Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

The Gospel of Mark – Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Alex O. Stone

Classes Presented on FreeConferenceCall.com

[Call: 978-990-5000 * PASSCODE: 94041#]

Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

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Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

The Gospel of Mark – Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Alex O. Stone

Classes Presented on FreeConferenceCall.com

[Call: 978-990-5000 * PASSCODE: 94041#]

Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

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Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

The Gospel of Mark – Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Alex O. Stone

Classes Presented on FreeConferenceCall.com

[Call: 978-990-5000 * PASSCODE: 94041#]

Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

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Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

The Gospel of Mark – Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Alex O. Stone

Classes Presented on FreeConferenceCall.com

[Call: 978-990-5000 * PASSCODE: 94041#]

Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

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Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

The Gospel of Mark – Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Alex O. Stone

Classes Presented on FreeConferenceCall.com

[Call: 978-990-5000 * PASSCODE: 94041#]

Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.

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Overall Theme: "Jesus, Servant Messiah, Promised By God" (3:1–8:10)

Later Galilean Ministry (Mark 3:6-6:6a)

I. **Jesus Rejection by The Pharisees - Plans to Destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6-3:35)**
II. **Parables Depicting "The Character" of God's Kingdom (Mark 4:1 – 4:34)**
III. **Miracles Demonstrating Jesus Sovereign Power (Mark 4:35 – 5:43)**
IV. **Jesus Rejection at Home /Nazareth (Mark 6:1 – 6:6a)**

V. **Jesus Ministry In and Beyond Galilee (Mark 6:6b – 8:11)**
   a. **Jesus Self-Disclosure to the 12 Disciples (Mark 6:32 – 8:11)**
   b. **Jesus Controversy Over "Defilement" (Mark 7:1 – 7:23)**
   c. **Jesus Ministry Beyond Galilee (Mark 7:24 – 8:11)**

Biblical Lens: Mark's Gospel

Mark's purpose was basically ***pastoral.*** The Christians in Rome had already heard and believed the good news of God's saving power (Rom. 1:8) but they needed to hear it again with a new emphasis to ***"understand"*** its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment. They needed to understand the *nature of discipleship*—*what it meant to follow Jesus*—in light of who Jesus is and what He had done and would keep doing for them. He (Mark) showed how Jesus

Christ is the Messiah because He is the Son of God, and His death as the suffering Son of Man was *God's plan for people's redemption*.[1]

CURRENT FOCUS: OPPOSITION TO JESUS – THE MESSIAH [MARK 3:1-8:11]

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." [4] Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Pharisees Counsel to Destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14–16; Luke 6:11)

[6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. [7] But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. [11] And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." [12] But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

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[1] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 101). Victor Books.

Selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16)

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted.
And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him
and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal
sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the
name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite;
19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

Opposition of His Friends

20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat
bread. 21 But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of
Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:24–32; Luke 11:17–23)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,
"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to
Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a
kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is
divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against
himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a
strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.
And then he will plunder his house. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be
forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to
eternal condemnation"—30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

New Relationships are Defined (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21)

31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him,
calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him,

“Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” [33] But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” [34] And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

Parable of the Soils (Matt. 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–15)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. [2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: [3] “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. [5] Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. [6] But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. [7] And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. [8] But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

[9] And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [10] But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. [11] And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, [12] so that *‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,* a*nd hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.’* ”

[13] And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16] These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17] and they have no root in themselves, and

so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18] Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19] and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Parable of the Lamp (Luke 8:16–18)

[21] Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22] For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25] For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29] But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31–35)

[30] Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? [31] *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; [32] but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." [33] And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. [34] But without a parable He

did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

The Sea is Stilled (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over
to the other side.” 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along
in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.
38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to
Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and
rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and
there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it*
that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another,
“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Demons are Cast into Swine (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and
no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound
with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the
shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and
day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself
with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with
a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” 8 For He said to him,
“Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” 9 Then He asked him, “What *is* your
name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” 10 Also
he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now

a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. [12] So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” [13] And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

[14] So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. [15] Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. [16] And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. [17] Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. [18] And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. [19] However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” [20] And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jairus Pleads for His Daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:41, 42)

[21] Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

A Woman with Issue is Healed (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

[25] Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27] When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28] For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

[29] Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30] And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" [31] But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " [32] And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33] But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34] And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

[35] While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" [36] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37] And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38] Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39] When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40] And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41] Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk. 6:1–6)

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the

synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” [5] Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. [6] And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Twelve are Sent to Serve (Matt. 10:1–42; Luke 9:1–6)

[7] And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—[9] but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. [10] Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” [12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John the Baptist is Murdered (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 9:7–9)

[14] Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” [15] Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” [16] But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother

Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. [21] Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24] So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" [25] Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. [27] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, [28] brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Twelve Return (Luke 9:10)

[30] Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. [31] And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Five Thousand are Fed (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:11–17; John 6:1–14)

[32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. [33] But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. [34] And Jesus,

when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. [36] Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”

[37] But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” [38] But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” [39] Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. [41] And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. [42] So they all ate and were filled. [43] And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. [44] Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matt. 14:22–23; John 6:15–21)

[45] Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. [46] And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. [47] Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. [48] Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. [49] And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; [50] for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and
anchored there. 54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people
recognized Him, 55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry
about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever
He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.
And as many as touched Him were made well.

Pharisees and Defilement (Matt. 15:1–20)

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come
from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with
defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all
the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the
tradition of the elders. 4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat
unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and
hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk
according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"
6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it
is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* 7
And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the
washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may
keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; and,
'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man
says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is*
Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his

father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15] There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

[17] When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18] So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" [20] And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (Matt. 15:21–28*)*

[24] From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25] For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26] The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. [27] But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28] And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." [29] Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." [30] And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Deaf and Mute Man is Healed

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst
of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one
who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put
His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers
in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He
sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was
loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no
one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.
37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well.
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Four Thousand are Fed (Matt. 15:32–38)

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus
called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the
multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will
faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar." 4 Then His disciples
answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the
wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said,
"Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the
seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set
before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small
fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them*. 8 So they ate
and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now
those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,
10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of
Dalmanutha.

Commentary: OPPOSITION TO THE "Son of Man" (CHAP. 3:1-8:10)

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (3:1–5) (Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

Mark 3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his "right" one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might [2] find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man's problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath**-violator, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

Mark 3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand. Then** He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

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[2] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 114–115). Victor Books.

Mark 3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus' anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, "hardening"; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God's mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus' command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

E. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)

Mark 3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.

IV. Jesus' Later Galilean Ministry (3:7–6:6a)

The second major section of Mark's Gospel begins and concludes structurally like the first one (cf. 1:14–15 with 3:7–12; 1:16–20 with 3:13–19; 3:6 with 6:1–6a). It

shows the development of Jesus' mission in the context of opposition and unbelief.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' activity around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–12) (Matt. 12:14–21)

Mark 3:7–10. This summary passage is similar in context and character to 2:13. An added element is that **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**, who shared in both the hostility and the popular acclaim directed toward Jesus.

Many people **from Galilee followed** (nontechnical sense, "went along with") and, attracted by **all He was doing** (i.e., healing miracles), **many … came** from areas outside Galilee—from the south, **Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea;** the east, Transjordan (Perea); and the north, the coastal cities of **Tyre and Sidon** (in Phoenicia). Jesus spent time in all these areas (except Idumea; 5:1; 7:24, 31; 10:1; 11:11). So intense was the impact of Jesus' healing ministry and the desire of **those with diseases** (*mastigas*, "scourges," cf. 5:29 ["suffering"], 34) **to touch Him** that **He told His disciples to have a small boat ready** to escape the rush of the crowds. Only Mark reported this detail, suggesting the memory of an eyewitness such as Peter.

Mark 3:11–12. In the crowds were demoniacs, people whose speech and behavior were dominated by **evil spirits**. They recognized Jesus' true status as **the**

Son of God and were greatly threatened by His presence. [3] Jesus did not accept their repeated (imperf. verbs) cries of recognition, and ordered (cf. 1:25; 4:39; 8:30, 32–33; 9:25) them **not to tell who He was** (cf. 1:24–25, 34). In silencing their untimely cries Jesus reaffirmed His submission to God's plan for the *progressive* disclosure of His identity and mission.

B. Jesus' appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19) (Matt. 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16)

Mark 3:13. From the lakeside lowlands **Jesus went up into the hills** (of central Galilee; cf. 6:46). Taking the initiative, He summoned to Himself **those He wanted**, namely the Twelve (3:16–19), **and they came** from the crowd **to Him** (cf. Luke 6:13). Mark had already said that Jesus had many other disciples (cf. Mark 2:15).

Mark 3:14–15. **He appointed** (lit., "made") **12** for two reasons:
(a) so they could **be with Him** (immediate association for training) and
(b) be sent **out** by Him **to preach** (cf. 1:4, 14) **and to have** (delegated) **authority to drive out** (*ekballein;* cf. 1:34, 39) **demons** (their future mission; cf. 6:7–13). Mark devoted attention to their association with Jesus and preparation for their ministries.

Nearly all major ancient Greek manuscripts and most early versions omit the phrase, **designating them apostles**. This seems preferable; its inclusion in a few early manuscripts was probably due to the influence of Luke 6:13 and because

[3] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 115–116). Victor Books.

Mark used the term “apostles” only in Mark 6:30 where it is appropriate in a nontechnical sense.

The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel, thus expressing Jesus’ claim on the whole nation. “The Twelve” became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion (cf. 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43). Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual “Israel.” Rather they were the nucleus of a coming new community, the church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Acts 1:5–8).

Mark 3:16–19. These verses give a traditional list of the names of the appointed Twelve. **Simon** (cf. 14:37) heads the list. Jesus surnamed him **Peter** (cf. John 1:42), the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, which means a “stone or rock.” This probably described his leadership role during Jesus’ ministry and in the early church (cf. Matt. 16:16–20; Eph. 2:20), and did not refer to his personal character. **James** and **John**, Zebedee’s sons, are surnamed **Boanerges**, a Hebrew idiom Mark interpreted as **Sons of Thunder** (cf. Mark 9:38; 10:35–39; Luke 9:54), though a more complimentary meaning (now unknown) may have been intended by Jesus.

Apart from **Andrew** (cf. Mark 1:16; 13:3), **Judas Iscariot** (cf. 14:10, 43), and possibly **James son of Alphaeus** as “James the younger” (cf. 15:40), *the remaining names do not occur again in Mark*: **Philip** (cf. John 1:43–45), **Bartholomew** (Nathanael; John 1:45–51), **Matthew** (Levi; cf. Mark 2:14), **Thomas** (cf. John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–28; 21:2), James son of Alphaeus (probably not Levi’s brother;

cf. Mark 2:14), **Thaddaeus** (Judas son of James; cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and **Simon the Zealot** ("Zealot" probably indicated his zeal for God's honor, not an extreme nationalism). In contrast was Judas Iscariot (a "man from Kerioth," the only non-Galilean; cf. John 6:71; 13:26), **who betrayed** Jesus to His enemies (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46).

C. The Beelzebub accusation and Jesus' identity of His true family (3:20–35)

This section has a "sandwich" structure in which the account concerning Jesus' family (vv. 20–21, 31–35) is divided by the Beelzebub accusation (vv. 22–30). This deliberate literary device is used several times by Mark (cf. 5:21–43; 6:7–31; 11:12–26; 14:1–11, 27–52) for different reasons. Here Mark pointed out a parallel in the charges made against Jesus (cf. 3:21 and 30) but at the same time made a distinction between general opposition to Jesus and a distortion of the Holy Spirit's work through Him.

1. THE CONCERN OF JESUS' FAMILY FOR HIM (3:20–21)

Mark 3:20–21. These verses are unique to Mark. After **Jesus entered a house** (in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2), such **a** large **crowd** demanded His attention **that He and His disciples** had no time **to eat** (cf. 6:31). **When His family** (lit., "those with Him," a Gr. idiom for kinsmen, not "friends," KJV; cf. 3:31) **heard** that His ceaseless activity prevented proper care for His needs, **they** came (probably from Nazareth) **to take charge of Him** (*kratēsai*, a word used for making an arrest; cf. 6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51) **for** (*gar*; cf. "for" in 1:16) the people kept saying **He** was **out of His mind**, a mentally unbalanced religious fanatic (cf. Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13).

2. JESUS' REFUTATION OF THE BEELZEBUB ACCUSATION (3:22–30) (Matt. 12:22–32; Luke 11:14–23; 12:10)

Mark 3:22. Meanwhile a delegation of Law **teachers** (scribes) **came down from Jerusalem** to investigate Jesus. They repeatedly charged (a) that **He** was **possessed by Beelzebub** (demon-possessed; cf. v. 30), and (b) that **He** was **driving out demons** through a power alliance with Satan, **the prince** (ruler) **of demons** (cf. v. 23).

The spelling "Beelzebub" came into English translations from the Latin Vulgate which derived it from the Hebrew "Baalzebub" meaning "Lord of the flies," the name of an ancient Canaanite deity (cf. 2 Kings 1:2). But the spelling "Beelzeboul" (NIV marg.) has better Greek manuscript support. It reflects the later Hebrew "Baalzebul" (not used in the OT) meaning: "Lord of the dwelling place (temple)," that is, of evil spirits in the New Testament contexts (cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:17–22).

Mark 3:23–27. **Jesus** summoned His accusers and refuted their charges **in parables** (short proverbial sayings, not stories). He dealt with the second accusation first (vv. 23–26) by showing the absurdity of their underlying assumption that **Satan** acts against **himself**. He [4] used two illustrations to make the self-evident point that **if a kingdom** or **a house** (household) **is divided against itself** in purpose and goals, it **cannot stand**. The same applies to Satan if it is

[4] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 116–117). Victor Books.

assumed that **Satan opposes** himself **and** his realm **is divided**. This would mean that **his end has come**, that is, his power, not his personal existence. Clearly this is false, for Satan remains strong (cf. v. 27; 1 Peter 5:8). So the charge that Jesus' exorcisms were due to Satan's power was false.

The analogy in Mark 3:27 refuted their first accusation (v. 22) showing **in fact** (lit., "on the contrary") that the opposite was true. Satan is **the strong man**. His **house** is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death. **His possessions** are people who are enslaved by one or more of these things, and demons are his agents who carry out his diabolical activity. **No one can enter** his realm to **carry off** (*diarpasai*, "plunder") his possessions **unless he first** binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). **Then he can rob** (*diarpasei*, "plunder") the realm, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (cf. 1:12–13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.

Mark 3:28–30. In light of the preceding charges Jesus issued a strong warning. The words, **I tell you the truth** (lit., "Amen [truly], I say to you"), are a recurring formula of solemn affirmation (13 times in Mark) found only in the Gospels and always spoken by Jesus.

Jesus declared, **All the sins and blasphemies** (derogatory words vs. God) **of men** (generic, "people") are open to God's gracious forgiveness (cf. 1:4) with one

exception—blasphemies **against the Holy Spirit**. In light of the context this refers to an attitude (not an isolated act or utterance) of defiant hostility toward God that rejects His saving power toward man, expressed in the Spirit-empowered person and work of Jesus. It is one's preference for darkness even though he has been exposed to light (cf. John 3:19). Such a persistent attitude of willful unbelief can harden into a condition in which repentance and forgiveness, both mediated by God's Spirit, become impossible. This person **is guilty** (*enochos*, "liable to, in the grasp") **of an eternal sin** (sing., the ultimate sin because it remains forever unforgiven; cf. Matt. 12:32). Judas Iscariot (cf. Mark 3:29; 14:43–46) proved the reality of these words.

Mark explained that Jesus **said** all **this because they** (the Law teachers, 3:22) kept **saying He** was demon-possessed (v. 22b). Jesus did not actually say the scribes had committed this unpardonable sin; but they came perilously close by attributing His exorcisms to satanic power when they really were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. They were close to calling the Holy Spirit "Satan."

3. JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (3:31–35) (Matt. 12:46–50; Luke 8:19–21; 11:27–28)

Mark 3:31–32. The arrival of **Jesus' mother** (Mary; cf. 6:3) **and** His **brothers** (cf. 6:3) resumes the narrative suspended in 3:21. **Standing outside** the house, **they sent someone** through the **crowd … around Him**, requesting a private conversation in an attempt to restrain His activity.

Mark 3:33–35. Jesus' rhetorical question (v. 33) was not a repudiation of family relationships (cf. 7:10–13). He was highlighting the far deeper issue of a person's relationship to Him. It is qualitative in force: **"Who are** the sort of people who are **My mother and My brothers?**" Then looking (from *periblepomai*; cf. 3:5) **at those seated in a circle around Him** (His disciples in contrast with those standing outside, v. 31), Jesus asserted that their kinship went beyond natural family ties. Jesus broadened the reference beyond those present by stating that **whoever does God's will is** a member of His family. The words **brother and sister and mother**, all occurring without an article in Greek (thus qualitative), figuratively denote Jesus' spiritual [5] family. Doing God's will (e.g., 1:14–20) characterizes those who are Jesus' spiritual kinfolk.

D. Jesus' parables depicting the character of God's kingdom (4:1–34)

This group of parables constitutes the first of two lengthy units in Mark's Gospel devoted to Jesus' teaching (cf. also 13:3–37). Mark selected these parables (as implied in 4:2, 10, 13, 33) from a larger collection to depict the character of God's kingdom (cf. 4:11 with 1:15).

They were given in a climate of growing hostility and opposition (cf. 2:3–3:6, 22–30), but also enormous popular acclaim (cf. 1:45; 2:2, 13, 15; 3:7–8). *Both responses showed people's failure to grasp who Jesus really is.*

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[5] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 117–118). Victor Books.

"Parable" is a transliteration of the Greek *parabolē*, "comparison." It can designate a variety of figurative forms of speech (e.g., 2:19–22; 3:23–25; 4:3–9, 26–32; 7:15–17; 13:28). But usually a parable is a short discourse that conveys spiritual truth by making a vivid comparison. The truth to be taught is compared to something in nature or a common-life experience. A parable usually expresses a single important truth, though occasionally a subordinate feature expands its total meaning (cf. 4:3–9, 13–20; 12:1–12). A parable draws its hearers to take part in a situation, evaluate it, and apply its truth to themselves. (See the list of Jesus' 35 recorded parables at Matt. 7:24–27.)

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY (4:1–2) (Matt. 13:1–2).

Mark 4:1–2. Once again (cf. 2:13; 3:7) **Jesus** was teaching a large crowd **by the lake** (Sea of Galilee). **The crowd** was **so large that He** was forced to sit in **a boat … out on the lake** and teach those who lined the shore. This time **He taught them many things by parables.**

2. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS (4:3–20)

a. Jesus' statement of the Soils Parable (4:3–9) (Matt. 13:3–9; Luke 8:4–8)

Both before and after Jesus told this parable, He urged the crowd to listen carefully (cf. Mark 4:3, 9, 23).

Mark 4:3–9. As **a farmer** (lit., "one who sows") scattered **seed** over his unplowed field, **some fell along the** well-trodden foot **path** (cf. 2:23). **Some fell on rocky places** having no depth of **soil** because limestone was close to the surface. **Other**

seed fell among thorns (ground containing unearthed thorn plant roots). And **still other** seeds **fell on good soil.**

Not all the seed produced a crop. **Birds … ate** the seed that fell on the path (4:4). **The sun … scorched** the tender plants that **quickly** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) sprouted in the **shallow** rocky soil **and they withered** (4:6). Thorns **grew up and choked** other **plants**, making them unproductive (v. 7).

By contrast, the seed on the good soil took root, **grew, and produced** an abundant harvest. It brought yields up to **30, 60**, and **even 100 times** (v. 8) the seed sown, depending on the fertility of the soil. Back then a yield of 10 to 1 was considered a fine crop.

b. Jesus' explanation for teaching in parables (4:10–12) (Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–10)

Mark 4:10. The change of scene here is significant. Verses 10–20 occurred later (cf. vv. 35–36; Matt. 13:36), but Mark put them here to illustrate the principle stated in Mark 4:11, 33–34, and thereby show the importance of parables. **When** Jesus **was alone** with **the Twelve and the others around Him** (other true disciples; cf. 3:34), they **asked Him about the parables** in general, and the Parable of the Soils in particular (cf. 4:13).

Mark 4:11–12. These verses must be viewed in the context of unbelief and hostility (cf. 3:6, 21–22, 30). To those who believed, **to you** (emphatic first position in Gr.), the disciples, God had **given** the **secret of the kingdom of God** (cf.

1:15). **But to those on the outside** (of the circle of disciples, the unbelieving crowd) **everything**, His whole message and mission, was stated **in** [6] **parables**. The word "parables" here has the special sense of "enigmatic speech." The crowd did not really understand Jesus.

Both groups were confronted by Jesus and His message (cf. 1:14–15). God enabled the disciples to see in Him the "secret" (*mystērion*) about the kingdom. This refers to the disclosure of God's *present* kingdom plan which is to be an Age of "seed-sowing" (cf. 4:13–20; 13:10). It was previously hidden to the prophets, but now was revealed to people of His choice (cf. Rom. 16:25–26).

The basic "secret," common to all the kingdom parables, is that in Jesus, God's rule (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new spiritual form. The disciples had believed in Jesus. God had already given (*dedotai*, perf. pass.) them this "secret," though so far they understood little of its full impact.

On the other hand those blinded by unbelief saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected Him and did not come to know the "secret" of God's kingdom. Jesus' parables served to conceal its truths from them.

They were like the Israelites in Isaiah's day (Isa. 6:9–10). Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God's judgment. He

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[6] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 118–119). Victor Books.

particularly referred to Israel as a nation (cf. Mark 6:9, "this people") for rejecting God's revelation, especially as expressed in Jesus. They would see or hear the imagery of a parable but they would not understand its spiritual meaning. **Otherwise** (*mēpote*, "lest perhaps") **they might turn** to God (repent) **and be forgiven** by Him.

Jesus' audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in Him. But after they persistently closed their minds to His message (cf. 1:15), they were excluded from further understanding of it by His use of parables. Yet even the parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and ultimately reveal it (cf. 12:12). They uniquely preserved people's freedom to believe, while demonstrating that [7] such a decision is effected by God's enabling (cf. 4:11a).

c. Jesus' interpretation of the Soils Parable (4:13–20) (Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

Mark 4:13. The two questions here emphasize the importance of the Soils Parable. If Jesus' disciples did not **understand** (*oidate*, "intuitively comprehend") its meaning, then they would not **understand** (*gnōsesthe*, "comprehend by experience") **any** of the kingdom parables.

Mark 4:14–20. **The farmer** (sower) is not identified, but the context indicates he probably represents Jesus and all who sow (proclaim) **the Word** (message) of

[7] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 119). Victor Books.

God, which is the **seed** (cf. 1:15, 45; 2:2; 6:12). In 4:15–20 a change occurs: the kinds of soil represent various types of hearers in whom the **seed** is sown.

Many **people** give one of three negative responses to Jesus' message. **Some … hear** the **Word** with hardhearted indifference. **Satan** (like the birds) **comes** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and takes** it **away**. In effect, there was no response.

Others … hear the Word with a hasty (*euthys*), enthusiastic, but shallow profession of acceptance. However, **they last only a short time** because the Word takes **no root** in them. **When trouble** (lit., "hardships") **or persecution comes** (like a hot sun) on account **of the Word, they quickly** (*euthys*) **fall away** (*skandalizontai*, "are repelled"; cf. comments on 14:27). Their profession proves not to be genuine.

Still others … hear the Word but are preoccupied with the cares and riches of this life. Three competing concerns—distracting **worries of this life** (lit., "the present Age"); **the deceitfulness** (deceptive lure) **of wealth;** and **desires for** all sorts of **other things** in place of the Word—enter into their lives (like thriving thorn plants). These things **choke the Word, making it** (the Word, *not* the hearer) **unfruitful** (cf. 10:22), indicating they are not true believers.

By contrast, **others … hear the Word, accept it** (*paradechontai*, "welcome it for themselves"), **and produce a crop**, or bear spiritual fruit. These are genuine disciples. In the future harvest they will have fruitful yields of varying amounts: **30, 60, or … 100** (cf. 4:24–25 with Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27).

Giving out the news of God's kingdom is like sowing seed on various kinds of soil. *At Jesus' first coming and in the present Age the kingdom is largely veiled in the face of satanic opposition and human unbelief*. But despite this, God's rule takes hold in those who accept Jesus' message and His rule manifests itself in spiritual fruitfulness. But God's kingdom will be openly established on earth at Jesus' second coming with a glory yet undisclosed (cf. Mark 13:24–27). Then there will be an abundant harvest. Thus, the parable displayed God's kingdom as both *present but veiled* and *future but openly glorious* (cf. 1:14–15).

3. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP AND THE MEASURE (4:21–25) (LUKE 8:16–18; MATT. 5:15 AND LUKE 11:33; MATT. 7:2 AND LUKE 6:38; MATT. 10:26 AND LUKE 12:2; MATT. 13:12; 25:29 and LUKE 19:26)

Jesus used the parabolic sayings of these verses on various occasions (cf. above references). Mark put them here because their message reinforced the message of Jesus' kingdom parables and demonstrated the need for a proper response to them. Mark 4:23–24a recalls verses 3 and 9, indicating that Mark understood these words to be part of Jesus' parabolic teaching to all (cf. vv. 26, 30) rather than the continuation of Jesus' private address to His disciples.

Mark 4:21–23. In this parable Jesus pointed out the self-evident fact that **a lamp**, a lighted wick in a shallow clay bowl full of oil, was not meant to be lit and then hidden **under a** measuring **bowl** (as was done at bedtime) **or a bed** (lit., "dining couch"). Rather, **it** was to be placed **on its stand** where it would give light. Then Jesus explained (*gar*, **for**) **whatever** was **hidden** or **concealed** (during the night)

was **meant to be brought out into the open** (for use in the day). This story from everyday life conveyed a spiritual truth for **anyone** willing to learn from it.

Mark 4:24–25. If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now **and even more** will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now **will** someday **be taken** away **from him.**

4. THE PARABLE OF THE EARTH BEARING FRUIT BY ITSELF (4:26–29)

This is Mark's only unique parable. Like the Soils Parable, it presents a *comprehensive picture of the coming of God's kingdom: sowing* (v. 26), *growing* (vv. 27–28), *and harvesting* (v. 29), with emphasis on the growing phase. Only one person, the sower (not identified), appears in all three phases.

Mark 4:26. The initial words in this parable could be rendered: "**The kingdom of God** is as follows: it **is like**…." In phase one, the sower **scatters seed on the ground.**

Mark 4:27–28. In phase two the sower appears but is not active. After planting **the seed**, he leaves it and goes about his duties **night and day** without anxious thought for the seed. Meanwhile it germinates, **sprouts, and grows** in a way **he** did **not know** and cannot explain.

The soil (lit., "the earth") **produces grain** which develops to maturity in successive stages. The soil does this **all by itself** (*automatē;* cf. the Eng. "automatic"). This key Greek word (emphatic by position) could be translated "without visible cause" implying "without human agency," and thus refers to work done by God (cf. similar situations in Josh. 6:5; Job 24:24; Acts 12:10). God works in the life-bearing seed which, when planted in good soil, grows stage by stage and produces grain without human intervention.

Mark 4:29. The sower's ultimate interest is phase three, [8] the harvest. Whenever (future) **the grain is ripe, he** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **puts the sickle to it** (lit., "sends forth the sickle," a figure of speech for "sending forth the reapers"; cf. Joel 3:13) **because the harvest has come** (*parestēken*, "stands ready").

Some interpreters view this parable as a picture of evangelism. Some take it as depicting spiritual growth in a believer. Others see it as a picture of the coming of God's kingdom by the mysterious, sovereign work of God. Its emphasis is on growth under God's initiative in the interim phase between the proclamation by Jesus (the lowly Sower) and His disciples and the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom by Jesus (the mighty Harvester). The third view is preferred in light of Mark 4:26a and the overall context of the kingdom parables.

5. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (4:30–32) (Matt. 13:31–32;

[8] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 120–121). Victor Books.

Luke 13:18–19)

Mark 4:30–32. This parable has an elaborate double-question introduction which states in essence that the emergence of God's **kingdom** is similar to what happens to **a mustard seed** (the common black mustard, *sinapis nigra*) after it is sown on **the ground**. In Jewish thinking, its small size was proverbial since it was **the smallest** of all the seeds sown in the field. It took 725-760 mustard seeds to weigh a gram (28 grams equal one ounce). The mustard shrub is an annual plant which, growing from seed, **becomes the largest of all garden plants** (*ta lachana*, "large, fast-growing annual shrubs") in Palestine, reaching a height of 10–12 feet in a few weeks. **Birds of the air** (undomesticated fowl) are attracted by its seed and the **shade** of its large **branches** (cf. TDNT, s.v. "*sinapi*," 7:287–91).

This parable emphasizes the contrast between the smallest of the seeds growing into the tallest of the shrubs. It contrasts the insignificant, even enigmatic beginning of God's kingdom, embodied in the presence of Jesus, with the greatness of the end result to be established at [9] His Second Advent when it will surpass all the earth's kingdoms in power and glory.

The reference to the birds may simply indicate the surprising size of the end result. Or perhaps they represent evil forces (cf. v. 4), but this would indicate an abnormal development of God's kingdom. Probably they represent the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's kingdom program (cf. Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:6). What God had

[9] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 121). Victor Books.

promised to do (Ezek. 17), He began to do in Jesus' mission. (The kingdom, however, is not to be identified with the church; cf. comments on Mark 1:15.)

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY (4:33–34)

Mark 4:33–34. These verses summarize the purpose and approach of Jesus' parabolic teaching (cf. vv. 11–12). His practice was to speak **the Word** (cf. 1:15) **to them**, the crowds plus the disciples, through parables which He adapted to their levels of understanding.

Because of misconceptions about God's kingdom, **Jesus … did not** teach about it **without using a parable** (in figurative speech). **But** to **His own disciples** privately (*kat' idian;* cf. 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3) **He explained** (lit., "kept on explaining") **everything** about His mission as it related to God's kingdom. This dual approach, illustrated here in chapter 4, is assumed throughout the rest of the Gospel.

E. Jesus' miracles demonstrating His sovereign power (4:35–5:43)

Mark's selection of parables is followed by a series of miracles, indicating that *what* Jesus *did* (His works) *authenticated what* He *said* (His words). Both relate to the presence of God's sovereign rule (kingdom) in Jesus.

With only three exceptions Mark put all the miracles he recorded before 8:27. (Cf. the list "The Miracles of Jesus" at John 2:1–11.) This was to highlight the fact that

Jesus would not tell His disciples about His coming death and resurrection until they openly acknowledged Him as God's Messiah.

This section contains four miracles that clearly show Jesus' sovereign authority over various hostile powers: *a storm at sea* (4:35–41); *demon possession* (5:1–20); *incurable physical illness* (5:25–34); *and death* (5:21–24, 35–43).

1. THE CALMING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (4:35–41) (Matt. 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25)

Mark 4:35–37. The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening** of **that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross **over to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His** 12 **disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by **a** sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous

waves broke over (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped.**

Mark 4:38–39. Exhausted from a full day of teaching, **Jesus** was **sleeping … in the stern**, on a sailor's leather rowing **cushion. The** panic-stricken **disciples woke Him** with a cry of reproach (cf. 5:31; 6:37; 8:4, 32) at His apparent indifference to their situation. Though they called Him **Teacher** (Gr. for the Heb. *Rabbi*), they did not yet understand His teaching.

Jesus **rebuked** (lit., "ordered"; cf. 1:25) **the wind and said to the waves**, "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" (the force of the Gr. perf. tense, *pephimōso*) This verb, "be muzzled," was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power (cf. 1:25) and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm. But at His command **the wind** stopped and **the lake** became **completely calm.**

Mark 4:40–41. Jesus rebuked **His disciples** for being **afraid** (*deiloi*, "cowardly fear") in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring (vv. 11, 34) it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present *in Jesus*. This is what He meant by His second question, **Do you still have no faith?** (cf. 7:18; 8:17–21, 33; 9:19)

In stilling the storm Jesus assumed the authority exercised only by God in the Old Testament (cf. Pss. 89:8–9; 104:5–9; 106:8–9; 107:23–32). That is why the disciples **were terrified** (lit., "feared a great fear") when they saw that **even the** forces of nature did **obey Him**. The verb "terrified" (from *phobeomai*, "have awe;" cf. *deilos*,

"cowardly fear," in Mark 4:40) refers to a reverence that overtakes people in the presence of supernatural power (cf. 16:8). However, their question to one another, **Who is this?** indicated that they did not fully comprehend the significance of it all.

2. THE CURE OF THE GERASENE DEMONIAC (5:1–20) (Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39)

a. A description of the demoniac (5:1–5)

Mark 5:1. Jesus and His disciples **went** to the east side of **the lake** (Sea of Galilee) into **the region of the Gerasenes**. Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes. (See comments on Luke 8:26). Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (cf. Mark 5:11, 19).

Mark 5:2–5. The vivid details of this whole account reflect both an eyewitness report and the report of townspeople who had long been familiar with this demoniac. As soon as (euthys; cf. 1:10) **Jesus got out of the boat**, He encountered **a man with an evil spirit** (cf. 5:8, 13 with 1:23) **from** (ek, "out of") **the tombs**. These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demented people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case.

Mark 5:3–5 elaborately describes his pathetic condition. He **lived in the tombs** (an outcast); he was uncontrollable for **no one could … subdue** (from damazō, "to tame a wild animal") **him**, not even with fetters for his feet or **a chain** for his hands. He went about **night and day** shrieking wildly and cutting **himself with** sharp **stones**, perhaps in a demonic form of worship.

Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man (cf. tdnt, s.v. "daimōn," 2:18–19).

b. The command to the demon (5:6–10)

Mark 5:6–7. The brief statement of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (v. 2) is now related in more detail. Three things indicate that the demon possessing the man was fully aware of Jesus' divine origin and superior power: he knelt before **Him** (in homage, not worship); he used Jesus' divine name in an attempt to gain control over Him (cf. 1:24); and he brazenly appealed to **Jesus** not to punish him. The words, **Most High God**, were used in the Old Testament, often by Gentiles, to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made gods (cf. Gen. 14:18–24; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:2; cf. comments on Mark 1:23–24). The plea, **Swear to God**, was used in exorcisms and should be rendered, "I implore you by (I appeal to) God." The demon did not want Jesus to **torture** him by sending him to his final punishment then (cf. 1:24; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:31).

Mark 5:8. This verse is a brief explanatory (gar, **for**) comment by Mark (cf. 6:52). **Jesus was** commanding **him**, the demon, to leave the **man**. Throughout this

section there is fluctuation between the personality of the man and the demon who possessed him.

Mark 5:9–10. These verses resume the conversation of verse 7. The demon said through the man, **My name is Legion for we are many**. Many evil powers controlled this man and subjected him to intense oppression. They tormented him as one combined force under the leadership of one demon, their spokesman. This accounts for the alternating singular ("my") and plural ("we") pronouns. Repeatedly the leading demon **begged Jesus** earnestly **not to send them out of the area** (lit., "region"; cf. v. 1) into a lonely exile where they could not torment people.

The Latin word "Legion," commonly known in Palestine, denoted a Roman army regiment of about 6,000 soldiers, though it probably also meant a very large number (cf. v. 15). To people under Roman domination the word no doubt suggested great strength and oppression.

c. The loss of the herd of pigs (5:11–13)

Mark 5:11. The Jews considered **pigs** "unclean" animals (cf. Lev. 11:7). But the farmers on the east side of the Sea of Galilee with its predominantly Gentile population raised pigs for the meat markets in the Decapolis, "the 10 cities" of that region (cf. Mark 5:20).

Mark 5:12–13. **The demons** (cf. v. 9) specifically **begged Jesus** to **send** them **among** (*eis* here suggests movement toward) **the pigs** so that they might **go into them** as their new hosts. They knew they were subject to Jesus' command, and in a desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal.

Jesus **gave them permission** to do so. When the demons left the man and entered **the pigs, the** whole **herd, about 2,000 in number**, stampeded **down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned** (lit., "one after another they drowned themselves"). The "sea" perhaps symbolized the satanic realm.

d. The plea of the townspeople (5:14–17)

Mark 5:14–15. The herdsmen **tending the pigs** fled in fear **and reported this** startling event **in the town** (probably Gersa; cf. v. 1) **and** the surrounding **countryside**. The report was so unbelievable that many **people went** to investigate the incident for themselves. **They saw the** former demoniac **sitting there, dressed** (cf. Luke 8:27) **and in his right mind**, rational and self-controlled (contrast Mark 5:3–5). So complete was the transformation that the townspeople **were afraid** (awed; cf. 4:41).

Mark 5:16–17. The herdsmen (and perhaps the disciples) rehearsed **what had happened to the … man—and** to **the pigs**, a detail Mark emphasized to show that this economic loss (not the man) was the people's major concern. As a result the

townspeople **began** urging **Jesus to leave**. Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.

e. The request of the restored man (5:18–20)

Mark 5:18–20. In contrast with the local inhabitants (cf. v. 17), **the man who had been demon-possessed** was begging (*parekalei*, the same word used by the demon, v. 10) **to go with Jesus**. Jesus' miracles repelled some (vv. 15–17) and attracted others (vv. 18–20).

The words, "to go with Him" (lit., "in order that he might be with Him"), recall a similar clause in 3:14 that describes one of the purposes for which Jesus called the Twelve. It is in this sense that Jesus refused the man's request.

Jesus told **him** to **go** to his **home** (immediate family) and **family** (lit., "to yours," your own people) from whom he had been estranged **and** report to **them** all that **the Lord**, the Most High God (cf. 5:7; Luke 8:39) had **done for** him **and how He** had shown **mercy on** him. **The man** obeyed **and began to** proclaim (cf. Mark 1:4, 14) **in the Decapolis** (a league of 10 Gr. cities all but one east of the Jordan) the wonderful things **Jesus** (cf. "Lord," 5:19) **had done for him**. Those who heard him **were amazed** (*ethaumazon*, cf. "astonished"; 6:6a; 12:17; 15:5, 44).

Since this man was a Gentile and his preaching activity was confined to a Gentile area where Jesus was not welcome, Jesus did not give His usual injunction to silence (cf. 1:44; 5:43; 7:36).

3. THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN AND JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (5:21–43) (Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)

This section, *like Mark 3:20–35*, has a "sandwich" structure. The account of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (5:21–24, 35–43) is divided by the incident of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34). What appeared to be a disastrous delay in the healing of the woman actually assured the restoration of Jairus' daughter. It was providentially ordered to test and strengthen Jairus' faith.

a. Jairus' earnest request (5:21–24) (Matt. 9:18–19; Luke 8:40–42)

Mark 5:21–24. **Jesus** and His disciples returned **to the other** (west) **side of the** Sea of Galilee, probably to Capernaum. As before in this area, **a large crowd gathered around** Jesus **while He was** still **by the lake.**

On this occasion, **Jairus came** to Him. As **one of the synagogue rulers**, he was a lay official responsible for the physical management of the synagogue building and the worship services. He was a respected leader in the community. Not all the religious leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Jairus' **little daughter** (an only daughter, Luke 8:42) was **dying** (lit., "was [10] at the point of death"). Matthew's abbreviated treatment of this event (135 words whereas Mark used 374) accounts for his statement that the girl had already died

[10] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 123–124). Victor Books.

(Matt. 9:18). In humility, Jairus **pleaded earnestly** (lit., "begged much"; cf. Mark 5:10) **with** Jesus to **come and put** His **hands on her so that she** might **be healed** (lit., "saved," delivered from physical death) **and live**. The practice of "laying on of hands" in healing symbolized the transfer of vitality to a needy recipient; it was popularly associated with Jesus' healings (cf. 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus probably knew about Jesus' power from previous associations (cf. 1:21–28) and was confident that He could save his daughter's life. As **Jesus went with** Jairus, **a** great **crowd followed** them **and pressed** ("kept thronging," from *synthlibō*; cf. v. 31) **around Him.**

c. The healing of the woman with a hemorrhage (5:25–34) (Matt. 9:20–22; Luke 8:43–48)

Mark 5:25–27. *An unnamed* **woman** *with an incurable condition* joined the crowd. **She had suffered** (lit., "was in") **bleeding for 12 years** (cf. v. 42). This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15:25–27), excluding her from normal social relations since any who came in contact with her would become "unclean."

She had suffered greatly from various treatments by **many doctors**. She **had spent all she** owned in a desperate attempt to get well. Nothing helped; in fact her condition **grew worse.**

But because **she** had **heard about** Jesus' healing power (which aroused her faith), **she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak** (outer garment). She did this despite her "uncleanness" and with a desire to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her malady.

Mark 5:28. She kept telling herself that **if** she could **just touch His clothes**, she would **be healed** and then she could slip away unobserved. Perhaps her faith was mixed with a popular notion that a healer had power in his clothing, or she may have known someone who had been healed in this way (cf. 3:10; 6:56).

Mark 5:29. When the woman touched Jesus' garment, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **her bleeding stopped. She felt** (lit., "knew," from *ginōskō*, "know experientially"; cf. 5:30) by a physical sensation **in her body that she was freed** (lit., "had been healed") **from her suffering**. The healing occurred without overt participation by Jesus.

Mark 5:30. Yet **Jesus** immediately (*euthys*) **realized** in Himself (from *epiginōskō*, "know fully"; cf. v. 29) **that power had gone out from Him** or, more literally, "power from Him (on account of who He is) had gone out."

This unusual expression has been understood in two ways. One view maintains that *God the Father healed the woman and Jesus was not aware of it till afterward*. The other view is that *Jesus Himself, wishing to honor the woman's faith, willingly extended His healing power to her.* The latter view is more consistent with Jesus' healing ministry. Power did not leave Him without His knowledge and will. However, He exercised it only at the Father's bidding (cf. 13:32). The touch of the garment had no magical effect.

Aware of *how* the miracle took place, Jesus **turned around … and asked, Who touched My clothes?** He wanted to establish a personal relationship with the

healed person, untainted with quasi-magical notions.

Mark 5:31–32. Jesus' question seemed absurd to **His disciples** (the Twelve; cf. Luke 8:45) because the crowd was pressing (from *synthlibō;* cf. Mark 5:24) in and many **people** were touching Him. This emphasized Jesus' ability to distinguish the touch of one who in faith expected deliverance from the inadvertent touch of those **crowding against** Him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. So **Jesus kept looking around** (*perieblepeto;* "was looking penetratingly"; cf. 3:5, 34) at the people surrounding Him in order **to see who had** touched Him in this way.

Mark 5:33–34. **Then the woman**, the only one who understood Jesus' question, **came** in humility, and **trembling with fear** (from *phobeomai*, "to have awe, reverence"; cf. 4:41) because she knew **what had happened to her**, in courage and gratitude told Him everything.

The affectionate title, **Daughter** *(its only recorded use by Jesus) signified* [11] *her new relationship with Him* (cf. 3:33–35). Jesus attributed her cure to her **faith** rather than the touch of His clothing. Her faith **healed** her (lit., "has saved or delivered you"; cf. 5:28; 10:52) in that it caused her to seek healing *from Jesus*. Faith, confident trust, derives its value not from the one who expresses it, but from the object in which it rests (cf. 10:52; 11:22).

[11] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 124–125). Victor Books.

Jesus said, **Go in peace and be freed** (lit., "be healthy") **from your suffering** (cf. 5:29). This assured her that her healing was complete and permanent. In her extremity of need—incurable illness and socio-religious isolation—she was a living "dead" person for 12 years. Her restoration to wholeness of life anticipated the dramatic raising of Jairus' daughter who died after living for 12 years.

c. The raising of Jairus' daughter to life (5:35–43) (Matt. 9:23–26; Luke 8:49–56)

Mark 5:35–36. The delay (cf. vv. 22–24) caused by the woman's healing (vv. 25–34) was a severe test of Jairus' faith. His fears that his little **daughter** would die before **Jesus** got there were confirmed by the report of **some men** (unidentified friends and relatives) **from** his **house** that she had died. They concluded that her death ended any hope that **Jesus** could help so they suggested that it was futile to **bother** (lit., "trouble") **the Teacher** (cf. 4:38) **any** further.

Jesus overheard the message but refused to accept its implications. This is the force of the verb translated **ignoring** (*parakousas*), which means "refuse to listen" (cf. Matt. 18:17). The present imperatives in Jesus' reassuring words to **Jairus** could be rendered: "Stop fearing (i.e., in unbelief); just keep on believing." He had already exercised faith in coming to Jesus, he had seen the relationship between faith and Jesus' power (Mark 5:25–34); now he was exhorted to **believe** that Jesus could restore his lifeless daughter.

Mark 5:37–40a. Including Jairus, Jesus let only three disciples—**Peter, James, and John**—accompany Him **to the** house as witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6). These three

disciples served as legal witnesses here in anticipation of Jesus' resurrection, then at His transfiguration (Mark 9:2), and in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house the elaborate ritual of Jewish mourning had already begun. The **commotion** (*thorybon*, "an uproar") included the activity of hired mourners (cf. Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16), weeping, and antiphonal **wailing.**

Jesus entered the house and rebuked the mourners because, **He** told **them … the child** was **not dead but asleep**. Did Jesus mean she was just in a coma? Friends and relatives (cf. Mark 5:35) as well as the professional mourners who **laughed** scornfully at His words, knew she was dead (cf. Luke 8:53). Was Jesus simply describing death as sleep, implying a state of "sleep" between death and resurrection? This is not supported elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Luke 23:42–43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23–24). Probably He was saying that in this case death was *like* sleep. From a mourner's point of view, the girl's death would turn out to be like "a sleep" from which she was awakened. Her condition was not final and irrevocable (cf. Luke 8:55; John 11:11–14).

Mark 5:40b–42. After He put … out all the mourners, Jesus **took the** girl's parents **and the** three **disciples** (cf. v. 37) **with Him** into her room. Then **He took her … hand and** spoke the Aramaic words, ***Talitha koum!*** This was a command, not a magical formula. Mark translated it for his Greek-speaking readers, **Little girl … get up**, adding the clause **I say to you** to emphasize Jesus' authority over death. Since Galileans were bilingual, Jesus spoke both Aramaic, His mother tongue—a

Semitic language related to Hebrew—and Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Greco-Roman world. He likely also spoke Hebrew.

At Jesus' command, **immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **the girl** got **up and** began walking around for (*gar*), Mark explained, **she was 12 years old**. The parents and three disciples **were completely astonished** (from *existēmi*, lit., "out of their minds with great amazement"; cf. 2:12; 6:51).

Mark 5:43. Jesus then gave two **orders**. The first was a **strict** injunction to silence. Jesus did not want the miracle to attract people to Him for the wrong reasons (cf. comments on 1:43–45).

The second command, that the girl be given food, displayed His compassion and also confirmed that she was restored to good health. Her body had [12] been resuscitated, returned to natural life, but was still subject to death, and needed to be sustained by food. This contrasts with a *resurrected* body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35–57).

F. Conclusion: Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6a) (Matt. 13:53–58)

Mark 6:1. From Capernaum **Jesus** went about 20 miles southwest **to His hometown**, Nazareth (cf. 1:9, 24), where He had lived and ministered previously (cf. Luke 4:16–30). He was **accompanied by His disciples**, returning as a Teacher

[12] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 125–126). Victor Books.

(Rabbi) surrounded by His students. This was a public mission, and He was preparing His disciples by example for their own missions (cf. Mark 6:7–13).

Mark 6:2–3. On **the Sabbath … He** taught **in the synagogue** (cf. 1:21), probably expounding on the Law and the Prophets. **Many … were amazed** (*exeplēssonto*, "astounded, struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) at His teaching. But some asked disparaging questions about the origin of (a) **these things**, His teaching, (b) the **wisdom … given Him** (lit., "to this One"), and (c) His power to do **miracles** elsewhere (cf. 6:5). Only two answers were possible: His source was God, or Satan (cf. 3:22).

Despite His impressive words and deeds, He was too ordinary for them. The derogatory question, **Isn't this the carpenter?** implied, "He is a common laborer like the rest of us." All His immediate family—mother, brothers, and sisters—were known to the townspeople, and they were ordinary people. The phrase **Mary's Son** was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother's son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1–2; John 8:41; 9:29). Their words, calculated insults, also suggested they knew there was something unusual about Jesus' birth.

His brothers and **sisters** (cf. Mark 3:31–35) were most likely children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus' birth rather than Joseph's children by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousins. **James** became a leader in the early church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13–21), and authored the Epistle of James (James 1:1). **Judas** was probably Jude, author of the Epistle of Jude (Jude 1). Nothing more is

known of **Joses** and **Simon** or His sisters. Perhaps Joseph was not mentioned because he was already dead.

Thus, since the townspeople could not explain Jesus, **they took offense** (from *skandalizomai*, "to be caused to stumble, to be repelled"; cf. comments on Mark 14:27) **at Him**, finding no reason to believe He was God's Anointed One.

Mark 6:4. Jesus responded to their rejection with the proverb that a prophet is not appreciated at **home**. He was like an Old Testament **prophet** (cf. v. 15; 8:28) whose words were often rejected and who was dishonored most by those who knew Him best (cf. 6:17–29).

Mark 6:5–6a. Because of such persistent unbelief Jesus **could not do any miracles there except** to **lay His hands on** (cf. 5:23) **a few sick people and heal them**. There was no limitation on His power, but His purpose was to perform miracles in the presence of faith. Only a few here had faith to come to Him for healing.

Even Jesus **was amazed** (*ethaumasen*, "astonished"; cf. 5:20; 12:17; 15:5, 44) **at their** unbelief, their unwillingness to believe that His wisdom and power were from God. So far as is known, He never returned to Nazareth.

The people of Nazareth represent Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience (cf. 6:7–13) and what Mark's readers (then and now) would experience in the advance of the gospel.

V. Jesus' Ministry in and beyond Galilee (6:6b–8:30)

The third major section of Mark's Gospel begins structurally like the first two sections (cf. 6:6b with 1:14–15 and 3:7–12; 6:7–34 with 1:16–20 and 3:13–19), but concludes with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (8:27–30) instead of a statement of rejection (cf. 3:6; 6:1–6a). During this phase of His ministry Jesus directed more attention to His disciples. In the face of opposition, He revealed to them by both words and deeds who He really is. Much [13] of this time was spent outside of Galilee.

A. Introductory summary: Jesus' teaching tour of Galilee (6:6b) (Matt. 9:35–38)

Mark 6:6b. This statement summarizes Jesus' third tour of Galilee (for the first, cf. 1:35–39; Mark did not mention the second, cf. Luke 8:1–3). Despite His rejection at Nazareth, **Jesus** was going **around** the neighboring villages **teaching** (cf. Mark 1:21). This set the stage for the Twelve's mission.

B. Jesus' sending forth of the Twelve and John the Baptist's death (6:7–31)

This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. 3:20–35; 5:21–43). *The narrative of the mission* of the Twelve (6:7–13, 30–31) *is divided by the account of John the Baptist's death* (6:14–29). This indicates that the death of John the messenger did not silence his message. The forerunner's death prefigured Jesus' death. And Jesus' message would still be proclaimed by His followers.

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[13] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 126–127). Victor Books.

1. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE (6:7–13) (Matt. 10:1, 5–15; Luke 9:1–6)

Mark 6:7. In order to extend His ministry on this Galilean tour, Jesus **sent** (from *apostellō;* cf. 3:14; 6:30) **the Twelve out two by two**, a common practice in that day for practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

The Twelve were His authorized representatives in keeping with the Jewish concept of *šelûḥîm*, that is, a man's representative (*šâlîaḥ*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and TDNT, s.v. "*apostolos*," 1:413–27). They were to fulfill a *special* commission and bring back a report (cf. Mark 6:30); so Jesus' unusual instructions (vv. 8–11) pertained only to that particular mission.

He **gave them authority** (*exousian;* the "right" and the "power"; cf. 2:10; 3:15) **over evil spirits**. This power to exorcise demons (cf. 1:26) would authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15).

Mark 6:8–9. The urgency of their mission required that they travel lightly. They were to **take** a **staff** (*rhabdon*, "walking stick") and to **wear sandals** (ordinary footwear). **But** they were **not** to take **bread** (food), a **bag** (probably a traveler's bag for provisions, not a beggar's bag), **money** (small copper coins easily tucked in their cloth **belts**), or **an extra tunic**, additional inner garment used as a covering at night. They were to depend on God to provide food and shelter through the hospitality of Jewish households.

The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9–10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used

ktaomai (“to procure, acquire”), instead of *airō* (“to take”); so the disciples were not to acquire *additional* staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had. Mark and Luke both use *airō*, “to take or carry along.” But Luke says, “Take nothing for the journey—no staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably no additional staff; while Mark says, “Take nothing for the journey *except* (cf. Mark 6:5) a staff (*rhabdon*),” presumably the one already in use. Each writer stressed a different aspect of Jesus’ instructions.

Mark 6:10–11. Whenever the disciples entered **a house** as invited guests, they were to **stay there** making it their base of operations **until** they left the **town**. They were not to impose on the hospitality of many people or accept more attractive offers once they were settled.

They should also expect rejection. **If any place** (a household, synagogue, village) would **not** offer hospitality **or listen to** their message, they were to **leave** there and to **shake the dust off** their **feet**. Devout Jews did this when they left Gentile (alien) territory to show that they were dissociating themselves from it. This would tell Jewish hearers they were acting like pagans in rejecting the disciples’ message.

This was to be done **as a testimony** (cf. 1:44; 13:9) **against** the citizens. It warned them that the disciples’ responsibility to them had been fulfilled and those who rejected the message would have to answer to God for themselves (cf. Acts 13:51; 18:6). No doubt it provoked serious thought and perhaps repentance by some.

The KJV statement regarding Sodom and Gomorrah is not in the earliest Greek manuscripts of Mark's text (cf. Matt. 10:15).

Mark 6:12–13. In obedience the Twelve **preached** repentance (cf. 1:4, 14–15), **drove out many demons** (cf. 1:32–34, 39), and healed **many sick people** [14] (cf. 3:10). As Jesus' representatives (cf. 6:7; 9:37) they learned that His power extended beyond His personal presence. Their mission showed the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 1:15).

Anointing the sick **with oil** is unique to Mark. This use of olive oil was both because of its medicinal properties (cf. Luke 10:34; James 5:14) and its symbolic value indicating that the disciples acted by Jesus' authority and power, not their own.

2. THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (6:14–29) (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)

a. Popular explanations of Jesus' identity (6:14–16)

Mark 6:14–16. The miraculous activity of Jesus and the Twelve throughout Galilee caught the attention of **Herod** Antipas I, son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas was *tetrarch* (ruler of a fourth part of his father's kingdom) of Galilee and Perea under the aegis of Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7).

[14] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 127–128). Victor Books.

Officially he was not a **king** but Mark's use of the title probably reflected local custom in view of Herod's covetous ambitions.

Mark 6:14b–15 presents three opinions which attempt to account for Jesus' **miraculous powers;** He was

(a) **John the Baptist** (cf. 1:4–9) risen **from the dead**,

(b) **Elijah** (cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6), or

(c) **a prophet**, resuming the suspended line of Israel's **prophets.**

Despite other opinions **Herod**, troubled by a guilty conscience, remained convinced that Jesus was **the man** he had **beheaded**. Herod believed **John** the Baptist was risen **from the dead** and was using miraculous powers. Mark 6:17–29 explains verse 16 in a "flashback."

b. Flashback: the execution of John the Baptist (6:17–29)

Mark included this section not only to supplement 1:14 and further clarify 6:16, but also to provide a "passion narrative" of Jesus' forerunner that foreshadowed and paralleled Jesus' own suffering and death. Mark focused on what Herod and Herodias did to John. Perhaps he included so many details to draw a parallel to the Elijah-Jezebel conflict since Jesus later identified John as Elijah (9:11–13).

Mark 6:17–18. Mark explained (*gar*, **for**) that **Herod himself had** ordered **John** to be **put in prison**. According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 2). Herod **did this because of Herodias**, an ambitious woman who was

his second **wife**. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod's half-brother (**brother** means half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18. 5. 1–2). They had a daughter, Salome. **Herod** divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip (not the Philip of Luke 3:1). **John had** repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

Mark 6:19–20. John's bold rebuke infuriated **Herodias** who **nursed a grudge against** him (lit., "had it in for him"). Not satisfied with John's imprisonment, she **wanted to kill him, but** her plans were thwarted **because Herod feared John** (had a superstitious dread of him), whom he knew was **a righteous and holy man**. So he **protected** John from Herodias' murderous intentions by keeping him in prison—a shrewd compromise.

In spite of his immoral lifestyle, **Herod** was fascinated by John. He had a certain attraction for John's preaching, but it left him **greatly puzzled**. The words "greatly puzzled" (*polla ēporei*) have good manuscript support and are preferred on contextual grounds to the reading "he did many things" (*polla epoiei;* NIV marg.; KJV), a reading that may reflect an error of hearing by scribes who copied the text as it was read to them. Herod's conflict between his passion for Herodias and his respect for John showed his vacillating moral weakness.

Mark 6:21–23. **Finally** (cf. v. 19) Herodias found an opportunity to carry out a murderous scheme. The occasion was Herod's **birthday … banquet**, a luxurious

celebration he gave **for his high officials** (in civil government), **militarycommanders, and the leading men** (prominent citizens) **of Galilee**. Herodias deliberately sent (implied by vv. 24–25) her **daughter**, Salome, into the banquet room to dance in a way that would win Herod's approval.

Salome was a young woman of marriageable age (*korasion*, "girl"; cf. Es. 2:2, 9; Mark 5:41–42), probably in her middle teens. Her skillful and provocative dance **pleased Herod and his … guests**, and led him to make her an ostentatious, rash offer as a reward. **He** arrogantly **promised her** anything she wanted and sealed it **with an oath** (cf. Es. 5:6) which included the words **up to half my kingdom** (cf. Es. 7:2). Actually Herod had no "kingdom" (realm) to give (cf. comments on Mark 6:14). He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf. 1 Kings 13:8).

Mark 6:24–25. When Salome asked **her mother what** she should **ask for**, Herodias replied with premeditated promptness, **The head of John the Baptist**. She wanted proof that he was dead. **At once** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) Salome **hurried** back **to the king with** her macabre **request**. She demanded that the deed be done **right now** (*exautēs*, "at once") before Herod could find a way to avoid it. She added the words **on a platter**, suggested perhaps by the festive occasion.

Mark 6:26–28. Salome's request deeply grieved (cf. 14:34) Herod. **But because of his oaths** (considered irrevocable) and to save face before **his dinner guests** (cf. 6:21) **he did not** have the courage to reject it. **So he immediately** (*euthys*) ordered the request to be fulfilled.

An executioner (*spekoulatora*, a Latin loanword, probably a bodyguard) **beheaded John in the prison** of the fortress, **brought … his head on a platter** to Salome in the banquet hall. **She** in turn **gave it to** Herodias (cf. 9:12–13). John had been silenced, but his message to Herod still stood.

Mark 6:29. When **John's disciples** (cf. Matt. 11:2–6) heard about his death, they **came … took his body, and** put **it in a tomb.**

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10)

Mark 6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, "delegates, messengers") returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their "works" first) **and taught** ("words") in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation "apostles" for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as "missionaries" (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with** Him for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they** had no time **to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by** themselves (*kat' idian;* cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, "remote"; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus' self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus' ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark's readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

Mark 6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus' directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat' idian*, Gr. idiom meaning "privately"), a phrase Mark used for Jesus' private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, "remote") **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot … ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need. [15] **When Jesus … saw** the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17;

[15] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–130). Victor Books.

Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the "wilderness" (*erēmos;* cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God's kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

Mark 6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in **a remote** (*erēmos;* cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people … so they** could **buy** food in **the surrounding … villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples' caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV marg.). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man's wages**, a sum beyond the disciples' means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

Mark 6:39–44. *Mark's vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter's*.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words "in groups" in verse 39 could be rendered "table company by table company" (*symposia symposia*, lit., "drinking or eating parties"). But the words "in groups" in verse 40 are literally, "garden plot by garden plot" (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., "to praise, extol" [God], or "to bless"; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., "kept giving") **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb "gave" indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, "males"), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

Mark 6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., "compelled") **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., "**go** before [**Him**] **to** the other side") to **Bethsaida** ("house of fishing"). The verb "made" implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this "messianic enthusiasm" and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd.**

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of "Bethsaida" (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of

the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called "Bethsaida in Galilee" (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53). **After** dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

Mark 6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the** disciples' **boat was** well out **in the … lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

Mark 6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the** choppy water's surface. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going "to bypass" them. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

Mark 6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark

explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified.**

Mark 6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., "I am," *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat … the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar*, **for**) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

Mark 6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain "the [16] Garden of God" and "a paradise." A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

Mark 6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats to** Him for healing. **Everywhere He went … the sick** were **placed** in **marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun;* cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The "edge" or "fringe" was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., "were being saved"; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark's earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). *Healing was not effected by a touch*

[16] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Victor Books.

but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

4. The controversy with the religious leaders concerning defilement (7:1–23) (Matt. 15:1–20)

This passage returns to the theme of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf. Mark 2:1–3:6). It emphasizes the rejection Jesus encountered in Israel (cf. 3:6, 19–30; 6:1–6a) despite His public popularity (cf. 6:53–56). It serves as a fitting prelude for His ministry to Gentiles (7:24–8:10). The words "unclean" (7:2, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23) and "tradition" (vv. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13) bind the section together.

a. The charge by the religious leaders (7:1–5) (Matt. 15:1–2)

Mark 7:1–2. The Pharisees (cf. 2:16; 3:6) **and some** Law **teachers** (cf. 1:22) **from Jerusalem** (cf. 3:22–30) came to investigate **Jesus** and His followers again, presumably at Capernaum (cf. 7:17).

They critically observed **some of** Jesus' **disciples eating food with "unclean" … hands**. "Unclean" (*koinais*, "common"), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant **ceremonially unwashed**. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Mark 7:3–4. These verses constitute an extended parenthesis in which Mark explained (*gar;* cf. 1:16), **for** the benefit of his Gentile readers who lived outside Palestine, the common Jewish practice of **ceremonial washing.**

The ritual washing regulations were observed by **the Pharisees and all the Jews** (a generalization depicting their custom) as part of **the tradition of the elders** which they followed scrupulously. These interpretations, designed to regulate every aspect of Jewish life, were considered as binding as the written Law and were passed on to each generation by faithful Law teachers (scribes). Later, in the third century a.d., the oral tradition was collected and codified in the Mishnah which, in turn, provided the foundation for and structure of the Talmud.

The most common ritual cleansing was the washing of one's hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating food (cf. tdnt, s.v. *"katharos,"* 3:418–24). This was especially important after a trip to **the marketplace** where a Jew would likely come in contact with an "unclean" Gentile or such things as money or utensils.

The comment that the Jews observed **many other traditions**, some of which Mark named, indicates that the issue under discussion involved the whole detailed question of ritual cleansing. For a loyal Jew, to disregard these regulations was a sin; to follow them was the essence of goodness and service to God.

Mark 7:5. The religious leaders directed their critical inquiry to **Jesus** who, as the disciples' Teacher, was held responsible for their conduct (cf. 2:18, 24). The

Jewish leaders thought that the disciples' failure to observe ritual washing was a symptom of a deeper problem. Their concern was that the **disciples**, and Jesus, did not **live according to the tradition of the elders** (cf. 7:3).

b. Jesus' response and countercharge to His critics (7:6–13) (Matt. 15:3–9)

In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He [17] In reply Jesus made no reference to His disciples' conduct. Rather He addressed two issues underlying the inquiry: (a) the true source of religious authority—tradition or Scripture (Mark 7:6–13), and (b) the true nature of defilement—ceremonial and moral (vv. 14–23).

Mark 7:6–8. Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 (almost verbatim from the LXX) and applied Isaiah's description of his contemporaries to His questioners whom He called **hypocrites** (occurring only here in Mark).

They were "hypocrites" because they made an outward profession of worshiping God but gave Him no genuine **worship** from **their hearts**, the hidden centers of their thoughts and decisive choices (cf. Mark 7:21; 12:30). Their worship (a pious act) of God was **in vain** (*matēn*, "futile") because like the Jews of Isaiah's day they were teaching the **rules** of **men** as authoritative (divine) teachings.

[17] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 132–133). Victor Books.

Consequently Jesus charged them with abandoning **the commands of God**, His Law, and instead adhering **to the traditions of men**. He redefined their oral tradition (cf. 7:3, 5), emphasizing its human origin (cf. vv. 9, 13), and He straightforwardly rejected its authority.

Mark 7:9. Jesus restated His charge that the religious leaders were clever at sidestepping God's Law **in order to observe** their **own traditions** (cf. v. 8). He supported this verdict by citing a striking illustration (vv. 10–12) which exposed their sin.

Mark 7:10. **Moses** clearly set forth the divine command (cf. v. 13) regarding a person's duty toward his parents. He stated it positively (Ex. 20:12, LXX, the fifth commandment; cf. Deut. 5:16) and negatively (Ex. 21:17, LXX; cf. Lev. 20:9). Such responsibility included adequate financial support and practical care for their needs in their old age (cf. 1 Tim. 5:4, 8). A person who treated his parents with contempt would face the **death** penalty.

Mark7:11–12. Jesus quoted a scribal tradition that sidestepped the divine command. The words, **But you say**, are emphatic, showing the contrast with Moses' words (v. 10). In their "tradition" it was possible for a person to declare all his possessions to be **Corban** and thereby absolve himself from the fifth commandment.

"Corban" is the Greek (and Eng.) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to **a gift devoted to God**. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and

property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes.

If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were "Corban" then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they **no longer let him do anything for** his parents.

Mark 7:13. **By** their **tradition** they nullified **the Word of God. Nullify** translates *akyrountes*, from *akyroō*, used in the papyri for annulling contracts. To sanction religious donations at the expense of violating God's command regarding one's duty to parents was to set human tradition above God's Word.

The "Corban" vow was only one example of **many** other **things like** it (e.g., restrictive Sabbath rules; cf. 2:23–3:5) where scribal tradition distorted and obscured the Old Testament.

c. Jesus' explanation of real defilement (7:14–23) (Matt. 15:10–20)

At this point Jesus gave a more direct reply to the defilement question (cf. Mark 7:5). He addressed the crowd first (vv. 14–15) and gave a general principle applicable to everyone. Then He explained the principle to His disciples privately (vv. 17–23).

Mark 7:14–16. Following a solemn call to attentive hearing and careful consideration by **everyone** (cf. 4:3), **Jesus** disclosed to **the crowd** the true source of defilement. Negatively, **Nothing outside a man** (generic, "person") by going into him **can make him "unclean"** (cf. 7:2). Jesus spoke in a moral not a medical sense. A person is *not* defiled morally by what he eats even if his hands are not ceremonially washed.

Positively **What comes out of a man** (person; cf. vv. 21–23) **makes him "unclean."** A person *is* defiled morally by what he thinks in his heart even [18] though he may scrupulously observe outward purity rituals. So Jesus contradicted the Rabbinic view by stating that sin proceeds from within and not from without (cf. Jer. 17:9–10). He also demonstrated the true spiritual intent of the laws regarding clean and unclean food in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 11; Deut. 14). A Jew who ate "unclean" food was defiled not by the food, but by His disobeying God's command.

Mark 7:17. After they **left the crowd and entered the house** (probably in Capernaum; cf. 2:1–2; 3:20), **His disciples asked** for an explanation of the **parable** given in 7:15. Their failure to understand Jesus' words and works is emphasized throughout 6:32–8:26 and is traced to their hardness of heart (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

[18] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 133–134). Victor Books.

Mark 7:18–19. Jesus' question, **Are you so dull?** is literally, "So then are you *also* without understanding?" It showed that they, like the crowd, did not comprehend His teaching despite the instruction He already gave them.

Jesus amplified the negative truth that **nothing … from the outside** of a person **can** defile **him** morally (cf. v. 15a). *The reason is that food* (or any other item) does *not enter **his heart**, the control center of the human personality, and thereby affect his moral nature*. Rather, it enters **his stomach** (a nonmoral agent).

The concluding sentence of verse 19 is an editorial comment by Mark (cf. 2:10, 28; 3:30; 13:14), to emphasize the significance of Jesus' statement for his Christian readers in Rome, some of whom may have been confused over Jewish food laws (cf. Rom. 14:14; Gal. 2:11–17; Col. 2:20–22). He simply pointed out that **Jesus declared all foods "clean"** for Christians. The early church was slow to grasp this truth (cf. Acts 10; 15).

Mark 7:20–23. Jesus repeated and amplified the positive truth that **what comes out of a** person **is what** defiles **him** morally (cf. v. 15b). This is confirmed by noting what things come **from within, out of** a person's heart (cf. v. 19).

The general term translated **evil thoughts** precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions.

The catalog of evil Jesus gave has a strong Old Testament flavor and consists of 12 items. First, there are six *plural* nouns (in Gr.) depicting wicked acts viewed individually: **sexual immorality** (*porneiai*, "illicit sexual activities of various kinds"); **theft** (*klopai*); **murder** (*phonoi*); **adultery** (*moicheiai*, illicit sexual relations by a married person); **greed** (*pleonexiai*, "covetings"), insatiable cravings for what belongs to another; **malice** (*ponēriai*, "wickednesses"), the many ways evil thoughts express themselves.

Second, *there are six singular nouns depicting evil dispositions*: **deceit** (*dolos*), cunning maneuvers designed to ensnare someone for one's personal advantage; **lewdness** (*aselgeia;* cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7), unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior; **envy** (*opthalmos ponēros*, lit., "an evil eye," a Heb. expression for stinginess; cf. Prov. 23:6), a begrudging, jealous attitude toward the possessions of others; **slander** (*blasphēmia*), injurious or defaming speech against God or man; **arrogance** (*hyperēphania*, used only here in the NT), boastfully exalting oneself above others who are viewed with scornful contempt; **and folly** (*aphrosynē*), moral and spiritual insensitivity.

All these evils defile a person, and have their source **from inside**, from one's heart. So Jesus took the focus of attention away from external rituals and placed it on *the need for God to cleanse one's evil heart* (cf. Ps. 51).

4. THE CURE OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S DAUGHTER (7:24–30) (Matt. 15:21–28)

This is *the first of three events* Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond

the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mark 4:35; 5:20; 6:32–52; 7:24–8:10). On this journey He actually went out of Palestine, apparently for the only time. These events in Gentile territory are an appropriate sequel to Jesus' teaching in verses 1–23 and a fitting preview of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9).

Mark 7:24. **Jesus left that place**, probably Capernaum **and went to the vicinity of Tyre**, a Mediterranean seaport city in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) [19] about 40 miles northwest of Capernaum. Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" (cf. NIV marg.) should be included (cf. v. 31).

Jesus went there not to minister publicly to the people but to secure privacy, previously interrupted (cf. 6:32–34, 53–56), in order to instruct His disciples. That is why He **did not want anyone to know** He was there. But **He could not** conceal **His presence** since news of His healing power had preceded Him (cf. 3:8).

Mark 7:25–26. An unnamed **woman, whose little daughter was** demon-**possessed** (cf. 1:23; 5:2), **came** immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **and fell at His feet**, an expression of deep respect as well as personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. 9:17–18, 20–22, 26). She kept asking **Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.**

[19] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 134–135). Victor Books.

Mark stressed the woman's non-Jewish identity: she **was a Greek**, not from Greece, but *a Gentile by culture and religion*. She was a Syrophoenician **born** in **Phoenicia**, part of the province of Syria. Matthew called her a "Canaanite woman" (Matt. 15:22).

Mark 7:27. Jesus' reply was appropriate to His purpose for being there (cf. v. 24), and was on a level the Gentile woman could grasp. It was cast in figurative language: **the children** represented His disciples (cf. 9:35–37); **the children's bread** represented the benefits of His ministry to them; and the **dogs** (lit., "little dogs," house pets, not outdoor scavengers) represented the Gentiles (not in a derogatory sense here).

Jesus was telling the woman that His first priority in being there was to instruct His disciples. It is not appropriate to interrupt a family meal to give the dogs food from the table. So it was not appropriate for Him to interrupt His ministry to His disciples to give His services to her, a Gentile. But Jesus' reluctance to help stimulated her faith.

Other interpreters understand a broader theological meaning in Jesus' words: the children (unbelieving Israel) must be fed (Jesus' mission); their bread (special privileges including first claim on Jesus' ministry) must not be thrown to the dogs (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) had not yet come. Though this view is true theologically, it overplays Mark's point.

Mark 7:28. The woman accepted Jesus' statement with the words, **Yes, Lord** ("Sir," a title of respect). She realized He had the right to refuse her request. However, feeling no insult in the analogy He used, she pressed it a little further: **Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**

Her point was that the dogs get some food *at the same time* as the children and thus do not have to wait. There need be no interruption in His instructing the disciples for all she humbly requested was a crumb, a small benefit of His grace for her desperate need.

Mark 7:29–30. Because of **such a reply**, which demonstrated her humility and faith, Jesus told **her** to **go** home (cf. 2:11; 5:34; 10:52), and assured her that **the demon** had **left** her **daughter**. The words "has left" (perf. tense) indicate the cure was already complete.

When **she** returned **home**, she **found** that **her child** was resting peacefully **and the demon** was **gone**. This is the only miracle recorded in Mark that Jesus performed at a distance without giving any vocal command.

6. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MAN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH (7:31–37)

This miracle is recorded only by Mark. It concludes a narrative cycle, 6:32–7:37, with the people's confession about Jesus (7:37). This event prefigured the opening of the disciples' "ears" (cf. 8:18, 27–30). A second narrative cycle begins in 8:1 and climaxes in the disciples' confession (8:27–30).

Mark 7:31–32. **Jesus left … Tyre** (cf. v. 24) **and went** north 20 miles **through Sidon**, a coastal city, and then turned southeastward, avoiding Galilee, to a place on the eastern side of **the Sea of Galilee** within **the region of the Decapolis**.

Some people there **begged** Jesus **to place His hand** (cf. 5:23) **on** a **man** who **was deaf and could hardly talk** (*mogilalon*, "speaking with difficulty"). This rare word occurs only here and in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6, a passage promising the coming of God's rule on earth. This promised intervention [20] intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).

Mark 7:33–35. In healing this man, Jesus used sign language and symbolic acts (which Mark did not explain) that uniquely suited the man's needs and caused him to exercise faith. Jesus **took him aside** privately (cf. 6:32) in order to communicate one-to-one with him apart **from the crowd**. By touching his **ears** and **tongue**, spitting (on the ground) and looking **up to heaven** (to God; cf. 6:41), Jesus conveyed what He was going to do. His **deep sigh** may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.

Then Jesus gave the Aramaic command **Ephphatha!** meaning **Be opened!** (lit., "be completely opened") This word could easily be lip-read by a deaf person. This Aramaic word may indicate that the man was not a Gentile.

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[20] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 135–136). Victor Books.

Immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) **at** Jesus' command **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he** could **speak** clearly. Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually.

Mark 7:36. The more **Jesus commanded** (lit., "kept commanding") the people to be silent, **the more they kept** proclaiming the news (cf. 1:44–45; 5:20, 43). He wanted to minister in the Decapolis region without being regarded as a popular "Miracle-worker."

Mark 7:37. Jesus' miracle left the people **overwhelmed with amazement** (*exeplēssonto;* "struck out, overwhelmed"; cf. 1:22; 6:2; 10:26; 11:18) beyond all measure (*hyperperissōs*, a forceful adverb used only here in the NT).

The crowd's climactic confession is a general statement about their understanding of Jesus, based on previous reports (cf. 3:8; 5:20). The words **the deaf** and **the dumb** are plural in Greek, viewing them as two classes of people. **Even** should be rendered "both." Mark probably intended an allusion to Isaiah 35:3–6 in the crowd's confession.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (8:1–10) (Matt. 15:32–39)

In **Mark 8:1–30** *Mark presented a series of events that parallels his sequence in* **6:32–7:37**. Despite the replay of events and teaching, *the disciples were still slow to "see and hear" who Jesus really is* (cf. 8:18). In both narrative cycles the feeding of a multitude played an important role (cf. 6:52; 8:14–21).

Mark 8:1–3. **During** Jesus' ministry in the Decapolis region (cf. 7:31), **another large crowd gathered** (cf. 6:34), probably both Jews and Gentiles.

After listening to Jesus' teaching **three days**, they had **nothing to eat**. They were weakened by hunger so that **if** Jesus would **send them home hungry, they** would **collapse on the way** as **some** had **come a long distance.**

Jesus had **compassion** on them in their physical need (cf. 6:34) and called the disciples' attention to it (contrast 6:35–36). He took the initiative to feed the multitude who chose to forgo food in order to be nourished by His words.

Mark 8:4–5. The disciples' question highlighted their slowness in comprehending the significance of Jesus' presence with them in a new crisis. It also showed their inadequacy to meet the need; yet they indirectly referred the matter back to Jesus (contrast 6:37).

Jesus' question concerning the amount of **bread** available clearly indicated His intentions, and was an invitation for the **disciples** to use the resources they had—**seven** loaves. They also had "a few small fish" (cf. 8:7; Matt. 15:34).

Mark 8:6–7. The feeding of this crowd occurred much like the feeding of the 5,000 (cf. 6:39–42). The Greek participles translated **taken** and **given thanks** (*eucharistēsas;* cf. 14:23), and the verb **broke** are in the aorist tense, expressing decisive acts, whereas the verb **gave** is in the imperfect, showing that Jesus "kept

on giving" the bread **to His disciples** for distribution **(cf**. 6:41**). He did the same thing with** a few small fish.

Mark 8:8–9a. In abrupt fashion Mark stressed the sufficiency of the miracle (all **ate and were satisfied**), the abundance of the provision (**seven basketfuls of** food remained), and the large size of the crowd (**about 4,000 men** [21] besides women and children; cf. Matt. 15:38).

The baskets (*spyridas*) on this occasion *differed from those used in* feeding the 5,000 (*kophinoi*, Mark 6:43; cf. 8:19–20). They were rope or mat baskets sometimes large enough to carry a man (cf. Acts 9:25). Thus the 7 basketfuls (perhaps a basket for each loaf used) of Mark 8:8 likely held more than the 12 basketfuls of 6:43.

Mark 8:9b–10. Dismissing the crowd, Jesus immediately (*euthys;* cf. 1:10) entered a **boat with His disciples** and crossed the Sea of Galilee **to the region of Dalmanutha**, a town (also called Magadan; cf. Matt. 15:39) near Tiberias on the lake's western side (cf. Mark 8:13, 22).

[21] Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 136–137). Victor Books.