

# Gospel of Mark

## Beginning of Jesus' Ministry

### December 13, 2009

### Mark 1:12-45

#### I. Background So Far

Chapter 1 has three parts:

- Preliminary information leading up to Jesus' ministry (John the Baptist and baptism)
- Perseverance in the desert
- Actual beginning of His ministry

In a sense, this beginning chapter reflects the life of a Christian. First salvation must come, then perseverance is required, and finally actually into ministry (with the last two being iterative).

#### II. Temptations: Mark 1:12-13

Mark 1:12-13

**12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.**

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Obviously, Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13 have a lot more detail, especially on the three specifically documented temptations suffered by Jesus.

The temptations took 40 days, which seems like a very specific time period, but is also a symbolic number for a long time. Both Moses and Elijah fasted by themselves for 40 days. Elijah was definitely in a desert/wilderness; Moses on top of Mt. Sinai might also be described this way. Only Mark points out that Jesus encountered wild animals during his temptations.

Why did Jesus have to suffer in these temptations (and later in His life)?

#### III. Preaching in Galilee: Mark 1:14-20

Mark 1:14-20

**14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" 16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.**

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The other gospel counterparts are: Matt. 4:12-17, Luke 4:14-15, and John 4:43-45.

Verse 14: What is a gospel?

Verse 14: Capernaum appears to become Jesus' primary location about this time.

Verse 15: This does not appear very complex but it also appears to be the core of Jesus' message. How has this message changed today?

Verse 16: In reviewing how Jesus chose the disciples, we should not assume that He was unfamiliar with them. Exactly how He knew them is not clear, but some possibilities are:

- Some might have been related to Him (as John and James are sometimes speculated to be through their mothers).

- He might have known them through John the Baptist (John and Andrew)
- He might have know them because they lived close to Him
- There might have been some other relationship that we do not know.

Verse 16: Originally Andrew had been a follower of John the Baptist. When the Baptist told Andrew and the Apostle John that Jesus was the lamb of God, the two men followed Jesus, according to John 1:43-51.

Verse 17: What does it mean to be “fishers of men”? In the OT, fishers of men are those who are hunting men for God’s judgment:

### Jer 16:16-18

**16 "But now I will send for many fishermen," declares the LORD, "and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks. 17 My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes. 18 I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land with the lifeless forms of their vile images and have filled my inheritance with their detestable idols."**

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Verse 18: Notice that they did not dawdle when called. A common theme in Mark!

Verse 19: According to Luke 5:10, James and John were partners with Peter.

Verse 20: How did James and John’s father feel when they left so abruptly?

Verse 20: We see Jesus’ band of disciples beginning with two sets of brothers:

- Andrew and Peter/Simon
- James and John

## IV. The Authority of Jesus’ Teaching: Mark 1:21-28

### Mark 1:21-28

**21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!" 25 "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26 The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching — and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.**

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Verse 21: Jesus would often teach in synagogues.

Verse 22: How did the teachers of the law teach? They were undoubtedly schooled in the traditional writings of the people. Jesus taught with His intimate knowledge of the Scriptures and of God. Knowing the hearts of men, His teaching would have necessarily have been more compelling than the best of the teachers of the law. As see verse 1:27 points out, they could see his authority at work. (Also, by the end of the chapter, we see Him doing miracles.)

Verse 23: Satan had attempted to defeat Jesus one way; now a demon attacks another way.

Verse 24: Why would the demon say that Jesus was the “Holy One of God”? Rather than hurting Jesus, would this not have added to Jesus’ power over the crowds?

Verse 25: Jesus shows that He has power over the demon.

Verse 28: In Galilee, He was becoming a local hero. See verses 33, 37, 45.

Verse 28: “Quickly” is the translation of the word often translated as “immediately.” (i.e. *euthus*)

## V. Jesus Heals Peter’s Mother-in-Law and Others: Mark 1:29-34

### Mark 1:29-34

**29** As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. **30** Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. **31** So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. **32** That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. **33** The whole town gathered at the door, **34** and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

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The counterparts are: Matthew 8:14-17 and Luke 4:38-41.

Verses 29: “As soon as” is the translation of the word often translated as “immediately.”

Verse 30: The word translated as “fever” (verb form) is translated as “fire” when used as a noun. So the fever was probably a strong one.

Verse 31: Notice how she began to serve Jesus as soon as she was healed. Do you think that there is a lesson for us here?

Verse 32: Knowing that He had the power to heal, everyone with an affliction was coming to Him. While this was undoubtedly physical in nature, one can see a spiritual implication from this verse.

Verse 32: In verse 1:29, the time frame was the Sabbath (“left the synagogue”). So they waited until the Sabbath had ended (“after sunset”), presumably because healing was forbidden on Sabbaths as it was considered work.

Verse 32: “Brought” probably meant that they were carried. These people were in really bad shape. Again, is there a spiritual lesson that we can glean from this point?

Verse 33: If door led to a narrow street, it must have been extremely crowded.

## VI. Need for Solitude: Mark 1:35-39

### Mark 1:35-39

**35** Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. **36** Simon and his companions went to look for him, **37** and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" **38** Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else — to the nearby villages — so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." **39** So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

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The counterparts are Matt. 4:23-25 and Luke 4:42-44.

Verse 35: Why did Jesus leave early in the morning, probably before 6:00 am and maybe as early as 3:00 am? Why did He look for a solitary place? What do you think that He prayed for? If Jesus felt compelled to pray this way, how should we pray? After major events, we see Jesus seeking solitude.

Verse 37: Peter seems more than a little excited. He appears to want Jesus to return to the crowds in Capernaum to continue healing and working miracles.

Verse 38: Jesus has not come to serve one town, but all mankind.

Verse 39: He does throughout Galilee what He had done in Capernaum.

## VII. Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy: Mark 1:40-45

Mark 1:40-45

**40** A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." **41** Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" **42** Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. **43** Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: **44** "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." **45** Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

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The counterparts are Matthew 8:1-4 and Luke 5:12-16.

Leprosy as recorded in both the OT and NT probably included a variety of chronic skin diseases, not just Hansen's disease.

Verse 40: As the acclaim for Jesus' power and authority spread, He must have been accosted constantly with people wanting to be healed. Only a few of these healings have been preserved in Scriptures as examples of what He did and to help us understand the message of His ministry.

Verse 41: Jesus heals in different ways; here, he does it with words only. By choosing to heal this leper with a touch, Jesus breaks the Jewish law:

Lev 5:3

**3** "Or if he touches human uncleanness — anything that would make him unclean — even though he is unaware of it, when he learns of it he will be guilty.

NIV

Since He has demonstrated that He can heal without touching by words alone, why did Jesus touch the leper?

Verse 44: Why did Jesus tell this person not to tell anyone? In breaking the law, Jesus would cause Jewish authorities to act against Him. Eventually, they would react and crucify Him, but the time is not yet ready for that.

Verse 44: While Jesus has healed the man, he is still required to have the Priest perform the ritual that he is clean.

Verse 45: Did Jesus know that the man would talk? If so, why did He heal him? If He knew that he would speak anyway, why did He tell him not to do so?

At the end of the first chapter, we see that Jesus is starting to break the customs of First Century Judaism. In next week's lesson, we will see that he is attracting the attention of the Pharisees and teachers of the law...who by Mark 3:6 will want to kill Him.

## VIII. Question: What Can We Learn from Jesus from this Lesson?

A good question to ask continually when reading the gospels is: What can I learn from the passage that I have just read? The gospels are not newspapers recording factual events for information only. We see probably hundreds of people accosting Jesus (in the time frame of this lesson alone); yet only a few of the incidences are recorded.

So, why were the ones in Chapter 1 recorded? Clearly given when Mark wrote the gospel, it was written primarily for Christians (although they would have the power of all Scriptures for saving the unsaved).

What have you learned from this first chapter?