

Mark 3:7-12 (NIV)

- 1) We really do not know exactly where Jesus is at this point.
- 2) In the last verses, he entered the synagogue – most likely in Capernaum.
- 3) If that is the case the sea he is withdrawing to is likely the Sea of Galilee.
- 4) What Mark is describing here is truly, the far reaches of Palestine.
 - a) Idumea is the far south of Judea at Beersheba.
 - b) Beyond the Jordan would indicate east of the Jordan in the territory of Perea
 - c) And to the far north, would be Sidon at the northern extreme of Palestine.
- 5) The indication is clearly that Jesus was known all over the Jewish world of that day and people were flocking to him for healing and his teaching.
- 6) I think we need to take a second and let the description of Jesus' predicament really sink in.
 - a) We have all seen cases where stars are mobbed with fans trying to get close to touch them.
 - b) In this case the purpose is to receive healing which would make the scene even more dramatic.
 - c) If you combine that with demons coming into His presence and crying out (thru their hosts) that He was the son of God.
 - d) This must have been a truly chaotic scene and, traumatic for Jesus and His disciples.
- 7) As to the last item we just mentioned – in verse 11, we have another situation that, at first glance, may appear to be a contradiction.
 - a) As we have seen in the past couple of passages, Jesus is truly at this point trying to drive home the point to the Pharisees that he is the Messiah and the Son of God.
 - b) Yet, here again, we hear him telling the evil spirits that recognized him not to tell who he really was.
 - c) From our study of Revelation, we know that these unclean or evil spirits were likely fallen angels who had joined Satan in his rebellion and therefore knew Jesus well.
 - i) They knew his power and his capability to destroy them if he desired.
 - d) When these evil spirits identify Jesus as the Son of God, there are several reasons why he would try to silence them.
 - i) First, though he was revealing himself to the religious leaders by his answers and actions, the majority of the people still did not get him – meaning, they did not realize His deity.
 - ii) Also that he did not want them to reveal his identity because it could be construed by the religious leaders as an endorsement him.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- iii) The Pharisees were already saying that he was casting out demons by the ruler of the demons. We will see details of this shortly in verses 20 to 35 of this chapter.
 - (1) The vocal recognition and endorsement of Jesus for who he was by these demons would only add fuel to the fire.
- iv) Finally, as we discussed a few weeks back, there is the issue of understanding who He really was prior to His crucifixion and resurrection.
- v) He did not want the evil spirits to identify him because he knew that his true identity would be revealed at his resurrection.

Mark 3:13-19 (NIV)

- 1) We have already met some but not all of these men in Mark's writing.
- 2) When we look at this list, we do not see a group of men who by any means would be expected to be totally successful on their own.
 - a) Fisherman, tax collectors – what one would likely call “common folks”.
 - b) No special credentials
 - c) Definitely not trained teachers, rabbis, or other religious leaders.
- 3) As I contemplated this event, it occurred to me that Jesus really had no other source from which to choose those that would establish his church.
 - a) He could not go to any of the groups that constituted the religious establishment of the day – with only a few exceptions, they all were trying in every way possible to stop his efforts.
 - b) He really could not go to his family – not enough resources there and at this point, we are not sure what their take on Jesus really is.
 - c) John tells us his brothers did not believe in him at this point.
- 4) So, why did Jesus choose these men? They were a truly diverse lot!
 - a) Tax collector
 - b) Couple of Fishermen who had probably had run ins with the tax collector
 - i) Possible conflict within the group.
 - c) A Zealot – perhaps a political activist.
 - d) A thief and betrayer
 - e) To use the vernacular – a couple of “hot heads” – James and John (son's of Zebedee)
 - f) The others were probably equally diverse.
- 5) Though they are a diverse and unlikely group, we know they were His choices – “those whom He Himself wanted”
- 6) By the way I used the NASB here. Some of your translations have the words “designating them apostles” or something to that effect.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- a) Here again, the words do not appear in all the earliest manuscripts so there is some debate.
 - b) The NASB leaves them out but NA27 says in their opinion, the evidence is too strong in favor of leaving them in.
 - c) In that, they place the phrase in brackets – thus the difference.
- 7) But as always, He looks to the Father for security in His choices.
- 8) When we look at Luke's account of this event, we are told that Jesus spent the night in prayer:
Luke 6:12-13 (NASB 2020)
- 9) This, to me says unequivocally that he wanted his father's input on this choice.
- a) There is much at stake here – in the end God's whole plan hinges on these men.
- 10) There are two other reasons that Mark states why Jesus chose these men.
- a) “so that they would be with Him”
 - b) And
- “so that He could send them out to preach, 15 and to have **authority** to cast out the demons”
- 23) In Matthew 10:1 we read additionally that they were also given the power “to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”
- 24) It was important that, like Jesus, these men as they preached, were validated by their acts in both the physical and spiritual or supernatural realms.
- a) In the physical – healing the sick.
 - b) In the spiritual – by casting out demons.
- 25) Eleven of these men were the ones who would establish the church – His Church after He departed back to the Father.
- 26) The twelfth was the instrument that would lead to the culmination of God's plan of salvation – Jesus' betrayal!
- 11) This is a pivotal moment in Christ's earthly ministry.
- 12) To this point, he had been concentrating on the crowds that had come to believe in his healing power and were listening to his message.
- 13) As we proceed, we will see that, even though he is still teaching and healing, He will be spending a large amount of effort on training and preparing these men for the work they are to do after he departs this earth.

Mark 3:20-30 NASU

- 1) Mark never lets us get very far from a situation in which someone is challenging Jesus – his power authority and, in this case His sanity as well.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 2) In fact, we can see that anyone who seriously encounters or even considers Jesus has only three options:
 - a) They can find him divine.
 - b) They can find him demon possessed.
 - c) Or, they can find him delusional (crazy).
- 3) In this passage, we see all three.
 - a) Many among the crowds that are looking to him for healing and are coming to hear him speak with authority would most likely consider him to be divine.
 - b) Clearly, “his people” meaning his family considered him delusional.
 - i) As we mentioned a bit ago, John records that his brothers did not believe in him at this point. In fact, they attempted to taunt him about his ministry.

John 7:3-5 (NASU)

- c) Finally, we see the “teachers of the Law” (the Scribes) attributing Jesus’ ministry to Satan.
- 4) In the first two cases we can be sure that he was glad for those in the crowd (the multitudes) that did believe.
- 5) In the case of his family, I am sure Jesus would have preferred that his family they would have embraced his message, but he probably understood.
- 6) However, in the situation with the Scribes, Jesus had to deal with this attitude!
- 7) In the parallel passage in Matthew, there is a precipitating incident that brings forth this accusation from the scribes.

Matt 12:22-25 (NIV)

Beelzebub or Beelzebul is a name derived from a Philistine god, formerly worshipped in Ekron, and later adopted by some Abrahamic religions as a major demon. The name Beelzebub is associated with the Canaanite god Baal. In theological sources, predominantly Christian, Beelzebub is another name for Satan. [Wikipedia](#)

- 8) Returning to Mark’s description of this event we see how Jesus handles the accusation.
- 9) First, he calls them to himself which means he wanted them closer to him so he could speak directly to them about their thoughts and accusations.
 - a) They truly did not realize how serious what they were saying was.
- 10) To set the focus, he begins by asking them a simple question.

"How can Satan cast out Satan?"

- 11) He then uses two parables to answer the accusation in a very clear and concise way

"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand." AND

"If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

12) To be sure the dots are connected of these two parables he tells them point blank what he thinks about their assertion

"If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!"

13) Then, to bring it further into focus for them he tells them a concluding parable;

"But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house."

14) The LABC explains the point of this parable in this way:

This picture reflects a situation in the ancient world where wealthy people's homes were virtual fortresses, and their servants could form a small army. Jesus pictured Satan as the wealthy man and his demons as his servants and possessions. Jesus called Satan a strong man in this parable. His house is the realm of evil where there is sickness, demon possession, and death. It also refers to a possessed individual in whom Satan's demons live. Satan's possessions are the demons — those beings through whom Satan carries out his work in the world. The only way those possessions could be carried off would be for someone to first tie up the strong man — the only way for the demons to be cast out is for someone to first limit Satan's power. Jesus' advent into the world did just that (1 John 3:8).

Although God permits Satan to work in our world, God is in control. Jesus, as God, has "tied up" Satan; Jesus is able to drive out demons and end their terrible work in people's lives. As such, every exorcism was a binding of Satan; one day Satan will be bound forever (Rev 20:10). Jesus was not in league with Satan, as the teachers of the law tried to claim; rather, he had overpowered Satan by refusing his temptations and by constantly freeing people held in Satan's grasp — either through demon possession or through the power of sin.

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15) Finally, Jesus brings them to the reality of *their* assertion.

- a) Obviously, by their denial, they have rejected him.
- b) But by the assertion that he was acting thru the power of an evil spirit SATAN (in essence calling the Holy Spirit and evil spirit or SATAN) they were committing an unpardonable sin!

16) As we look at this, we can and should see that Jesus has an immediate and specific offense in mind when he says this.

17) Jesus has been in total submission to the Father and under the influence of the Holy Spirit his entire life.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- a) The Holy Spirit has been involved in every aspect of his life – birth, temple visit at age 12, baptism, desert temptations, and anything else you can think of.
- b) To me, this is the crux of Christ’s fully human nature.
 - i) Though he is the Son of God and fully divine, he is totally human in his functioning here on earth at this time.
 - ii) The Hebrew writer tells us:

Heb 4:15 (NASU)

- 18) Here in lies the sin that Jesus is calling “unpardonable” – those who have been observing him with such a critical eye have ample evidence of his power.
- 19) The problem is they attribute that power NOT to the Holy Spirit, recognizing in that process that he is divine in nature and the power ultimately comes from God.
- 20) Instead, they say publicly that this power is from Satan!
- 21) William Hendriksen in his “The Exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew” says:
For penitence they substitute hardening, for confession plotting. Thus, by means of their own criminal and completely inexcusable callousness, they are dooming themselves. Their sin is unpardonable because they are unwilling to tread the path that leads to pardon. For a thief, an adulterer, and a murderer there is hope. The message of the gospel may cause him to cry out, “O God be merciful to me, the sinner.” But when a man has become hardened, so that he has made up his mind not to pay any attention to the promptings of the Spirit, not even to listen to His pleading and warning voice, he has placed himself on the road that leads to perdition.
- 22) PAUSE to SEPARATE
- 23) This is the unpardonable sin, that one hardens their heart to the point that they cannot and will not accept God’s truth.

Is it possible then for us to commit the unpardonable sin?

Does the unpardonable sin have to involve blaspheming the Holy Spirit as the religious leaders did here?