Some of His last instructions to His disciples before His ascension included believers laying hands on the sick so they would recover (Mark 16:17-18). The true preaching of God's Word is confirmed by signs of healing (Mark 16:20). Healing is still for today and available to every believer.

This instance was the first time that anointing with oil was used in the Bible for the purpose of healing. In the Old Testament, priests were anointed (Exodus 28:41, 29:7, 29, 30:30, 40:13-15; Leviticus 8:12, 30; and Psalms 133:2), kings were anointed (1 Samuel 9:16, 10:1, 16:12-13; 2 Samuel 2:4, 5:3, 19:10; 1 Kings 1:39, and 19:15-16), and prophets were anointed (1 Kings 19:16) symbolizing the power and authority of the Spirit of God resting upon them (1 Samuel 16:13). Anointing with oil for the purpose of healing became a common practice in the New Testament church and was commanded by the Apostle James for those who were sick (James 5:14).

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Mark 6:22.

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give [it] thee.

This must have been a very sensual dance to have generated such an oath from Herod.

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Mark 6:24.

And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

Herodias' actions could be interpreted in two ways:

(1) Instead of responding in anger or jealousy to Herod's obvious lust for her daughter (Mark 6:22), she was so full of hate for John the Baptist that she seized the opportunity to eliminate him.

(2) She was hurt by Herod's lust for her daughter, and she gave the advice to her daughter to ask for John's head as a way of getting even with Herod, knowing it would make him exceedingly sorry (Mark 6:26).

In either case, she accomplished her goal concerning John and revealed how truly wicked she was in her heart.

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Mark 6:25.

And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

The fact that Herodias' daughter came in immediately with haste to ask for John's head reveals that she was just as wicked as her mother. There were no reservations on her part in doing such a terrible thing.

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Mark 6:26.

And the king was exceeding sorry; [yet] for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

This is a classic example of the folly of swearing or using oaths. Solomon warned against making vows (Ecclesiastes 5:1-6), as did Jesus (Matthew 5:37). Herod would have been thought more highly of by God and probably also by his guests who were present if he had simply humbled himself and admitted he was wrong in making such an oath. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

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Mark 6:31.

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

Jesus often separated Himself from others so that He could spend time with the Father. Here, Jesus called His disciples apart for rest and leisure.

Many zealous Christians have neglected the needs of their physical bodies and have therefore cut their ministries short through death or severe illness. Likewise, many have failed to take the time to be still and know God (Psalms 46:10). This will also cut ministries short through non-effectiveness. One of Satan's deadliest weapons against those involved in ministry is busyness. They must balance their time ministering to others with their time being ministered to by the Father. If the devil can't stop Christians from "getting on fire" for God, then he'll try to stop them by getting them "burned out" (compare with Luke 10:38-42).

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Mark 6:34.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

Remember that the reason Jesus and His disciples were going to this remote place was to get away from the multitude for a while and rest (Mark 6:31). As noted in note 1 at Mark 6:31, this rest was not optional but rather a necessity. Jesus and His disciples were taking a much-needed vacation.

However, the multitude followed them, and their vacation ended even before it began. Surely Jesus and His disciples were just as disappointed as you or I would have been. But instead of anger or bitterness, Jesus was moved with compassion.

Later on in the evening, Jesus went up into a mountain and prayed until the fourth watch (3 to 6 a.m., Mark 6:46-48). The Lord intends for us to take care of these physical bodies, as can be seen by Jesus' actions in taking His disciples aside for rest. But when this purpose was frustrated by the demands of the ministry, Jesus gave priority to the spirit man and stayed up all night praying and getting that spiritual rest He was needing. We should follow His example and always put the needs of the spirit ahead of the needs of the flesh (John 6:63).

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Mark 6:36.

Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

The people's need for food was even more acute because of the fact that some of them had expended a lot of energy to run and meet Jesus on the other shore of the Sea of Galilee. This was also compounded by the fact that they were in a desert place and that the day was far spent. Soon they would not have been able to get any food unless they went all the way back home.

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Mark 6:45.

And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

If Jesus and His disciples were already near Bethsaida (Luke 9:10), why was Jesus constraining His disciples to go "to the other side before unto Bethsaida"? One explanation is that the Greek word "PROS," translated "unto" in this verse, can also be translated "against" and is rendered that way more than two dozen times in the New Testament. Had "unto" been translated "against," the phrase "against Bethsaida" would imply "the opposite side of the lake from Bethsaida" just like Luke 8:26 uses the expression "against Galilee" to mean "on the opposite side from Galilee." The Translator's New Testament reads, "Go to the other side of Bethsaida before him," which could also be interpreted as "the other side of the lake from Bethsaida." Joh 6:17 would support this view since this verse says they "went over the sea toward Capernaum." Bethsaida is only two or three miles across from Capernaum, both cities being on the north end of the Sea of Galilee.

The marginal rendering of "unto Bethsaida" in some reference Bibles is "over against Bethsaida," which would tend to support PROS being used in this verse to mean "across from" or "on the opposite side from."

Another explanation to reconcile Mark 6:45 to Luke 9:10 is that the grassy "desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida" may have been as much as a mile or two away from the city, probably farther down the shore. Sailing "unto" or "toward" Bethsaida in a north to northwesterly direction may have offered protection from "heavy seas" as the ship made its way around the shoreline with the ultimate destination being Capernaum.

Because of the strong wind, "the ship was in the midst of the sea" (Mark 6:47), and most certainly far off course. This explains why after rowing twenty-five or thirty furlongs (three to four miles) (John 6:19), they were still not at their destination.

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Mark 6:52.

For they considered not [the miracle] of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

Most of the time, we think of a person with a hard heart as being someone who is in terrible rebellion to God. While it is true that a person like that does have a hardened heart, in this instance, the Word is referring to the disciples' hearts being hardened because they were "sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered" at Jesus walking on the water.

The word "hardened," as used here, means to make calloused, unyielding or cold in spirit, or insensitive to. The disciples were not God haters, but rather they had become so sensitive to the natural world and its limitations that they were overwhelmed to see Jesus supersede these laws. Therefore, they had hardened hearts (Mark 8:17).

So we see that, in this case, a hardened heart was simply being more sensitive to or dominated by natural thinking than by supernatural thinking. If we use this Bible definition of what a hardened heart is, then all of us have areas where we are hardened (or insensitive) to God (see note 3 at Mark 8:17 for characteristics of a hardened heart).

Our hearts become hardened (insensitive) when we consider (think upon, study, ponder, deliberate, or meditate on) anything other than God and His ways. In this case, the disciples weren't thinking on things that were sin, such as murder, adultery, theft, etc. Their thinking was totally occupied with the storm and how they could save their lives. However, they were considering only the natural ways of deliverance. They should have been considering a miraculous deliverance since they were out on the sea in obedience to Jesus' command.

If they had kept their thinking stayed on the miracle they had just seen Jesus perform (the feeding of the five thousand), then they wouldn't have been amazed to see Jesus walking on the water toward them. After all, He had constrained them to get into the ship (Matthew 14:22) and was therefore responsible for them. He also was just a short distance away from them and was in the same storm they were, so they knew He was aware of their situation. They should have been expecting Jesus to come and save them, even if He had to walk on the water to do it. Certainly, a man who could feed five thousand men (not including women and children) with five loaves and two fish and have more left over when He finished than when He started could walk on water too.

But their hardened hearts kept them from perceiving spiritual truths and kept them dominated by only natural thinking, which was completely inadequate to solve their problem.

This is the reason that people today, who know what the Word says, still don't see it work for them. They are more sensitive to fear and doubt than they are to the truths of God's Word, simply because they have thought more on things that minister fear and doubt.

We can take these laws that harden our hearts and use them in a positive way. We can actually harden our hearts to doubt by considering only God's Word. It is a possible and obtainable goal to become just as sensitive to God and faith as we have been to Satan and doubt.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A HARDENED HEART.

Just a few days before this instance, hardened hearts had made Jesus' disciples amazed when they saw Jesus walk on the water to them (Mark 6:52). Here, Jesus' statements revealed some of the characteristics of someone with a hardened heart.

First, hard hearts keep us from perceiving spiritual truths. This is why everyone in a church service will hear exactly the same message, and some will receive while others won't. It's not the Word that's the variable but rather the condition of the hearts (Luke 8:11). Hard hearts stop spiritual perception (Exodus 7:10-13, 19-23; 8:8-19, 31-32; 9:5-7, 10-12, 22-35; 10:13-27; 11:10; and 14:3-4).

Second, hard hearts stop us from understanding spiritual truths (1Corinthians 2:14). When we don't understand God's Word, Satan finds no resistance when he comes to steal it away (Matthew 13:19, see note 3 at Luke 8:12).

Third, hard hearts keep us from remembering. This isn't to say that we can't recall facts or Scriptures. As related in Mark 8:19-20, these disciples remembered the facts of the two miraculous feedings, but they had forgotten any spiritual lessons they may have learned. Likewise, some of us can quote Scripture or remember what the sermon was about, but we can't perceive the spiritual life in them or retain what we did perceive, because of hardened hearts.

Also, in Job 39:13-17, God spoke of the ostrich as being hardened toward her young and equated that with being deprived of wisdom. A hardened heart toward God produces spiritual retardation.

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Mark 7:1.

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

Jesus' statements here once again reflect His divinity. Man looks on the outward appearance (this was what the scribes and Pharisees were concerned with), but the Lord looks on the heart (1Samuel 16:7). Jesus looked on people's hearts.

The Old Testament laws concerning washing served a secondary purpose of hygiene; their real purpose was to shadow or illustrate spiritual truth (Colosians 2:16-17; Hebrews 9:1, and 9-10). Defiled food may hurt our bodies, but it cannot reach our spirits (John 3:6).

The scribes and Pharisees had missed the spiritual purity that the Old Testament ordinances taught and had become obsessed with the strict adherence to their rituals. While they relentlessly enforced the laws dealing with the physical realm, they had become completely corrupt in the spiritual realm. In Matthew 23, Jesus revealed the thoughts and intents (Hebrews 4:12) of their hearts.

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Mark 7:3.

For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash [their] hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

Note 4:

As noted in the Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introductions to Matthew and Mark, Matthew was writing to the Jews to portray Jesus as the Messiah, while Mark was addressing Gentiles as well as Jews. This can be clearly seen by contrasting Matthew's and Mark's accounts of this incident. Matthew gave no explanation of this Jewish custom of washings, while Mark did. The Jewish readers of Matthew's Gospel were very familiar with the background of this custom, while the Gentile readers of Mark's Gospel needed more detail.

Note 5:

This washing of the hands before eating was definitely a tradition of the elders and not a commandment of the Law. Washings were commanded under the Old Testament Law, but they were for ceremonial cleansings of the priests as they ministered and for those priests who had been defiled by an unclean person or thing (Leviticus 22:1-6). God never commanded the washing of the hands before eating except for the priests when eating of the holy food in the tabernacle.

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Mark 7:6.

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.

This is the Bible definition of a hypocrite. This is someone whose words and heart (actions) don't agree. Hypocrites may act the part of a Christian or possibly talk like Christ, but they won't do both. When both confession and action from the heart are consistent with God's Word, it equals salvation (Romans 10:9-10).

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Mark 7:8.

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.

The commandments of God and the traditions of man are not the same thing and must always be clearly distinguished. Any attempt to place them on the same level will always result in making the Word of God of none effect (Mark 7:13). You have to either "lay aside" the commandment of God to keep the traditions of men, or you have to "lay aside" the traditions of man to keep the commandments of God (Exodus 20:3). Church liturgy is tradition, as well as many of the dos and don'ts taught by churches today.

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Mark 7:13.

Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

We can neutralize the positive power of God's Word toward us, and nothing will do that any quicker than elevating man's traditions above God's Word. God's Word is still true (Romans 3:3-4) and will not return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11), but it may produce the negative results of judgment instead of the positive results of salvation (John 12:48). The Jews who came out of Egypt didn't receive the positive results of God's Promised Land, because they didn't mix faith with the word they heard (Hebrews 4:2).

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Mark 7:15.

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.

This statement looks like it is in direct opposition to Leviticus 11:40, 22:8; Deuteronomy 14:7-8, 12-19, 21, and other Old Testament passages. However, Colosians 2:16-17 reveals that all of these Old Testament dietary laws were shadows (or pictures) of spiritual truths that would become realities in the New Covenant. These Pharisees (as well as many Christians today) missed all of the spiritual significance of these laws and saw only the physical act.

The real spiritual meaning that these Old Testament dietary laws pictured was that we are supposed to be holy (separated) unto God in everything, even what we eat. The New Testament scripture that corresponds to this is 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Under the Old Testament Law, it was forbidden to eat or to touch certain animals (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14:3-21), not because there was anything wrong with the animals but to illustrate the point of being separated unto God and to serve as a constant reminder of this separation. Under the New Testament, we see that no animal is, or ever was, unclean of itself (Romans 14:14 and 1 Timothy 4:1-5). The Old Testament designation of certain animals as unclean was purely symbolic, and this is why Jesus could make this statement.

Jesus' statements here refer to more than just the Old Testament clean and unclean beasts, however. He said that nothing that enters into us through our mouths could defile us. However, this statement cannot be interpreted as condoning any type of abuse we would like to give our bodies, such as gluttony, drug abuse, etc. Rather, Jesus was simply explaining that the condition of our hearts should be given preeminence over our physical bodies. Our hearts control our bodies (Proverbs 23:7), not the other way around. Sin doesn't make our hearts corrupt, but our corrupt hearts make us sin. God looks on our hearts (1 Samuel 16:7), and our cleanliness or defilement in His sight is dependent solely on whether or not we have been made clean in our spirits by the blood of the Lamb.

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Mark 7:21.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

These verses (Mark 7:21-23) further establish the fact that our hearts include more than just our spirits (Mark 12:34). Even Christians still struggle with things like pride and foolishness, which Jesus said come out of our hearts (Mark 7:22). It's certain that our born-again spirits are not the source of these sins; therefore, our hearts encompass more than our spirits.

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Mark 7:26.

The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

Phoenicia was an area on the Mediterranean coast that is now occupied by modern Lebanon. In Jesus' time, its affairs were administrated by Syria, thus "Syrophenicia." The region near Tyre and Sidon was about forty to fifty miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee, which would have been a two- to three-day journey for Jesus and His disciples from the land of Gennesaret.

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Mark 7:27.

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.

Jesus said that healing was the "children's bread." God would no more withhold healing from us than a father would withhold bread from his child. Compare with Luke 11:11-13.

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Mark 7:35.

And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

There are three other instances recorded in Scripture when Jesus healed dumbness (Matthew 9:32-33, 12:22; Mark 9:25; and Luke 11:14 [same instance as Matthew 9:32-33]). There is only one other instance of deafness and dumbness being healed at the same time (Mark 9:25). In these three examples, demons were cast out to effect the cure. In this case, it is not clear that a demon was present. The Greek word "DESMON," used for "string" in this verse, might imply demonic activity, as in the other examples.