

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a wooden chess piece, likely a king or queen, over a chessboard. The hand is positioned in the upper right, with the thumb and index finger gripping the piece. The chessboard is visible in the lower half, with several other pieces scattered around. The lighting is warm and focused on the hand and the piece being held.

WEEK FOUR

MARK 2:18-3:6

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# LIKE THEY OWN THE PLACE

In spite of the great things Jesus is doing, it seems in the eyes of the Pharisees - the respected Jewish religious leaders - he can't put a foot right! The Pharisees believed that all Israel's problems would be solved if they sternly stuck to the rules of the Old Testament Law - and added a few new ones themselves. But Jesus seems to take a different approach.

***READ MARK 2:18-3:6***

1. What are people criticising and questioning about Jesus?
  - What common thread do you see in their attitude?
  
2. What do you think Jesus means when he calls himself the “bridegroom”?
  - When is the time for fasting that he refers to? (Should followers of Jesus fast now?)
  
3. Torn shirts and burst wine skins... What do you think Jesus is talking about in verses 21 and 22, and how does it connect with the rest of the conversation?
  
4. Jesus is challenged about picking heads of grain with his disciples on the Sabbath day. They're harvesting! What's the significance of the passage he uses in his reply?

5. In 3:1-6 Jesus is challenged for doing the work of healing on the Sabbath. How are the words of his question in verse 4 reflected in the reality of verse 6?

- Who's the real sinner here?

DANIEL 7

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9 As I looked,  
thrones were set in place,  
and the Ancient of Days took his  
seat.  
His clothing was as white as snow;  
the hair of his head was white like  
wool.  
His throne was flaming with fire,  
and its wheels were all ablaze. ...

13 In my vision at night I looked, and  
there before me was one like a **son  
of man**, coming with the clouds of  
heaven. He approached the Ancient  
of Days and was led into his presence.  
<sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and  
sovereign power; all nations and  
peoples of every language worshiped  
him. His dominion is an everlasting  
dominion that will not pass away, and  
his kingdom is one that will never be  
destroyed.

*Jesus moves from identifying himself with “the  
Bridegroom” to “anointed King in waiting” (like David,  
2:25) to “Son of Man” (2:28). Read Daniel’s vision in  
Daniel 7 (sidebar) for background on The Son of Man.*

6. What has this unmasked about the real identity of  
Jesus?

*Once again, Jesus is walking around as if he owns the  
place! He owns the Sabbath, he is master of feasting and  
fasting, and can heal as and when he wants. And for  
that, he meets a wall of rejection. So how will we respond  
to the claims of Jesus?*

7. Jesus claimed to be God himself come to save us from our sins, because we couldn't save ourselves. Why is this offensive to so many people, not just the Pharisees?

- Is it a claim you find difficult yourself? How so?

8. Are there ways you try to add to what Jesus has done to save you?

- Does anything you do make you feel like you're a better person than others?

9. What's an appropriate response to being saved by Jesus?

- What should motivate obedience to his authority now?

*With 2000 years of hindsight, it's easy to look down on the Pharisees for their rejection of Jesus. But what motivated them can also affect us. Isn't it nice to think that our efforts at being good make a difference, that we are at least better than those who don't even try? It can feel insulting to hear that actually Jesus is the one the world really needs, the only one who can save from sin, and that we each need him as desperately as anyone else does. Instead of thinking we're better than the Pharisees, maybe we can at least learn from their mistakes. Let's pray that we can let Jesus be the hero, the one the world was waiting for - because he is - and simply throw ourselves at his feet.*