



Introduction*

The Gospel of Mark emphasizes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, healed the sick, and died as a ransom for sinners. In addition to Jesus, Mark features three main groups of people: the disciples, the crowds, and the religious leaders, none of whom understood Jesus. When the time came for Jesus to go to the cross, the religious leaders arrested him, the disciples abandoned him, and the crowds jeered him. Only when he died alone on the cross did a Roman centurion recognize that he was the Son of God.

“A New Teaching... with Authority?” **Mark 1:21-2:12**

²¹ They went to Capernaum and immediately, after he entered the assembly on the Sabbath day of rest, he was teaching. ²² They were amazed by his teaching, for he was teaching them with authority and not like the Bible scholars. ²³ Immediately there was in their assembly a man occupied by an impure spirit and he cried out, ²⁴ “What of you and us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the holy one of God!” ²⁵ Jesus rebuked him, “Be silent and come out from him!” ²⁶ After convulsing him and crying out in a loud shriek, the impure spirit came out of him. ²⁷ They were all so astonished that they conversed among themselves saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority†? He even commands the impure spirits and they obey him!” ²⁸ The report of him immediately spread everywhere into the whole surrounding area of Galilee. ²⁹ After leaving the assembly, they immediately went into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon’s mother-in-law was lying down, sick with a fever, and immediately they were speaking to Jesus about her. ³¹ After going to her, he lifted her up by taking her by the hand and the fever went out of her and she began serving them. ³² Now when evening had come, while the sun was setting, they were carrying to him all those who were weak and occupied by demons. ³³ The whole city was gathering to the door. ³⁴ He healed many who were weak with various diseases and he cast out many demons, but he did not release the demons to speak because they had knowledge about him.

³⁵ After rising exceedingly early in the dark, Jesus left and went out to a place in the wilderness and was praying. ³⁶ Simon and his companions hunted him down, ³⁷ found him and said, “Everyone is looking for you.” ³⁸ He said to them, “Let us go elsewhere, to the nearby towns, so that I can preach there also, for this is why I have come out.” ³⁹ He went preaching in their assemblies throughout all Galilee and casting out demons. ⁴⁰ A man with diseased skin came to him, pleading with him, “If you want, you are able to purify me!” ⁴¹ Having compassion and stretching out his hand, Jesus touched him and said, “I want to. Be purified.” ⁴² Immediately the leprosy departed from him and he was purified. ⁴³ Jesus immediately sent him away with a stern warning ⁴⁴ and said to him, “Make sure you say nothing to no one, but go away to show yourself to the priest and offer for your purification sacrifice what Moses commanded as a witness to them.” ⁴⁵ But after going out, he began to talk and spread the word around so much that Jesus was no longer able to openly enter a city, but was living outside in wilderness areas and people were coming to him from everywhere.

* Ryken, L. (Ed.). (2011). The ESV and the English Bible legacy. Wheaton, IL: Crossway. The ESV Preface, Explanation of Features, introductions to each book of the Bible: Mark

† Literally “a word of power”

¹ After again entering into Capernaum for some days, it was reported that Jesus was home. ² So many were gathering there that it could hold no more, even outside the door, and he was speaking the word to them. ³ Some people came to him, bringing a paralyzed man who was being carried by four of them. ⁴ But they were not able to bring the man to him through the crowd, so they removed the roof where he was and, after digging through, they lowered down the cot on which the paralyzed man was lying. ⁵ After seeing their faithfulness, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are released!" ⁶ Now there were some Bible scholars sitting there and they were questioning within themselves, ⁷ "Why does this man speak in this way? He insults! Who is able to release sins other than the one God?" ⁸ Immediately after Jesus recognized by his spirit that they were discussing this among themselves, he said to them, "Why do you think this way in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are released,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your cot, and walk?' ¹⁰ But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority over the earth to release sins," he said to the man who was paralyzed, ¹¹ "Rise, pick up your cot, and go to your home!" ¹² He was raised and, immediately after picking up his cot, he went out in front of everyone so that all were utterly astonished and thought about God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

1:21

To a first century Roman reader (the initial audience of the Gospel of Mark) what is significant about the city of Capernaum being mentioned as to where Jesus has gone to begin his ministry after calling disciples for himself?

How does this contrast to John the Baptist?

What does the time and location (the Synagogue on the Sabbath) tell us about Jesus?

What is symbolic of the time, location, and the reaction of the people in connection with this first exorcism?

1:22

Jesus' teaching is contrasted with the Bible scholars (scribes) as being one who has authority. What do the succeeding events which Mark records have to do with this statement?

1:25

Along with how Jesus defeated the adversary's temptations in the wilderness (1:12-13), what is the pattern we are beginning to see in how Jesus defeats the evil forces that are opposed to His kingdom?

1:35

In the midst of all the activity of Jesus (miracles and teaching) Mark makes a point to tell the reader that Jesus got up early to go out and pray. What lesson should we learn from this?

"I have so much to do that if I did not spend at least three hours a day in prayer, I would never get it all done." -Martin Luther

1:36-38

When Jesus is having great success in Capernaum and the wilderness, with crowds of people coming to him, why would Jesus want to go somewhere else?

What is the purpose of miracles?

As we see in the Gospel, many people became curious about Jesus because of his miracles and authoritative teaching. But sadly, many still refused to believe in him. In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis argues that given the claims that Jesus made about himself, he was one of three options:

- a) a lunatic - his claims were false, but he believed them
- b) a liar ("the Devil himself" Mark 3:25) - his claims were intended to deceive and lead astray
- c) the LORD - this man was, and is, the Son of God

First, if he claims to be God and yet in fact is not, he has to be a madman or a lunatic.

Second, if he is neither God nor a lunatic, he has to be a liar, deceiving others by his lie.

Third, if he is neither of these, he must be God.

You can only choose one of the three possibilities.

If you do not believe that he is God, you have to consider him a madman.

If you cannot take him for either of the two, you have to take him for a liar.

There is no need for us to prove if Jesus of Nazareth is God or not. All we have to do is find out if He is a lunatic or a liar. If He is neither, He must be the Son of God.

The argument can be formulated as follows:

1. If Jesus were not Lord, he would be a liar or a lunatic.
2. Jesus' miracles demonstrated He had authority and thus was neither a liar nor a lunatic.
3. Therefore, Jesus is Lord.

"If the claims of Jesus and the Bible are true, then he is Lord and demands our full commitment."

1:34 & 44

Why does Jesus not want people to speak about his miracles?

“The Messianic Secret in Mark”

Jesus often commands silence of demons (1:25, 34; 3:12), of people healed (1:44; 5:43; 7:36), and even of the disciples (8:30; 9:9). This is most likely because the Jews had no idea that the Messiah would be a suffering servant; they waited only for a conquering king. Jesus did not want this erroneous view made known and spread, for it would get him in immediate trouble with the authorities (Jewish and Roman) when the proper time had not yet come (Romans 5:6). Moreover, Jesus wanted true understanding to emerge from his actions, especially from the event of the cross. Jesus had no desire to be designated a revolutionary insurrectionist, and it is clear in his trial before Pilate that such charges were false. The demons knew that he was not only the Messiah who had come for His kingdom, but also the Son of God (3:11), but Jesus did not want this stated at this time. Jesus also had no desire to become a celebrity; he performed miracles to demonstrate authority and out of compassion for people’s needs, not to produce amazement and a following. If he allowed himself to become “the popular prophet of the moment,” his impact would be fleeting. At the same time, Mark makes it clear that his glorious ministry cannot be hidden. The demons are silenced (1:24-25; 3:11-12), for they know who he is and are at war with him. Yet at the times Jesus commands silence of those healed as well, they are unable to do so (1:44-45; 7:35-36). This is not really disobedience, for anyone touched by God cannot fail to tell others.‡

1:40

What is symbolic about the man with “diseased skin”?

2:3

What is symbolic about the friends of the paralyzed man tearing out the roof to get to Jesus?

What causes Jesus to state that the paralyzed man was released from his sins?

2:6

Why are the Bible scholars upset at Jesus for releasing sins?

Does this mean that the Church/pastors should not forgive sins today?

2:10

What does “son of man” mean?