

Handout Mark Lesson 5

Parallels between the deaths of John the Baptist and Jesus:

1. Both deaths were brought about by rulers who were reluctant to order the execution.
2. Both Herod and Pilate acknowledged the holiness of the lives of the men they unjustly condemned to death.
3. The persons who orchestrated the deaths of both John and Jesus (Herodias and the Jewish leaders) did so out of malice because both men confronted them with hard truths.
4. Herod's banquet that led to John's death was a banquet of death whereas Jesus' banquet with Levi/Matthew and his friends and Jesus' other banquets are foreshadows of the banquet of life.
5. No one involved in John's death protested the execution of an innocent man and therefore all are complicit in his death. In the same way, all associated with Jesus' death, in fact all humanity, is complicit in the death of the sinless Jesus.
6. John the Baptist's disciples took his body and gave him a proper burial, and Jesus disciples will also claim His body and provide a proper burial.

The key word in the events of Mark 6:34 to 8:26 is the word "bread," *artos* in the Greek, which is translated as either "bread," "loaves," or "meal" in the English translation. The word *artos* appears 17 times (Mk 6:36, 37, 38, 41 twice, 52; 7:2, 5, 27; 8:4, 5, 6, 14 twice, 16, 17, and 19). St. Mark has carefully chosen to use this word repeatedly in this section to demonstrate the unveiling of the mystery of Jesus centering on the theme of "bread." It is a revelation that will reach its climax at the Last Supper.

There is a repeated pattern of events in 6:34-8:30. Jesus will miraculously feed a multitude twice with a few loaves of bread and fish. Each time the miracle is followed by a crossing of the Sea of Galilee, a conflict with the religious leaders, a confession of faith, and a healing (in the last part the healing and confession are reversed). In both parts of the continuing bread narrative, Jesus heals a deaf man and a blind man, symbolizing the warning He gave when He quoted from Isaiah 6:9-10 (Mk 4:12) as He continues to spiritually open the deaf ears and the blind eyes of His disciples and others so they will one day be able to understand the mystery of the Kingdom He has come to proclaim.

Part I:

- 1A. Feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6:34-44)
- 1B. Crossing the Sea of Galilee toward Bethsaida (Mk 6:45-52)
- 1C. Conflict with Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem (Mk 7:1-23)
- 1D. Profession of faith of a Gentile woman (Mk 7:24-30)
- 1E. Healing of a deaf man (Mk 7:31-37)

Part II:

- 2A. Feeding of the four thousand (Mk 8:1-10)
- 2B. Crossing of the Sea of Galilee toward Dalmanutha (Mk 8:10)
- 2C. Conflict with the Pharisees (Mk 8:11-13)
- 2E. Healing of the blind man (Mk 8:22-26)
- 2D. Peter's confession of faith (Mk 8:27-30)