

# NEW TESTAMENT 1

## UNIT SIX: THE RECEPTION OF THE KING

### Withdrawal

(Mark 3:7-12)

- Following the conflict with scribes and Pharisees Jesus withdraws to the lake.
- A large crowd from Galilee follows him.
- The text implies that the people see Jesus as a miracle worker and probably little more.

### At Home in Nazareth

(Mark 3:20-35)

- Even knowing Jesus from childhood doesn't guarantee knowledge of his real identity.
- The scribes recognise what Jesus does but ascribe his power to the devil, rather than to God.
- Jesus points out that his exorcisms work against Satan.

- Jesus gives a warning to those who make these accusations.
- Sin is so fixed in their minds that there is no possibility of repentance.
- Jesus hints at the right response to him – his true family are those who wish to do the will of God.

## A Second Cycle of Responses

(Mark 6:1-56)

- REJECTION AT NAZARETH (6:1-6)
  - Because they know Jesus' background, the people of Nazareth are astonished at what he says and does.
  - Their familiarity makes it hard to truly know him; he seems too ordinary so they reject him.
- HEROD (6:14-16)
  - Herod had heard about Jesus, and the people had many different ideas about his identity.
  - The account of John the Baptist's death reveals a threat to Jesus' future: the one who prepared the way was unjustly killed.

## ➤ THE GALILEANS (6:30-56)

- The feeding of the five thousand has a *Moses-like* character.
- The crowd have characteristics of an army.
- They suspect that Jesus is a prophet like Moses.
- Jesus dismisses their interpretations.
- He performs another miracle to show what kind of king he is.
- The *Bread of Life* discourse is further evidence of Jesus' true identity.
- Jesus indicates that people are reacting wrongly to him.
- He has come to give life to the new age.

## Further Conflict with the Authorities

(Mark 7:1-37)

- Two issues are at stake in Jesus' conflict with the authorities.
  - Attitude to Old Testament law generally.
  - Cleanness and defilement.
- New regulations had been created to apply the law to situations that didn't exist when it was given.
- Jesus maintains a distinction between Scripture and tradition.

- The Pharisees thought that in keeping tradition they were keeping Scripture as well. Jesus shows that they are wrong.
- They defined defilement in terms of external actions.
- Jesus showed the problem to be internal rather than external.
- Changing actions is not enough, nature must be changed first.
- The truth of this is shown in Jesus' dealings with Gentiles in the miracles that follow.
- To the Pharisees they were unclean, but to Jesus this was irrelevant.

## A Third Cycle of Responses

(Mark 8:1-30)

- The reactions here revolve around *hardness of heart*.
- The disciples and feeding four thousand (8:1-10).
  - The disciples still don't believe that the feeding is possible.
- The Pharisees and the sign (8:11-13).
  - They demand signs of their own choosing, unwilling to recognise what God had already done.

- The disciples and leaven (8:14-21).
  - Jesus warns the disciples of the threat that the Pharisees pose.
- The blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26).
  - A sign that the promised intervention of God in Isaiah 35 is being fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus.
- The disciples at Caesarea (8:27-30).
  - The disciples finally begin to see who Jesus is, a result of God's work in them.

## Conclusion

- By this stage, Jesus' ministry has been going for nearly three years.
- Responses to him and his teaching have been very different.
- Responses have been conditioned by expectation and hardness of heart.
- For people to see Jesus as the Messiah, he must open their eyes.