

# The Gospel of Mark

## Lesson 2: "Jesus Enters the Battle"

### 1. The Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness – Mark 1:12 – 13

- a. Much "Left Out" of Mark's Story: we must accept the specific purposes Mark has in mind for his gospel
- b. Jesus Replays Israel's Wilderness Experience
  - i. God's "original" son (Israel) failed when tested in the wilderness (see Hosea 11:1)
  - ii. God's eternal Son (Jesus) will succeed when tested in the wilderness
- c. Wilderness is cursed
  - i. Jesus is "driven out" by the Holy Spirit
  - ii. Jesus is tested
  - iii. Jesus is tempted
  - iv. Jesus must make a choice
- d. Jesus Is "With" the Wild Beasts
  - i. Some view this as a positive renewal of Eden's harmony (compare the vision of peace between animals and humans in Isaiah 11:6-9; 43:18-21; 65:25)
  - ii. More view this as a negative feature, linked to the negatives of wilderness, fasting, and Satan's presence
- e. Jesus in the Face of Satan's Temptation
  - i. Assisted by God's Spirit (not stated, but implied)
  - ii. Assisted by angels
- f. The Outcome
  - i. End result of Jesus' wilderness experience is unclear
  - ii. Not a decisive victory over Satan
  - iii. Jesus' temptations continue
- g. Marks audience
  - i. Knows God protects the righteous (Psalm 91)
  - ii. Jesus is under divine protection
  - iii. God does not abandon Jesus
  - iv. Might expect an announcement of God's Kingdom

### 2. Jesus Launches His Galilean Ministry – Mark 1:14 – 15

- a. Jesus does not start His ministry until John is removed
  - i. Waits for the right time
- b. Jesus Returns to Galilee
  - i. Jesus chooses not to go immediately to Jerusalem, the Jewish capital
- c. Even in Galilee, Jesus does not enter its major cities (Chorazin, Sepphoris), but teaches in small villages, towns, and the countryside
- d. People "come out" to Jesus: Jesus is an "attracting" person
- e. Little, obscure, and supposedly insignificant things/places/people are often where God chooses to show his glory

- f. Jesus Has a Message
  - i. The time has come
  - ii. The kingdom of God has drawn near
    - 1. God's rule is something God initiates, builds, controls
    - 2. God's rule "comes near enough" to allow us to "enter" it
  - iii. Repent
    - 1. Jesus picks up John's message (repent): Turn away! Turn around!
    - 2. Reversal of priorities, values and grounds for security
  - iv. Time for humiliation is "filled up"
  - v. Time for God's favor has arrived
  - vi. God reigns
  - vii. Believe in the Gospel
    - 1. Good News about God
    - 2. Good News from God
    - 3. Jesus is the Gospel

### 3. Jesus Calls the First Disciples – Mark 1:16 – 20

- a. He Calls Fishermen
  - i. Galilee is a place of "mixed" population
    - 1. Jewish and Gentile
    - 2. Many professions
- b. Capernaum is a commercial crossroads
- c. Fish is a staple food and a "cash crop"
- d. Fisherman are:
  - i. Skilled laborers
  - ii. Skilled businessmen
- e. The Call
  - i. Jesus takes the initiative in seeking out the disciples
    - 1. Common for students to follow and emulate a rabbi
    - 2. Unusual for a rabbi to go out to seek students
  - ii. Students followed a rabbi to learn the Torah
  - iii. Disciples followed Jesus because...
  - iv. A rabbi would invite students to follow him
    - 1. Sometime after the age of thirteen
    - 2. He "saw" something in these students, a spark
  - v. Those not invited became craft apprentices
  - vi. None of the disciples were rabbis
    - 1. The disciples were "rejects"
    - 2. Jesus "saw" something in them, a spark
    - 3. Jesus could see passed the outside and into the heart
  - vii. To follow the Jesus
    - 1. Nothing required of the disciples...except faith
  - viii. To serve, to be a servant
    - 1. Change from selfishness to selflessness
    - 2. To serve and not to be served

- ix. To form a fellowship
  - 1. Only in fellowship is the call heard and obeyed
  - 2. A new community was formed with real people
- f. "Fishers of Men"
  - i. Positive image of rescuing people from the sea of chaos/danger/death
  - ii. God used Israel's enemies as "fishers"
    - 1. Gathered Israel for judgement
    - 2. Lead His people back to faith
  - iii. Rabbi's lured students to study Torah
    - 1. Saved them from a wasted life
  - iv. Jesus will train disciples to lure men

#### 4. Jesus Teaches in the Synagogue – Mark 1:21 – 22

- a. Jesus is "based" in Capernaum
- b. Into a Synagogue
  - i. Assembly hall where the Torah was taught by laity
  - ii. One temple, many synagogues
- c. Jesus taught with authority
  - i. Most often referred to as rabbi or teacher
- d. Jesus is compared to be scribes
  - i. Experts on the Torah
  - ii. Teachers
  - iii. Legal jurists
  - iv. Received their "authority" from forefathers, tradition
- e. Jesus receives His authority from THE Father
  - i. Jesus has the ability to compel a decision

#### 5. Jesus Launches His War Against the Forces of Evil – Mark 1:21 – 28

- a. Mark "Not Interested" in Many Features of This Story
  - i. Exactly what Jesus was actually teaching
  - ii. How Jesus was invited to teach
  - iii. The man's story
- b. Mark cares more about what Jesus does than what he says
- c. The Exorcism Event Itself
  - i. Supernatural battle between Jesus and Satan
  - ii. Demon has completely taken over the man
  - iii. Demon speaks in the plural
  - iv. The unclean spirit knows Jesus' real identity
    - 1. More informed than the people
    - 2. Speaks His "name" to gain control
    - 3. Defensive and resistant
    - 4. "Holy One of God"
  - v. The unclean spirit knows Jesus' real mission: to destroy the forces of evil
  - vi. The unclean spirit must not be allowed to speak
    - 1. Unclean spirit should not announce Jesus as holy
    - 2. Protect Jesus' real identity
  - vii. Jesus has complete command over the demon

- d. The Outcome of the Exorcism
  - i. Jesus “wins” a battle against Satan
  - ii. Jesus frees the victim of the demonic possession
  - iii. Jesus’ actions show
    - 1. Possibility of reconciliation with the Creator
    - 2. Power of redemption
  - iv. ‘All were amazed’
    - 1. Respond most strongly to Jesus’ actions
    - 2. Seem almost alarmed

### Questions

1. Who tempts us? Who tests us? What is the difference?
2. What is your wilderness? What “wild beasts” do you face? What is your protection?
3. When you hear about “the Gospel”, what does that mean to you? Be specific.
4. What are the three parts of “the call”? How do you measure up as a disciple?
5. What did the disciples give up to follow Christ? What have you given up to follow Christ? What are you willing to give up in the future to follow Christ?
6. Why did the scribes consistently oppose Jesus? What part did they play in his death?
7. When you are trying to learn something new, how do you learn best?
8. What was the significance of Jesus’ exorcism of the demon?
9. Why was the congregation “amazed”? Why did they seem almost alarmed?
10. Do you believe that demons are still present in our world? Do demons still possess people?