

**Mark 8:1-26, The Trip Against the Pharisees**  
**10-12, Outbound and Destination**  
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**H. Van Dyke Parunak**

**Overview**

1. Another five-part trip, after the usual pattern. This time, the disciples are along again, and there is special teaching for them in the boat.
2. The event at the destination is unusual. We find not the usual outsiders, but the Pharisees, asking a sign!

**A. 10, Outbound trip: Uneventful**

1. Once again, the disciples travel with him.
2. Dalmanutha: location unknown, possibly on the western shore of the lake.

**B. 11-12, At the destination: debate with Pharisees**

1. 11, Their question
  - a) They "came forth." A deliberate change of location by them. They weren't just there when he walked up, nor were they a constant part of the crowd that followed him, but they made their appearance specifically for this conversation.
  - b) Three successively refined descriptions of their question. All three verbs appear for the first time in Mark in ch. 1, and those uses set the tone here.
    - 1) "Question." Could be an honest expression of wonder, as by the people in the synagogue in 1:27. We need further information.
    - 2) "Seek" a sign.
      - a> Their specific query has to do with his miracles. Cf. 1:37, where the multitudes were seeking the Lord because of his wonders. A less healthy attitude, reflecting as it does a concentration on the secondary aspects of his work, rather than on his teaching.
      - b> They may have learned that when he sails away with his disciples, some miracle usually ensues. So they have followed him to see if they can witness the next one.
      - c> In particular, they want not just a miracle, but "a sign," something that will support his messianic claims. But the healings should already have satisfied this need, based on Isa. 35.
    - 3) "Tempting him."

- a> Verb only 4x in Mark. First time is by Satan (1:13); this is the first of the last three, all of which are by the Pharisees (8:11; 10:2; 12:15).
- b> The use of the verb of them by Mark associates them squarely with Satan; its introduction at this point shows the intensification of their opposition. Previously they have criticized him (2:6,7, palsied man; 2:16, eat with publicans; 3:2, man with withered hand) or his disciples (2:18, fasting; 24, picking grain on Sabbath; 7:2, eating with unwashed hands); on issues that arise naturally; now they begin to set traps.
- c> Gives the underlying motive behind their request for a sign.
  - 1> Not because they are devoted to his teaching and have a physical need (as at the first part of the chapter, feeding the 4000),
  - 2> nor because they are just curious and want to see a show (as when the multitudes repeatedly crowd about him),
  - 3> nor even because they honestly think he might be the Messiah and want to confirm it,
  - 4> but in order to set up a situation in which they can trap him.

## 2. 12, His Response

- a) "Sighed deeply." cf. 7:34; this is a compound form. His encounter with them pained him as did his struggle with evil in the form of sickness.
- b) The "generation": Three other times in Mark
  - 1) Its character: adulterous, sinful (8:38), faithless (9:19)
  - 2) Its timing (13:30): until the Lord's return.
  - 3) Not a conventional generation of 20 or 40 years, but those who inhabit this present age (*aiwn*, cf. 10:30; Luke 16:8 explicitly relates *aiwn* and *genea*. Gal. 1:4 denotes this present *aiwn* as evil.)
  - 4) In Mark and Luke this word functions much as *kosmos* does in John, for an evil system opposed to God. 1 Cor 1:20 links *aiwn* with *kosmos*.
  - 5) In 13:30, watch out for date setting based on how long a generation is! Hal Lindsey's error in *LGPE*
- c) The refusal. The Lord will not cast his pearls before swine, Matt 7:6. Cf. Acts 13:46. Not every question deserves an answer. The Lord does not respond when people are trying to trap him; instead, he calls attention to their hypocrisy. "The real intent of your question is not to get an answer, but to attack me; therefore it is appropriate for me to unveil your hypocrisy in pretending to seek instruction."