

**Mark 1:16-
10/18/09
Lynchburg, VA 24503**

EXHORDIUM

In the introduction of the book, Mark declares the gospel. He says that the Jesus the Messiah has come and He is King of all the Earth. Those who recognize His coming and embrace the truth of His Kingdom will be included among God's covenant people. They will be the recipients of the promises.

Mark makes those kinds of claims in the opening of the book. Immediately after, he begins to prove that Jesus is in fact the Messiah by the authority that He wields here on Earth.

We see in the first few pages of the book that Jesus has authority over:

- 1) Other men, as He begins to authoritatively call His disciples.
- 2) The teachers of the day, the leaders of the synagogue, as He taught with authority and not as the scribes.
- 3) The demonic world as He casts out demons.
- 4) The physical world as He heals the sick and lame.
- 5)

EXEGESIS

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. ¹⁷And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. ¹⁸And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. ¹⁹And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. ²⁰And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

Simon and Andrew are called. As you know, Simon, is Simon Peter, that great impetuous apostle. They are called along with James and John.

It is most interesting that we have two sets of brothers as the apostles. Also, that we brothers who are also business partners. This whole thing starts off on a rather ingrown level. We should learn something from this. The Lord Jesus was not worried about what people might say about Him or His ministry.

Both brothers immediately forsake their nets and follow after Jesus.

Fishers of men. They were going to be men catchers.

We don't see anything in the text of the calling of the Apostles that shows their personal merit or quality. They were businessmen laborers. They were of a humble sort, not the kind you would expect if one was picking out His cabinet to take over the land and the world. But that is what Jesus is doing. He is picking out those men who will take over the world.

Then why pick men like these? They are not particularly educated, gifted, wealthy or well-connected. One obvious answer is that their authority and power came from God, from Jesus and from the Holy Spirit. The more humble the leaders, the more obvious that God is working in the midst of this movement.

They leave their father in the ship and follow Jesus. In the calling of Elisha, he is allowed to say goodbye to father and mother before following Elijah. With Jesus, the disciples are not afforded that luxury. Something greater than Elijah is here and His followers must see Him and obey Him now.

We should not how many things take place by the Sea in the book of Mark. The sea is often connected to both the sinfulness of the world and also to Gentiles. Jesus takes up His work by the sea and returns to the sea again and again. He is identifying with the world and His calling to cleanse even the seas.

²¹And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. ²²And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark does not take much time in revealing Jesus's authority and also how this authority runs him afoul of the powers that be. Jesus begins to do His work on the Sabbath in the synagogue. We should not that the work that Jesus is doing is cleansing and restoring. But not everyone receives the cleansing and restoration. Some revile Him and do not receive His teaching.

The people were astonished at His doctrine. Why? Well, first of all, it made sense of the Old Testament. He was able to reveal the truth about Messiah and Israel's expectations. Second, they were surprised that somebody like Jesus could teach so well. The son of a poor carpenter should not have been so polished and bold.

Jesus is expressly contrasted with the scribes. They did not teach with the same kind of authority that Jesus did. His preaching was bold, clearly expressing Thus Saith the Lord.

Jesus is always running afoul of the authorities on the Sabbath. Those of us who are Sabbatharians, should keep this in mind. The Pharisees had made the Sabbath a day of mourning and fasting, not a day of rest and feasting. They had actually turned the Sabbath upside down. Jesus calls them to account for this repeatedly, as He does things that are lawful on the Sabbath according to God but considered sins against the Sabbath by the Pharisees.

Primarily, Jesus takes care of people on the Sabbath. While this is an admonition to stay away from a tight shoed application of Sabbath, it is not an invitation to not celebrate Sabbath. Jesus did good on the Sabbath and was condemned by the Pharisees. But we do not see Him agitating for doing anything you want on the Sabbath.

Jesus taught as one who had authority and this was recognized by the people. We should keep in mind that Jesus was a mamby pamby leader. The people understood that He was making bold claims. They were waiting to see if He could back them up and also what the establishment was going to do.

We should keep the context in mind as we read. Remember that Jesus is being declared by Mark to be the Messiah. He is claiming to be the one who is to have all authority on Earth. So, His teaching with authority is exactly what one would expect of the Messiah. Is He the one?

²³And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, ²⁴Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. ²⁵And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. ²⁶And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

Jesus is in the synagogue and there is a man with an unclean Spirit. Jesus is making His rounds to the synagogues and cleansing them of the evil that He finds there. The demons were comfortable in the church, operating there among unbelievers.

The demons know who Jesus is. It is not is not enough to know that Jesus exists or even to believe that He is the Messiah. The demons knew this but they were still in opposition to Him. Later on, we get the sense that the religious authorities begin to realize that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah. But both the demons and the religious authorities have set themselves up against the Messiah. They know who He is but they will not submit to Him.

It is interesting that the demons ask Jesus if He has come to destroy them. He has but not all at once or immediately. He casts demons out and they must leave but sometimes they can come back. We definitely get the sense that the demons power and authority is being taken away from them. We should keep in mind that this authority is being revealed on the Earth. It is not an other worldly authority. Jesus is King of the Earth, over both physical and spiritual entities, in heaven and on earth, all authority is being given to Him. After the Ascension and Pentecost, we see that authority transfer as complete. We also see Jesus's authority transferred to His Apostles and disciples on the Earth.

²⁷And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. ²⁸And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

Why were the people amazed? Had they not seen demon possession before? It seems that it was fairly common in Israel at this time. We have several instances of people being brought to Jesus who had trouble with spirits or demons. So, that is not why they were amazed. They obviously felt helpless against the power of the demons. But here is Jesus who has the authority. The demons have to do what He says just because He says so. That is a magnificent authority.

Jesus's fame spreads in Galilee. Again, we should remember that this is Galilee of the Gentiles. There are many Jews there but it is an area that is known as a Gentile area. Jesus is taking authority over the world.

²⁹And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. ³¹And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Sabbath community. This was a biggish party. We have Jesus, James, John, Andrew and Simon Peter, Peter's wife and molther-in-law, probably both men's fathers and the other wives as well. Imagine a wonderful group of folks meeting after the extraordinary morning at the Synagogue to eat together. Peter's mother in law was sick with a fever and Jesus heals her.

Already in a few short verses, Mark has revealed that Jesus.

- 1) Has authority over the Sabbath
- 2) Authority over demons
- 3) Authority over disease

³²And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. ³³And all the city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

So, by the end of the day His fame had spread so much that people began to flock to Him for healing and cleansing. We should keep in mind that this would very much provoke the leaders of the Synagogue. Jesus exposed the Synagogue as a place where unclean spirits comfortably roam. But now many, many people are coming directly to Him to be cleansed and healed.

³⁵And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. ³⁶And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. ³⁷And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee. ³⁸And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. ³⁹And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

Jesus was an early riser. He went out without telling His disciples. Jesus is a bit unpredictable. The disciples do not like this.

Jesus prays to the Father for His strength and is strengthened.

We see Simon emerge as a leader here at the beginning. He followed Jesus and brought others along with him.

The people are seeking for Jesus but He moves on anyway. He has a mission and is focused on achieving His mission. He must preach in the synagogues throughout Galilee.

The disciples may have been more than a bit flummoxed. Don't they need disciples? Here they have a host of people coming to see Jesus. He has the makings of an army and He just moves on, leaving these folks in the lurch and completely unorganized.

Jesus expressly says that He came forth to preach the gospel. Throughout all Galilee Jesus preaches and casts out demons.

Again, we should keep the context in mind. We tend to think of the Jews as a bunch of goody two shoes who were very persnickety about keeping the exact letter of the law. They were so good but they just were not saved. They were about as good as you can get by your own merits but that is just not good enough. But that is not what was going on. The various sects of the Jews were in a great mess. There was a great deal of sinful behavior run amok. The fact that demons were so powerful in this land shows the real truth. They had not been faithful. They were not good. They needed cleansing and healing.

Furthermore, the priests in the synagogues were falling short. Whatever they could do was not enough. The demons had power and authority and the priests were no match for them. The priests knew this. The demons knew this. The people knew this. That is why everyone is so taken with Jesus. He does not fit the situation. He is different and real power flows from Him. Everybody was taking notice of Him.

⁴⁰And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. ⁴¹And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. ⁴²And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. ⁴³And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; ⁴⁴And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. ⁴⁵But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

This last story of the chapter is interesting. Elisha also healed a leper, a Gentile. But Jesus heals a leper who is a Jew. We should see that Israel is now in the wilderness again and has leprosy. Jesus has come to heal and to cure them but will they do what He says. The leprous man in Elisha's story bathed in the Jordan River and was cleansed.

Jesus can now simply speak the Word, the Word of God, and cleanse the lepers of Israel. Will they heed Him?

Jesus commands the man to tell no one but to go and verify the cleansing to the priest. Once the priests declared him clean, he would have been able to go in and out of the temple and fully enter into the worship of God.

Why does Jesus tell the man to be quiet? Wouldn't it have been a great publicity stunt to do exactly what the man did? Wasn't Jesus trying to gather believers? I am not exactly sure about the answers to these questions. One thing I do know is that Jesus does things differently than we would expect. He is unpredictable. He leaves just when people need Him. He moves on to the next town when the demand for Him is at its peak. He tells people to be quiet when He is clearly trying to gather disciples.

This drives Jesus into the desert and lonely places. We should remember that Jesus is taking on the identity of Israel. He is the Savior but what happens to Israel, happens to Jesus. Now, He is driven once again into the desert. It is as if God, Himself, is in exile. But the people come to Him, like they did to John the Baptist, for cleansing and healing. The religious leaders note this and envy begins to grow that the people do not come to them but rather go to Jesus.

I think in this situation there are at least two things going on. One, Jesus was not ready to be completely inundated by the crowds. He wanted to preach to more cities and towns and needed the freedom to be able to travel. This is a fairly weak argument however because we already have men coming to hear Him among mobs. Second, he wanted the man to go the priests to testify that Messiah had come. The healing was clearly from God. This meant that Jesus was a great prophet like Elisha and probably the expected One. Since Jesus heals by just the Word of His voice, He is powerful. Third, if the priests did not heed Him, this would be a testimony against them. Jesus is clearly going from synagogue to synagogue and cleansing them.

We will later see Him cleanse the temple twice as He drives out money changers, flips over tables, etc. Israel is dirty and they need cleansed by their true High Priest. The priests, of all people should realize this. But instead of embracing Him, they are envious and stand against Him.

2:1-12 ¹And again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house. ²And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. ³And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. ⁴And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son,

thy sins be forgiven thee. ⁶But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? ⁸And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? ⁹Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?* ¹⁰But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) ¹¹I say unto thee, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.* ¹²And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, *We never saw it on this fashion.*

Jesus heals the man sick of the palsy based upon the faith of the four who were carrying him. He does not just heal him, though. He forgives his sins. But to prove that He has authority to forgive sins, He does heal the man.

Jesus really proclaims His purposes here. God can forgive sins and so can the Son of Man, the Son of God.

We never saw it on this fashion. There were stories from the past but clearly these people never saw such glory.

Elisha raises up a man, even after he was dead.

EXHORTATION

What do we want from Jesus? Do we simply want to walk? Are we like the paralytic, crippled and unable to support ourselves? But we can walk. We can work. We can do all those things that we need to do. So, we don't have the same dire need. Here is a man, though, stuck in his sins and unable to do anything about it. Jesus perceives the man's true need and addresses it directly.

Furthermore, Jesus tells us that He can forgive sins on Earth and prove it by the power of His Words to heal.

But there is something else going on. Jesus seems to indicate that this man's sins and his paralysis are related. We don't like that conclusion. How could it have been his fault to be paralyzed and born around on a litter? In another place in Scripture, Jesus denies that some men killed by a falling tower were guilty of greater sins than other men. On another occasion, he says that the man born blind was not born blind either for his own sins or even for the sins of his parents but so that the glory of God could be revealed.

Here we have a similar issue. The man is forgiven his sins and made to walk both to glorify God. But we should see that both our physical and spiritual lives are to be used to give God glory. That is simply to say that our entire being should be used to glorify God.