

**The SAME Jesus:
The Gospel of Mark**
“Shriveled Hands or Shriveled Hearts?”
Mark 3:1-6

Willerup UMC
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Resource Page

Message Notes

- The political and religious environment of the first century reveals much about the first century legal systems of power and authority. Jesus was constantly being challenged about his legal authority.
- Consider our present-day political and religious environment.
- Sometimes it is easier to diagnose the problem than fix a situation.
- Notice the faith sequence: stretch, stretched, restored. (Mark 3:5)
- Shriveled hearts miss the miracle. Do we?

Rome

Tiberius Caesar, the emperor of Rome ruled from 14-37 AD, and distinguished himself as a citizen for his skills as an orator, a soldier and a public official. As emperor he was slothful, self-indulgent, licentious, vindictive and cruel. Consider the content of Romans 1 as Paul writes to remind Christians of their true identity and where their authority resides.

Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea from 27-37 AD. Like most Roman military leaders, he accepted the post in Palestine to advance his own career. He was regarded as ruthless and murderous, with a reputation among the Jews as being tyrannical and tempestuous. Tradition tells us he died by suicide in Italy. The Lakes of Pilate still bear his name.

Herod Antipas (20 BC-39 AD), son of Herod the Great (72-1 BC) was ruler of the northern region of Galilee. Herod was first married to a daughter of King Aretas of Arabia; then he took Heroidas, his brothers' wife, as his own wife. This act resulted in the death of John the Baptist. (Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29)

Herod Philip, (26 BC-34 AD) son of Herod the Great and half-brother of Herod (Antipas), was ruler of the northeastern region of Ituraea. He was known for his moderation and his justice. Caesarea Philippi was named for him. (Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27; Luke 9:18)

Jerusalem

Temple Priests, the Sanhedrin-(23 judges), and the High Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and although Caiaphas

was the official high priest of Israel, Annas had been the former high priest still held power and authority.

Scribes were “students of the scriptures.” Scribes were men whose primary occupation was writing out copies of the Jewish Scriptures and teaching the people exactly what the law said. The scribes provided teaching that was religious and moral. They were often addressed as “Teacher.”

They were trusted as professional interpreters and as ones who could judge individual cases as they related to Jewish law. Scribes were, therefore, also trusted as lawyers within Jewish society. As the scribes were the most learned individuals on the fine details of following Jewish law, their duties also consisted of deciding on specific questions of the law in individual cases. Scribes had no authority in themselves, but rather they continually deferred to the authority of other scribes and traditions to support their positions. The scribes were some of Jesus’ most *adamant opponents*.

Pharisees were self-made men and fundamentalists who focused on strict observance of the Jewish laws, ceremonies and traditions. There were around 6,000 Pharisees from all over the world at the time of Jesus and many were leaders in the local synagogue. Most Jewish communities had their own synagogue for discipleship, while there was only one temple for worship in Jerusalem.

Pharisees strongly encouraged the Jewish people to pursue righteousness by closely following the Jewish laws and not compromising with the beliefs and ways of the Romans or Greek culture. The Pharisees openly opposed Jesus, appalled at his acts of healing people on the Sabbath and his blatant claims to divinity. Jesus denounced them as being hypocrites. (Matthew 23) They often lived moral lives, full of good deeds, but it was all outward actions with *no thought given to the heart or motives of the actions*. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin and a friend of Jesus. (John 3, John 7, John 19)

Sadducees were Jewish religious leaders distinguished by their blood lines who were primarily from the upper-class, sympathetic to the Romans and sought to maintain their aristocratic positions in Jerusalem society. They often disagreed with the Pharisees because the Sadducees rejected the oral traditions and much of the doctrine of the Pharisees that included resurrection. (Matthew 22:23; Mark 12:18) Sadducees were opposed to Jesus as he could potentially overthrow the systems of Jewish authority and Roman government, jeopardizing their positions of power. Sadducees lived primarily in Jerusalem where their lives were often focused around the happenings of the Jewish temple.