

## Mark 1

Mark opens his gospel by setting the work of John the baptizer and Jesus, Himself, in the context of Old Testament prophecy. Mark then summarizes John's ministry, Jesus' temptations, His preaching, the first calls for disciples, and then some of the early miracles Jesus performed.

### TRANSLATION - 1:1-3:

**1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ [Son of God]; **2** Even as it has been written in Isaiah, the prophet, "Behold, I am sending My messenger before your face, who will prepare your way. **3** A voice crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, straight make His paths.'"

### GREEK WORDS:

"Beginning" (ver. 1) is found 55 times, four times in Mark: 1:1; 10:6; 13:8, 19. "Gospel" is found 76 times in the NT, eight times in Mark: 1:1, 14-15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15. The expression "Son of God" is found three times in Mark: 1:1; 3:11; 15:39, out of 48 times (see also: 1:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:6; 13:32; 14:36, 61). "To write" (ver. 2) is used 191 times in the NT, ten times in Mark: 1:2; 7:6; 9:12-13; 10:4-5; 11:17; 12:19; 14:21, 27. The prophet Isaiah is mentioned by name 22 times in the NT. He is found in Mark here (1:2) and 7:6. "Prophet" is an eminently (although not exclusively) biblical word; the Greek word is found 144 times, six times in Mark: 1:2; 6:4, 15; 8:28; 11:32. "Behold" is found 200 times in the NT to emphasize a statement; it is found only seven times in Mark: 1:2; 3:32; 4:3; 10:28, 33; 14:41-42. "To send" is related to the famous noun "apostle;" it is used 132 times in the NT. In Mark, it is found twenty times. "Messenger" can also refer to a divine messenger; the word is found 175 times in the NT, six times in Mark: 1:2, 13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27, 32. "To prepare" is found 11 times in the NT, only here in Mark. "Way" is found 101 times, 16 times in Mark. Besides 1:2-3, the word "way" is always used literally, to refer to a road.

"Voice" (ver. 3) is found 139 times in the NT; in Mark, it is found seven times: 1:3, 11, 26; 5:7; 9:7; 15:34, 37. "Crying" is found twelve times, twice in Mark: 1:3; 15:34. "Wilderness" does not necessarily mean "desert." It simply refers to a place where the inhabitants are few. The word is used 48 times in the NT, nine times in Mark: 1:3-4, 12-13, 35, 45; 6:31-32, 35. The verb "to prepare" is used 40 times in the NT, five times in Mark: 1:3; 10:40; 14:12, 15-16. "Lord" (in Hebrew, translating the word "Jehovah") was used extensively in the OT to refer to Jehovah God, as it does in this quotation from the OT. The Greek word is found 717 times in the NT, eighteen times in Mark. "Straight" is used 59 times in the NT. In Mark it is frequently used as an adverb to mean "immediately" (for example, see verse 10). The word is used 42 times in Mark! "To do or make" is used 568 times in the NT, 47 times in Mark. "Path" is used once in Matthew (3:3), once in Mark (1:3), and once in Luke (3:4).

### GREEK GRAMMAR:

The expression "it has been written" (ver. 2) is the standard method of citing OT Scripture quotations. Its tense (perfect tense) denotes that the writing was done in the past, but it still has continuing ramifications in the present.

### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Isaiah predicted the coming of One who would bring "Good News" (Isa. 52:7-10). The verb is used 24 times in the OT. It is found in Isaiah at: 40:9-11; 41:27; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1.

### ARCHAEOLOGY:

There is some question as to the strength of the manuscript evidence for the phrase "son of God." The *Textual Commentary* ascribes the addition a "C," as opposed to a higher status of "A" or "B." It could have dropped out by a scribe's eye overlooking the phrase due to

the ending (*ou*) being similar to other words in the verse. On the other hand, it would be more likely for a scribe to *add the phrase* later than to exclude it intentionally. However, the whole Gospel was written to prove Jesus is “Son of God” (see 15:39), so we will include the translation and comments on it.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-9, 15-17; John 1:19-28 for parallels to the ministry of John.

#### COMMENTS:

In what sense is this first paragraph the “beginning” of the gospel? In our view, Mark intends to “begin” his account of the life of Christ (the “gospel”) with these quotations, setting the life of the Son of God in the context of the OT prophecies. “Gospel” in the original language means “good news.” This Jesus, of whom Mark writes, is the “Son of God.” He is the Savior who came into the world to “give His life a ransom for many” (10:45), to “pour out [His blood] for many” (14:24). God had spoken of His ministry in ages past.

The quotation from verses 2-3 are a combination of verses and phrases from the OT. The first half of verse 2: “Behold, I am sending My messenger before your face” comes from Exodus 23:20. In that context, God informed Israel that He would send an angel (a messenger) before Israel as they left Mount Sinai. The next phrase and verse combine the overlapping thoughts from Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1. Isaiah preached during the siege by the Assyrian Empire and predicted the Savior coming to provide forgiveness of sins. It is significant that Jesus will fulfill the imagery of Isaiah’s portrait of a “Suffering Servant.” Malachi preached after the return from exile in Babylon and repeated Isaiah’s prophecy, to let Israel know that both the messenger and the coming of Jehovah were still in the future. Mark mentions “Isaiah,” likely to tie Jesus tightly into the prophecies of Isaiah relative to the coming Messiah.

The purpose of the prophecy was to denote the idea that God was sending a messenger before the coming of “Jehovah” (who is equated here with Jesus, contrary to the teachings of the Jehovah’s Witnesses that Jesus is not equal with Jehovah God). This messenger would prepare the way for the coming of Jehovah / Jesus. In other words, the coming of Jehovah happens through the coming of Jesus. In Luke’s account, the angel tells Zacharias, the father of John, that John would “make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (1:17).

#### APPLICATION:

The gospel is the good news about Jesus Christ. It is set within the context of OT prophecies (Rom. 16:25-26). God had planned at the right time to send Jesus into the world (Gal. 4:4), preceded by John.

#### TRANSLATION - 1:4-8:

**4** John, the one immersing, was in the desert and was preaching immersion of repentance for forgiveness of sins. **5** And all were going out to him - the Judean region and the Jerusalemites all, and they were being immersed by him in the Jordan River while confessing their sins. **6** And John was clothed with camel hair and a belt of leather around his waist and he was eating locusts and wild honey. **7** And he was preaching, saying, “There is coming the One stronger than me, behind me. I am not worthy after bending down to loosen the straps of His sandals. **8** I immerse you in water, but He will immerse you all in the Holy Spirit.”

#### GREEK WORDS:

“John” (ver. 4) is a popular name, both in the NT and in Greco-Roman / Jewish society. The name is found 135 times in the NT, 26 times in Mark. The participle “one immersing” is related to the noun “immersion.” The verb is used 77 times in the NT, thirteen times in Mark: 1:4-5, 8-9; 6:14, 24; 7:4; 10:38-39; 16:16. The noun is found 19 times, four times in Mark: 1:4;

10:38-39; 11:30. "Repentance" is found 22 times in the NT, only here in Mark. "Forgiveness" is used 17 times in the NT, in Mark twice, at 1:4; 3:29. "Sin" is found 173 times in the NT; Mark uses the word six times: 1:4-5; 2:5, 7, 9-10.

"Judean" (ver. 5) is used 195 times in the NT, seven times in Mark: 1:5; 7:3; 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26. "Jerusalemites" or inhabitants of Jerusalem is only found twice: Mark 1:5; John 7:25. The Jordan River is found 15 times in the NT, all in the gospel accounts. Mark mentions the river at 1:5, 9; 3:8; 10:1. "River" is found 17 times in the NT, only here in Mark. "To confess" is used only here in Mark, out of 10 occasions. "To be clothed" (ver. 6) is used 27 times, three times in Mark: 1:6; 6:9; 15:20. "Hair" is found only here in Mark, out of 15 uses. "Camel" is found here and 10:25 in Mark, out of six occasions. "Belt" is used eight times, in Mark at 1:6 and 6:8. "Leather" is found at Matthew 3:4 and here. "Waist" is found eight times, only here in Mark. "To eat" is found 158 times, 27 times in Mark. "Locusts" is used four times: Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6; Revelation 9:3, 7. "Wild" is used three times: Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6; Jude 13. "Honey" is found four times: Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6; Revelation 10:9-10.

"To preach" (ver. 7) was used in verse 4. "To come" is used 632 times, 85 times in Mark. "Stronger" is used 29 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 1:7; 3:27. "Behind" is used 35 times in the NT, six times in Mark. "Worthy" is used 39 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 1:7; 10:46; 15:15. "To bend down" is used only here and John 8:6. "To loosen" is used 42 times, five times in Mark: 1:7; 7:35; 11:2, 4-5. "Straps" is only used in Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:27; Acts 22:25. "Sandals" is used 10 times, only here in Mark. "Water" (ver. 8) is used 76 times in the NT, in Mark at 1:8, 10; 9:22, 41; 14:13. "Spirit" can refer to the spirit of man or the Holy Spirit. The word "spirit" is found 379 times in the NT, 23 times in Mark. "Holy" is found 233 times in the NT, seven times in Mark. "Holy Spirit" is found 90 times in the NT, four times in Mark: 1:8; 3:29; 12:36; 13:11.

#### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

John's description is reminiscent of Elijah from 2 Kings 1:8. The phrase "the coming One" references the Messiah; see Malachi 3:1-2; 4:5-6; Psa. 118:26. See Matthew 11:3 for the expression to refer to Jesus. "Repentance" was a key theme in the prophets, normally translating a term which meant "to turn" or "to turn back." Jer. 18:11; Isa. 55:7; Zech. 1:4. On the prophets' message about "forgiveness of sins," see: Jer. 31:34; Isa. 33:24; 53:5-6; Ezek. 18:31; 36:25-27; Zech. 13:1; Micah 7:18.

Promises of the coming and work of the Holy Spirit are found frequently in the prophets: Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; 63:11, 14; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26-27; 37:14; 39:29. The key text is Joel 2:28-32 which Peter informs the reader of the Bible was fulfilled in Acts 2:14ff, on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. The fact that *Jesus* would give the Holy Spirit equates Jesus (once again) with Jehovah God in the OT.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

Jews practiced a proselyte immersion and the Jews at Qumran also practiced such. There were ritual immersions at that time but none seem to have been the antecedents of John's immersion. His immersion was given by the God of heaven (see Mark 11:27-33). Jerusalem was about twenty miles from the Jordan River. Jerusalem had a population of about 60-70,000 people.

Locusts were considered "clean animals" under the Law: Leviticus 11:21-22.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-20; John 1:6, 15, 19-28 for parallels to John's ministry.

#### COMMENTS:

After centuries of silence, God sends another prophet: John. We do not know when Malachi lived and preached but it was likely toward the end of the OT time period. This means

that there passed about 400 years between Malachi and the sending of John. With the coming of John, however, the time of the Messiah is now about to begin.

Having cited three OT passages, Mark summarizes the ministry of John in this next paragraph. John, the one immersing (the Greek word is a present participle: the immersing one), began preaching in the wilderness, specifically an “immersion of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (ver. 4). “Immersion” is generally translated “baptism.” It means to “dip, plunge, or immerse.” John taught the Jews, in order to be prepared for the Messiah, they needed to be immersed into water, as they repented of their sins, in order to be forgiven of their sins. “Repentance” literally means to change one’s mind. This changed mind then leads to a changed behavior. Luke gives a more detailed explanation of what that repentance would involve relative to different groups of individuals, in Luke 3:10-17. It is also clear that this immersion, accompanied by repentance, was in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. It was likely a great offense to the religious Jews for John to require them to be immersed in order to be saved. They were *already* saved, so they thought, because they were *Abraham’s children* (see Matt. 3:9). Yet, John’s message implies strongly that they were *not* in a proper relationship with God at that point.

Protestant scholars are grossly deceptive when they attach “forgiveness of sins” simply to “repentance” and not to the act of “immersion.” It is the “baptism of repentance” that is for the forgiveness of sins. The phrase “forgiveness of sins” is also found in Matthew 26:28 where Jesus teaches that His blood was shed “for the forgiveness of sins,” but the phrase is also found in Acts 2:38 where Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, taught that mankind needs to “repent and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins.” Contrary to the standard Protestant theology, baptism is more than a symbol; it is an act of obedience to the Lord in order to have one’s sins washed away (see Acts 22:16). The individual being immersed recognized that God was fair in judging sinful behavior (Luke 7:29-30).

Verse five is likely hyperbole, but it emphasizes the popularity of John’s preaching and baptism. As they were being baptized, the Jews were also confessing the sins they had committed that separated them from Jehovah God (see Isaiah 59:1-2). John himself was clothed in a way that reminded the Jewish reader of the great prophet Elijah (see Luke 1:17, which shows that John is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi (4:6) that “Elijah” would come during the Messianic age; see also Matthew 11:14). John wore camel’s hair and a leather belt and ate locust and wild honey. In other words, he lived an austere life and had no greater pretension than to be of service to his God. He would say in his preaching, speaking of the Messiah, “He must increase but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

Another aspect of his sermon also dealt with the coming of the Messiah and the Holy Spirit (ver. 7-8). Relative to the Messiah, John preached that “One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals.” In all the ways John intended to use the word “mightier,” we do not know. However, in every way imaginable, the Messiah, the “Christ of God” (Luke 9:20; 23:35) is superior and mightier than John. Slaves were the ones who untied the sandals of their masters. John here is saying that he is not even worthy to be the slave of the Messiah! Specifically, John immersed in water (ver. 8) but the Messiah, in fulfillment of OT prophecies, would immerse in the Holy Spirit. This whole message of John was to inform the Jews that the Messianic Age and the Messianic Kingdom was about to be established (see verse 15).

#### APPLICATION:

John’s immersion was “for the forgiveness of sins” to prepare Jews for the coming Messiah (Luke 1:17). Christ’s immersion (so called “Christian baptism”) is also “for the forgiveness of sins” to prepare mankind for the second coming of Christ. Its effects are illustrated in 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26-27. Speaking of John’s baptism, it appears from Acts 18:23-28, that Apollos was preaching “John’s baptism” (that the Jews should *look forward* to the “Coming One”) *years after* Jesus actually came, went to the cross, rose from the dead and returned to heaven. Those baptized under “John’s baptism” at that point were

*improperly immersed* and had to be immersed (“reimmersed”) properly, under Jesus’ baptism (Acts 19:1-7). In the same way, the majority of Protestants improperly teach that salvation is obtained simply by saying a prayer and “receiving Jesus into their heart.” Then they are immersed as a “pledge” that they have given their lives to Jesus. That is not the “plan of salvation” which inspired men taught and a person having thereby obeyed an uninspired man, needs to study what the NT actually teaches about baptism and be immersed with the proper understanding of God’s plan of salvation.

God does not require Christians to live the austere life which John did. However, Christians do need to realize that we are soldiers in the army of Christ and our lifestyle should reflect the seriousness and importance of this spiritual war: 2 Timothy 2:1-4; Ephesians 6:10-18.

The “baptism” in the Holy Spirit would occur twice, when the kingdom is established in Acts 2 and when the door of the kingdom is opened to the Gentiles in Acts 10. See Acts 11:15 which implies that the baptism in the Holy Spirit did not occur regularly. In fact, in Ephesians 4:5, Paul writes that there is only “one” baptism, which must be the immersion in water since it is for “the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 2:38).

#### TRANSLATION - 1:9-11:

**9** And it happened in those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and He was immersed in the Jordan by John. **10** And immediately going up out of the water He saw tearing apart the heavens and the Spirit as a dove descending on Him, **11** and a voice happened out of the heavens, “You are My Son, the Beloved. In you I am pleased.”

#### GREEK WORDS:

“To immerse” (ver. 9) is used 77 times in the NT; Mark uses it 13 times, five times in this first chapter (1:4-5, 8-9) and four times in chapter 10 (10:38-39). The verb is usually translated “baptize,” but this word is too ambiguous in modern languages. “Immediately” (ver. 10) is one of Mark’s favorite words; he uses it 42 out of the 59 times it is found in the NT (see ver. 3). It is found twelve times just in chapter 1. “To go up” is found 82 times in the NT, 9 times in Mark. “Water” is found 76 times in the NT, five times in Mark. “To tear apart” or “to split open” is found 11 times in the NT; in Mark it is found in 1:10; 15:38. “Heaven” is found 273 times in the NT, 18 times in Mark. “Spirit” is found 379 times in the NT. It can refer to man’s spirit or disposition or the Holy Spirit of God. Mark uses the word 23 times. Mark uses “Holy Spirit” only four times: 1:8; 3:29; 12:36; 13:11. “Dove” is found 10 times in the NT, twice in Mark: 1:10; 11:15. “To descend” is used 81 times in the NT, six times in Mark. “Voice” (ver. 11) is found 139 times in the NT, 7 in Mark. “Son” is found 377 times, 35 in Mark. “Son of God” is found in Mark at 1:1; 3:11; 15:39. “Son of Man” is found 14 times. “Beloved” is found 61 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 1:1; 9:7; 12:6. “To be pleased” is used 21 times in the NT, only here in Mark.

#### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Relative to verses 10-11, Isaiah wished that God would “tear” the heavens and come down (64:1). The Spirit hovered over the waters at the creation, as a bird hovers over its nest (Gen. 1:2). A more likely background to the Spirit descending as a dove is the dove sent out by Noah (Gen. 8:9-12). The reference to Jesus being the “Son” of God is built on the prophecies of the “son of David” - the Messiah: Psalm 2:7 (compare 2 Samuel 7:14; “sonship” refers to the relationship available through the covenant with God); Isaiah 42:1; Hosea 11:1. See also Genesis 22:2, 12, 16; Exodus 4:22-23. Israel is called “God’s beloved” in Jeremiah 12:7; Hosea 11:1.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

“Nazareth” (ver. 9) is used six times in the Gospels (nowhere after John). This is its only use in Mark. It was about 60 miles from there to where John perhaps baptized in the Jordan

River and had a population of about 400 or less. “Galilee” is found 61 times in the NT; Mark uses it 12 times. That region had a population of about 25-30,000. “Jordan” is used 15 times in the NT, not outside of the Gospel accounts. Mark uses it 4 times: 1:5, 9; 3:8; 10:1.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22 for parallels to the baptism of Jesus.

#### COMMENTS:

Among the many who went to John to be immersed by Him was Jesus, from the village of Nazareth (ver. 9). Jesus will explain in Matthew 3:15 that He needed to be immersed, not for the forgiveness of sins since He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21), but in order to bring righteousness to its full completion. As soon as He came up from the water (ver. 10), Jesus saw the heavens split apart - to indicate an interaction between God and man - and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. It was in this way that Jesus was “anointed” to be the Messiah (which means “anointed one”) of God (Isaiah 61:1-3).

Two members of the “Godhead” (see Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:29; 2 Peter 1:3-4) are apparent in this paragraph so far: Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The third member speaks from heaven: “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well-pleased.” God expresses His love and appreciation for His Son’s willingness to serve as man’s sacrifice, to make righteousness available to mankind, removing the barrier of sin. In line with the thoughts given above under “OT References,” Jesus is the Servant who would suffer on behalf of both Israel and the pagan nations at large.

#### APPLICATION:

As we have indicated, while “trinity” is not a biblical word, this paragraph shows that there are three members of the Godhead: the Son, the Spirit, and the Father. The rest of the NT supports and substantiates that view of the Godhead. These are not separate gods as we see in pagan religions. There are no differences in personalities, goals, methods, or desires. They are completely one: Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30. In similar imagery, the Hebrew author writes that Jesus opened up heaven through the “veil, that is, His flesh,” because He is our great high priest (Heb. 10:19-22).

#### TRANSLATION - 1:12-13:

**12** And immediately the Spirit compels<sup>1</sup> Him into the wilderness. **13** And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by the Satan, and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving Him.

#### GREEK WORDS:

See comments at 1:3, 10 for the word “immediately” (ver. 12). For “Spirit,” see 1:8, 10. To “cast out” or to “compel,” is often used of exorcisms of demons. The verb is used 81 times, 18 times in Mark. See comments on “wilderness” at 1:3-4. It does not refer to a desert but to an area which is not inhabited very densely. “To tempt” can also mean “to test.” The verb is used 38 times in the NT, four times in Mark: 1:13; 8:11; 10:2; 12:15. The “Satan” (ver. 13) is found 36 times in the NT, six times in Mark: 1:13; 3:23, 26; 4:15; 8:33. “Wild animals” is found 46 times in the NT, especially in Revelation (39 times). This is its only use in Mark. “Angels” is found 175 times in the NT. It can refer to human messengers or it can refer to divine messengers, also known as “angels.” They are found in Mark six times: 1:2, 13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27, 32. “To serve” is the verbal form of the noun which gives us “deacon.” The verb is found 37 times in the NT, five times in Mark: 1:13, 31; 10:45; 15:41.

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<sup>1</sup> The original Greek has a present tense verb, known in Greek grammar as the “historical present.” The event was in the past, but Mark uses the present to denote the vividness of the action. He does so 150 times.

### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The likely analogy to the “40 days” is the “40 years” which Israel spent, being tempted, in the wilderness: Numbers 14:33. Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai, twice: Exodus 24:18; 34:28. Elijah was also in the wilderness for 40 days: 1 Kings 19:8. However, since Jesus was *tempted* during the 40 days, as Israel was in the wilderness, we believe the Numbers 14 passage is the more likely background. In contrast with Israel, Jesus stayed faithful through the temptations. However, some suggest the “40 days” is symbolic. There is no reason to interpret the time frame as symbolic.

### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13 for parallels to the temptations of Jesus.

### COMMENTS:

Jesus was tempted just as humanity is tempted; yet He was spiritually strong enough to say “no” to each temptation (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:14-16). Mark does not detail the temptations as Matthew and Luke did (see above for the specific references). Living a sinless life, He alone deserves heaven (Romans 6:23). Yet in His grace, He extends the opportunity to be saved through His blood to us (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6).

We do not see a reference to the Garden of Eden in the fact that Jesus was with the “wild animals.” Nor do we believe there is some type of “theological” message, based on Isaiah 11:6-9. Mark, led by the Spirit, points to the wild animals, it seems to us, to show that Jesus was alone - without human aid - while He was tempted in the wilderness. He was simply served by the angels. The ministry of the angels to Jesus also recalls to mind God ministering to Elijah in the wilderness, in 1 Kings 19:5-7.

### APPLICATION:

God knows that humans will be tempted to sin, beginning in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). God sent Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, so Jesus could face Satan. He rebuffed his attempts to deceive the Son of God, and thereby Jesus became the “author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him” (Heb. 5:8-9). The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin since they knew no sin (see Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:4). But Jesus was tempted, yet He did not sin, thus making Him the perfect Savior from our sins (Heb. 4:14-16).

### TRANSLATION - 1:14-15:

**14** And after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God  
**15** and saying that, “The time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the gospel.”

### GREEK WORDS:

“To arrest” or “to hand over” or “to betray” (ver. 14) is used 119 times in the NT, 20 times in Mark. “John” is found 135 times; there are two men in the NT named “John:” John the baptizer and John the apostle. The name is found 26 times. Here, it refers to the John in the context, the baptizer. On “Galilee,” see comments at 1:9. “To preach” or “to announce” or “to herald” is found 61 times in the NT, 14 times in Mark, beginning at 1:4. “Gospel” was used earlier at 1:1. The word is found eight times in Mark: 1:1, 14-15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15. “To fulfill” (ver. 15) is found 86 times in the NT, only twice in Mark: 1:15; 14:49. “Time” is found 85 times in the NT, only five times in Mark. “To come near” is used 42 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 1:15; 11:1; 14:42. “Kingdom” is used 162 times, 20 times in Mark. “Repent” is found 34 times in the NT, twice in Mark: 1:15; 6:12. “Believe” is found for the first time here; it is found 241 times in the NT, 14 times in Mark.

### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The OT portrayed God as the “King” of Israel as early as Moses’ song at the Red Sea: Exodus 15:18. See also 1 Samuel 12:12; Psalm 29:10; Isaiah 41:21; 43:15; Jeremiah 8:19. The “kingdom” prophecies have especially Daniel 2:44-45 and 7:13-14 in its background. The prophets predicted that “David” (the “Son of David,” a Messianic term) would come and establish a kingdom which would never end. That kingdom is the body of Christ, which He established in the first century (see Mark 9:1). The “time” when the kingdom would be established is, by Daniel, more specifically given in Daniel 9:24-27 (see also Daniel 12:4, 9). Again, that time frame would put the establishment of the kingdom within the days of the Roman Empire.

### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 4:12-17; Luke 4:14-15 for parallels to the beginning of Jesus’ ministry.

### COMMENTS:

For a while, the ministry of John and Jesus overlapped (see John 4:1-2). In 6:14-32, Mark will record in more detail the arrest and death of John the immersing one. Here, he notes that once John was arrested, Jesus began preaching with more prominence the “gospel of God.” This gospel was *from* God but the gospel is also *about* God since it concerns Jesus, who is “God in the flesh” (Matt. 1:23).

Jesus’ message is that “time is fulfilled.” That is, everything was ready, according to the Father’s time frame (see Gal. 4:4). Specifically, it was time for the kingdom predicted by Daniel (2:44-45; 7:13-14) to be established (ver. 15). As Jesus moves through His ministry, He will identify that kingdom, its nature and its destination, and when it would come into existence.

For Israel to be ready for this kingdom, they needed to “repent and believe in the gospel.” These commands were given to the Jews in this order: repent and believe, because they *already* believed in Jehovah God (see John 14:1). They needed to repent of their sins *toward Him* (see 1:5) and begin trusting the Good News from Jesus Christ, that salvation would be found in Him. Today, Protestants generally use the same two commands, in that order; but that is historically inaccurate. Those who are outside of Christ need to believe in the Messiahship and Saviorhood of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31), including believing the Gospel message (2 Thess. 1:7-9) and then repent of their sins and be immersed for the forgiveness of those sins (Acts 2:38).

### APPLICATION:

The gospel concerns the kingdom, the reign of God in the hearts of mankind. Mark will use the term “kingdom” twenty times in his gospel. The kingdom is an important theme in Mark: 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14-15, 23-24; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43. Jesus identifies the kingdom, on earth, as the church (Matt. 16:18-19). This kingdom would be established during the lifetime of the early disciples (Mark 9:1). Those who believe in the 1,000 year reign of Christ (otherwise known as premillennialism) believe the kingdom is yet to be established and they twist the Scriptures to make “kingdom” have six or more difference nuances. The only other way the NT uses the word “kingdom” besides being a synonym for “church” is when writers speak of the “eternal” kingdom: 2 Peter 1:11. In that case, “kingdom” refers to the church once its purpose is consummated in heaven. Paul wrote that Christians were already in the “kingdom” in Colossians 1:13 as did John (Rev. 1:6) and Peter (1 Peter 2:9). That kingdom was established in Acts 2. See 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 for more on the idea of godly sorrow that brings repentance.

### TRANSLATION - 1:16-20:

**16** And passing by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting [nets] into the sea; for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, “Come behind Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.” **18** And immediately leaving the nets they followed Him. **19** And going further a little, He saw James the [brother] of Zebedee and John



his brother and these in the boat were mending the nets. **20** And immediately He called them and leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the workers they went behind Him.

#### GREEK WORDS:

“Sea” (ver. 16) is used 91 times in the NT, 19 times in Mark. “Simon” is found 75 times in the NT, 11 times in Mark. “Andrew” is found 13 times in the Gospels and Acts (1:13). He is found in Mark four times: 1:16, 29; 3:18; 13:3. “To throw” or “to cast” is found only here (1:16) in the NT. “Fisherman” is found five times in the NT, only here (1:16-17) in Mark. “To come” (ver. 17) is found 12 times in the NT, three times in Mark (1:17; 6:31; 12:7). “Immediately” (ver. 18) was used earlier at 1:3, 10. “To leave” or “to abandon” is used 143 times in the NT, 34 times in Mark. “Net” is found 12 times in the NT, only here in Mark (1:18-19). “To follow” is found 90 times in the NT, 18 times in Mark. “James” (ver. 19) is found 42 times in the NT, 15 times in Mark. “Zebedee” is found 12 times in the NT, four times in Mark (1:19-20; 3:17; 10:35). On “John,” see 1:4. This John is the apostle, who is different from the baptizer. “To mend” is found 13 times in the NT, only here in Mark. “To call” (ver. 20) was used 148 times in the NT, four times in Mark: 1:20; 2:17; 3:31; 11:17. “Worker” is used three times in the NT: Mark 1:20; John 10:12-13. “To go behind” is used 117 times in the NT, 23 times in Mark.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

On “Galilee” (ver. 16), see comments at 1:9, 14. The sea was 14 miles long and six miles wide. The sea was known variously as “Sea of Chinneroth” (Joshua 12:3), “Sea of Tiberias” (John 6:1; 21:1), or “Sea of Gennesaret” (Matt. 14:34; Mark 6:53; Luke 5:1). The net which was cast was 18-21’ in diameter. Around the edges were lead weights to cause the net to sink into the sea. As it descended in the water, it would trap the fish inside; then the fishermen would draw it out of the water, full of fish. Sometimes, the men would dive into the water, to draw the net together with its fish inside. A different net was larger, composed of five nets combined, used to encircle a school of fish.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11 for parallels to this text. Jesus had a half-brother named James (6:3); there is also a “James, son of Alphaeus” (3:18; Matthew / Levi was also a “son of Alphaeus” but we do not know if it is the same “Alphaeus”), and James “the less” (15:40). James, Jesus’ bother, was considered a “pillar” in the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9). James the apostle was persecuted along with Peter in Acts 3-4. He was beheaded by King Herod in Acts 12:1-2.

#### COMMENTS:

Jesus is beginning to assemble the beginning of His new “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). The twelve apostles will mirror the twelve tribes of the ancient nation of Israel. As He walks by the sea of Galilee, He identifies four men, two sets of brothers, whom He calls to serve Him. John (1:29-51) informs us that some of these men were disciples of John the immersing one and they had earlier contact with Jesus before He formally calls them into discipleship. The prophets did not call Israel to follow *them*; they called Israel to follow *God* (see 1 Kings 19:19-21). In a similar way, the rabbis of Jesus’ day called their followers to follow the Law. Jesus’ manner of call, then, was unique.

In verse 16, Jesus calls Simon and Andrew, his brother. Peter will be mentioned 21 times in Mark. Andrew is only mentioned four times: 1:16, 29; 3:18; 13:3. These two brothers were fishermen in the sea of Galilee. Jesus called them to leave their nets behind and be His disciples and fish for men. Through the use of this metaphor, Jesus encouraged the men to engage in gathering men and women into the kingdom of God as a fisherman gathers fish into his net (see the parable recorded in Matthew 13:47-50).

At soon as Jesus called them, Peter and Andrew left their nets and followed Jesus. Further along the walk by the sea, Jesus saw the two sons of Zebedee: John and his brother

James (ver. 19). These men had been fishing and were now mending their nets. As soon as Jesus called them into discipleship, they left their nets behind, with their father's hired workers, and followed Jesus. We do not believe the apostles left their fishing business behind entirely, at least not yet. They return to it after the resurrection in John 21.

#### APPLICATION:

For other uses, and application, of the Greek verb translated "mending," see: Romans 9:22; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 3:10; Heb. 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; 1 Peter 5:10.

"Discipleship" is the process of following Jesus. It refers to accepting His teachings, trusting His word, and obeying His commandments. No one knows how to please the Father except the Son and the Father has not revealed His commandments except through the Son (Matt. 11:27). Consequently, Jesus calls all men to follow Him and be His disciples. The first time the word "disciple" (which means "learner") is used in Mark is 2:15. The word is used 46 times in Mark. In the whole NT, the word is used 262 times, but never after the book of Acts. "Saints" is God's much preferred designation for His followers in Christ.

Paul might argue that the reason Jesus called *fishermen* rather than too many rabbis (as in Saul of Tarsus) was so that men's faith would be in the power of the Gospel, not in the eloquence of the messengers: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 4:7.

#### TRANSLATION - 1:21-28:

**21** And they entered into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath after entering into the synagogue He taught. **22** And they were being amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as having authority and to as the scribes. **23** And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit and he yelled, **24** saying, "What [is it] between us and you, Jesus the Nazarene? Have you come to destroy us? I know you who you are, the Holy One of God."

**25** And Jesus rebuked him saying, "Be silent! And come out of him." **26** And after convulsing him, the unclean spirit also after crying with a loud voice came out of him. **27** And all were astounded so that they disputed among themselves saying, "Who is this? A new teaching with authority? And the unclean spirits He ordered and they obeyed Him." **28** And there went out His fame immediately everywhere into all the neighborhood of Galilee.

#### GREEK WORDS:

"Sabbath" (ver. 21) is found 68 times in the NT, 12 times in Mark. It is found in Acts ten times. After Acts, "Sabbath" is found only in 1 Corinthians 16:2 (where it connotes a "week") and Colossians 2:16. "Synagogue" is found 56 times, eight times in Mark. "To teach" is found 97 times in the NT. It denotes one of the most fundamental activities of Jesus and, subsequently, of His followers. The verb is used 17 times in Mark. "To be amazed" or "astounded" (ver. 22) is used 13 times in the NT, five times in Mark (1:22; 6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18). "Teaching" is the noun related to the verb used earlier. The noun is used 30 times in the NT, five times in Mark (1:22, 27; 4:2; 11:18; 12:38). "Authority" or "power" is used 102 times in the NT, ten times in Mark. "Scribes" are found 63 times in the NT, 21 times in Mark. "Spirit" (ver. 23) was used earlier 1:8, 10, 12. The designation of "unclean" denotes this "spirit" as a demon. "Unclean" is found 32 times in the NT, eleven times in Mark. "To yell" means to "cry out." It is found five times: Mark 1:23; 6:49; Luke 4:33; 8:28; 23:18. "Nazarene" (ver. 24) is found six times in the NT: Mark 1:24; 10:47; 14:67; 16:6; Luke 4:34; 24:19. "To destroy" is used 90 times in the NT, ten times in Mark. "Holy One" is used 233 times in the NT. It is God's preferred designation for Christians. The adjective is used in Mark seven times (1:8, 24; 3:29; 6:20; 8:38; 12:36; 13:11). The expression "Holy One of God" is found in Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; John 6:69.

"To rebuke" (ver. 25) is used 29 times in the NT, nine times in Mark (1:25; 3:12; 4:39; 8:30, 32-33; 9:25; 10:13, 48). "To be silent" is used seven times in the NT: Matt. 22:12, 34; Mark 1:25; 4:39; Luke 4:35; 1 Tim. 5:18; 1 Peter 2:15. "To convulse" or to "shake" (ver. 26) is used only three times: Mark 1:26; 9:26; Luke 9:39. "To cry out" is the verbal form of the noun

“voice,” also used in this verse. The verb is used 43 times, ten times in Mark. The noun is used 139 times, seven times in Mark. “Loud” or “great” is used 243 times, 18 times in Mark. “To be astounded” or to “be amazed” (ver. 27) is used only three times, all in Mark: 1:27; 10:24, 32. “To dispute” is used 10 times, six times in Mark: 1:27; 8:11; 9:10, 14, 16; 12:28. “New” is used 42 times in the NT, five times in Mark. “To order” denotes “to command;” it is used 10 times, four times in Mark (1:27; 6:27, 39; 9:25). “To obey” literally means “to listen under” or to “listen submissively.” It is used 21 times in the NT, only twice in Mark: 1:27; 4:41. “Fame” or “report” (ver. 28) is used 24 times in the NT, three times in Mark (1:28; 7:35; 13:7). “Neighborhood” is used nine times, only here in Mark.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

“Capernaum” (ver. 21) is used 16 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 1:21; 2:1; 9:33. See Jesus’ contrast between Capernaum and Tyre and Sidon in Matthew 11:23-24. The city was on the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee. Archaeologists estimate that the population of Capernaum at this point may have been between 600 and 1,000. The city was located close to a major highway, the *Via Maris*, which was a major road near the Mediterranean Sea toward Damascus in the north. It would also be the location of Matthew’s tax booth (Mark 2:14). A centurion built at least one synagogue in Capernaum (Luke 7:1-10).

The synagogue was a gathering place for the Jews to visit, talk, and to study the Law of Moses. The practice began sometime during the exile in Babylon and extended through the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament. If a village had at least ten Jewish men, there would be a synagogue. “Scribes” were normally Pharisees in their religious orientation; however, any sect of the Jews could have their scribes. They had the responsibility to copy the Old Testament for further use, which meant that they knew the Law very well and had the responsibility to teach that Law. The first scribe known in biblical times was Ezra (Ezra 7:6, 11).

Zechariah prophesied (13:2) that in the day of the Messiah, the unclean spirit would be expelled from the land. Jesus tells us that His exorcisms were proof that the Messianic Kingdom was about to be established (Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20).

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Luke 4:31-37 for Luke’s parallel to this event.

#### COMMENTS:

At this point in Mark’s Gospel, Jesus has not performed any miracles to attest to His message. Now Mark begins a series of miracles to show that Jesus’ message was true, verified by God Who alone can perform miracles. Jesus does most of His ministry in the area around Capernaum in Galilee (ver. 21) in this gospel, at least until He goes to Jerusalem for His trial. Capernaum was the home of Peter, Andrew, James, and John once they left Bethsaida (John 1:44). Some scholars want to suggest that Mark (who says Peter and Andrew had a home in Capernaum) contradicts John (who says they were “of” Bethsaida). Yet, as usual, there are a number of legitimate ways to reconcile the two statements:

1. John speaks of their *home town* while Mark speaks of their *current residence*. This would be similar to Jesus having been born in Bethlehem but growing up in Nazareth.
2. Peter and Andrew had two houses.
3. The home in Capernaum belonged to Peter’s in-laws (see 1:29-31). In this writer’s view, the first option and the third option are probabilities.

Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Saturday) as Jews did, in order to study the Law and to pray. Visiting teachers would be invited to teach as Paul was in Acts 13:15-16. Jesus was invited here to teach. Mark uses the verb “to teach” 17 times; 15 times it refers to Jesus. Jesus was a teacher (all twelve times in Mark, “teacher” refers to Jesus); in fact, He was *the* Teacher. Jesus has taught that the kingdom of heaven is near (1:15). He will teach that He has authority on earth to forgive sins (2:10). He will teach that He came to call

sinner to repentance (2:17). He will teach that His covenant will come in new forms, not like the old covenant (2:21-22). He will also teach that He is Lord of the Sabbath (2:28). He will also teach that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable (3:29). Yet, largely the first three chapters focus on Jesus' miracles rather than His teachings, which are given more substantively in chapter 4. What Mark does in the first three chapters is to focus on what Jesus began *to do* as opposed to what He began *to teach* (see Acts 10:38). His teaching, in other words, was given in the context of His serving.

Once He taught, the audience was amazed at His teaching (ver. 22). Particularly, Jesus taught with authority. That is, He taught with the message centered in Himself and He had perfect understanding of what the Law had to say and what it meant. By contrast, the "scribes" would quote other respected rabbis in order to support their understandings. Jesus did not quote other rabbis. "Authority" is used by Mark nine times, six of which refer to Jesus' authority (1:22, 27; 2:10; 11:28-29, 33). Three refer to the authority given by Jesus to His apostles: 3:15; 6:7; 13:34.

In the synagogue of Capernaum, a man with an "unclean" spirit (eleven times in Mark) - a demon (thirteen times in Mark; the words are synonyms: 3:22, 30; 7:25-26, 29-30) - was present in the synagogue. This demon-possessed man knew Who Jesus was. Jesus is identified as "from Nazareth" since that was the village where He grew up, which is not recorded by Mark (Matt. 2:23). "What is it between us and You?" is a Jewish expression (see 2 Sam. 16:10; 19:22; Judges 11:12; 1 Kings 17:18) to ask what business or relationship did they have with each other. The demon wondered if the time for his destruction was near. He recognized that Jesus was the "Holy One of God." Further NT teaching shows that demons, with Satan, will be cast into eternal fire for permanent punishment for their rebellion against God: Matthew 25:41; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4. While this demon knew that judgment was coming, he did not know when. The NT teaches that the final judgment - even of demons - is still yet in the future: Revelation 20:10, 13-15.

Jesus did not need nor want the testimony of Satan's followers, so He rebuked the demon and commanded him to be silent, which means to be "muzzled" as one does a dog (ver. 25). Then Jesus commanded the demon to leave the possessed man, a command which the demon could not refuse. However, he did shake the man violently once more as he came out, crying, perhaps in pain or anger (ver. 26).

The crowd was amazed (ver. 27) as they had been at His teaching (ver. 22), which motivated them to debate Jesus' identity. They acknowledge that Jesus teaches something "new" with authority. What was "new" about Jesus' teaching is that He taught with authority, as Mark pointed out in verse 22. The illustration of His authority is that He commands unclean spirits and they obey Him. From that point on, the news about Jesus' ability to perform miracles, specifically exorcisms, spreads "everywhere" around Galilee. We see the negative aspect of His popularity in verse 45.

#### APPLICATION:

Christians are not required to observe the Sabbath. Jesus never commanded it nor did His apostles. The word is found in 1 Corinthians 16:2 where it is translated as "week," where Paul teaches that Christians worship on *Sunday* - the first day of the week - rather than Saturday, the *last* day of the week. Additionally, in Colossians 2:16, Paul tells Christians, who were Jews by race, that they cannot be judged if they do not celebrate the Sabbath. That is the last time "Sabbath" is used in the NT.

"Demon possession" was a distinctive occurrence to Jesus' ministry and the ministry of His apostles. There was a "spirit of divination" in Acts 16:16-18 which Paul exorcized. Paul was able to exorcise demons in Acts 19:12, but Jews could not exercise demons (Acts 19:13-16). James writes (2:19) that the demons "believe" but they "shudder," fearing the judgment, not having changed their behavior. James's point is that "faith only" does not justify anyone. Once the student of the Bible studies the examples of demon-possession, he draws the following conclusions:

1. Demon-possession is distinct from physical sickness.
2. Demon-possession is also distinct from sins. No sin is ever attributed to the possession by demons nor is demon-possession ever the cause of sin in the NT.
3. Exorcism is a miracle which God allowed His Son and Christ's apostles to perform. Since the purpose of miracles was to confirm their message (John 20:30-31) and their message stands confirmed (Jude 3), then there is no longer anyone able to perform miracles. Only apostles could give others the ability to perform miracles (Acts 8:15-17) and all the apostles are dead. Also, see Paul's contrast between the temporary nature of miracles in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 with the permanency of the revealed word of God (that which is "perfect").
4. Therefore, God does not allow demon possession to occur today.
5. That does not mean that people cannot allow themselves to fall under the influence of Satan and perform wicked deeds. Satan is still very active and powerful, but he cannot withstand the teachings of Truth (Rom. 16:20).

#### TRANSLATION - 1:29-34:

**29** And immediately out of the synagogue after going out they went into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. **30** And Simon's mother-in-law was lying down suffering a fever, and immediately they spoke to Him concerning her. **31** And after approaching He raised her, grasping the hand; and the fever left her, and she began serving them.

**32** And evening coming, when the sun set, they brought to Him all those having illness and those demon-possessed; **33** and the whole city was being assembled at the door. **34** And He healed many having illness, various diseases and many demons He cast out and He did not allow the demons to speak because they had known Him.

#### GREEK WORDS:

"House" (ver. 29) is used 93 times, 18 in Mark. "Simon" and "Andrew," were seen earlier at 1:16. "James" was first seen in 1:19. "John" was used first at 1:4. "Mother-in-law" (ver. 30) is used six times: Matt. 8:14; 10:35; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38; 12:53. "To lie down" is used 12 times in the NT, four times in Mark. The verb "to suffer a fever" is all one word with "fire" as its root word. It is used in Matthew 8:14 and Mark 1:30. "To raise up" (ver. 31) is used 144 times, 19 in Mark. "To grasp, seize, or take hold" is used 47 times in the NT, 15 times in Mark. "To leave" was used earlier at 1:18. "To serve" was used earlier at 1:13.

"To set" (ver. 32) is used only twice: Mark 1:32; Luke 4:40. "Sun" is used 32 times in the NT, four times in Mark: 1:32; 4:6; 13:24; 16:2. "To carry, bring" is used 66 times, 15 times in Mark. "To be demon-possessed" is one word in Greek, with "demon" as the root word; it is used 13 times in the NT, four times in Mark: 1:32; 5:15-16, 18. "To be assembled" (ver. 33) is related to the noun "synagogue;" it is used eight times in the NT, in Mark twice: 1:33; 13:27. "To heal" (ver. 34) is used 43 times in the NT, five times in Mark: 1:34; 3:2, 10; 6:5, 13. "Diseases" is used 11 times, only here in Mark. "To cast out" was used earlier at 1:12. "Demons" are found 63 times in the NT, 13 times in Mark. "To know" is used 318 times in the NT, 21 times in Mark.

#### GREEK GRAMMAR:

"To begin to serve" (ver. 31) translates an imperfect tense verb, which denotes continuous action in the past: "continued to serve." Here, we translate it with an ingressive nuance: "began to serve."

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 8:14-17; Luke 4:38-41 for parallels to this paragraph.

#### COMMENTS:

The next miracle recorded pertains to Peter's mother-in-law. After leaving the synagogue in Capernaum, Jesus and His disciples enter the house of Simon Peter and Andrew with James and John (ver. 29). Simon's wife's mother (see 1 Corinthians 9:5 for verification that

Peter was married) had a fever and was laying down, sick. Peter and Andrew spoke to Jesus about the illness (ver. 30). So, Jesus went to the woman, helped her sit up, and taking her by the hand, healed her. The fever immediately left. Peter's mother-in-law quickly arose and began serving her guests.

#### APPLICATION:

Jesus proved His power over demons in 1:21-28. Now, He proves His power over health (1:29-34). Jesus has the ability to heal our bodies in this life (James 5:14-15). But if He chooses not to heal us now, we know that we have a body that will never be destroyed and will not be susceptible to sickness and disease and death (2 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49). For more examples of demon-possession in Mark, see: 3:11, 15; 6:7, 13; 9:38.

In Mark, Jesus has the power to heal:

1. Fever - 1:29-31.
2. Skin disease (leprosy) - 1:40-45.
3. Paralysis - 2:1-12.
4. Atrophy - 3:1-6.
5. Hemorrhaging - 5:25-34.
6. Deaf and mute - 7:32-37.
7. Blind - 8:22-26; 10:46-52.
8. Epilepsy - 9:14-29.
9. Death - 5:21-43.

#### TRANSLATION - 1:35-39:

**35** And very early in the night, after rising He went out and left into a wilderness place and there He was praying. **36** And Simon searched extensively for Him and those with him, **37** and they found Him and they say to Him that "All are seeking You." **38** And He says to them, "Let us go elsewhere into the surrounding villages, in order that even there I might preach. Since for this [purpose] I went out." **39** And He went preaching in their synagogue in all Galilee and was casting out demons.

#### GREEK WORDS:

"To pray" (ver. 35) is used 85 times in the NT, ten times in Mark. "To search diligently for" (ver. 36) is used only here in the NT. "To seek" (ver. 37) is not related to the prior verb; this one is used 117 times in the NT, ten times in Mark. "Village" is used only here in Mark. "To preach" was used earlier at 1:4, 7, 14. "Synagogue" was used earlier at 1:21, 23.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Luke 4:42-44 for his parallel to this paragraph.

#### COMMENTS:

That same evening (ver. 32), the people of Capernaum began bringing their sick people to Jesus to heal them. They also brought the demon-possessed to Him to have the demons cast out. The whole city of Capernaum was gathered at the door (see comments under "Archaeology" about Capernaum under 1:21-28). There, Jesus healed every manner of illness and disease which was brought to Him, including casting out demons. As He did with the demon at 1:25, Jesus would not allow the demons to testify to Whom He was. He did not need to be preached by demons. These demons, as the one in 1:24, knew who Jesus was.

The following morning, early while it was still dark (ver. 35), Jesus went to a secluded place so He could spend time in prayer to the Father. Mark records three times that Jesus prayed: 1:35; 6:46; 14:32-39. Jesus taught often about prayer (9:29; 11:24; 13:18; 14:38) and He practiced prayer often. But, His friends would not allow Him to be secluded. Simon Peter and the other disciples found Him and notified Him that people from Capernaum were looking for Him. But Jesus had spent sufficient time in Capernaum, at least at this point.

He encouraged His disciples to follow Him to other towns nearby so He could preach there also. He states that He came for that purpose: to preach the good news of salvation in Him (ver. 38). That same purpose and goal is true with Christ's followers today, Christians. Their responsibility is to preach the gospel of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:16). Therefore Jesus visited other towns and villages in the region of Galilee, preaching and proving His authority over Satan by casting out their demons (see the exorcism in 3:20-30).

#### APPLICATION:

Christians are to continue doing good and helping those who are in need, including praying for them. Christians continue the "healing ministry" of Jesus by doing good to all men, especially those of the "household of the faith" (Gal. 6:10). However, their greater responsibility, as noted above, is to preach the gospel of Christ. It alone is the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16). One can go to heaven being sick; but he or she cannot go to heaven without obeying the gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

In verse 38, Jesus says that He came for the purpose of preaching. In 1 John 3:8, John writes that Jesus also came to "destroy the works of the devil."

#### TRANSLATION - 1:40-45:

**40** And there came to Him a leper, imploring Him [and kneeling] and saying to Him that, "If You desire You are able me to cleanse." **41** And after feeling compassion, after stretching His hand, He touched [him] and says to him, "I desire, you are cleansed." **42** And immediately there went out from him the leprosy and he was cleansed.

**43** And after warning him sternly, immediately He sent him away **44** and He says to him, "See you might speak to no one nothing, but go show yourself to the priest and offer concerning your cleansing what Moses required for a testimony to them." **45** And after He went out He began to preach freely and to spread abroad the word so that no longer was He able openly into the city to enter, but He was outside in the wilderness place; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

#### GREEK WORDS:

"Leper" (ver. 40) is used nine times in the NT, in Mark at 1:40; 14:3. "To implore" means also to "encourage" and is used frequently, 109 times. Mark uses the verb nine times. "To kneel" is used four times: Matt. 17:14; 27:29; Mark 1:40; 10:17. "To desire" is used 208 times, 25 times in Mark. "To be able" is used 210 times, 33 times in Mark. "To cleanse" is used 31 times, four times in Mark (1:40-41, 42; 7:19). "To have compassion or pity" (ver. 41) is used 12 times in the NT, four times in Mark (1:41; 6:34; 8:2; 9:22). "To stretch or reach out" is used 16 times, three times in Mark (1:41; 3:5). "To touch" is used 39 times, 11 times in Mark. "Leprosy," related to the word "leper," is used only four times: Matt. 8:3; Mark 1:42; Luke 5:12-13.

"To warn sternly" (ver. 43) is used five times: Matt. 9:30; Mark 1:43; 14:5; John 11:33, 38. "To send away" is the same verb earlier translated "to compel" (ver. 12) and "to cast out [demons]" (ver. 34, 39). "To show" (ver. 44) is used 30 times, twice in Mark (1:44; 14:15). "Priest" is used 31 times, in Mark only at 1:44; 2:26. "To offer" or "bring, present" in this context denotes offering a sacrifice. It is used 47 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 1:44; 2:4; 10:13. "Cleansing" is related to the verb "to cleanse" used earlier; this word is found seven times in the NT, only here (1:44) in Mark. "To require" is used seven times, only here in Mark. "Moses" is mentioned 80 times in the NT, eight times in Mark: 1:44; 7:10; 9:4-5; 10:3-4; 12:19, 26. "Testimony" is used 19 times, three times in Mark: 1:44; 6:11; 13:9. "To spread abroad" (ver. 45) is used three times: Matt. 9:31; 28:15; Mark 1:45. "Word" is used 330 times, 24 times in Mark. "Openly" is used three times: Mark 1:45; John 7:10; Acts 10:3.

#### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The Law of Moses' most extensive discussion about leprosy is found in Leviticus 13-14. Noteworthy is the fact that touching a leper made the individual unclean (11:24-40; 13:45-46;

14:46-47; 15:5-12, 19-27; Num. 19:11-16). The process of a leper being declared clean would take eight days and had to accompany sacrifices in Jerusalem, which would have been about 90 miles south of Capernaum. The priest was responsible for declaring a leper cured, or not contagious. We learn from Numbers 12:10 and 2 Kings 5:1-14 that Israel believed only God could cure leprosy. The Messiah, when He came, would perform miracles: Isaiah 35:5-6; fulfilled in the life of Jesus, according to Matthew 11:5; Luke 7:22. Josephus estimated that there were about 20,000 priests in the area of Palestine in the days of Jesus. They were divided into 24 “courses” or groups to serve together (see Luke 1:8-9).

#### COMMENTS:

The final miracle recorded here in chapter 1, at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, is the cleansing of the leper. Lepers, because their condition might be contagious, had to stay away from crowds and the marketplace. It is significant here that this leper comes to Jesus. His faith and desire to be healed compelled him to ignore those limitations and beg Jesus to heal him. Notice that he suggests the healing is only limited to Jesus’ willingness to heal him (1:40).

Jesus also ignored societal regulations and touched the leper (ver. 41). Jesus was “moved with compassion.” Some manuscripts have Jesus was moved with “anger.” The *Textual Commentary* gives “compassion” a rating of “B.” However, they write that the decision between “compassion” and “anger” is difficult. Jesus’ anger is also directed at demons in 1:25; 3:12; 9:25. He was also emotional at the death of Lazarus: John 11:33, 38. If Jesus was angry, He was likely angry at the pain and suffering through leprosy which was ultimately caused by Satan. Even so, His compassion for His created being moved Him to touch the leper and “immediately he was cleansed” (ver. 42). Three terms connote a strong emotional reaction on the part of Jesus: compassion (or anger in some manuscripts), “sternly warned,” and “sent away.”

Jesus did not need to be hindered in His work so He told the leper not to tell anyone. On more than one occasion, Jesus told someone not to share their knowledge of Jesus’ identity: 5:43; 7:36; 8:26.

Instead, He sent the man away, commanding him to obey the Law of Moses (ver. 44). Jesus did not come to set aside the Law as if it was a matter of choice to obey it (see Matthew 5:17-20). Jesus obeyed the Law and He came to bring it to its completion in providing righteousness through the offering and sacrifice of Jesus Himself. Consequently, He told the leper to show himself to the priest, who alone under the Law of Moses could pronounce the man clean. He would also have to offer the animal sacrifices which the Law required. He would do these things as a “testimony” to “them” - perhaps the priests or the Jewish people or both - that the Messianic Age had arrived.

However, the healed leper was far too excited and thankful to keep quiet about his healing (ver. 45). He “preached” about Jesus all over Galilee so that the fame made it difficult for Jesus to enter publicly the city. He had to stay in “unpopulated” areas. Yet people continued to come to Him and He healed those who came to Him.

#### APPLICATION:

“Leprosy” is used as a metaphor for sin, specifically when it pictures the blood of Christ or baptism as “cleansing” the sinner of their sin. “Cleansing” is the regular term for curing leprosy. For the blood of Christ cleansing through *baptism*, see Acts 22:16, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26-27, Titus 3:5. Some manuscripts of Revelation 1:5 have the Greek word “washed:” “to Him who loves us and washed us from our sins by His blood.”

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, He respected both the Law and the temple so that the false accusations at His trial were easily disproved if one were wanting the truth: Mark 14:58; Acts 6:11, 13-14.

Mark shows us that Jesus has all authority (see Matthew 28:18):

1. Authority in teaching: 1:21-22.
2. Authority over the Sabbath: 2:27-28.



3. Authority to forgive sins: 2:5-12.
4. Authority over demons: 3:19-27.
5. Authority over nature: 4:35-41; 6:45-52.
6. Authority over the Law: 7:1-13, 14-20.
7. Authority over the temple: 11:12-33; 12:1-12.
8. Authority to share the mystery of the Kingdom: 4:10-11.