

The chapters, along with many others in the gospels, speak of scribes and Pharisees.

Scribes were those who copied the words of scripture and by the familiarity gained in their work came to be regarded as experts in the law. Although often opposed to Jesus, their meticulous work was responsible for the remarkable preservation of the Old Testament over the centuries.

Pharisees is from a word meaning “set apart.” There were about 6000 Pharisees in Jesus’ time. They were popular as teachers of practical holiness. But they claimed that much oral tradition was equal to the written scriptures. Over time, the Pharisees’ teaching of the law became encrusted with traditions so their authority began to usurp God’s. After the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, the sect of Pharisees evolved into the rabbinical system which continues today.

Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus tells the man his sins are forgiven when healing is what he’s looking for? Does God sometimes give us something other than what we’ve asked for?
2. Why do the scribes and Pharisees so often oppose Jesus? Can we sometimes be like them?
3. Why is it particularly significant that Jesus eats a meal with tax collectors and sinners? Where else in Scripture is eating with someone an issue?
4. When reading that Jesus socializes with sinners, we might be tempted to think that sin is not that bad. How does His figure of a physician answer that?

5. Why do the disciples of John the Baptist fast and Jesus' do not. What does fasting symbolize?
6. Is it appropriate for us to fast?
7. Explain the parables of the cloth and the wineskins.
8. What does Jesus' response to the Pharisees in verse 25-28 tell us about Jesus?
9. How was the Sabbath made for man?