

# MARK

## Chapter 1

### *John the Baptist Prepares the Way*

**The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” 4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”**

**1:1-8** The theme of preparation introduced in the Gospel for the First Sunday in Advent (Mark 13:33–37) is continued in the text for the Second Sunday in Advent. It describes one of the messengers who prepared the way for the mission, ministry, and message of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist. Indirect references also point back to Isaiah and Malachi. Mark prepares us for the coming of Jesus Christ so that we in turn might prepare the way for others through the proclamation of the gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The Nestle-Aland text divides the text into two paragraphs: Mark 1:1–6 and 1:7–8. The UBS text<sup>2</sup> treats the text as one paragraph. Since vv 7–8 continue the description of John’s characteristic activities begun in v 4, the UBS arrangement of the text appears to be superior. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The parallel accounts are found at Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-17; John 1:19-27. Isaiah 40 ought to be read in its entirety. (Buls)

Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark says nothing about the announcement of the birth of John and Jesus, nor anything about the birth of these two. Mark begins with the public ministry of the Baptist which likely began in the summer before the appearance of Jesus, which came six months later. (Buls)

The evangelist Mark offers the comic-book version of the Good News of Jesus, not in the sense of a humorous or silly fantasy, but in moving quickly from one frame to the next. Action and expectancy characterize Mark. Narrative and teaching are left to a minimum. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

This makes it challenging for the preacher, especially at this juncture of the church year. There is no visitation, no announcement, no genealogy, no angels, just “Bang, they’re off!” jArch; tou' eujaggelivou, the beginning of the Gospel. Mark submits a reference verse from the prophet Isaiah, combines it with a verse from Malachi, and then writes the story of John the Baptizer, the short version, of course. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

Everything about John causes his hearers to be attracted to him. His message, his attitude, clothing, and diet all cause the crowds (and us, for that matter) to wonder what he is all about. But

just as the chartreuse and hot pink billboard ad gets your attention for the product it promotes, John is a man designed to bring attention, not to himself, but to the Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

This text leaves the preacher to focus on the person and actions of John the Baptizer as they relate to Jesus. The force of this text rests in the last two verses, where Mark relates John's understanding of his purpose. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

Mark's is the most compact of the four Gospels. He begins not with a birth narrative as in Matthew or Luke, or a cosmic overview of the incarnation as in John, but with a concise summary of the work of John the Baptist. Kingsbury sees Mk 1:1 as "caption-summary" to the whole book (see Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1983], 69). The good news about Jesus then begins with the prophetic words from Malachi and Isaiah in 1:2–3 and the appearance of John and his Baptism in 1:4–8. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

The penitential character of Advent is evident in this text, as John preaches "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4). Hearers would be well served by preachers who carefully think through the meaning of repentance. For this work, the essay by James Nestingen, "Preaching Repentance" (*Lutheran Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3 [Autumn 1989], 249–65), will prove invaluable. Nestingen makes it clear that "under the power of the gospel, repentance can come to its true end: faith" (261). While based on the Gospel for Advent 3, Year B (Jn 1:6–8, 19–28), the sermon of Gerhard Forde, "On Getting Out of the Way for Jesus" in *The Captivation of the Will* (Steven Paulson, ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 94–98), contains many helpful insights for preaching on John the Baptist. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**1:1** *The beginning*. Much has been written about this verse, only one line. It is a formal introduction. Note that the Nestle/Aland Greek text places a period at the end of the line. Likewise NIV, JB, NEB. These Notes consider this the correct punctuation. We agree with Franzmann as to the meaning of this verse: (Buls)

This is too comprehensive and solemn a phrase to be the title of the opening section only, as some have thought, the part which deals with John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism and His temptation, the preparation for Jesus' Messianic ministry. It is designed to be the title of the whole work, and it is a significant one. Mark's book aims to set before the readers the record of the beginning and origin of that Good News which they knew and believed, that powerful and saving Word of God which the Son of God first proclaimed in word and deed (1:14-15), a word which was still the voice of Christ when proclaimed to men by human apostles and evangelists. (*Concordia Bible With Notes*, page 73) (Buls)

Lenski: These words must be considered the title of the entire Gospel of Mark. . . Mark considers this beginning of the Gospel to start with the work of the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus, and to extend to his resurrection and glorification. 'Beginning' connotes continuation, and this would be the glad news concerning the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and concerning all his blessed work in the world, ending with the consummation of the Gospel at the last day. (Buls)

The Greek word *arxē*, "beginning," is the word the Septuagint uses in Gen 1:1. John introduces his gospel with the words *en arxē*, "In [the] beginning" (John 1:1), and says that Christ was the agent of the creation described in Genesis. Mark 1:1 does not directly refer to the creation narrative. The verse may serve as the title of the gospel (so Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament* 88). It may also stress that God is the one who initiates salvation; he is

the one who acted in the beginning (William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974] 42). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

These words take all who are acquainted with Scripture back to Genesis 1:1. With the coming of Jesus Christ, Mark tells us, there is a new beginning, a new creation. His coming fulfills all the OT promises and prophecies concerning the Savior who would come to redeem men from sin and everlasting death. Mark's words, "the beginning," include everything he wrote in his Gospel. He identifies the new beginning as Jesus Christ and all that he said and did. (PBC)

This whole verse is designed to be the title of the whole work, and it is a significant one. Mark's book aims to set before the readers the record of the beginning and origin of that Good News which they knew and believed, that powerful and saving Word of God which the Son of God first proclaimed in word and deed.

*gospel*. From the Old English *godspel*, "good story" or "good news," which accurately translates the Greek. The good news is that God has provided salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (CSB)

Greek euangelion. Here used as (1) fulfillment of God's promises to Israel about forgiveness and new life through the Messiah and (2) an extended account of Jesus' teaching and healing ministry, His crucifixion, and resurrection from the dead. "Sometimes (gospel) is used to mean the entire doctrine of Christ, our Lord...this includes the explanation of the Law and the proclamation of the favor and grace of God His heavenly Father" (FC SD V 4). (TLSB)

"The gospel" is "God's good news to men" (BAGD 317). The subject and content of "the gospel" is "Jesus Christ." Martin Franzmann (*The Word of the Lord Grows* 170) understands that the aim of Mark "is to confront men with the Christ." Martin Hengel (*Studies in the Gospel of Mark* 53) states that "the gospel about Jesus Christ" refers to "the saving events of the ministry and death of Jesus in the 'biographical' work that is now beginning . . . it contains the whole saving event which begins with the forerunner, John the Baptist, and culminates in the death of Jesus for many and his resurrection." Regarding the word "gospel," Vincent Taylor (*The Gospel According to St. Mark* 152) writes, "Characteristic of Mk . . . and freely used by St. Paul, the word is employed here, not of a book or generally, but of the Apostolic message of salvation in Christ." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The Formula of Concord (Solid Declaration, Article V: Law and Gospel; Tappert edition, 558–59), refers to Mark 1:1 in a discussion of the word *gospel*. In the broad sense, it denotes "the entire teaching of Christ, our Lord . . . both the exposition of the law and the proclamation of the mercy and grace of God, his heavenly Father, as it is written in Mark 1:1, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' Shortly thereafter the chief parts are announced, namely repentance and forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4)." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Our text is certainly one of the clearest calls to repentant preparation in all of Scripture. The evangelist Mark, said to be Peter's interpreter, follows Peter's straightforward manner and immediately gets to the point. His writing is a "gospel." In the Roman world, euangelion denoted "an historical event which introduces a new situation for the world . . . a radically new state of affairs for mankind," such as the birth of an emperor (William Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974] 43). But while the Roman concept was retrospective, looking back on an event that had already taken place, in biblical thought the word had a distinctively forward-looking, eschatological flavor. The gospel announces that the

promised time of eternal salvation has now come (Is 40:9–11; 52:7,10). Mark states clearly that this eternal salvation has come in the person of Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of God—no question, no debate, but simple statement of fact. Mark does not rationalize; he simply proclaims. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

The good news which Mark and the other Gospel writers report centers in Jesus of Nazareth. Mark calls him Jesus Christ the Son of God. (PBC)

The term “gospel” or “evangel” was not a word first coined among the Christians. On the contrary, the concept was significant both in pagan and Jewish culture. Among the Romans it meant “joyful tidings” and was associated with the cult of the emperor, whose birthday, attainment to majority and ascension to power were celebrated as festival occasions for the whole world. The reports of such festivals were called “evangel” in the inscription and papyri of the Imperial Age. A Calendar inscription from 9 BC found in Priene in Asia Minor, says of the emperor Octavian (Augustus): “the birthday of the god was for the world the beginning of joyful tidings which have been proclaimed on his account. This inscription is remarkably similar to Mark’s initial line and it clarifies the essential content of an evangel in the ancient world: an historical event which introduces a new situation for the world. In this perspective the Roman would understand Mark’s proclamation of Jesus the Messiah. Beginning with the inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry, Mark announces Jesus’ coming as an event that brings about a radically new state of affairs for mankind. (Lane)

*Jesus* – A major theme of Mark. (TLSB)

"Jesus Christ, the Son of God" is adjectival genitive. The Good News is ever and always and only about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus is the personal name of the incarnate Christ (Matthew 1:21). Christ denotes His office, the Anointed One, the Messiah, Who was anointed with the Holy Spirit when He was baptized (Mark 1: 10). There are six nouns in this line. Only the second has an article. But all six are definite: "The beginning of the good news about the Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the (Only) God." Plainly this one-line title stresses both natures in Christ: "Jesus Christ" speaks of the incarnate Christ; "Son of God" speaks of His divinity. "The Son of God" is applied to Jesus again and again in this Gospel (3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61,62; 15:39). (Buls)

The verse serves to introduce Mark’s account. It is *to euaggelion* of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Some manuscripts omit the title. For a treatment of *huiou theou*, see Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1959, 1963), 270–305). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Jesus was his personal name chosen by God and revealed to Joseph by the angel saying, “You are to give him the name of Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus is the NT form of the name of Joshua which means “Yahweh is help and salvation.” It was a very popular name. But for Jesus of Nazareth it is descriptive of our Lord’s mission – to be mankind’s Savior. (PBC)

*Jesus*, an objective genitive, refers to the story of Jesus, not the message preached by him. *Christ* points to the Gentile understanding of the Jewish promise of one coming to save. The object of v 1 is much the same as the time/date/place stamp at the opening scene of a historical movie. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

*Christ*. The name Christ, used here a proper name, is also descriptive of our Lord’s mission. Christ means “the anointed one.” This Jesus, of whom Mark writes, is thus not just any Jesus, but

the Jesus anointed by the Holy Spirit to be our prophet, priest and king. Jesus himself in his ministry avoided using the name Christ, or Messiah, because by that time the name had been given false, political overtones. (PBC)

*Son of God* – Using this title, Mark comes from the point of view presents his account of the good news about Jesus Christ. Though Jesus Christ was rejected by his own people and crucified as a malefactor, Mark tells us that he was anything but a malefactor. The study of Mark's Gospel leads step by step to the conviction arrived at the centurion at the cross, "Surely this man was the Son of God (15:39). It is Mark's God-given purpose to lead you and me to recognize the man Jesus Christ as the very Son of God and to confess him as such (see 1:11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:16; 13:32; 14:36,61; 15:39). In this Matthew (1:23), Luke (1:35) and John (1:14; 20:31) fully agree with him. (PBC)

The words "the Son of God" pose a text-critical problem. Some manuscripts lack the phrase. Most English versions, including the NIV, NASB, and RSV, retain the words but indicate the problem in a footnote. The omission of the phrase would not cause any theological difficulties since the intent of the gospel is to lead the reader to the conviction that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God who came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

**1:2-3 in Isaiah the prophet.** The quotation that immediately follows (see first two poetry lines) comes from Mal 3:1 but is followed by one from Isa 40:3. Understanding the ministry of Jesus must begin with the OT. What Isaiah says about God applies to Jesus, his Son (v. 1). The passages cited speak of the messenger, the desert and the Lord, each of which is stressed in vv. 4–8. (CSB)

OT passages now fulfilled. "John the Baptist (preceding Christ) is called a preacher of repentance, but this is for the forgiveness of sins. That is, John was to accuse all and convict them of being sinners. This is so they can know what they are before God and acknowledge that they are lost. So they can be prepared for the Lord to receive grace and to expect and accept from Him the forgiveness of sins" (SA III III 5). (TLSB)

Isaiah is mentioned because he was Israel's preeminent prophet, only his name need be mentioned here. He is the only prophet quoted in Mark (cf 7:6-7). (TLSB)

Notice that Mark begins his gospel not with the story of Christmas, but with the words of the prophet Isaiah. The same prophet who had so much to say about the coming Messiah also spends time previewing the one who would prepare his way. And Mark thinks it's so important that he repeats those prophetic words in order to introduce the event at the Jordan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 1)

The verse attributes the OT quote to Isaiah, but while v 3 is from Is 40:3, v 2 is from Ex 23:20 and Mal 3:1. That this was recognized as a problem is indicated by the fact that some manuscripts have the reading "in the prophets." The most likely explanation is that Mark was using a catena of Bible passages in which the Isaiah passage was at the head. Taylor (p 153) suggests that Mark was using "a collection of Messianic proof-texts." What is obvious is that Mark, under inspiration, sees the Old Testament as the basis for understanding John the Baptist's role as the one whom God has raised up to prepare the way for the Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The quotation is from the Septuagint version of Is 40:3, with one change. The Septuagint reading is “make straight paths for our God” instead of “make straight paths for him.” Mark clearly understands that Isaiah pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Next, following apostolic practice, Mark immediately cites OT authority. The gospel fulfills what God had promised through the centuries. Mark follows a rabbinic method of citing only the most prominent source, Isaiah. Actually, the quote combines three passages. In Ex 23:20, God promised to send his angel before Israel in the first exodus through the wilderness to the Promised Land. The quote also draws from Mal 3:1, 23 (English 3:1; 4:5) where the promise is reiterated in more detail and applied to a future deliverance: the messenger will be a second Elijah, and the Lord himself will suddenly come to his temple. The second part of Mark’s quote is from Is 40:3, which speaks of a second exodus through the wilderness to the final deliverance prepared for the people by the Lord himself. Thus both the Torah and the Prophets attest to the promise of a herald in the wilderness who will precede the Lord himself, and then the Lord will lead his people into the promised “land” of eternal salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

*My messenger.* Mark brings the reader the first essential information needed to understand the story. The great Jewish prophet wrote long ago that a messenger would come. Mark connects Isaiah’s words with Malachi’s description of where the messenger would come from and what he would pronounce. Mark joins them together to introduce the Baptizer to the reader. This seems to be a passing of the torch from prophet to prophet to quickly prove John’s legitimacy. *ijdouv*, a term weakly translated “behold/look/see,” offers the effect of an upside-down exclamation point at the beginning of the sentence in the Spanish language. *eJtoimavsate*, an aorist imperative, sums up the message of the Baptizer, “you must prepare now!” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

Matthew stressed that the connection to the OT because he wrote his Gospel for Jewish readers well-acquainted with the OT. Mark wrote for Gentile readers and so, except for this one instance, does not personally refer to the OT prophecies. In writing his Gospel he simply wants us to observe Jesus in action and in doing so wants us to come to the same conclusion Matthew drew from the OT prophecies he quoted so frequently. Mark opens his Gospel with the OT prophecy concerning John the Baptist. In thus presenting John’s credentials Mark likewise presents the credentials of Jesus Christ the Son of God, whose forerunner John was. Note, therefore, that Christianity is not a new religion, but is the fulfillment of God’s OT promises. (PBC)

This citation is from Mal 3:1 and Is 40:3. John the Baptist brings the prophetic office to a point as he comes as the messenger sent from God to prepare his way. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Exodus 23:30 contains God’s promise to send his messenger before the people on a first exodus through the wilderness to Canaan. In Isaiah 40:3 the messenger announces the second exodus through the wilderness to the final deliverance prepared for God’s people. (Lane)

*prepare the way* – At Malachi 3:1 the LXX reads in translation: “Behold I am sending my messenger and he will take an interest in the way before me, and suddenly the Lord will come to his temple, namely the Lord of the Covenant, whom you desire.”

Note that the Greek text has a comma after verse 3. RSV and JB follow this idea which we consider correct. "Just as it stands written" is answered in verse 4: "Just as it stands written, so

there came John the Baptist etc." Fulfillment corresponds precisely to prophecy. Only verse 3 is found in Isaiah. Mark has been accused of ignorance because the prophecy in verse 2 is from Malachi 3:1. (Buls)

For several reasons we confidently defend Mark against such accusation: (Buls)

- a. Matthew 3:3; Luke 3:4 and John 1:23 tell us that the Baptist spoke only Isaiah 40:3 of himself. This is found at Mark 1:3. Nowhere does it say that the Baptist spoke Malachi 3:1 of himself, though Jesus Himself applied it to him at Matthew 11:10 and Luke 7:27. In other words, at Mark 1:2 only Isaiah is mentioned because the Baptist quoted only Isaiah concerning himself; (Buls)
- b. And Bengel rightly points to other instances like this in the NT: "In the same way as Matthew in 21:4.5 quotes Zechariah under the title of one prophet, and at the same time blends with Zechariah's words something out of Isaiah 62: 11; and as Paul also, in Romans 9:27 quotes Isaiah by name, and yet has interwoven with Isaiah's words something out of Hosea 2:1, so Mark quotes two prophets, and yet mentions only the one by name. . . . John the Baptist himself quoted Isaiah, not Malachi, concerning himself." (Buls)

Note that Nestle/Aland note a reference to Exodus 23:20 in the margin. Mark 1:2 is found verbatim at Exodus 23:20 in the LXX. But there the reference is plainly to the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. At Malachi 3:1 the LXX reads in translation: "Behold I am sending My messenger and he will take an interest in the way before Me, and suddenly the Lord will come to His temple, namely the Lord of the Covenant, whom you desire." The Hebrew at Malachi 3:1 reads: "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me." (NASB). Therefore, though Mark 1:2 agrees verbatim with Exodus 23:20 in the LXX, but does not do so at Malachi 3:1, the reference at Mark 1:2 is clearly to Malachi 3:1. Some critics have played havoc with this. For example Danker (*Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*, p. 90, edition of 1960. (Buls)

Matthew (11:10 where this same passage is found) evidently ties up the fortunes of Israel's past history as presented in the Exodus along with her future destiny as seen by the prophet Malachi and alleges that Israel's entire history has meaning only in terms of John the Baptist's activity as related to Jesus' Messianic mission. Significant is the alteration in the second quotation of "my" to "your" to conform to the pronoun in the quotation from Exodus. Jesus is the embodiment of Israel. (Buls)

Mark 1:2 is not conforming to Exodus 23:20, but *DID* change "my" to "you" from Malachi 3:1 because "you" (twice in this verse) is referring directly to Christ, true God incarnate. Jesus is not the embodiment of Israel. That false idea is a subtle way of identifying "The Servant of the Lord" in Isaiah 53 with all of Israel, not just Jesus in prophecy. (Buls)

Back to Mark 1:2. As already stated, "you" (twice) refers directly to Christ. Jehovah sent the Baptist to prepare the way for Christ. Prophecy was fulfilled. (Buls)

**1:3 make paths straight** – Before a king made a journey to a distant country, the roads he would travel were improved. Similarly, preparation for the Messiah was made in a moral and spiritual way by way the ministry of John, which focused on repentance and forgiveness of sin and the need for a Savior. (CSB)

Exodus 23:20 contains God's promise to send his messenger before the people on the first exodus through the wilderness to Canaan. In Isaiah 40:3 the messenger announces the second exodus through the wilderness to the final deliverance prepared for God's people. (Lane)

This is what the Baptist said of himself. All four Gospels make a point of this. (References above ). Matthew, Mark and Luke quote the first three lines alike. These words are from the LXX. They change "of our God" to "His" meaning Christ. The divinity of Christ is implicit. "In the desert" in Isaiah was figurative, denoting the miserable condition of Israel, but, in all four Gospels where it is quoted, it is literal. Mark 1:4 clearly shows that. Verses 4-8 will show us that what the Lord said through the Prophet Isaiah came true in the person of John the Baptist. The second and third lines of Mark 1:3 are an example of Hebrew parallelism, saying the same thing in different words. (Buls)

**1:4-11** The Baptism of Our Lord serves as the foundation for the life and work of Jesus in the Gospel according to St. Mark. In the Gospels according to Sts. Matthew and Luke, it plays a pivotal role that is preceded by Jesus' rather low-key birth and youth and followed by his high-profile public ministry. From a slightly different perspective, Jesus' Baptism in Mark serves as the initial introduction to Jesus and, thus, forms the basis for interpreting his later temptation, the calling of the four fishermen, and the series of miracles that follow. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

It is important to note here that the very early placement of the Baptism of Our Lord in Mark has been erroneously interpreted by some. Already in the third century, Paul of Samosata, an Adoptionist, erroneously suggested that Jesus was born a simple man. Later, he was adopted by God in his Baptism and then became the recipient of divine powers similar to the prophets, but to a much greater degree. This heresy has been termed Dynamic Monarchianism. This interpretation has been "adopted" by some modern theologians who deny the mystery of the incarnation. According to Scripture and the tradition of the Fathers, the Baptism of Our Lord is revelatory. That is, it makes known what would otherwise remain unknown. Jesus, born of Mary in time, is eternally God and the Second Person of the Holy Trinity: he is the beloved Son of the Father and the bearer of the Holy Spirit. (See Augustine, *Sermon 52*.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

In this Series (B) of texts, verses 4-8 have already been covered in the text for Advent II. Very likely verses 4-8 are repeated here to show the close connection between the mission of the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. Consult the Notes for Advent II for verses 4-8. (Buls)

The Notes on this text will not repeat all the thoughts put forth in three other textual studies in the three-year series, namely, Matthew 3:13-17, Series A, Epiphany I, pp. 19-21; John 1:29-34, Series A, Epiphany II, pp. 22-25; and, Luke 3:21-22, Series C, Epiphany I, pp. 18-19. Matthew 3:13-17 (five verses) gives us the fullest account of Jesus' baptism. Luke 3:21-22 (two verses) gives us the briefest account. Mark 1:9-11 (three verses) is parallel to that in Matthew and Luke. The account at John 1:29-34 assumes knowledge of Jesus' baptism, for in verses 32-33 the Baptist clearly refers to the incident of Jesus' baptism. (Buls)

*Mark 1:4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Mark 1:5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Mark 1:6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist,*



*and he ate locusts and wild honey. Mark 1:7 And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." Mark 1:8 "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Buls)*

**1:4-8** The main ideas of Mk 1:4-8 are the great words of John the Baptist: “preaching,” *kērussōn*, means “to proclaim,” much as a herald announces a king’s message. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 1)

John’s message was not simply the hammering blows of the Law, calling sinners to confess their sins. He was a preacher of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins, offered by his Baptism, which pointed forward to the “one more powerful than I.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 1)

John is greater than the Old Testament prophets because he is the last herald before the coming of Jesus Christ. He is the announcer *before* the main event. He prepared the way (v 3) for “the Lord” (Is 40:3)—Jesus Christ, who will baptize the people with the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 1)

**1:4** *John came.* Mark, like John, has no nativity narrative, but begins with the ministry of John the Baptist. The name John means “The LORD is gracious.” (CSB)

The appearance of a prophet shattered 400 years of silence from heaven. Israel knew that the age of prophecy had ceased long ago, but the faithful remnant still cherished the hope that God would fulfill his promise to send the Prophet (Deut 18:15– 19). John’s appearance confirmed that the fulfillment of that hope was at hand. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

From Mark’s perspective, John is important not for his own sake but as the beginning of the unfolding drama of redemption which centers in Jesus of Nazareth. The brevity of his presentation of John serves to project into sharp relief two features of the Baptist’s ministry which were of special significance to him (1) John’s career was the result of divine appointment in fulfillment of prophecy; (2) John bore witness to the supreme dignity and power of the Messiah, whose coming was near. (Lane)

*baptizing.* John’s practice of baptizing those who came to him in repentance was so characteristic of his ministry that he became known as “the Baptist” or “the Baptizer.” (CSB)

AAT is a typical translation: "So John the Baptizer came into the wilderness, preaching, etc." AV and NKJV: "John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching etc." We would translate: "(In keeping with prophecy) there came John, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching etc." In other words, the two participles denote attendant circumstance. He did two things: baptized and preached. We have already mentioned that "in the desert" is locative. The Gospel of John (1:28 and 3:22) clearly indicates that the Baptist did not always stay in one place. He did his work in the desert on both sides of the Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. (Buls)

Bengel suggests that this verse is elliptical for: "baptizing the baptism of repentance and preaching the preaching of repentance." That makes sense. He preached both Law and Gospel as is clear from Matthew, Luke and John. Lenski rightly points out that "repentance" literally means "to think after, to regret." Regret what? Their sins. It becomes clear at the end of verse 5. But there "repentance" is evidently used in the wider sense denoting both contrition and faith. It

was a "contrition and faith baptism." The language here denotes both the purpose and the result of the baptism. (Buls)

Here we must mention that, to this day, the Reformed do not consider baptism a means of grace. In this pericope Hendriksen (a Baptist) refers to baptism as a "rite, a powerful stimulant to conversion, a symbol of divine purification, only the outward rite." But the text speaks of "contrition and faith baptism for the forgiveness of sins." Hendriksen considers no instance of baptism as a true means of grace. Furthermore, some claim that John's baptism did not forgive sins, but Jesus' did. (Buls)

Lenski: Not a few consider John's baptism to be different from Christ's, John's conveying no grace and remission, while that of Jesus does. On this point Acts 2:38 is decisive. . . Jesus himself took up and continued John's baptism (John 4:1,2), and eventually instituted this Baptism for all nations. In essentials John's and Christ's baptism are the same. The Baptist's was administered on the basis of the revelation made at that time; that of Jesus on the level of his completed work. The Baptist's made followers of the Christ to come; that of Jesus followers of the Christ already come. Thus the baptism of John was preparatory for Israel alone, Christ's permanent for all nations. Only in this way was the one merged into the other. The remission bestowed by them was identical. (Buls)

Furthermore, with reference to "forgiveness of sins" Bengel remarks "without the need of Levitical sacrifices." True. The Mosaic Law, including the Ceremonial Law, served as bondsman until Christ would come. Galatians 3:23,25. The whole Epistle to the Hebrews attests to this truth. But the Baptist made no mention of circumcision, sacrifices, etc. He preached and baptized. Period. He was Christ's immediate forerunner. Christ abolished the necessity of the Ceremonial Law. (Buls)

eigevneto, aorist from givnomai, carries the sense of Ed McMahon's introduction, "Here's Johnny!" khruvsswn, "preaching" or "proclaiming," connects John's actions with Malachi's prophesy. bavptisma metanoiva" ei]" a[fesin aJmartiw'n is seen as a baptism that the hearer chooses to undergo, demonstrating his heartfelt repentance. This must be contrasted to v 8, baptivsei uJma'" ein pneuvmati aJgivw/. The first baptism is chosen by the hearer and performed by a human with water. The latter Baptism is chosen and performed by the Christ with the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

baptivzw: While much has been written on Christian Baptism, several points of contrast need to be made between the Baptism via Holy Spirit, and the baptism John was performing. John, being the last in line of Old Testament prophets, uses baptism as a demonstration act of repentance. This seems to have been a custom used for Jewish proselytes, but adopted by John for use among all people to prepare them for the coming One. baptivzw, "I bathe" or "I wash" or "I dip," is redefined by John to be a sign of repentance among the Pharisees, as well as the hated Gentiles and even Roman soldiers (from the parallel passages, Mt 3:1-10; Lk 3:2-17). And yet in v 8, John differentiates between his practice and baptism as refined by the Christ. He will use not only water, but also the Holy Spirit. If baptivzw is translated to mean "wash with water/Spirit," then v 8 conveys an unusual force. "I wash you with water, but the coming One will wash you with the Holy Spirit." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

*baptizōn en tēi erēmōi*, "baptizing in the desert." Whereas Baptism is a washing with water, the desert is the place one would least expect to find water, but, no doubt, a dry and dusty place where a washing with water is most needed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Another text-critical problem is whether the participle *baptizōn*, “baptizing,” is preceded by the article *ho*. If the article is absent, the phrase reads “John came, baptizing” (as in NKJV, TEV), while if the article is included, it would make the participle John’s title: “John the Baptist” (as in NIV, RSV, NASB, NEB). The RSV has “John the Baptizer.” In any event, the distinctive feature of John’s activity was baptizing, and this led to his title. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

In explaining the participle *kērussōn*, “preaching,” Robert G. Bratcher (*A Translator’s Guide to The Gospel of Mark*, 5) suggests “proclaiming his message, announcing, telling people.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The NASB, RSV, and NKJV have identical translations of the phrase “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” The TEV reads, “Turn away from your sins and be baptized.” Taylor (p 154) states that the Greek word for baptism “is the distinctive NT word for ‘baptism.’ Here it is characterized by the genitive of quality ‘a repentance-baptism.’” He sees the Greek word for repentance as denoting “‘a change of mind,’ but in the NT it is used in a deeper sense, indicating a deliberate turning . . . , ‘a coming to one’s senses, resulting in a change of conduct.’” He understands that “the baptism has for its end . . . the remission of sins.” Larmar Williamson (*Mark* 31–32) comments, “Since in verse 5 John’s hearers respond to his call by ‘confessing their sins,’ repentance seems also to imply recognizing one’s sins, being sorry for them, and admitting them publicly. . . . Repentance, no less than the heavenly kingdom, is the gift of God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The NEB translation, “a baptism in token of repentance, for the forgiveness of sins,” obviously does not see John’s baptism as a means of grace. In his commentary on the NEB (*The Gospel According to Mark* 9), C. F. D. Moule writes, “Thus, the Baptist, who was so called because of his symbolic use of water, was in this way evidently giving dramatic, visible expression to his call to repentance. Those whose consciences responded to John’s call to moral reform submitted to being dipped in the river . . . as a sign of their response.” In stark contrast to this, the clear statement of the text is that John’s baptism was “for the forgiveness of sins.” Baptism was not symbolic or just a sign; those who were baptized did in fact receive forgiveness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Pieper (*Christian Dogmatics* 3.288–89) indicates that Lutheran theologians have claimed “the essential and complete identification of the Baptism of John with Christian Baptism.” Pieper writes, “according to Scripture, the Baptism of John actually was a means of grace with *vis dativa* (power to give remission) and *vis effectiva* (power to effect faith) . . . the Baptism of John is expressly described as a ‘Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins’ . . . (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3).” Acts 19:1–6 may indicate that there was a difference between Christian baptism and that of John, since those baptized by John did not receive the Holy Spirit until later baptized into Christ. Nevertheless, this passage gives no indication that John’s baptism did not convey forgiveness and faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

John came baptizing. This was such a striking activity that he became known simply as John the Baptizer. While there are OT and Jewish parallels (cf. the cleansing of Naaman in the Jordan, 2 Kings 5), this “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” was quite unique. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

*the desert region.* The arid region west of the Dead Sea, whose inhabitants included those who wrote and preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls. (CSB)

Prophets and their activity are frequently set in the wilderness (e.g., Elijah; 1 Kings 19:4-8). Here, it probably refers to where the Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea. (TLSB)

In the OT the period of Israel's wilderness wandering is often portrayed as the time when the people learned what it truly meant to be the Lord's. There God chastised Israel as his beloved son and taught him true repentance (cf. Hosea 11). So now the divine call to repentance summons the people again to the wilderness, where they will experience a second exodus. They must leave behind their comfortable surroundings, their old habits and cozy lifestyles. In the harsh wilderness they must rely on God alone to sustain them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

As long ago Israel was separated from Egypt and its prosperity by passing through the Red Sea. Now John calls the people to again journey into the wilderness and pass through water. The Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, is coming. The Lord is opening heaven and coming down (Is 64:1), not in wrath, but in mercy. Prepare to meet him!. St. Paul compares the first exodus to a kind of baptismal washing in 1 Cor 10:1-6, and stresses that drastically changed lives of repentance must follow Baptism or else we will perish as did those Israelites who hardened their hearts in the wilderness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

Following our text, Jesus himself will fulfill this whole pattern as he comes to be baptized in the wilderness as God's own Son, then is tempted in the wilderness as God's faithful Son. Though he has no sin, he demonstrates true "repentance" in the sense of total selflessness, humility, and dependence on God, his Father, to sustain him through all trials. Jesus reenacts and completes the history of Israel, but in perfect "repentance" and faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

John comes in the wilderness, that is, in Judea on the banks of the southern Jordan. Wilderness brings to mind where Adam and Eve are after the fall as well as Israel's forty years in the desert. John preaches "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Repentance means to be turned from sin to faith, from self to God. It is not a "sorry" contrived by human beings, but God's own work. On *hē metanoia*, see the articles in TDNT 4:626-29, 975-1008. On the nature of John's Baptism as a Baptism of anticipation, see Edmund Schlink, *The Doctrine of Baptism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1969, 1972), 17-21. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

*and preaching – baptizōn . . . kērussōn*: "baptizing . . . preaching." These two actions of John parallel those spoken of to the apostles by Jesus at the end of the Gospel (Mk 16:15-16) and so serve as bookends to Mark. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*baptism*. John was preaching repentance-baptism, i.e., baptism that was preceded or accompanied by repentance. Baptism was not new to John's audience. They knew of baptism for Gentile converts, but had not heard that the descendants of Abraham (Jews) needed to repent and be baptized. (CSB)

Even before John the Baptist appeared, different groups within Judaism likely practiced Baptism. Rabbinic literature notably mentions that Gentiles converting to Judaism were expected to undergo circumcision and a proselyte baptism, and to make an offering. These rites marked full acceptance into the community of God's chosen people. But John insisted that Jews needed to repent and be baptized, implying that they were no better than Gentiles. (TLSB)

The hearts of the people had become a desert region, and they needed to be rescued. What he offered them in this baptism of repentance was not merely a ritual washing, but the gift of forgiveness. His baptism was essentially no different from the baptism by which our Lord comes to us today with his pardon and peace. The forgiveness granted through John's baptism was not a reward because they repented, but a wonderful gift of God who through John's preaching brought them to repentance and gave them a change of heart. (PBC)

*repentance.*† Involves deliberate turning from sin to righteousness, and John's emphasis on repentance recalls the preaching of the prophets (e.g., Hos 3:4–5). (CSB)

*forgiveness* – John's Baptism removed the guilt of sin. Christian Baptism, which Jesus instituted after the resurrection (Mt. 28:19-20), delivers this same blessing (Acts 2:38-39; 1 Peter 3:21). (TLSB)

*eis aphesin hamartiōn*, "for the remission of sins" (KJV). St Peter speaks of the same benefit attached to the Baptism of Jesus and the apostles (Acts 2:38). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:5 whole ... all.** Obvious hyperbole, indicating the high interest created by John's preaching. For centuries Israel had had no prophet. (CSB)

John attracted large numbers. For this reason, Herod began to worry about his influence. (6:17-20). (TLSB)

The first "and so" denotes continued action. "All the people" is evidently hyperbole, not to be taken literally but meaning "in large numbers." Josephus mentions that the preaching and baptism of the Baptist caused a great sensation. It has been estimated that the Baptist baptized 200,000 to 500,000 people. (Buls)

By the way, at Matthew 3:15 Jesus says to John: "Thus it becomes US (not ME) to fulfill all righteousness." Though baptism John was an active agent in forgiving peoples' sins. "In the Jordan" is purely locative and cannot be invoked to support immersion. The aorist "confessing" would mean that first they confessed and then were baptized. Contrition is a constant in the life of a Christian. "Their sins" is subjective genitive. They committed them and were responsible for them, until forgiven. (Buls)

The use of the words *whole* and *all* "is a typical idiomatic expression in Hebrew" and in this context means "many of the people" (Newman and Stine, *A Translator's Handbook on The Gospel of Matthew*, 64.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

*ejxeporeueto*, an imperfect, offers the reader the idea that it was the normal or routine practice of those living in Jerusalem to venture out to the wilderness to hear the engaging preacher. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

*confessing* – Greek *exomologeō*, a public acknowledgement of the need for forgiveness and a belief that God provided it through this washing. (TLSB)

John's Baptism is tied to the confession of sins, the acknowledgment that God's verdict on sin is indeed right. See Ps 51:4. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

*Jordan River.* The principal river in Palestine, beginning in the snows of Mount Hermon and ending in the Dead Sea. Its closest point to Jerusalem is about 20 miles. (CSB)

*pasa hē Ioudaia chōra kai hoi Ierosolimitai pantes kai ebaptizonto . . . en tō Iordanē potamō:* “all the land of Judea and all those from Jerusalem were baptized in the Jordan River” (author’s translation). While this may refer to the popularity of John’s preaching and baptizing, it also points back to the Mosaic Baptism at the Red Sea (1 Cor 10:1–2) and Joshua leading the Israelites through the Jordan and leaving a memorial of twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes, taken from the river (Joshua 4). The Jordan River is a place where the Lord gathers his people and reveals himself and his will to them through his actions on their behalf. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:6** *camel’s hair . . . leather belt.* Worn by Elijah and other prophets (2Ki 1:8; cf. Zec 13:4). (CSB)

Worn by Elijah and other prophets. Jews of Jesus’ day expected Elijah to return just before the Messiah would come. Jesus later equated John’s ministry with this expected return of Elijah (9:11-13; cf 6:15). (TLSB)

The attempt a translation: "John was permanently dressed. . . . and constantly eating etc." He always dressed thus. The obvious meaning is: "John wore clothing made of camel's hair." NIV. The leather belt was worn to keep the clothing from opening and to draw the coat up when walking or running. Jesus mentioned that John did not wear fine clothing (Matthew 11:8). Both food and clothing were simple. The word "locust" is not equivalent to "grasshopper." Even today certain Arabian tribes relish these locusts. The author of these Notes witnessed the fact that in Nigeria the people consider a certain kind of locust as a delicacy. (Buls)

Hendriksen: John's food was as simple as was his clothing. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: John conformed his preaching of repentance through his whole outward appearance, through his clothing and way of living, wearing a garment of camel's hair, and feeding himself with the food of the wilderness, locusts and wild honey. (Buls)

Lenski: The very appearance of John was a stern sermon. John was a living illustration of how little man really needs here below. The Baptist's mode of life marks him as a Nazarite (Luke 1:15), and up to the time of his preaching he must have lived like a hermit (Luke 1:80). In this he was the antithesis of Jesus (Matthew 11:18). (Buls)

John lived his message as a “wild man” after the fashion of Elijah, who once was sustained by ravens in a wadi (1 Kings 17:1–6). John begins his ministry where Elijah left off—along the Jordan, where Elijah had been taken up to heaven. He rejected all pretense, wearing coarse camel’s hair and a leather girdle, eating locusts (a clean food, Lev 11:21–22) and wild honey. He lived off the land, even as reluctant Israel had been forced to do after the exodus, though they lusted to return to the fleshpots of Egypt. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

h\n, the imperfect of eijmiv, leads the reader to understand that this was John’s usual or habitual garb. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

John's vesture of camel hair and diet of locusts and wild honey were as strange as his austere and ascetic life in the desert. Yet in this strangeness, God is calling Israel (and us) to repentance and faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

When John began his work in the desert region, the uninhabited area near the Jordan, the similarity to the OT prophets was not lost on the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem who came out to hear him. The twenty-mile journey was an arduous one, downhill from Jerusalem and uphill on the way back. But it took them away from their business deals and their hours of relaxation. They came because they sensed the power of God in John. They were excited. After all, it had been 400 years since a legitimate prophet had appeared on the scene. They had to find out, and they did. (PBC)

Both his garb and his food are those familiar to the wilderness nomad, and characterize life in the desert. The reference to the leather girdle about the Baptist's waist recalls a characteristic feature of another man of the wilderness, the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). (Lane)

*locusts and wild honey* – John's diet was just as unusual as his attire. These foods functioned as "enacted prophecies" against the prevailing worldliness and excessive concern for creature comfort. Locusts are mentioned as food in the Cairo Damascus Document 12:14. They were cleansed by water or fire before eaten. (TLSB)

John conformed his preaching to repentance through his whole outward appearance. (Stoeckhardt)

**1:7-8** John argues from the lesser to the greater: himself and the One; his own Baptism of water and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. If all of Judah comes to John's Baptism, who will come for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? As important as were John and all of the Old Testament, they pale in comparison to Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:7 message.** Mark's account of John's message is brief (cf. Mt 3:7–12; Lk 3:7–17) and focuses on the coming of the powerful One. (CSB)

In this verse John clearly indicates the superior person of Christ. He is divine. Only Mark has the word "to stoop down." The point of the second part of verse 7 is the Baptist's feeling of unworthiness. This is important for verse 8. (Buls)

John was not seeking his own enhancement. He was only the messenger, heralding the Coming One, a term that reflects Mal 3:1; 4:5; Ps 118:26, which speak of the arrival of God himself or his specially appointed representative. John considers himself unworthy to do the most menial tasks. The Jewish rabbis taught that even an Israelite servant should not be required to untie the shoes of his master because that job was too demeaning (Lane, p. 52, note 45). Yet Jesus humbled himself to do even that task (John 13). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

John's message is telescoped to focus upon a single theme, the proclamation of a person still to come who will baptize the people with the Holy Spirit. (Lane)

Again, ejkhvrussen, the imperfect of khruvssw, may direct the reader to the idea that John was continually or normally or routinely proclaiming the message that follows. This would further verify John's purpose: he had come to point to the One to come. e[rcetai carries the idea that he is presently coming or that his journey is already underway. Much is made of John's comment here concerning the loosening of the Christ's sandal laces being the task of the slave. Perhaps, though,

iJkano;"; translated as "fit" or "worthy," offers the preacher a better point. John was calling the crowds to repentance, and yet he proclaims himself not fit to meet the coming Master. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

In characteristic fashion, Mark gives an abbreviated account of John's preaching. John identifies himself as an unworthy servant. Lohmeyer interprets *ho ischuroteros mou opisō mou* (literally, "the stronger one than me after me") as indicative of a master/slave relationship, suggestive that the One who follows after John is the Judge and Savior of the end time (see Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* [Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937], 18). For this Messiah, John confesses that he is unqualified to perform even the most menial task of a slave. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

*more powerful* – The coming Messiah. Jesus later characterizes Himself as the One stronger than Satan (3:23-27). (TLSB)

*whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie* – John affirms that he is not worthy of performing the most menial task, from which even the Hebrew slave was released. (Lane)

Tying and untying the master's shoes were among the lowliest tasks performed by slaves. Thus, John casts himself as a humble servant of the coming Messiah. (TLSB)

Taylor (p 156) comments, "John speaks of the Mighty One as stronger than himself . . . which may suggest a consciousness of standing at the beginning of the unfolding of the eschatological drama." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

This points to the Baptist's telling of unworthiness. This is important for verse 8.

**1:8 I have baptized you** - The first Greek verb, *ebaptisa*, "I have baptized," is in the aorist tense. Rienecker (p 89) comments, "The aor. represents John's course as already fulfilled in view of the coming of Messiah." According to Williamson (p 32), "The major emphasis in verses 6-8 . . . is neither on the place nor on the prophet, but on the Lord whose way John prepares, on the one who is coming." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Note emphatic "I." AV and NKJV read "I indeed." Its counterpart is emphatic "He." In this verse John is comparing persons, not baptisms. John is not saying that his (John's) baptism was devoid of the Holy Spirit. John 3:5 clearly proves that. The only baptism known at the time when Jesus spoke with Nicodemus was the baptism of John. Nor is John saying that Jesus' baptism would not involve water. But John is saying that Jesus and Jesus only makes baptism effective by bestowing the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, what John says is akin to what Jesus says at John 7:39 where Jesus refers plainly to Pentecost. (Buls)

Furthermore, read Acts 11:16. There Peter is not downgrading John's baptism. But he is speaking about the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, through baptism, beginning with Pentecost, bestowed, without distinction, on Gentile and Jewish repentant sinner. (Buls)

Lenski: The distinction is not before Pentecost NO Spirit; after Pentecost the Spirit. The true distinction is: before the actually completed work of redemption the limited preparatory work of the Spirit; after the super-abounding fullness of the Spirit. There is no such thing as 'Baptism of the Spirit', a fanatical conception and substitute for these means, human emotions, imagining, and dreams by which the Spirit never comes. (Buls)



Stoeckhardt: John baptized with the water of repentance, with which he testified that the people needed the washing and cleansing from their sins above everything else, which would be provided by Christ. Since the preaching and baptizing of John pointed to Christ, his baptism was a powerful sacrament and produced forgiveness of sins. (Buls)

Verse 8 should not be read apart from verse 7. John was the humble servant, Christ the Master. The baptism of John was effective through the Master. (Buls)

*baptize you with the Holy Spirit* – The contrast between John and the coming One is seen in their respective Baptisms. John baptizes with water; Jesus with the Holy Spirit. John's Baptism will have a short shelf life, while Jesus' Baptism will endure forever. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

John baptized with the water of repentance, with which he testified that the people needed washing and cleansing from their sins above everything else, which would be provided by Christ. Since the preaching and baptizing of John pointed to Christ, his baptism was a powerful sacrament and produced forgiveness. (Stoeckhardt)

In describing how much greater Jesus is, John points to Christ as the one through whom the Spirit will be poured out. It is the descent of the Spirit onto Jesus that causes John to recognize the Son of God (In 1:33–34). The involvement of the Spirit is also a fulfillment of prophecy. The first exodus had been a march under the guidance of the Spirit (Is 63:11, 14), and the second exodus through Christ will bring a fresh outpouring of the Spirit (Is 32:15; 44:3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

The contrasts of this verse are tremendous. First there are the subjects, *εἰγωὺν* and *αὐτοῦν*, "I do this, and he will do that." Of particular interest here are the means by which baptism is effected. John's is with *ὕδατι* (from the muddy Jordan, no less). Jesus' is with the Spirit (the *πνεῦμα* *ἁγίον*), the holy one contrasted to the water of the Jordan). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 1)

**1:1–8** Mark begins by telling of (1) John's call to repentance, (2) Baptism, and (3) eager expectation of the Messiah's coming. John warns us not to adopt worldly values and expectations. Happily, all of us who are baptized have received the promised Holy Spirit, who continually forgives us, restores us, and focuses us on the splendor of Jesus' second coming. • Lord, remind us of the washing we received in Baptism, for through it Your Holy Spirit was poured into our hearts. Keep us steadfast in the hope of Your glory. Amen. (TLSB)

### *The Baptism of Jesus*

<sup>9</sup> **At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.**

<sup>10</sup> **As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." <sup>12</sup> At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, <sup>13</sup> and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.**

**1:9-11** The Baptism of Jesus invites the question Why? The best answer comes in the voice of the Father from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, whom I love." This is an echo of Is 42:1, one of

the “songs” of the (Suffering) Servant of the Lord. In his Baptism, Jesus further identifies our sinfulness as his own (cf. Isaiah 53). He voluntarily walks through the doorway marked “sinners.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 1)

**1:9** *At that time.* Jesus probably began his public ministry c. A.D. 27, when he was approximately 30 years old (Lk 3:23). As far as we know, he had spent most of his previous life in Nazareth. (CSB)

It is unclear how long John preached before Jesus came to him to be baptized, but it was long enough to have gathered some disciples (cf John 1:35). The focus now shifts from John’s ministry to that of Jesus. (TLSB)

The verse begins with a Hebraism, frequent in LXX and Luke, which denotes something exceptional and noteworthy. Here it denotes a noteworthy occurrence during the Baptist’s ministry. “At that time” means, at the very height of the Baptist’s ministry. The Baptist was baptizing on the east bank of the Jordan not far from the Sea of Galilee. It wasn’t far from Nazareth. It has been suggested (but can’t be proved) that some of the natives of Nazareth had already gone to be baptized by the Baptist. That is an interesting thought. And it leads to an interesting question: “Had Jesus’ mother already been baptized, assuming that Joseph was already dead?” We know not. The point we are making is that when one reads all four Gospel accounts one is left with the definite impression that Jesus came just as did all the rest, without fanfare. (Buls)

He came of His own volition and when His hour had come. His purpose in coming was to be baptized. By the way, compare the baptism of Jesus with that of the people in verses 4-5. Jesus did not need the preaching of repentance-baptism to have His sins forgiven. Jesus did not come confessing His sins. (Buls)

*Nazareth – Nazaret . . . Iordanēn:* “Nazareth . . . Jordan.” The God who created “place” acts and reveals himself according to place. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*baptized by John.* For the significance of Jesus’ baptism. (CSB)

In submitting to John’s baptism Jesus acknowledges the judgment of God upon Israel. At the same time his baptism signifies that his mission will be to endure the judgment of God. In doing so he identified himself with a rebellious generation in need of redemption. Mark is concerned to indicate from the very beginning that Jesus is not an isolated individual who is responsible only for his own righteousness. From the point of introduction Jesus shares the heritage and predicament of the people like Moses in the first exodus (Ex 32:23), he does not set himself apart from their sins. (Lane)

**1:10-11** *schizomenous*, “parting.” This middle present participle portrays the effect of Jesus’ Baptism upon the creation. The descent of the Spirit and the words of the Father are not normal or neutral events in the creation, but rather, the Creator tears the fabric, so to speak, of the creation in this most glorious revelation of God. *su ei ho Huios mou ho agapētos*, “You are my beloved Son” (ESV). The Father speaks this again of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mk 9:7). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

The visual descent of the Spirit and spoken words of the Father show the usual means by which divine revelation is given and received: human senses. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:10** *Jesus coming out of water* – Suggests that Jesus was either immersed or sprinkled while standing in the river. (TLSB)

ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος—This phrase confirms that Jesus was in the water of the Jordan. (CC)

immediately – Greek euthus occurs 41 times in Mark but only 10 additional times in the rest of the NT. It underlines both the urgency of Jesus' ministry and His march toward the cross. (TLSB)

The Greek text begins with a word that means "immediately," that is, after His baptism. "As He was going up" denotes attendant circumstance. "Out" means "from." All ancient paintings of Jesus' baptism have Him standing in the water. "Up out of" by no means supports the idea of immersion. Furthermore, verse 10 tells us what happened "after" not "during" Jesus' baptism. (Buls)

*heavens being torn open* – Mark's distinctive language echoes Is. 64:1, where the prophet prays, "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence..." The pattern had been established already in the first exodus that God could not come down until the people had been consecrated (Ex 19:10 f.). For this reason Jesus expressed a vicarious confession of sin on behalf of the many. He walked into the waters of baptism in obedience to the Father's will. He had consecrated himself in faith, even as every other man must do. But in this instance God came down, and there was striking attestation that sonship has been re-established through the one true Israelite whose repentance was perfect. (Lane)

"He saw" implicitly means "Jesus saw." This clearly denotes Jesus' humanity. From the account in John 1:29-34 we know that the Baptist also "saw." (Buls)

"Torn open" is a predicate, passive participle. Matthew and Luke have forms "to open." Mark says: "the heavens rent." The comments on this word are interesting: (Buls)

Bengel: 'Rent open' is said of that which had not previously been open. Christ was the first who opened heaven. (Buls)

Luther: Heaven opens itself which hitherto was closed, and becomes now at Christ's baptism a door and window, so that one can see into it; and henceforth there is no difference any more between Him and us; for God the Father himself is present and says: 'This is my beloved Son'. (Buls)

Lenski: What happened was an act of God, that great act by which he inaugurated Jesus into his mighty office of Prophet, High Priest, and King. (Buls)

Ezekiel (1:1) saw the heavens opened; Stephen likewise (Acts 7:56); compare also Revelation 4:1; Isaiah 64:1. We are not told what became visible when the heavens were suddenly opened, as we are told in the case of Ezekiel and of Stephen. Out of the open heavens the Spirit came down upon Jesus. (Buls)

*the Spirit descending on him.* Jesus' anointing for ministry—an anointing he claimed in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk 4:18). (CSB)

The Messiah would possess the Spirit of the Lord (Is. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1). The prophecies are fulfilled. "On Him" literally mean "into Him." (TLSB)

Jesus saw two things happen: the heavens rent and the Holy Spirit coming down to Him as a dove. Why as a dove? Perhaps it is best not to seek symbolism in the word "dove." There are so many ideas on this point. What is clear is that it was a clear and visible sign both for Jesus and the Baptist that the Holy Spirit was now descending on Jesus. Here He truly becomes the Messiah, the Anointed of God. Jesus, of course, had the Holy Spirit before. As true God He was One with the Father and the Spirit. He also had the Spirit according to His human nature but now He is anointed with the Spirit without measure. Read John 1:33,34. No human being ever received the Holy Spirit in the measure which Jesus did. (Buls)

Bengel: The Holy Spirit with which Jesus was about to baptize. (Buls)

Exactly. That is the whole point of John 1:32-34. There the Baptist says: "This (Jesus) is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." The Baptist clearly means that his own (John's) baptism is effective because Jesus had been anointed with the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Triune God was effectively working in the baptism of the Baptist. (Buls)

Lenski: Some speak of the Spirit's descent upon Jesus as though this were a feature of his baptism, which it was not. The application of this to our baptism, namely that in the same way through our baptism and in it, the Spirit comes to us with His regenerating grace, is wrong. He, indeed, does come to us, but upon Jesus he came, not in and through the baptism but AFTER it. (Buls)

Titus 3:5 and John 3:5 tell us that we are regenerated, born again, of the Holy Spirit through baptism. Jesus did not need regeneration or rebirth. The Holy Spirit, in fullest measure, was bestowed on Him AFTER His baptism. (Buls)

Lenski: The Spirit was a permanent gift to Jesus. Like his conception 'of the Spirit' so was this coming of the Spirit as a gift; it pertained to the human nature of Jesus, it equipped and empowered that nature with all that it needed to carry out the work of redemption. In His deity the Son was of identical essence with both the Father and the Spirit, nor could the Spirit be given to him. But in his human nature, which he had assumed in order by it to work out our redemption, he could and did receive the Spirit. . . . The coming down of the Spirit upon Jesus is the anointing prophesied in Psalm 45:7; Isaiah 61:1. Cf. Acts 10:38. The prophets received some of the gifts of the Spirit; Jesus, lifted far above them for an infinitely greater task, received the Spirit as such. What power thus filled him we see when he is now led up into Galilee, to teach there in his wonderful way and to work miracles. (Buls)

Jesus did not begin teaching or performing miracles until this bestowal of the Spirit right after His baptism. (Buls)

*like a dove.* Symbolizing the gentleness, purity and guilelessness of the Holy Spirit (see Mt 10:16). (CSB)

**1:11** An allusion to Ps 2:7 and Isa 42:1. (CSB)

*a voice.* God sometimes spoke directly from heaven (see 9:7; Jn 12:28–29). (CSB)

*You are my Son.* In v. 1 Mark proclaims Jesus as the Son of God; here God the Father himself proclaims Jesus as his Son. (CSB)

Jesus had seen two things with His very own eyes. Now He hears something with His very own ears. Whose voice was this? It must have been that of the Father because the voice says: "You are My Son." Only the Father could say that. (Buls)

"My Son" clearly denotes Jesus' divinity. "Whom I love" clearly denotes this divine Son incarnate. "Whom I love" is not a synonym of "only begotten" found in the Gospel of John. "Only begotten" denotes Jesus' eternal generation from the Father. But here we have a passive verbal adjective with Father as agent which denotes the Father's total approval of the incarnate Christ. It would not be necessary for the Father to say that He loved the "divine" nature of Christ. (Buls)

Note the repetition of the article here to stress the importance and uniqueness of the love of the Father toward the incarnate Christ. The Father saw His Son through thick and thin, motivated by His love, here meaning the very highest type of love. (Buls)

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit equipped the Son to accomplish His work. All three Synoptics quote the words of the Father. Mark and Luke have identical wording. But Matthew has "This is" but otherwise has identical wording. The Father's voice said both: emphatic "My" for Jesus' sake, and emphatic "you are" for my sake. The Father assured His Son that He would see Him through. The Father assured me that His Son would see me through. The Father assured me that His Son, the Messiah, would accomplish my salvation. For the same reasons Matthew reads "in whom" and Mark and Luke read "in you." (Buls)

God addresses Jesus as his unique Son, the object of his elective love. In this expression of unqualified divine approval there is recognition of Jesus' competence to fulfill the messianic task for which he has been set apart. (Lane)

*I am well pleased* – The grammars struggle to explain the tense usage of "well pleased" and the lexicons struggle to explain its meaning. These Notes consider the translation "I am well-pleased" correct. And its meaning lies right on the surface. The Father is fully pleased with what the Son is, says and does for all men. (Buls)

**1:9–11** The Father declares Jesus is His Son as the Spirit descends on Jesus. Jesus' status as God's Son makes Him a target of Satan's assaults (1:12–13). This same dynamic continues in the lives of God's children today, as Satan does all that he can to tempt the baptized. Yet, our own Baptism joins us to Christ and clothes us with His righteousness. • Lord, You humbly stood in our stead when baptized by John and thereby gave us a share in Your life, death, and resurrection. Let us therefore celebrate our place in God's family, obeying the Father, dwelling richly in the Spirit, and ever following You. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Temptation of Jesus*

**12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.**

**1:12-15** The temptation of Christ follows immediately after the baptism of Christ. There he made Baptism his own that he might make us his own in Baptism. After Baptism, however, comes temptation, for it initiates us into a life of combat with Satan. The Father's words at Jesus' baptism, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Mk 1:11), are twisted by Satan as he endeavors to get Christ to deny that he is God's Son and that the Father is well pleased with Him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The Gospel reading for Lent I is always the temptation of Jesus. The parallels to Mark 1:12-13 are Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13. See the author's Notes on these parallels in Series A and C for Lent I. The Notes on Mark 1:12-15 do not repeat what is said there. The Gospel of John records neither Jesus' Baptism nor His Temptation. But both are found in the Synoptics. Matthew treats the Temptation in 11 verses, Luke in 13 verses, Mark in only 2. (Buls)

The longer the author of these Notes studies the Gospels, the more he becomes convinced that the two-source hypothesis (Mark and Q), as the basis of the composition of Matthew and Luke, is false. The Gospels were very likely written in the order in which they stand in the manuscripts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) quite independently of each other. A quote from Lenski is in place: (Buls)

The idea that Mark presents the original tradition, out of which the longer accounts of Matthew and Luke were elaborated, is cancelled by the other idea of the critics that Mark is the one who brings the detailed touches which Matthew especially is thought to lack. In this narrative the reverse holds true. The fact is that, even while heavily abbreviating, Mark adds touches that neither Matthew nor Luke has. What he wrote so briefly is plainly an independent product. (Buls)

Furthermore, how did Matthew, Mark, and Luke know about this Temptation? Only Matthew of the three, was a disciple of Jesus. It is commonly accepted that Mark wrote upon information received from Peter. Did Jesus tell the disciples about the Temptation? There is no record of that. And, it is obvious that they were not there. The critics resort to a nebulous "tradition" idea. But whence the tradition? The only sensible and Scriptural answer is that the Holy Spirit gave this information to these individual writers. See John 16:13.14. (Buls)

The reading for today includes verses 14-15. Note the "for" in the Nestle/Aland Greek text between verses 13 and 14. The entire early Judean ministry of Jesus, not recorded by the Synoptics, lies between these verses, of about a year's duration. The exposition of verses 14-15 has already been covered in the *Notes* for the reading for Epiphany 3 Gospel Series B. Very likely these verses are included with this reading because Lent is a season of repentance, beginning with Ash Wednesday. We shall comment briefly on these verses after the exposition of verses 12- 13. (Buls)

The Temptation of Jesus reminds one immediately of Genesis 3:15 and Luke 10:18. The first thing that God spoke in the presence of Adam and Eve, naked in body and convicted of sin in the conscience, was spoken to Satan. First He told Satan that the serpent, cursed, would henceforth crawl on his belly. And then He personally told Satan that the Seed of the woman would crush his (Satan's) head. Victory was announced then and there. In Luke 10:18 Jesus told the seventy that He saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven, completely conquered. Commentators differ among

themselves as to the exact point of time meant. It is beyond our comprehension. But, from Jesus' point of view, victory was already assured. (Buls)

The evolutionist denies Scripture from Genesis 1:1 on. Those who deny the existence of the devil and the person and work of Jesus, begin their denial at Genesis 3:15. There isn't much difference between the two denials. (Buls)

**1:12-13** Immediately after being revealed as God's Son, Jesus' archenemy, Satan, begins to assault Him. Jesus emerges from His time of testing perfectly, without succumbing to temptation in any way. He thus achieves something greater than all those tempted before Him and foreshadows the climax of the Gospel. There, He will undergo greater temptation but will rise victorious over the grave. (TLSB)

**1:12** *At once.* A distinctive characteristic of Mark's style is his use (some 47 times) of a Greek word that has been variously translated "at once," "immediately," "quickly," "just then" (see, e.g., vv. 18, 20, 23, 28–29, 42–43). (CSB)

"At once," immediately after Jesus' baptism. Jesus and the Baptist didn't stand around chatting needlessly. They did speak important words to each other before the baptism. (Buls)

eujquv", "at once." This is a favorite word in Mark's Gospel (occurring 40 times). Here it marks the rapid transition from the place of washing to the place of temptation, from the water of life to the wilderness of death, from the divine presence to the (seeming) divine absence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Immediately the Spirit sent Jesus into the desert for his first recorded encounter with Satan, the devil who had caused Adam and Eve to fall into sin and thus bring sin upon the entire human race. Jesus faced him alone; no fellow believers were present to comfort and strengthen him. (PBC)

Here it marks the rapid transition from the place of washing to the place of temptation, from the water of life to the wilderness of death, from the divine presence to the (seeming) divine absence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

*Spirit drove him* – The spiritual dove of peace that landed on Jesus in his baptism now becomes the spiritual hawk of war, as the Spirit send Jesus into combat with the devil. God takes the initiative; he sends his Son to war that he might overthrow the tyrant of hell. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

to; pneu'ma, "the Spirit." The spiritual dove of peace that landed on Jesus in his baptism now becomes the spiritual hawk of war, as the Spirit sends Jesus into combat with the devil. God takes the initiative; he sends his Son to war that he might overthrow the tyrant of hell. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit, Who had anointed Jesus for His work, is the subject of this sentence. "Sent" from "drive," a stronger verb than used by Matthew and Luke, doesn't mean that Jesus went against His own will. On this point read Hebrews 10:5-10 and John 10:17-18. One of our Lenten hymns begins. "A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth." (Buls)

The Father was not tempted, nor the Holy Spirit. Only the incarnate Son was tempted. Now read John 4:34. Hebrews 10:9-10 brings out that truth. In verse 9 it's the will of the Father. In verse 10 it's the will of the incarnate Christ. These wills are absolutely consonant. (Buls)

Lenski: The idea is not that Jesus was forced against His will, or that he was reluctant to go and thus had to be driven. The intention is rather the opposite. The strong urge of the Spirit met the consent of Jesus. He did not go into this temptation against his will. But more is brought out by the verbs which the evangelists use: Jesus did not throw himself into this temptation of his own accord, when, in human judgment, at the beginning of his ministry he might have been wise to avoid such a decisive conflict. We often rashly put ourselves into temptation. Jesus was brought into his by his Father's own Spirit. (Buls)

Commentators are exercised over the fact that Jesus was already in the wilderness. That is mentioned about the Baptist in verse 3, where it literally means "in the wilderness." But Mark has not mentioned that specifically in verses 9-11, the baptism of Jesus. Furthermore, Mark is stressing the fact that the Spirit drove Jesus into an area which was uninhabited. The meaning is an area which was desolate and uninhabited by people. That's all. (Buls)

One senses determination and purpose in this action and its connection to Christ's baptism. Mark uses this same verb eleven times to describe the expulsion of demons and to describe Jesus' action in driving the money changers out of the temple grounds. It is also used to describe the expulsion of the heir from the vineyard in the parable of the wicked tenants. Combined with the use of the historic use of the present, it denotes a strong, forceful, intended act. As such, it denotes God's will that this testing occur at this time, at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and immediately following his baptism.

ekballo, meaning to *eject* (literally or figuratively):—bring forth, cast (forth, out), drive (out), expel, leave, pluck (pull, take, thrust) out, put forth (out), send away (forth, out). (QV) – The idea is not that Jesus was forced against his will, or that he was reluctant to go and thus had to be driven. The intention is rather the opposite. The strong urge of the Spirit met the consent of Jesus. He did not go into this temptation against his will. But more is brought out by the verbs which evangelists use: Jesus did not throw himself into this temptation of his own accord, when, in human judgment, at the beginning of his ministry he might have been wise to avoid such a decisive conflict. We often rashly put ourselves into temptation. Jesus was brought into his by his Father's own Spirit. (Lenski)

*out into the wilderness* – ermos. The locale of the temptation is significant in light of the OT narratives with which it compares and contrasts. First, the contrast to Adam, who was tempted in a paradise garden, the Second Adam is tempted in a barren desert. Second, in comparison with the Israelites, who sojourned 40 years in the wilderness as punishment for their rebellion, Christ remains 40 days in the wilderness. Unlike Adam and Israel, however, Christ (the Second Adam and Israel reduced to one) remains faithful to the Word of his Father, and in so doing, earns salvation for all humanity and constitutes a new Israel (i.e., his church). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

**1:13** *wilderness* – e[rhmo], "wilderness" (NIV: "desert"). The locale of the temptation is significant in light of the OT narratives with which it compares and contrasts. First, in *contrast* to Adam, who was tempted in a paradise garden, the Second Adam is tempted in a barren desert. Second, in *comparison* with the Israelites, who sojourned 40 years in the wilderness as



punishment for their rebellion, Christ remains 40 days in the wilderness. Unlike Adam and Israel, however, Christ (the Second Adam and Israel reduced to one) remains faithful to the Word of his Father, and in so doing, earns salvation for all humanity and constitutes a new Israel (i.e., his church). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

*forty.* – The battles was arduous and long. It lasted forty days with no breathing spells (CSB)

Totally unlike the forty days Moses had spent on the mountain with God (Exodus 24:18), totally different from the forty days Elijah spent on the way to Horeb sustained by the food God had provided (1 Kings 19:8). For Jesus they were forty days of continuous testing. Matthew and Luke relate three specific attacks of Satan; Mark simply presents the antagonists, Jesus and Satan. (PBC)

*tempted* – Do not think this battle was relatively simple for Jesus because he could not possibly sin. As a man he could suffer hunger and thirst, appreciate power and wealth, and thus he felt the pressures of these temptations. Nor was it simple for him because he was the Son of God. Though Jesus during his ministry often used his almighty power to heal and to bless, he seldom used it to defend himself. He faced temptation in the same way you and I must face it – with the Word of God. This was also not the only time Jesus had to face the devil. Jesus continued to fight him until the moment on the cross when he said, “It is finished.” (PBC)

It is the evangelist’s distinctive understanding that Jesus did not win the decisive victory during the forty days nor did he cease to be tempted. Jesus is thrust into the wilderness in order to be confronted with Satan and temptation. It is this confrontation which is itself important, since it is sustained throughout Jesus’ ministry. This explains why Mark does not say anything about the content of the temptation: his whole Gospel constitutes the explanation of the manner in which Jesus was tempted. (Lane)

This verse involves us in three separate thoughts. The subject of the first two clauses is Jesus. Luke 4:2 makes very clear that the temptation lasted forty days. “Satan,” “THE Adversary,” an Old Testament expression, which means “the one who lies in ambush for.” The devil did not entrust this job to one of His underlings. He did it himself. (Buls)

Luke 4:13 “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.”

*Satan* – tou Satana meaning THE Adversary which was an OT expression which means “the one who lies in ambush for.” The devil did not entrust this job to one of his underlings. He did it himself.

*wild animals.* In Jesus’ day there were many more wild animals—including lions—in Palestine than today. Only Mark reports their presence in this connection; he emphasizes that God kept Jesus safe in the desert. (CSB)

Likely meant to evoke prophetic depictions of the messianic age (cf Is. 11:6-8; 65:25). (TLSB)

In the OT blessing is associated with inhabited and cultivated land; the wilderness is the place of the curse. (Lane)

“With wild animals.” This clause has evoked much discussion. There are three interpretations: (Buls)

1. One view is that here we have a touch of Paradise, that Jesus walked among the wild animals as did Adam in Paradise. On this Hendriksen remarks: "The idea that the animals gathered about Jesus as a friend runs contrary to the context which stresses the difficult and terrible conditions surrounding the Lord." Some extend this idea in that they say that here Jesus is restoring the sin-cursed creation to its pristine innocence. But all the passages which deal with the state of Jesus ' humiliation militate against such a thought. (Buls)
2. A second view is that espoused by Lenski: "These wild animals prowled around Jesus, more or less endangering him. And Mark throws these dangerous animals into contrast with the blessed angels who finally ministered unto him." (Buls)
3. A third view is espoused by Ylvisaker and Fahling. The former says: "Mark says that Jesus was with the wild beasts in the desert. This would emphasize the circumstance that Jesus was separated from His fellow men at the time of His temptation. No human being should, nor could, help Him." And Fahling: "The wild beasts are not mentioned to hint at the danger in which our Savior was, but rather to indicate the uninhabited nature of that region." (Buls)

These *Notes* consider view #3 the correct one. (Buls)

Here we must add some observations on the Temptation of Jesus. There are those who say that if victory for Jesus was already promised (Genesis 3:15; Luke 10:18) and assured to Him, then the Temptation of Jesus on this occasion was a mere sham, a mere going through motions, needless motions. (Buls)

If that were true, parallel examples would be true too. For example: At Mark 8:31 Jesus told His disciples that it was necessary that the Son of man suffer, be rejected, be killed, but would rise again on the third day. Was that death a sham death, going through needless motions? Perish the thought! According to that view all of Isaiah 53 would be a sham. Genesis 3:15 and the promise at Psalm 16:10-11 would become sham promises. (Buls)

Lenski makes some pertinent observations at this point: (Buls)

The Son could be tempted, because he became man. . . He alone (of the three persons of the Trinity), by his human nature, was made dependent on His Father. . . Temptation was possible for Jesus only from the side of his human nature. . . The greatness of the strength tested changes nothing about the reality of the test to which it is subjected. The strain applied is just as real when the strength endures it, as when the strength is too weak to endure it. Jesus as the Stronger stood unmoved under all the force that Satan, the strong one, could bring to bear against him. . . The test or temptation was real in every way and no illusion. . . When the test was made, the outcome was not in doubt for a single moment. Yet the agony and the death was real, though Jesus bore them triumphantly. (Buls)

Well said. Lenski does not mean, of course, that the divine nature of Jesus was not operative in His Temptation. Just as we say that in the case of Jesus, the God-man, God truly died for us, so we also say that in the case of Jesus, the God-man, God was truly tempted for us. But He truly endured all that we justly deserved and all the forces of hell which are against us. He endured

victoriously. We are more than conquerors through Him (the God-man) Who loved us. Romans 8:37. (Buls)

The Temptation of Jesus is a great comfort for us. He was tempted vicariously for all men, though He was sinless. Read Hebrews 2:14-18 and 4:14,15. He was tempted IN ALL THINGS JUST AS WE ARE TEMPTED but He was without sin. What a comfort! (Buls)

Furthermore, Satan tempted Jesus during His entire earthly life. For example, when the people wanted to make Him an earthly king (John 6:15), He dismissed the disciples and the people and went to the mountain alone to pray. And when Peter objected to His suffering and dying, Jesus turned on Peter, telling him that, as Satan's agent, Peter was presenting a trap for Jesus. Satan worked through Jesus' enemies and Jesus plainly told them so at John 8:44, where He described Satan as a murderer and liar. So thoroughly wicked and vicious is Satan that he thought He could conquer God Himself and he used and still uses people to try to accomplish this. (Buls)

*angels attended him.* As they had attended Israel in the desert (see Ex 23:20, 23; 32:34). (CSB)

Ministering angels contrast sharply with Satan, the fallen angel who brings temptation rather than help. (TLSB)

The final clause of Mark 1:13 reads "and the angels were serving Him (Jesus)." This implies that Jesus conquered Satan when He was tempted. These angels were not sent to help Jesus in His temptation. Matthew 26:53-56 rules that idea out. Jesus could have asked the Father for the help of legions of angels. But He did not. He was tempted and suffered alone, all alone, in our stead. Matthew 4:11 makes it very clear that only after Satan had left did the angels come and serve Him. And, because of what Jesus did for us, Hebrews 1:14 is a wonderful comfort. He sends His angels to serve us. Our struggle in this life is not with people. It's with Satan and all his hellish forces. On this point read Ephesians 6:10-17. (Buls)

The Word of God is the sole instrument which we must use in our constant fight with Satan. That's what Jesus used in Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13. People cannot win in their struggle with their own flesh and Satan unless they hear the Word of God and keep it. (Buls)

When he had won the battle in the wilderness, Jesus was completely exhausted. It is then that "angels attended him." Noting this, we are moved to pray as Luther did in his morning and evening prayers: "Let your holy angel be with me, so that the devil may have no power over me." Our Lord leaves the battlefield qualified to meet every challenger and every challenge. His credentials are perfect: he is acknowledged by the promised forerunner; he is accepted by the Father and blessed by the Spirit; he meets and defeats Satan. Thus he enters on his ministry. In reading the Gospel of Mark we observe his deeds, hear his words and learn to rejoice. (PBC)

There is no indication in Mark that the service of the angels is withdrawn nor that it serve to mark the termination of the temptation. (Lane)

Hebrews 4:14-16 <sup>14</sup>"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then approach the throne of

grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

**1:12–13** Jesus’ successful struggle against temptation in the wilderness prefigures His final victory at the cross over our ancient foe. From the days of Adam and Eve, we have continuously fallen into Satan’s traps. Jesus, after uniting Himself with fallen humans through Baptism, won a preliminary victory over the evil foe’s temptations. At the cross, Jesus gained an even more wonderful victory for us. His resurrection proves that Satan cannot prevail. • Lord, when we are tempted, remind us of Your own struggles and trials. You have broken Satan’s power once and for all. Amen. (TLSB)

*Jesus Begins His Ministry*

**14** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15** and saying, **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”**

**1:14-15** As noted above, verses 14-15 have already been covered in the *Notes* for The Gospel for Epiphany III. Therefore, they are not treated here. But several observations are made here. (Buls)

There is a sense in which the Temptation of Jesus and also His suffering and death is the preaching of Law. They show us how dearly it cost the Son of God to redeem us from sin, death and the devil. He came not to be served but to serve, to give His life as a ransom for many, which means all. The sinless Son of God took my place when He was actually and severely tempted by Satan for forty days. The sinless Son of God took my place when He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The sinless Son of God took my place when He laid down His life and took it again. If it cost Him that dearly I must confess my sins. But I must also believe the Gospel. "If ever we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. (Buls)

**1:14** After John was put in prison – Mentioned in passing; 6:14-29 gives the full account of the prophet’s imprisonment and execution. Mark focuses on Jesus and the ministry He is beginning. (TLSB)

It is significant that Jesus does not enter his own distinctive ministry until after John has been arrested. Mark’s formulation suggests that Jesus is restrained by God from his ministry of proclamation until the Baptist is removed from the scene. His arrest indicates that the time has come for Jesus to act. Jesus enters into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. NOTE: When Jesus ascends the Holy Spirit leads the disciples in their proclamation. (Lane)

*came into Galilee* – Since the days of the Judges this large territory had been exposed to political and military aggression from the north (Syria, Assyria, etc) and to the corrosive moral and religious influences of a pagan environment. At the time of Jesus the people of Galilee were a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, pagan people, by and large. These people who were sitting in spiritual darkness saw a great Light, Jesus. (B)

*ēlthen* He “came.” Directly, with business on his mind. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

*the good news of God.* The good news from, as well as about, God. (CSB)

“the gospel of God.” Mark does not spend time defining the Gospel of God. He wants us to find our place in it. So our interest in whether the genitive means the Gospel is about God or from God (perhaps both are intended) isn’t what Mark has in mind. He wants us to repent and believe! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:15** *the time – peplērōtai*: This is the *kairos*. The time of waiting has been filled. Now is the decisive time for action. Seize the opportunity. This is Kingdom time. Mark, like Luke and John, uses the term “kingdom of God.” Matthew uses “kingdom of heaven.” The evangelists equate the Kingdom itself with Jesus himself, who is God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

The time that has come is *kairos*, the decisive time. It is that moment when things change. Here the prophecies of the Messiah have been fulfilled. The perfect tense indicates Jesus’ arrival has come, but it also has lasting significance. The passive shows this momentous moment is God’s doing and not some natural course of events. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

*The kingdom of God* – The “kingdom” is the rule, or reign, of God. The Kingdom was present then as Jesus stood proclaiming—in authority. It is present now as Jesus’ ascension has him sitting at God’s right hand ruling, particularly on behalf of the Church. But God’s kingdom will come on the Last Day, when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess him as Lord. The expectations of the people whom Jesus is calling to repent and believe were close to the mark: sin destroyed; God’s people released from poverty, hunger, and disease; economic prosperity; safety and peace in a new garden, where children and animals play together; and liberty from foreign domination. They just had the timing wrong for the complete fulfillment of this wondrous Kingdom. That Last Day ultimate expression of the Kingdom first needed to go through his Kingdom that comes to us in suffering and death. So he chooses four fishermen to follow him rather than raising up an army as the Kingdom was inaugurated then. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Jesus declares that the critical moment has come; God begins to act in a new and decisive way, bringing his promise of ultimate redemption to the point of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is a distinctive component of redemptive history. It belongs to the God who comes and invades history in order to secure man’s redemption. The emphasis falls upon God who is doing something and who will do something that radically affects men in their alienation and rebellion against himself. (Lane)

It is not a confined geographical territory, but wherever and whenever people are ruled by God through their faith in His Son. The kingdom has come in the advent of Jesus (the verb “is” emphasizes completed action), for He came to fulfill all of God’s promises about the salvation of the world. Throughout His ministry, Jesus invites people to enjoy God’s kind of rule by living under His grace and righteousness. Luther says, “Once we have His Word, true doctrine, and true worship, we also pray that His kingdom may be in us and remain in us; that is, that He may govern us in this doctrine and life, that He may protect and preserve us against all the power of the devil and his kingdom, and that He may shatter all the kingdoms that rage against His kingdom, so that it alone may remain. (TLSB)

*is near.* The coming of Christ (the King) brings the kingdom near to the people. (CSB)

Or, “here.” (TLSB)

The kingdom of God has drawn near, meaning that the Kingdom of God is present in its fulfillment in the person, Word and work of Jesus. (B)

*repent and believe* – Echoes John’s call for a public show of contrition and an adoption of a new way of life (cf vv 2–4). (TLSB)

Only through repentance can a man participate with joy in the kingdom when it does break forth. Jesus accordingly calls men to radical decision. In Jesus men are confronted by the word and act of God; he himself is the crucial term by which belief and unbelief come to fruition. The either/or character of this decision is of immense importance and permits of no postponement. (Lane)

*Metanoeite* and *pisteuete* reinforce the sense of urgency that Mark brings to us. Again, he “cuts to the quick.” No time for fooling around. When Christ is present, the time is *kairos*. Consider the quick response of the Ninevites (Jonah 3:5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

His message led its first hearers back into the Scripture which they had heard in their synagogues and which some of them did understand in its proper religious sense. (PBC)

*gospel* – In its proper sense, “Gospel” does not mean the preaching of repentance, but only the preaching of God’s grace. This follows directly after the preaching of repentance. (TLSB)

**1:14–15** On the one hand, Jesus’ message sounds much like the message of John and the prophets. On the other hand, the arrival of the Messiah fulfills prophecy and ushers in a new era. The Church’s message today has the same combination of new and old. True, it focuses on the age-old problem of sin and human failure. However, the Gospel delivers the forgiveness of sins and with it the hope of an eternal future with God. • Lord, help us to see You clearly and so believe that Your kingdom is still among us. Move us to a steadfast hope for the future and to daily repentance and new life. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Jesus Calls the First Disciples*

**16** Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, “**Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.**” **18** And immediately they left their nets and followed him. **19** And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. **20** And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

**1:16** *Sea of Galilee.* A beautiful lake, almost 700 feet below sea level, 14 miles long and 6 miles wide, fed by the waters of the upper Jordan River. It was also called the Lake of Gennesaret (Lk 5:1) and the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 6:1; 21:1). In OT times it was known as the Sea of Kinnereth (e.g., Nu 34:11). (CSB)

καὶ παράγων παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν—Note that we do not put a paragraph break here, or (worse) start the body of the Gospel narrative here (as do those who see the introduction ending at 1:15). The transition between 1:15 and 1:16 is smooth in the Greek. See, by contrast, 1:14a, with the

initial infinitive construction. The use of παρά here indicates that Jesus was walking “along” the shore, “beside” (at the side of) the lake. (CC)

Galilee was home for most of the disciples and also for the majority of the first Christians. Galilee, even though also under the control of Herod who imprisoned John the Baptist, was nevertheless very open to non-Jewish influence. When opposition surfaced in Jerusalem, Jesus moved the thrust of his ministry to Galilee. Much remained to be done and to be taught before the disciples would be prepared for Jesus’ passion. (PBC)

*Simon*. Probably a contraction of the OT name Simeon. Jesus gave Simon the name Peter (3:16; Mt 16:18; Jn 1:42). (CSB)

τὸν ἀδελφὸν Σίμωνος—With this verbiage Mark precludes the possible misunderstanding that Andrew was the brother of Jesus. (CC)

Of the disciples named here, Peter is mentioned first. From the start he became the spokesman of the apostolic group. The picturesque details in this account and elsewhere in Mark, details that could come only from Peter, demonstrate that

Peter was the personal source on whom Mark drew in writing his Gospel. The contact between Peter and Mark was a close one. At the close of his First Epistle, Peter sent greetings to the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia from “my son Mark. (PBC)

*net*. circular and c 10-15 ft in diameter, it could be thrown either the shore or from a boat. (TLSB)

**1:17** *Come, follow me*. The call to discipleship is definite and demands a response of total commitment. This was not Jesus’ first encounter with Simon and Andrew (see Jn 1:35–42). (CSB)

Jesus’ practice contrasts sharply with that of other rabbis, who were chosen by those who wanted to follow their teaching. Jesus, however, chose those whom He wished to follow Him. (TLSB)

*I will make you – poiēsō humas genesthai*: “I will cause you to become.” Again directness and conviction are expressed in no uncertain terms. Note, however, that the initiative for the action comes from the outside. It is an “alien” effort as Luther would be comfortable in saying. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

*fishers of men*. Evangelists (see Lk 5:10). (CSB)

anthropoid means men, women and children.

Like fishermen, then, Jesus’ disciples were likewise expected to draw others into the Kingdom. (TLSB)

**1:18** *at once...followed* – Emphasizes the disciples’ unquestioning response to Jesus’ call. Given that the promises of God’s kingdom were being fulfilled (v 15), one might expect all people to respond to Jesus’ invitation as did Peter and Andrew. (TLSB)

They complied immediately. What caused that? Obviously, what is said in verse 14-15. They had heard the Gospel of God. They knew the opportune time had come. They knew that the

Kingdom of God had permanently come in the person, Word, and work of Jesus. It must have taken much courage. They were living in pagan Galilee, surrounded by unbelievers. (B)

*euthus*: What should we expect? An immediate response keeps true to the spirit of Mark and the *kairos* of the Christ. There is a divine compulsion in the words of Jesus (much like in his miracle incidents), and it cannot be resisted. That Word is powerful. By it the universe was created (Genesis 1); it became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1); it empowers the water of Baptism and the bread and wine of the Eucharist (Luther's Small Catechism, Baptism III and Communion III). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

When Jesus called, they were ready to follow him, for they had learned to love him and believe in him. Business, wealth, family – all were secondary to following Jesus and becoming fishers of men. The same faith that filled their hearts should also fill ours, whether we are pastors, teachers, missionaries or lay Christians. Christ must be first in our lives. (PBC)

**1:19-20** *euthus* again. *Euthus* contains the prefix *eu* from which come so many words in the Greek signaling “good, well, straight”: *heuriskō*, the eureka of discovery, and even the Eucharist itself. Immediate good is to be found in having been serendipitously discovered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

*Ekalesen*: Consider the call of Isaiah and Jeremiah, also Rom 8:30; 1 Cor 1:9; and 1 Pet 1:15; etc. The initiative comes from God (and his Anointed One). The disciples do not by their own initiative hurry after Jesus; rather they are chosen by him and drawn after him by his word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

**1:19** *going on a little further* – Evidently he walked up the shore a short way. Simon and Andrew were walking with him. (B)

*James ... John*. Brothers later dubbed “Sons of Thunder” by Jesus (3:17). Along with Peter, they formed something of an inner circle among the 12 apostles (cf 5:37; 9:2; 14:33). (TLSB)

*mending the nets*. A regular task for fishermen. (TLSB)

**1:20** *left their father...with hired servants* – James and John's fishing business was large enough that it supported laborers from outside the family. Walking away from this business, therefore, meant leaving a successful trade and a relatively secure future. (TLSB)

They, too, comply immediately and for the same reason as Simon and Andrew. It is a fair conclusion that the family possessed means, and that Zebedee's business was of some proportions. The fact that his sons left their father's prosperous business shows how devoted they were to Jesus. The hired men could be depended upon to find ways in which to fill the gap. Provision has been made for every need. The point is that their leaving their father did not amount to disrespect or disobedience. (B)

Zebedee did not object. Without a doubt he together with the hired men continued to bring great sacrifices to support Jesus' mission and the training of his disciples. (PBC)

**1:16–20** The first thing Jesus does in His public ministry is to call two pairs of brothers. They respond by dropping everything, following Him, and becoming “fishers of men.” The same invitation to discipleship confronts people today: either drop everything and, in faith, follow Jesus



and make sacrifices, or run the risk of missing out on the Kingdom. Thankfully, we are not left to our own devices in this regard. God's Holy Spirit, working through the Word and Sacraments, moves us to faithful discipleship and so also to eternal life. • Lord, thank You for calling us into Your kingdom, for which You declare us fit by Your grace. Keep us faithful in our calling, for Jesus' sake. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Jesus Drives Out an Unclean Spirit*

**21 And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. 22 And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” 28 And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.**

**1:21-28** In the original Greek, the verbs in v 21 do not have subjects. The subject is Jesus and the four disciples mentioned in vv 16–20. This omission connects our text with the preceding context. In the RSV and NKJV the word “immediately” prefaces the action of Jesus in v 21, echoing the immediacy of the kingdom of God as described in v 15. Verse 29 also connects our text with the following context. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The connection between text *and* context is subtle. Jesus encounters demons throughout the entire first chapter of Mark. Verse 13 calls brief attention to Jesus' temptation in the desert by Satan, the prince of darkness. In our text Jesus does battle with one of Satan's subordinates. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Finally, vv 34 and 39 remind us that Jesus “drove out many demons.” Even more specific is the connection between the refusal of Jesus to accept the testimony of demons in v 34 and his stern reaction to the testimony of the evil spirit in vv 24 and 25 of our text. Modern readers may be surprised at the frequency of the miracle of casting out demons in our Lord's ministry. Its frequency is understandable once we grasp the purpose of Jesus' mission on earth. He came to battle Satan and the powers of darkness in order to liberate mankind who was held in damning bondage (cf Heb 2:14). In every case that bondage was spiritual, and in numerous cases the bondage was physical as well. In Luke 11:20 Jesus says, “If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” In v 15 preceding our text, Jesus says, “The kingdom of God is near.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

With this in mind, we should expect an immediate encounter between God and Satan as Jesus begins his ministry as well as numerous skirmishes between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness throughout his ministry. The incident in our text is consistent with Jesus' mission. No wonder there are so many instances of exorcism in the first chapter of Mark! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Jesus had just called the four “fishing” disciples, as recorded in last week's Gospel reading, Mk 1:14–20. This fivesome then made an appropriate first stop—in a Capernaum synagogue.

(Capernaum may have had several synagogues, since the minimum requirement was only ten married Jewish men.<sup>i</sup>) In this synagogue, these infant disciples would be taught an important lesson regarding Jesus' authority. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

The synagogue served mostly as a place of the Word. Whereas the temple was mainly a place of worship and sacrifice, the service in the synagogue would consist of prayer, reading Scripture, and an exposition of that Word.<sup>ii</sup> Therefore, the synagogue was the ideal place for the true Word, Jesus, to reveal himself with authority. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Note that the work of Satan and his demons is discussed both before and after this text—during Jesus' temptation in the desert in 1:13, and in 1:34 and 39. Such frequency of mentioning the devil and his work is understandable, considering the nature of Jesus' work on earth. Christ's primary mission of saving man would also require destroying the devil's work (Heb 2:14; 1 Jn 3:8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

First, the heading of Mark's Gospel—"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"—seems to be a title that governs his whole account of Jesus' life and passion. Thus, Mark's account is intentionally open-ended and unfinished; Mark seems to have ended his account with the women leaving the tomb in astonishment and fear (16:8). This unsatisfactory conclusion led the Church to supply more appropriate endings that included resurrection appearances, a commissioning of the apostles, and the ascension to the right hand of the Father. Such elements certainly brought Mark into conformity with the other Synoptic Gospels. However, it appears that originally Mark himself sees the narrative of Christ as only a "beginning." The true ending of the Gospel of Jesus Christ continues to unfold in the life of the Church as she proceeds toward the second coming of Christ and the eschatological kingdom. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Second, Mark defines the Gospel of Christ as a baptismal narrative. Mark begins with John the Baptist, who describes Jesus as one who "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (1:8). Thus, the whole Gospel should be read as a baptismal narrative. This interpretation is supported by Mark's account of Jesus' Passion. On the cross, Jesus "expiates" (*exepneusen*), that is, he "breathes out the Spirit" (15:37). When the Spirit is breathed into the face of the centurion, he makes his confession (15:39). By means of inspiration, the centurion declares Jesus to be the "Son of God." Thus, the title "Son of God" is present in the heading of Mark's Gospel; it proceeds from the Father's own lips at Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan; and it is the confession of the centurion at the cross. However, this title is also found in the mouth of the demons (3:11). Thus, Jesus' interaction with the devil and his demons must be seen as inherent to his baptismal mission. What the Father declares from the height of heaven, the demons must echo from the depths of hell. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:21-22** Jesus' authoritative Word that confronted the congregation of Capernaum permitted neither theoretical reflection nor theological debate. Jesus' teaching, the content of which was succinctly outlined in Mk 1:14-15, was simple and direct: believe me and my message. It was a sweeping mandate, unlike anything they'd heard from the scribes.<sup>iii</sup> (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

No scribe ever spoke on his own. He would always preface his statements with, "There's a teaching that . . ." Or he would quickly shore up declarations with quotes from so-called "authorities."<sup>iv</sup> Jesus, however, spoke with a direct line. He cited no authorities other than his own

Father in heaven—a citation that would later “ticket” him with other so-called “authorities.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:21 Capernaum** – Evidently they were already close to it. Though Jesus had been in Capernaum before (Jn 2:12), this occasion was his first public appearance there. Evidently Andrew and Peter had already moved to Capernaum from Bethsaida (cf verses 29-31) and Jesus, too, had moved to Capernaum, though he said later that he had no home of his own (Mt 8:20). (Lenski)

Its situation on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and at the intersection of several important trade routes made Capernaum an ideal base for carrying the gospel into the regions of Galilee and beyond. (PBC)

*immediately* – The RSV calls attention to parallelism in the text by matching the “immediately” prefacing Jesus’ entrance into the synagogue (v 21) with the “immediately” prefacing the emergence of the demoniac in the audience (v 23). The parallelism is evident in the original Greek by the repetition of *euthus*. This parallelism suggests that the structure of the text is that of thesis and documentation. Vv 21–22 make the generalization about Jesus’ authority, while vv 23–28 provide a specific example of that authority. The movement of the text is deductive: from large to small, from wide to narrow, from general to specific. This could well serve as an optional structure for a sermon on this text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

*euthus*: This word occurs throughout Mark’s Gospel; it is often translated as “immediately.” However, it typically appears in contexts where Jesus’ movement is emphasized. Its first use is 1:3, where Mark quotes Is 40:3 in reference to John the Baptist, who is sent to “prepare the way” for Jesus and “make his paths straight (*eutheias*).” Thus, *euthus* seems to express the straight, direct, and urgent path that Jesus takes toward the cross. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

*synagogue*. A very important religious institution among the Jews of that day. Originating during the exile, it provided a place where Jews could study the Scriptures and worship God. A synagogue could be established in any town where there were at least ten married Jewish men. (CSB)

Like other pious Jews, Jesus joined the community in corporate worship on the Sabbath. (TLSB)

*began to teach*. Jesus, like Paul (see Ac 13:15; 14:1; 17:2; 18:4), took advantage of the custom that allowed visiting teachers to participate in the worship service by invitation of the synagogue leaders. (CSB)

Mark tells us more of what Jesus did than what He taught. However, the reaction of Jesus’ controversial teachings – most of which were accompanied by equally provocative actions – produce such outrage in His opponents (cf 2:5-12, 16-17, 18-19, 23-28; 3:1-5) that they are already planning on killing Him by 3:6. (TLSB)

Jesus lost no time going where He could preach about the Kingdom of God. The verb denotes ingressive action: “He began teaching.” (Buls)

*Edidasken*: Mark does not record as much of Jesus’ teaching as do Matthew, Luke, or John. By limiting Jesus’ words, Mark gives a prominence to Jesus’ actions and miracles. Thus, Jesus’

miracles do not merely serve to demonstrate the truthfulness of his teaching; rather, they are already the beginning of Jesus' Passion as he enters into conflict with the devil. The miracles are rhetorical actions in which Jesus' identity is being revealed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Since synagogues had no resident ordained ministers, the rules of the synagogue would invite some rabbi (teacher) or scribe present to teach lessons. (PBC)

Mark concentrates upon a single Sabbath when Jesus' synagogue teaching provoked the astonishment of the congregation. The evangelist has no immediate interest in the precise content of Jesus' exposition; its general thrust is sufficiently indicated by chapter 1:15 which summarizes Jesus' proclamation during this initial phase of the Galilean ministry. (Lane)

**1:22** *amazed*. Mark frequently reported the amazement that Jesus' teaching and actions produced (see 2:12; 5:20, 42; 6:2, 51; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18; see also 15:5). (CSB)

The tense and meaning of "amazed" are important. The imperfect denotes ingressive and continued action. It is variously translated "astonished, amazed, astounded," a very strong verb which means literally "to strike out." (Buls)

*exēplēssonto*: This is one of Mark's favorite words for expressing the surprising nature of Jesus' ministry (6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18). This verb is an imperfect passive, which suggests that the people were uncontrollably overwhelmed by Jesus' teaching and miracles. Along with *thambeō* (1:27; 10:24, 32) and *ekstasis* (5:42; 16:8), *exēplēssonto* emphasizes the unexpected and unprecedented character of Jesus' life and work. These words also intentionally make the people's response to Jesus ambiguous. Mark seems to leave the people's response open-ended as a rhetorical tool to invite the hearer of his Gospel to consider his own response to Christ's work. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

*with authority* – Jesus never used the prophetic formula "thus says the LORD." In contrast to the scribes, whose authority derived from the teachings they received from their forefathers, Jesus spoke as one uniquely authorized by His Father in heaven. (TLSB)

"His teaching" can denote either the act of teaching or the substance thereof. Here evidently the latter is stressed. The periphrastic denotes a constant teaching. NEB, TEB and JB make "authority" adverbial ("With a note of authority" or its equivalent). The other seven translations make it adjectival ("as one that had authority" or its equivalent). We prefer the latter. (Buls)

The people sensed that Jesus Himself was authoritative. "Teachers of the law" means "Bible scholars." Ezra was the first Bible scholar. From the time of the return from the Captivity these "Bible scholars" degenerated into almost worthless teachers. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: The teaching of the scribes was traditional, that is, a fatuous reiteration of sentences and man-made precepts, which would never satisfy the aspirations of the soul. (Buls)

Twice in our text (vv 22, 27) the people recognize the authority of Jesus' teaching. Just what is this "authority" that they recognize? It likely consisted of both the manner and the content of his teaching. It was more than the sternness and directness of Jesus described in v 25, although that probably was part of it. Many of the verbs in our text describing the reaction to or consequence of

Jesus' words give us some inkling of Jesus' authority. It could only be the authority of God himself. He spoke and it was so (cf. Gen 1). His word even had the power to drive out the demons. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The Living Bible's paraphrase suggests that, ironically, Jesus displays his authority by not quoting authorities! The citation of rabbinic authorities was the pedantic practice of "the teachers of the law" (v 22), whose words often were no more helpful to people than Nero's fiddling was for quenching the fire in Rome. To paraphrase a modern commercial, "When Jesus speaks, people listen!" When the Primary Source teaches, he needs no secondary sources. Saying what you mean and meaning what you say might be one way of describing authority. Conviction, sincerity, relevance, and directness all play a part, too. Lenski<sup>1</sup> simply equates Jesus' authority with his deity: he acted and spoke like the God he was! Though we may have trouble defining authority, most of us recognize it when we see it. This is especially true when we encounter God's authority. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

In C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Mr. Beaver tells Susan about Asian, the Christ-figure, "You'll understand when you see him." When Susan confesses nervousness about meeting Asian and wonders whether he'll be "quite safe," Mr. Beaver continues, "If there's anyone who can appear before Asian without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly. . . . 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you." So it is with Jesus. We will understand his authority when we see him, and he is the King. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

*Exousia*: This word is used throughout Mark's Gospel (1:27; 2:10; 3:15; 6:7; 11:28, 29, 33; 13:34) in the context of Jesus' miracles and his conflict with the demons. For Mark, *exousia* refers to the reordering of the cosmos; the Creator's will and power to govern the world is now being ordered through the man Jesus and his apostles. The demonic oppression of the human race is being overcome. The surprising character of Jesus' ministry is that the devil is compelled to submit, not merely to the authority of God, but also to the authority of a man. In Jesus, man is given the cosmic authority for which he was created in the beginning. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

His primary emphasis is on the authority of Jesus' teaching and the response of the people, whose astonishment conveys the impression of real alarm. Jesus' word, presented with a sovereign authority which permitted neither debate nor theoretical reflection, confronted the congregation with the absolute claim of God upon their whole person. Jesus' teaching recalled the categorical demand of the prophets rather than scribal tradition. (Lane)

The teaching of the scribes was traditional, that is, a fatuous reiteration of sentences and man-made precepts, which would never satisfy the aspirations of the soul. (Ylvisaker)

There was no appeal to human authority, neither did he resort to subtle logical distinction, legal niceties, witticisms, or clever sayings. (Fahling)

He testified of the Kingdom of the God, which had now come, and as the Lord of heaven he unveiled its mysteries. (Stoeckhardt)

Isaiah 42:2 says of the Suffering Servant (Jesus) "He will not shout or cry out." The commentary on that phrase follows – Although he is certain of his divine call, and brings to the nations the highest and the best, his manner of appearing is nevertheless quiet, gentle, and humble; the

opposite of such world conquerors like Sennacherib and Cyrus. He brings what commends itself, and therefore requires no forced trumpeting. He expects his message to carry itself successfully through every test. Parents, pastors or teachers who need remind others who they are, are usually in trouble or in doubt themselves. It seems the more unsure people are, the louder they speak.

*teachers of the law* – Space does not allow a full discussion of the scribes, the Sopherim, of that time. (Buls)

Fahling: There was no appeal to human authority, neither did He resort to subtle logical distinction, legal niceties, witticisms, or clever sayings. Clear and limpid words flowed from the spring, which was itself life and truth. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Jesus testified of the Kingdom of the God, which had now come, and as the Lord of heaven He unveiled its mysteries. (Buls)

With reference to this verse, Hendriksen draws six points of comparison between the scribes and Jesus. (Buls)

1. He spoke 'with authority';
2. His message came straight from the very heart and mind of the Father (John 8:26);
3. His message came from his own inner being, and from Scripture;
4. The scribes were constantly borrowing from fallible sources, one scribe quoting another scribe;
5. They were trying to draw water from broken cisterns;
6. He drew from himself, being 'the Fountain of living waters' (Jeremiah 2:13). (Buls)

The divinity of Jesus is plainly implicit in verse 22. (Buls)

They always appealed to the interpretations of past rabbis and were particularly adept at breaking down God's word into any number of legalistic regulations. Jesus instead always proclaimed the gospel of God. He quoted no experts, but proclaimed the good news on his own authority. (PBC)

**1:23-26** Just as Jesus faced Satan immediately after His Baptism, so also here He is met by a demon-possessed man at the beginning of His teaching ministry. Exorcisms, common in Mark (3:11; 5:13; 9:25), reveal Jesus' identity and power. (TLSB)

**1:23** *a man in their synagogue ... cried out.* It was actually the demon who cried out. (CSB)

*en pneumati akathartōi*: Jesus' teaching and presence compels the demons to react. What Jesus does in the flesh reverberates throughout the spiritual world. The description of the demons as "unclean spirits" is a consistent one throughout Mark's Gospel (1:23, 26, 27; 3:11, 30; 5:2, 8, 13; 6:7; 7:25; 9:25). This description may imply that Jesus' interaction with the demons is inherently baptismal. Mark defines Jesus' mission as "baptizing with the Holy Spirit (*en pneumati hagiōi*)" (1:8). This baptizing with the Spirit of Holiness necessitates a conflict with the "unclean" spirits that oppress sinful humanity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

It is not surprising that Satan, despite his defeat in the wilderness, was not ready to let such a message and such a preacher go unchallenged. (PBC)

*possessed by an evil spirit.* Demonic possession intended to torment and destroy those who are created in God's image, but the demon recognized that Jesus was a powerful adversary, capable of destroying the forces of Satan. (CSB)

"Just then" occurred in verse 21. Here we have it again. (Buls)

Bengel: Mark delights in this adverb. It has the effect of beautifully characterizing, especially in the first and second chapters, the rapid career of Christ, who was ever tending towards the goal, and the opportunities rapidly presented to Him, and His rapid success. (Buls)

Lenski and TEV state that this verse means that the person immediately came into the synagogue. The other commentators and versions do not say this, nor does the text. By the way, neither Mark nor Luke says that this person was a "man" in the sense of male. Both use the word "person" which leaves the sex undecided. We are not insisting that it might have been a woman. (Buls)

The verse describes the person, totally possessed by an impure, obscene spirit, a devil. Devil-possession wasn't just illness, affliction or some kind of abnormality. Nor do the Scriptures say that it was caused by a specific sin on the part of the possessed person. Job was not "devil-possessed." Not even Judas is called that. It is not said that Paul, though the thorn in his flesh was devil-sent, was possessed of the devil. In most cases devil possession afflicted the body, but not all. But, in every case of devil-possession, the pitiful victim had no control of self. It occurs with high frequency in the Gospels, much less so in Acts. Furthermore, it is clear from verse 27 that the people somehow knew that it was devil-possession. There was something very terrible about it all. They didn't wonder whether it *was* or *wasn't* devil-possession. They knew. Furthermore, the account in Luke 10:17 -20 clearly shows that the seventy knew that they were dealing with demoniacs. (Buls)

The commentators dwell at length on this phenomenon. Does it occur today? (Buls)

Fahling: As little as the possible occurrence of present day miracles can be denied, just so little the possibility of demoniacal possession. But it would be difficult to establish a particular case. In the writer's opinion they have practically ceased as such, at least in Christian countries. (Buls)

Missionaries in heathen countries have reported instances in which only the Word of God could deal with the situation but even in these instances we ought to be reticent to call it devil possession. Satan knew why Christ had come. He used every foul means at his disposal to keep people from Christ, and to destroy the Kingdom. But the Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Through His death Jesus overcame the one who had the power of death, the devil (Hebrews 2:14). (Buls)

Ylvisaker: Human nature is wholly stifled under the alien power of the devil -- it is entirely unresisting and submissive. In possession, the devil employs the human organism as his personal instrument, he speaks and acts as if it were His own. Even the spirit is forced from its central position in the personality of the possessed person, and the human entity is null and void. It is the demoniac spirit which rules and controls the individual. It is the rational principle of the demon

which operates through the human personality, thinks its thoughts, speaks its words, and acts its deeds. (Buls)

It's clear that the people in the synagogue knew this was demon possession (see also v 27). There was no questioning whether it *was* or *wasn't*.<sup>v</sup> They would soon question many things about Jesus, but not the reality of demons. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Many people today do question the reality of demons. They attribute the biblical claims to a less educated, more primitive, superstitious age. They say that those who make any such claims haven't learned from the advances of technology and the medical sciences. But to discount the reality of demon possession has serious ramifications. Since Jesus, speaking to such afflicted people, did indeed address demons, to deny demon possession could only mean one of two things: either Jesus was ignorant of the true origin of the afflictions, or he was acting out a lie.<sup>vi</sup> Either option places Jesus outside the bounds of deity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

His personality had been damaged to the point that the demonic power had usurped the center of his self, and spoke through him. (Lane)

**1:24** *what do you want* – It is not said that the person suddenly appeared. He was ill the synagogue. Evidently, from what is said later, the people knew him. These Notes suggest that this person had been in the synagogue on previous occasions but heard only the unauthoritative droning of the scribes. But when Jesus spoke, suddenly the person shrieked, but he spoke audible and understandable words. According to the Nestle/Aland Greek text the person screamed, a word not read here, but it is found at Luke 4:34, the parallel account. AAT gets this verse correctly: "And he screamed, 'Leave us alone, Jesus from Nazareth! You've come only to destroy us! I know who You are -- God's Holy One!'" He's practically saying: "Get out of here!" (Buls)

*us* – Either more than one demon possessed this man (as in 5:9) or Jesus' attack on one demon was a declaration of war on them all. (TLSB)

*Jesus of Nazareth – Iēsou Nazarēne*: This demonic title for Jesus seems to possess a tone of ridicule and mockery. The demons hate and disdain human flesh and blood; according to a tradition reflected throughout the New Testament, the devil fell in the beginning, not because he refused to submit to God, but because he refused to submit to humanity. The demons disdain the weakness, vulnerability, and mortality of humankind. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

*to destroy us – apolesai*: The demon's question may reflect their expectation that the Son of God has come to "destroy" them. They expect Jesus to gain the victory by means of violence, power, and domination. The demons expect Jesus to act in the same way that they treat humanity. What is interesting is that Jesus does not "destroy" them; Jesus' mission is not to destroy demons, but to save and cleanse humanity. This same truth is found again in 5:1–13. The demons expect Jesus to "torment" them; Jesus does not torment them, but sends them into the swine. The demons are consistently surprised by God's love for weak and vulnerable humanity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

After the outcome of the temptation (vv 12-13; cf Mt. 4:10-11), the demons expect only punishment from Jesus. (TLSB)



*know who you are* – Is the person making a question or a statement? Bengel, Stoeckhardt, Lenski and AAT take it as a statement of fact and these Notes consider that correct. What is the antecedent of "we know?" Is this man identifying himself with other devils or with the people? (Buls)

At Mark 5 and Luke 8, in the account of the devil-possessed, we read that many devils possessed one man. But that is not said here in Mark 1 :24. These Notes, therefore, take the position that "we know" does not mean "me and fellow devils" but "me and these other people" He was telling Jesus to quit teaching and to leave because He was the enemy of the people. And when he says: "I know who You are, the Holy One of God," he was picturing Jesus as the destroyer of man, quite the opposite of Luke 19:10: "The Son of man has come to seek and save that which is lost." (Buls)

*the Holy One of God.* Apart from the parallel in Lk 4:34, the title is used elsewhere only in Jn 6:69 and points to Christ's divine origin rather than his Messiahship (see Lk 1:35). The name was perhaps used by the demons in accordance with the occult belief that the precise use of a person's name gave certain control over him. The man was possessed by more than one demon (see 5:9), but only one spoke. (CSB)

In the ancient world, people believed that knowing the real name of a divine being gave one control over that deity. This demon knew Jesus' true identity and yet could not overcome Him. Though the demons often use messianic title for Jesus, the disciples fail to do so until much later (8:29). Their slowness to recognize Jesus' messianic status is a major theme in Mark. (TLSB)

"God's Holy One" occurs only here, in the parallel at Luke 4:34, and in the mouth of Peter at John 6:69. But the difference is tremendous. Satan is using this demoniac as a missionary to picture Jesus as the destroyer of men. Peter used the same term, acknowledging that Jesus is the *Savior* of men. Of course, if people reject Jesus, He becomes their Judge and Destroyer. It was true in this devil's case. He knew and he trembled. James 2:19. But it was not true of the people to whom Jesus was preaching. Can anything be more diabolical than to picture Jesus as the enemy of mankind? (Buls)

An amazing fact is that the demons always recognize Jesus as God, such as in Mt 8:29 (Son of God); Mk 5:7 (Son of the Most High God); and in our text as "the Holy One of God."<sup>vii</sup> Such knowledge can only come supernaturally—either by the believer as joyful confession, or by the unbeliever as reluctant admission. Either way, it confirms the words of Phil 2:11 (every tongue will confess Jesus as Lord). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*Ho hagois tou theou:* The demons are compelled to acknowledge what the Father has said concerning Jesus at his Baptism in the Jordan. Here they refer to him as the "Holy One," which reflects the gift of the "Holy Spirit" (1:8) given at the Jordan (1:10). In 3:11, the demons echo exactly what the Father declared at the Jordan; and in 5:7, the demons confess him to be "Son of the Most High God." These demonic confessions certainly demonstrate the power of Baptism. While humankind may reject what the Father says at the waters of Baptism, the demons possess no such luxury; they must of necessity acknowledge the Father's word. However, these titles may also possess a note of surprise and wonder. The demons are amazed that the power of God is found in the weakness of a flesh-and-blood man, Jesus of Nazareth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

That the demonic powers possess a certain knowledge of Jesus' identity is clear from the cry of recognition, "I know who you are, the Holy One of God." The unclean spirit recognizes Jesus as the Holy One of God, the Bearer of the Holy Spirit, and between the Holy Spirit and an unclean spirit "there exists a deadly antithesis that the demons know." This formula of recognition, however, does not stand alone. It is part of a larger complex of material exhibiting a striking difference between the forms of address employed by the demoniacs and the titles used by ordinary sick individuals. The latter group appeal to Jesus as "Lord" (ch 7:8), "Teacher" (ch 9:17), "Son of David" (ch 10:47-48) or "Master" (ch 10:51). The demoniacs, however, address Jesus as "the Holy One of God" (ch 1:24, "the Son of God" (ch 3:11) or Jesus as the divine Son of God." The contrast in address is an important recognition-formula is not a confession, but a defensive attempt to gain control of Jesus in accordance with the common concept of that day, that the use of the precise name of an individual or spirit would secure mastery over him. (Lane)

**1:25 *Be silent!*** Lit. "Be muzzled!" Jesus' superior power silences the shrieks of the demon-possessed man. (CSB)

Note that Satan's missionary is described with "cried out" in verse 24. Jesus' speech is introduced with the same word. The demoniac shrieked. Jesus sternly rebuked and forbade. Why did Jesus say: "Be muzzled and come out of him?" Commentators point out that Jesus would not allow demon possessed people to use His titles. Why not? Because this devil was using this title with a meaning quite the opposite of what it really means. And, lest the demon-possessed would say anything else to turn the people against Jesus, by His almighty Word Jesus absolutely forbids him to say anything else and makes the demon come out of the man. (Buls)

Nearly the exact same Greek words in Mk 1:26 (literally "and shouting with a great voice") are used for Jesus on the cross as he shouted, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23:46 —*kai phōnēsas phonēi megalēi*). In the Mark passage, Jesus achieved one of many tactical victories over Satan. In the Luke verse, Jesus triumphantly shouted his final and strategic victory over sin, death, and the devil. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*phimōthēti kai exelthe ex autou*: Jesus' rebuke reveals his utter concern for humanity. Jesus does not seek to destroy the demons, nor merely to demonstrate his own authority and power, but to remove the demonic oppression from the man before him. For Jesus, it is unseemly and repulsive that demons should use human tongues and human bodies to speak their thoughts and accomplish their will. Jesus' refusal to allow the demons to speak is part of the messianic secret emphasized throughout the Gospel of Mark. For Mark, the full revelation of Jesus' identity awaits the cross and resurrection. Jesus wishes to be revealed precisely in his Passion. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:26 *unclean spirit*** – akatharton is unclean because he could only produce that which was impure, obscene and diabolical.

Just as Jesus had made a distinction between the evil spirit and the person in verse 25, so in this verse an even clearer distinction is made. The demon shakes the man. The demon is called "unclean" because he could produce only that which was impure, obscene and diabolical. (Buls)

*convulsing him* – This incident teaches three things: 1) the personal existence of the devil; 2) that the devil has a terrific power, which can harm no one, however, who is protected by him

who is stronger; 3) that the devil never willingly but only through necessity, releases his victim. (Ylvisaker)

φωνῇ μεγάλῃ—This is a dative of means, “with a loud voice.” (CC)

"Shook" does not denote laceration, as might be indicated by the KJV , but convulsion, as is clearly stated by most of our translations. The Lukan parallel clearly states that the demon did not harm the man. Jesus would not permit it. (Buls)

Again the verb "call out" evidently denotes a shrieking, a painful cry. The demon does not leave the man willingly. The devil never lets go willingly. (Buls)

Bengel: This prohibition ('be silenced') did not prevent the cry of the unclean spirit when going out of the man, but merely the utterance of articulate words, such as are mentioned at verse 24. (Buls)

Fahling: Jesus' words sufficed. One wild paroxysm, and the poor sufferer was free from demoniacal possession; one final fit, and he was perfectly healed. (Buls)

Lenski: Mark uses this as the first miracle of the many recorded in his Gospel. It fits most perfectly the theme of this first half of his Gospel, Jesus proving himself to be the Christ, God's Son, by His mighty teaching and deeds. (Buls)

But isn't it remarkable that Jesus says nothing of Himself? The demon had announced Jesus as "The Holy One of God" but Jesus forbade him to say more. Jesus did not come saying: "I am the Son of God, the Son of man, the Messiah, the Christ." By His words and deeds Jesus caused people to come to that conclusion. Cf. John 4:25-26. Only after the woman began speaking about the Messiah did Jesus identify Himself. Cf. John 10:22-26. His enemies say: "If you are the Christ, tell us openly." In verse 25 He declares to them that He told them that He was the Christ by the miracles which He performed. But they reject Him and His miracles. When He walked with the Emmaus disciples He did not permit them to know Who He was until He had gone through many or passages to describe the kind of Savior they truly needed, not one of their own making. Then He permitted Himself to be identified. (Buls)

*phōnēsan phōnēi megalēi*: For Mark, Jesus' conflict with the devil begins immediately following his Baptism and continues through the Passion. Thus, Mark tells of this conflict in language that looks forward to the cross. "Crying out with a loud voice" expresses the dramatic conflict that is taking place; the "great voice" may bear the connotation of a cry heard in the midst of an intense battle. This same language appears again in 5:7. However, most significantly, it appears twice in Mark's account of the crucifixion (15:34, 37). Jesus cries out with a great voice as his battle with the devil is brought to a victorious end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

The silencing and expulsion of the demon is the proof of that judgment which Jesus has come to initiate. To have allowed the defensive utterance of the demon to go un-rebuked would have been to compromise the purpose for which Jesus came into the world, to confront Satan and strip him of his power. (Lane)

**1:27** *all amazed* – "Amazed" is another strong verb, a synonym to "astonished" in verse 22, variously translated "amazed, astonished, dumbfounded." In verse 22 the verb is imperfect, denoting a continued state. In verse, 27 we have the aorist, denoting an explosion of amazement.

Its subject is "all the people", denoting unanimous amazement and wonder. Might it include the person who was cured? The sentence reads literally: "And, as a result, all were so dumbfounded that they questioned among themselves, saying: 'What is this?'" (Buls)

The people were utterly astonished and alarmed at Jesus' word. The same measure of authority with which they had been confronted in his teaching was demonstrated in the word of command to the demon. There had been no technique, no spells or incantations, no symbolic act. There had been only the word. There was no category familiar to them which explained the sovereign authority with which Jesus spoke and acted. (Lane)

*new teaching* – Jesus' teaching is supported by miraculous signs. Because of His deeds, Jesus needed no one to support the truth of His words. His actions spoke clearly for themselves. (TLSB)

"A new teaching!" (v 27) is the people's response to Jesus' words and deeds in the synagogue on that particular Sabbath. This reaction does not suggest that Jesus was a novice, an upstart, or a sensationalist. Actually, the religion he taught, salvation by God's grace through God-given faith, was as old as the fallen world. But in the course of time this old teaching had been obscured by the encrustations of the teachers of the law. Jesus removed these encrustations and revealed this teaching more forcefully and clearly than any previous teacher had done because he himself embodied the grace and truth of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

*didachē kainē*: The use of *kainē* or "new" emphasizes the unprecedented and surprising character of Jesus' work. This language also connects to the newness of the New Testament (2:21–22; 14:24–25). While Matthew emphasizes Jesus' ministry as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, Mark gives expression to the new and unexpected nature of the covenant being established in Jesus' death and resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Note that the text in Nestle/Aland Greek version is that of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. According to the Koine text, KJV and NKJV read: "What new doctrine is this? for with authority etc." (Buls)

Our English versions suggest about eight different translations of what the people said. They differ among themselves for two reasons: 1) The variant readings, and, 2) Punctuation. TEV places a question mark after "Some kind of new teaching?" AAT reads thus: "A new teaching!" NEB reads as does AAT but places a period at the end. "A new kind of teaching! He speaks with authority." Others: "With authority He gives orders etc." If the Nestle reading is correct, perhaps NASB is best: "A new teaching with authority! He commands etc." In other words, they answer their own question. It is a teaching of a kind different from that of the scribes because it is authoritative. That is proved by the fact that "He orders *even* the unclean spirits and, *as a result* they obey Him." It is implied that the scribes could do nothing about demon-possessed people. (Buls)

*with authority*. Jesus' authority in how he taught (v. 22) and in what he did (here) impressed the people. (CSB)

Commentators disagree about the quality and maturity of the audience's evaluation of Jesus in v 27 and of the message they spread throughout Galilee in v 28. Did they recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of God and the Savior of the world, or did they simply consider him an outstanding teacher, a miracle worker, one more of the prophets? Their reaction seems to indicate wonder and amazement, but not true perception of who Jesus was. Other passages

describe how many were impressed with Jesus but did not actually have saving faith in him (Matt 16:14; John 6:14–15). Yet some who at first misunderstood him may later have received true faith and understanding. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Christian understanding is a lifelong process in which the Holy Spirit, working through the Word and Sacraments, ever guides us into the truth. Incomplete as the audience's response to Jesus may have been, it was a positive response. They seemed to be off to a good start. Although we dare never settle for an incomplete understanding of Jesus in ourselves or in others, neither dare we reject a favorable partial understanding of Jesus simply because it is not yet complete. Rather, we should rejoice in such beginnings and seek through the Gospel to cultivate full maturity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

We must fault the congregation at Capernaum—like the multitudes who would come after them—for not going far enough in their confession. Like most who witnessed Jesus' miracles, they “wowed” at the “what,” not the “who.” They couldn't see the man behind the miracle as the one, true God-man, their long-awaited Messiah. They came to church that day for a show, not for salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Isn't it sad that the demon understands more than the congregation about who this Jesus really is? He actually says all the right things: Jesus is the Holy One of God and has come to destroy the work of Satan! Yet, for all his shallow knowledge and words, he is destined for destruction, for his knowledge is not faith, nor can it be (James 2:19). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*epitassei*: This language emphasizes Jesus' authority to govern creation. Here it is used in reference to Jesus' authority over demons (cf also 9:25). It is used in 6:39 in reference to Jesus ordering the five thousand to sit in companies of hundreds and fifties in the miracle of the loaves. Thus, this language emphasizes that God's kingdom is being established on earth through a flesh-and-blood man. The cosmos is being reordered according to God's intention from the beginning. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

*they obey him* – It is implied that the scribes could do nothing about the demon-possessed people.

**1:28** *his fame spread everywhere* – “News” is variously translated “His fame,” “the news about Him,” “His reputation,” in all cases referring to Jesus, not the healed man. KJV and NKJV understand the final phrase to mean not only Galilee but also the territory surrounding it. NKJV reads: “throughout all the region around Galilee.” All the other versions take it as does RSV: “throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.” In any case, His fame spread geographically to quite an extent. And note that it spread quickly, immediately. (Buls)

Jesus' incredible popularity characterized the early days of His ministry (e.g., v 45; 2:2; 3:8, 20; 4:1). TLSB)

*quickly* – Note that “quick” occurs three times in this text: 1) In verse 21 Jesus went immediately to the Synagogue; 2) In verse 23 the reaction, on the part of the demon-possessed, to Jesus' preaching was immediate; 3) In verse 28 Jesus' fame spread immediately and quite far. (Buls)

It is remarkable that only the demoniac called Jesus “The Holy One of God” (Buls)

Hendriksen: When the demon declares 'I know' he is not telling a lie. There are certain things that are known to the prince of evil and his servants. Cf. James 2:19. Moreover, some of this knowledge causes them to tremble, to be frightened. They know that for them there is no salvation, only dreadful punishment. ...Jesus is 'holy' in the sense that he had been anointed, hence set apart, separated, for the performance of the most exalted task (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18.19; 19:10; John 3:16; 10:36; 2 Corinthians 5:21). When radicals deny Christ's deity they show less insight than the demons, for the latter are constantly acknowledging it. To be sure, they do not do this in the proper spirit. For reverence they substitute impudence; for joyfulness, bitterness; for gratitude, turpitude. But they do it all the same. (Buls)

And because of this Jesus muzzled the demoniac so that he would say no more. The audience had not yet been brought to the point at which they acknowledged Jesus to be "the Holy One of God." This must have been painful for Jesus. It is incumbent upon every preacher of the Word to bring his hearers to a hearty acknowledgment of the fact that Jesus is the Holy One of God, the Savior of sinners, the Redeemer of the lost, the One Who truly conquered the devil and his hosts. And he must ever remember, as said Luther, that whatever is not of the Word and Sacraments is of the devil. (Buls)

*surrounding region of Galilee* – Meant not only Galilee but also the territory surrounding it. His fame spread geographically to quite an extent.

The report concerning the enigmatic bearer of the authoritative word went forth at once into the surrounding region. The disturbance of men by God had begun. (Lane)

**1:21–28** Jesus' authoritative teaching and power over the unclean spirits create an immediate stir among those beholding Him in the early days of His ministry in Galilee. Today, we often see the same thing. People continue to be interested in and even amazed by Jesus' teaching, and yet many fail to depend on Him for life and salvation. By the power of His authoritative Word and Spirit, however, others are indeed brought into saving faith and life. • Lord Jesus, move us to an unquestioning trust and mature faith in You. By the power of Your Word and Spirit, make us steadfast in the hope of glory. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Jesus Heals Many*

**29 And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 32 That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.**

**1:29-39** Jesus' first public act is an exorcism (Mk 1:21–28) and is followed by healing (vv 29–31). Exorcisms and healings are crucial aspects of Jesus' ministry. Both activities are instrumental in implementing Jesus' major objective: bringing the kingdom of God to earth (1:14–15). The usurping "ruler of this world," and his evil works and ways, are cast out. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

It is noteworthy that Jesus performs the first exorcism in a man and his first healing on a woman. The kingdom will embrace both male and female. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

In discussing the threefold office of Christ (Prophet, Priest, and King), the explanation of Luther's Small Catechism answers thus to question 125: "As Prophet, Christ preached personally during His life on earth, validating His word with miracles, especially His own resurrection; through the preached Gospel today [Christ] still proclaims Himself to be the Son of God and Redeemer of the world" (pp. 124–25). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Take note of the cross-reference materials for the pericopes, especially Lk 4:38–39, 42–43, which is clarified in the Concordia Commentary *Luke 1:1–9:50* (Arthur A. Just Jr. [St. Louis: Concordia, 1996], pp. 197–202). Crowds of people see in Jesus' words and actions the Messiah, the Son of the living God. He is the ultimate Prophet. Jesus' whole compassionate life—preaching and healing—is the will of God. The account of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple indicates the necessity of widespread preaching, teaching, and learning to carry out the Father's plan of salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

The reactions by the demons demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus didn't allow his enemies, the demons, to speak. But Jesus, the divine Apostle, instructs his disciples and sends them out as apostles to speak the Good News to everyone for him. They are his missionaries. Jesus sees no distinction between body and soul in regard to his healing or preaching. Demon-possession, sickness and illness, sin and death are all signs of mankind's bondage to sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

God the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit at his Baptism and sent him to preach the Good News of the kingdom of God (salvation) to the poor from one town to the next. That is why he came. The poor who receive the Good News include the men who are demon-possessed, Peter's mother-in-law, and others who are sick. Jesus releases those who are held captive by Satan and disease. The presence of God is found in Christ Jesus (Immanuel). The message that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, preaches embodies everything that is of the heavenly Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

In regard to preaching, in *What Luther Says* (compiled by Ewald M. Plass [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959]), Martin Luther tells us that the message of the Word from a faithful servant of the Word is the message of God (pp. 1125–26). God uses men to be his agents or instruments of communication. Preachers should confine their message to the Word of God. Good preaching centers in and exalts Christ, not the preacher. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

The disciples in Mark: Out of the four Gospels, Mark's portrayal of the disciples is the harshest. More often than not, they don't "get it" and fail to understand Jesus' mission of bringing salvation. At 6:52, they are even described as hardhearted. The time they spend with Jesus doesn't seem to help, as James and John ask for the best places at Jesus' right and left hands in 10:35–45. At the end, in 14:31, all the disciples (not just Peter) confidently assert they will not deny Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:29** *to the home of Simon and Andrew.* Jesus and the disciples probably went there for a meal, since the main Sabbath meal was served immediately following the synagogue service. (CSB)

From the synagogue they (Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James and John) went immediately to Peter's house. The most natural way to take this verse is that Simon and Andrew owned this house and that Peter's mother-in-law lived with them, This assumes that Peter's father was already dead. It

could be that she, a widow, owned her own house in Capernaum and was staying temporarily with daughter and son-in-law. (Buls)

At any rate, the words seem to indicate that Jesus, James and John had been invited to eat the evening meal at the house of Peter and Andrew, The Jews customarily ate a festive meal when the Sabbath was over at 6 p.m. (Buls)

“Simon’s mother-in-law.” While Lutherans have used this passage to argue against Roman Catholic theology about a celibate priesthood in that Peter, the first “pope,” was married, the text does not have that purpose in mind. This miracle could simply be showing that Jesus responds with compassion to individual need, including that of a feverish woman. It also emphasizes Jesus’ authority that had been evident in the synagogue (1:21–28) with his teaching and casting out the demon. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:30** *Simon’s mother-in-law.* Peter was plainly a married man. 1 Corinthians 9:5 clearly says that Peter took his wife along on his preaching tours. (Buls)

*lay ill with a fever* – Often symptom of a serious illness. (TLSB)

"In bed" means that she was bedfast. "With a fever," a predicate participle, gives the reason. Luke 4:39 says that the fever was intense. Note another "told him." No sooner had Jesus entered the house when they informed Jesus about her fever. Luke adds that "they besought Him for her." Note how plain the humanity of Jesus is in all of this. (Buls)

**1:31** “lifted her up.” The vocabulary is also used for the resurrection of Jesus and those who believe in him, but that would be reading back into this text what is yet to come. More prominent is that the miracle was immediately effective in that she began to serve them—to carry out her vocation in this home. We do not know what the fever was, but the lack of medical resources would make any fever a serious situation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Note both the humanity and divinity of Jesus. He grasped her by the hand. That is so human. But raising her up was more than human. A person with a high fever is very weak. Jesus did not lift dead weight by grasping her hand. His divinity, working through His humanity, caused her to rise. Luke adds that "He rebuked the fever," the same verb, in Greek, used to rebuke the winds and waves. His Word brought the fever to an end. (Buls)

Touched her. This is similar to how He revived Jairus’s daughter (5:41-42). (TLSB)

*fever left her...began to serve them* – Indicates the completeness and instantaneousness of her recovery. (TLSB)

"Left" at Mark 1:31, is plainly resultative. It is the same verb used for "forgive." When God forgives, the sins are no more. When Jesus spoke, the fever was no more. The Koine text, followed by KJV and NKJV adds the word "immediately." If it is not textual, it is implicit in the text. She did not become well gradually but immediately. (Buls)

"She began serving them," that is, the guests. The text would seem to imply that Peter's wife had prepared the evening meal and that now her mother assisted her. (Buls)



Ylvisaker: The mother-in-law of Peter is the first woman who performed the service of evangelical deaconess. (Buls)

**1:32** *the people brought*. They waited until the Sabbath was over (after sunset) before carrying anything (see Jer 17:21–22). (CSB)

Here we have a genitive absolute of time denoting about 6 p.m. "After sunset" is a subordinate clause of time, making the time more specific, at sunset. Obviously the meal was over. (Buls)

The miracle of driving out the demon (verses 23-28) had caused a great stir in Capernaum. Perhaps by this time the people had also heard about Jesus' healing Peter's mother-in-law. "They began bringing." It is clear that they waited until the Sabbath was ended at 6 p.m. Note that the sick and the devil-possessed are clearly distinguished. Devil possession is not merely illness. And devil possession may or may not be caused or accompanied by illness. (Buls)

Because of Sabbath regulations, the people most likely waited until sundown to come to Jesus with the sick and demon-possessed. Once they started, the imperfect verb tense indicates they kept bringing people to Jesus—a continuous stream arriving at Peter's home. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:33** *whole town gathered* – Note the perfect paraphrastic verb. "Whole" means the city in its entirety gathered at the door of the house of Peter. Mark alone reports this. Such a large gathering at the door of a house is unique in the Gospels. Mark 2:2 is similar to it but not so extensive. (Buls)

Fahling: Parents, children, husbands, wives, brought, led, and carried their beloved sick. A peaceful scene of faith and hope. But also a scene of suffering humanity. (Buls)

So much suffering has sin caused in the world! (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: The preaching of the Gospel was His chief prophetic work, and His miracles served to confirm His doctrine. That the kingdom of God had come, showed itself also in this that now the power of God, and the power to do miracles was effective on earth. The great prophets of the Old Covenant performed miracles. . . But Jesus did miracles in overabundance. . . His very nature produced them. (Buls)

Perhaps verse 33 indicates not only the sick and demon possessed and those who brought them but also additional people who came to witness what was happening. (Buls)

**1:34** *healed* – From Matthew 8:16 and Luke 4:40 it is clear that the word "many" here in Mark 1:34 does not mean that Jesus healed only some, but that He healed all who were brought. Mark is stressing that the number was very large. It must have been a magnificent sight. (Buls)

"Various" shows that the kinds of sicknesses were many. Despite all our modern medical know-how, there are so many kinds of illness, even many species of one genus. So long as there is sin in the world (and that will be til its very end) there will always be many diseases. (Buls)

*therapeuō, therapeia*, "to heal; healing." In secular Greek, the word means "to serve, to cure, to care for the sick, to treat," and the most common, "to heal." Philo of Alexandria refers to healing of both body and soul. The Messiah brings more than medical treatment. He brings real healing.

It is no less a part of his ministry than preaching. Driving out demons is a form of healing. This is done by his Word. The healing is total. Disciples are commanded to heal the sick. Pastors heal through the Word and Sacraments. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) (pp. 331–32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*cast out – ekballō*, “to cast out.” Literally, in Greek, the word means “to throw out, expel or repel.” While Judaism had a series of formulas to effect exorcisms, Jesus simply uses his word and his full power over demons. Jesus also commissions his apostles to cast out demons. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985] p. 92). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Note that Mark distinguishes between ordinary illnesses and demon-possession. Even the verbs are different. He healed diseases but expelled many demons. Matthew says that He expelled them “with His Word.” Luke adds that as the demons came out they cried “Thou art the Son of God.” When Mark says that Jesus was not allowing the demons to speak he means that He would not allow them to call Him the Son of God. Look at the well-attested Greek text variant for this verse: “Because they knew that He was the Christ.” Why would Jesus not allow the devils to call Him by His titles? Not only because the confession came from an unholy mouth but also because they might have applied the title wrongly. Perhaps they would have diverted the people from Jesus’ true mission by saying that He was a Messiah to their liking, something like the incident at John 6:15. Satan used the title “Son of God” only to divert Jesus from His true mission. Cf. Matthew 4:3.6. He tempted Jesus to be a self-serving and popular Savior. (Buls)

The devils did not “realize” but “knew,” without anyone telling them, that Jesus was the Son of God. Cf. James 2:19. They knew much but did not assent to it nor put their confidence in it. (Buls)

And it is sad to note that none of the people who were healed or witnessed the healings acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. Luke 4:23 tells us of the many works Jesus performed in Capernaum. Matthew 11:23.24 and Luke 10:15 tell us how cold and impenitent these miracles left these people. Their judgment will be worse than that of Sodom. “He came unto His own but His own received Him not.” John 1:11. What a grief that must have been to Jesus Who was not only divine but also human! (Buls)

*because they knew who he was.* Luke says, “because they knew he was the Christ” (Lk 4:41). Jesus probably wanted first to show by word and deed the kind of Messiah he was (in contrast to popular notions) before he clearly declared himself, and he would not let the demons frustrate this intent. (CSB)

It begins the references to the “Messianic secret.” Jesus does not want to base his ministry on the testimony of demons or others who offer their own slant on his mission. He wants his words and deeds to speak for themselves (Jn 10:25, 38). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

Jesus did not allow the demons to speak. He wanted those who were healed and those who witnessed the healings to draw their own conclusions directly from his words and actions and thus to come to the realization he was more than just a healer of the body; he was the promised Savior from sin. (PBC)

Not only did he not let them speak because the confession came from an unholy mouth and also because they might have applied the title wrongly. Perhaps they would have diverted the people from Jesus' true mission by saying that he was a Messiah to their liking, something like the incident at John 6:15. (B)

**1:29–34** Jesus' first day of public ministry—the Sabbath—is a busy one. Given the endless series of things to which Jesus attends, we sometimes imagine that He is too busy for us and our problems. But Jesus knows and cares for each of us individually. He actually commands us to lay all our needs before Him and stands ever willing and able to help us. • Lord, teach us to turn to You in every need. Then give us grateful hearts so that, after receiving Your kindness and healing, we thank and serve You. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place*

**35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, 37 and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." 38 And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." 39 And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.**

**1:35-38** These verses have several interesting concepts within them. One is the emphasis on Jesus going off by himself to pray—a pattern that would repeat itself many times. There is also the suggestion of a conflict between Jesus and the disciples (cf. the conflict between Paul and the Corinthians). They "pursued" (v 36: *katediōxen*) Jesus because they wanted him to come back to his place of triumphs. But he has other plans—to go to nearby villages. As was St. Paul, Jesus is under divine compulsion to fulfill his mission. He does not exercise freedom to go wherever and do whatever he pleases, or do as the crowds please. Even he is a Servant. In exorcising, healing, and preaching the kingdom of God comes. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

**1:35** *desolate place and there he prayed* – Though Jesus had plenty to do in Capernaum (vv 29-34), He nonetheless retreated into the wilderness in order to pray. The Gospels repeatedly depict Jesus spending time alone in prayer (cf 6:46; Lk. 5:16; 6:12). (TLSB)

Jesus must have worked until late at night, healing the sick and casting out devils. (Buls)

Lenski: The remarkable thing is that there were so many, all in this one city. This affliction (devil possession) did not appear only in rare and isolated cases; it was prevalent and well-known as distinct from any form of disease. (Buls)

After this strenuous Sabbath Day Jesus very likely got at least a little sleep at the house of Simon Peter. The words mean "very early while it was still night." The verbs are graphic: "After he got up He went out (of the house) and went away." "Solitary" always means "devoid of people." He wanted to be alone. "And there He began and continued to pray." Obviously Jesus prayed about the situation in which He found Himself, just as He prayed alone in the Garden of Gethsemane about the situation in which He found Himself. Evidently He foreknew (Luke 4:42) that the people wanted Him to stay there. A man who could cure all their diseases and drive out all their demons was very attractive. (Buls)

Fahling: It was, however, not His purpose to establish a clinic at Capernaum. This seems to have been what the people at Capernaum expected. (Buls)

After the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:15) when they wanted to make Him King by force He went away, all alone, to pray. Why? For strength to overcome this temptation. Mankind always wants a Messiah of its own making, for better earthly conditions such as no sickness, better wages, more food, etc. (Buls)

It literally means “wilderness place.” The description is in appropriate geographically, for the land about Capernaum was cultivated during this period. Its reference is to a place of solitude which in some sense recalls the wilderness. This and other texts suggest that Jesus deliberately withdraws from the people to return to an area which has the character of the wilderness where he encountered Satan and sustained temptation. The nature of the temptation in each instance may be related to the clamor of the crowds, who are willing to find in Jesus a divine-man who meets their needs and so wins their following. He turns from their acclaim, returning to a place which recalls his determination to fulfill the mission for which he has come into the world. In Mark’s Gospel Jesus is seen in prayer only three times: at the beginning of the account, when his ministry was defined (1:35), in the middle after the feeding of the 5000 (6:46), and near the conclusion when Jesus is in Gethsemane (14:32-42). These three occasions have the character of a critical moment. The setting for Jesus’ prayer is quite alone in spite of the three disciples who are separated a short distance from him. The situation again recalls the wilderness when Jesus confronts the temptation of Satan, and is sustained by help from God. His strength is in prayer through which he affirms his intention to fulfill the will of God, which means his submission to the judgment of God on behalf of the many who return to the wilderness without understanding. (Lane)

The desolate place is most likely a secluded place outside of town. *Erēmos* is the same word used for the desert when Jesus was tempted, but we cannot say if this is the place where Satan confronted Jesus during the forty days. However, in Mark when Jesus retreats in prayer, it is because he is being tempted with abandoning his messianic mission (6:46; 14:32–42). It is desolate not just because of its physical appearance but also because of what Jesus goes through there. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

That Sabbath had been an exceptionally busy one for Jesus, yet he did not sleep late the next morning. It may seem strange to us that Jesus the Son of God felt the need to spend time in praying to and communing with his heavenly Father, but only until we remember he was also truly human. As such he too was dependent upon God. However in one respect his prayers were not identical with ours. They were not prayers for forgiveness of sins, for he had none. In his prayers he talked with his heavenly Father about the work that lay before him and thus found strength for his task. On this particular morning he may well have discussed with the Father whether he should remain longer in Capernaum or begin taking his message into other areas of Galilee. The Father’s answer was clear in the words of Jesus to his disciples and in his subsequent action. (PBC)

**1:36** *companions*. Andrew, James, John and perhaps Philip and Nathanael (cf. Jn 1:43–45).(CSB)

"Went to look for" means "to pursue strenuously." "Companions" evidently means Andrew, James and John and maybe even Peter's wife and mother-in-law. (Buls)

Hendriksen: Excitedly the disciples inform Jesus about this. The result, however, was surprising. (Buls)

*found him* – That they found him suggests that they were aware of his practice of going apart by himself to pray. (PBC)

**1:37-38** The temptation here involves the people's (including the disciples') expectations. They wanted to set Jesus' priorities in terms of personal needs and/or a nationalistic utopia. The temptation would be to use his growing popularity and authority to walk a different path than suffering and death. His response is to move on to the next town to preach, and his message was set forth earlier in the chapter: repent and believe. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:37** *everyone is looking for you* – What are you doing here when you should be in the midst of the multitude who are clamoring for you? A very considerable impression had been made in Capernaum, and in the mistaken thinking of the fishermen it was this response which Jesus had sought to elicit. Jesus' answer indicates their failure to understand him or his mission. The crowds that gathered in Capernaum had made their decision, but it could not be the appropriate one because it involved not repentance but attraction to Jesus as a performer of miracles. That is why Jesus interrupts the miracles to go elsewhere to proclaim the gospel. His purpose is not to heal as many people as possible as a manifestation of the kingdom of God drawn near in his person, but to confront men with the demand for decision in the perspective of God's absolute claim upon their person. (Lane)

They said: "All are seeking you." It would seem that Hendriksen is right. The disciples so impressed and so excited about the "seeking" of all. But cf. John 6:24. The seeking was very likely only for selfish reasons. The disciples needed to learn a lesson. The text does not say that the people were seeking to have Him do more miracles but merely that He should not leave them (Luke 4:42). (Buls)

**1:38** *go on to the next place* – Jesus refused to stay within the friendly confines of Capernaum. He was committed to preaching, exorcising demons and healing throughout Israel. (TLSB)

The antecedent of "us" is obviously the disciples. Jesus was primarily a Herald, a Preacher. Luke 4:43 explains: "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also." "I came" plainly means "I came out of heaven into this world" as Luke 4:42 clearly indicates. (Buls)

*that I may preach* – *kērusso*, "to proclaim." The New Testament uses many words to mean the proclamation of the Gospel message. This word can mean "to cry out loud, declare, announce, or preach." It involves the declaration of an event. It stresses dynamic proclamation. Here proclaiming God's Word is Jesus' stated mission. He delivers the message as the prophet of fulfillment. His proclamation is an event. His Word is a creative force. It gives what it declares. Those whom Jesus heals tell others what has happened, even though he orders them not to do it (vv 44–45). It seems that Jesus did not want to have the amazement over the miracle replace faith (pp. 432–33). Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:39** *throughout Galilee*. The first of what seem to be three tours of Galilee (second tour, Lk 8:1; third tour, Mk 6:6 and Mt 11:1). (CSB)

Josephus described Galilee as a land of great villages: “The cities lie very thick and the very many villages that are here are everywhere so very full of people, because the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contained more than 15,000 inhabitants. (Lane)

*preaching in their synagogues* – Wherever Jesus went on this tour, he entered the synagogues. This offered him many opportunities to preach the gospel, since synagogue services were not only conducted on the Sabbath but also on Mondays and Thursdays. In connection with his preaching he also drove out demons for they were the opponents of his message. Our Lord saw the need for taking the gospel message beyond Capernaum. That reminds us we too are not to keep the gospel to ourselves, but to share it. (PBC)

Nestle 25th edition Greek text makes this the final verse of the preceding paragraph. The 26th edition makes it the first sentence of the following paragraph. (Buls)

"So" denotes attendant circumstance, what He constantly did. "Preaching" is the static use, meaning the same as always. Jesus always preached where people congregated. Read Matthew 4:23-25 for a fuller account of this tour throughout Galilee. Jesus preached, healed, drove out devils. People came from Syria, Galilee, Decapolis, from beyond Jordan and even from Jerusalem. (Buls)

We conclude with a few sentences from Stoeckhardt.

With sin Christ has also carried all the consequences of sin. Vicariously He had taken on Himself all the miseries of this life, and through His entire living in the flesh, through His suffering and death He atoned and made satisfaction for what we have broken and deserved. With the healing of the sick and the casting out of the devil, He not only showed Himself as a Prophet, mighty in word and deed, but also as a faithful High Priest, who came to redeem His people from all their sins. Through Christ we are freed and delivered from all fetters of sin, and of the devil, and of hell. And although we still suffer in the flesh, if it is the Lord's will, yet no suffering of this earth can harm and consume us, and no death can kill us; for we conquer all because of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. (Buls)

**1:35–39** Though Jesus has much more to do among the people of Capernaum, He makes time for private devotion and then insists on moving on to visit other towns and villages. His unswerving adherence to the right priorities stands in sharp contrast with our own tendency to lose focus, allow others to set our agenda, and put lesser things above what is most important. Given our weaknesses, it is reassuring that Jesus keeps things straight. His highest goal was, and is, to fulfill the Father's command that He save the lost. • Lord, preserve us from misplaced priorities. Keep us focused on Your Gospel, that we may know and do what is pleasing in Your sight. Amen. (TLSB)

*Jesus Cleanses a Leper*

**40 And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” 41 Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” 42 And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. 43 And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” 45 But he went out and began**

**to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.**

**1:40-45** Old Testament prophets (i.e., Isaiah) promised that the performance of marvelous deeds, such as healing and curing sickness and disease, would reveal the Messiah and his kingdom. Crowds in Galilee and Judea were eyewitnesses to Jesus healing the sick, cleansing lepers, and expelling demons. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Take note of the cross-reference materials for the pericopes, especially Lk 5:12–16, which is further clarified in the Concordia Commentary *Luke 1:1–9:50* (Arthur A. Just Jr. [St. Louis: Concordia, 1996], pp. 211–17). The healing of the leper is an element of the purpose for which Jesus was sent. The willingness of Jesus to heal the leper is exhibited by his reaching out and touching something considered unclean in the Law and then announcing that it is clean. There is no contagion. The life and death of Jesus fulfills the Law. Jesus shows that there is a connection between body and soul when Jesus sends the leper to the priest to give guilt and sin offerings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

In *What Luther Says* (compiled by Ewald M. Plass [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959]), Martin Luther tells us that the will of God is sovereign. It is God's will that men (like lepers) believe in Christ and rely on him (p. 1439). Jesus' will is the Father's will. The man with leprosy is guided and directed by the will of God to go to the temple and show himself to the priest. The will of God is something done either *by* us or *on* us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:40-42** This is an amazing account in which the mercy of Jesus is made manifest in the life of a grieving soul, a man stricken with leprosy. Lev 13 reveals the social and spiritual implications of what it would mean for a person with leprosy should the priest declare him or her “ceremonially unclean” (13:3, 45–46). William Lane points out that “any man who was identified as a leper was reduced to a most pitiful state of existence. In addition to the physical ravages of the disease, his cultic impurity was graphically described in the Levitical provision: ‘The leper who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry ‘Unclean, unclean’” (William Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 85). Lepers were outcasts in the strictest sense, as even the most casual encounter with a non-leper could render that person “unclean.” A leper in that day could well be considered as many would consider a person with AIDS today. (See the story of Ryan White below.) Yet Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, makes his dwelling among men and is willing to defile himself for the sake of this one crying out in mercy. This is Jesus, who sits with sinners and eats with them (Lk 15:1–2), who kneels before his disciples, strips himself of his outer garments, and washes their feet (Jn 13:1–17), and who comes to the home of Zacchaeus the tax collector (Lk 19:1–10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

There is some disagreement as to what Jesus actually felt when he looked on the leper (v 41). The word used, *splanchnistheis*, has been rendered as diversely as by some to say Jesus “had compassion or mercy” and by others that Jesus “was filled with indignation.” If the former, his feelings were clearly for a man in such plight; if the latter, then presumably either (1) Jesus is indignant at the custom of religious zealots and society, who turn their backs on those in such apparent need, or (2) Jesus is indignant at the ravages of sin, disease, and death, which take their toll even on the living. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

In any case, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, endangering himself both to social retribution and rejection and to physical endangerment of infection. Here again we see a Jesus

who is willing to stoop down into the stench of sin and need, to dirty himself, and to bring healing and forgiveness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**1:40 leprosy** – Luke 5:12 informs us that the man was “full of leprosy,” an advanced case of leprosy. He must have been a pitiful and ugly sight. – In addition to the physical ravages of the disease, his cultic impurity was graphically described in the Levitical provision: “The leper who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry, ‘Unclean, unclean’. He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone in a habitation without the camp” (Lev 13:45f). Rabbinic refinement of the biblical legislation imposed many practical difficulties upon the leper, for even a chance encounter between the leper and the non-leper could render the latter unclean. Lepers were allowed to live unhampered wherever they chose, except in Jerusalem and cities which had been walled from antiquity. They could even attend the synagogue service if a screen was provided to isolate them from the rest of the congregation. In spite of these two provisions, however, leprosy brought deep physical and mental anguish for both the afflicted individual and the community in which or near which he lived. It is against this background that the significance of the cleansing of a leper by Jesus can be appreciated, whether the man in Mark’s account had true leprosy or some other frightful skin disease. (Lane)

The term “leprosy” in Scripture covers a wide variety of skin diseases and is not limited to what today is called Hansen’s disease. Whatever form it took, it was contagious, hideous and painful and most often incurable. (PBC)

*came to him* – The man who approached Jesus did not cry out, “Unclean,” and we can understand why. In his great distress he did not want anyone to stop him from coming to the one he recognized as being able to do what no one else could do, namely heal him (PBC)

*erchatai* is graphic historical present tense. Those who follow the historical order of Matthew, (see Mt 8:1) say that Jesus was surrounded by a large crowd. If that is so, this leper must have pushed his way through the crowd, a most exceptional thing. The verb is attended by three participles: *parakalon*, *gonupeton*, and *legon*, “beseeching, kneeling, saying.” These participles clearly show that this leper believed in Jesus. How he came to faith in him we do not know. (B)

*imploing him* – *parakaleō*, “to plead.” Used to indicate an urgent calling out for help, inviting, or summoning. Used whenever a specific need is necessary, e.g., when people ask Jesus for help. The word is related to immediate and real comfort from God and future deliverance, which is linked to salvation. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) p. 781) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*on his knees* - *gonupeteō*, “to kneel; to bend the knee; genuflect.” Linked to prayer, to requests to the Lord, to homage, to a greeting, to idolatry, and to acknowledgement of God and the Lord. The gesture can express supplication, abasement, worship, and subjection. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) (p. 127). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*if you can* – With these words, the sick man makes a twofold confession: 1) He admits his absolute unworthiness and 2) His childlike trusting faith. Luther says “The leper teaches us how



we should believe and pray especially in our bodily needs. This is called the right prayer in such matter, namely to believe that God can help, and yet not set for him the time, measure or goal, how and when he should help us. (B)

*thelēma*, “to desire; to be ready, to want, to take pleasure, to like.” The will that commands, e.g., God’s rule and purpose in creation and history. The whole future of the disciples rested on the omnipotent will of the Son of God. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) (p. 319). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*dunamai*, “to be able.” Gives the basic sense of ability or capacity suggesting an attitude that makes one not only able, but also desirous and willing. The divine power, authority, and strength of Jesus is linked to the Old Testament view of the Messiah, who will come with all of God’s power and authority. This power has no connection with magic. This authority is carried out by the Word of the omnipotent God. A personal relationship is demanded because there is faith in both the doer and the recipient of the work. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) (p. 189). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*make me clean – katharizō*, “to cleanse.” Words connected to this word present the sense of something that is physically, religiously, and morally clean, innocent, or pure. It impresses one of being free of stain, shame, and adulteration. Jesus made the man not only physically clean, but morally clean and pure. He was forgiven. Being pure in the body of Christ means to be pure in heart. God looks at one’s heart. What is clean is ready for fellowship with God; what is unclean is removed or shut out. Christ loves us in his daily cleansing, or forgiveness, of our sins. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) (pp. 381, 383). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:41** *filled with compassion* – *splagchvistheis* denotes Jesus’ condition of deep sympathy. In its various forms (twelve times in the Gospels) this verb always denotes Jesus’ vicarious compassion, treating the victim as if the sin or sickness were his very own. (B)

*splanchnizomai*, “to have compassion.” This root word seems to reveal human attitudes. However, it in fact reveals a mercy that is entirely divine. This attitude of being filled with compassion is revealed in the parables of mercy: The lord has mercy on his servant; father has mercy on his prodigal son; and the Samaritan has mercy on the man beaten by robbers. It also has messianic significance. Only Jesus, the Messiah, can have such a full compassion that it overflows into his words and actions for the outcasts and sinners. Jesus was filled with compassion to the point that he was both able and willing to cleanse the leper, physically and spiritually. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) (p. 1068). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

*touched the man*. An act that, according to Mosaic Law, brought defilement (see Lev 13, especially vv. 45–46; cf. Lev 5:2). Jesus’ compassion for the man superseded ceremonial considerations. (CSB)

The touch of Jesus was significant from two points of view. From the perspective of the leper it was an unheard-of act of compassion which must have moved him deeply and strengthened him in his conviction he had not asked for help in vain. From the perspective of Jesus' relationship to the cultic and ritual system, it indicated that he did not hesitate to act in violation of its regulations when the situation demanded: "the ceremonial law gives place to the law of love when the two come into collision. (Lane)

He did not withhold his blessing. In so doing Jesus indicated when it comes to the requirements of the ceremonial law, love and compassion take precedence over ritual and regulation. (PBC)

**1:42** *immediately* – euthus is again used as so often happened in Mark and especially in this chapter. Immediately two things happened: The leprosy left the man and he was cleansed, the first stated negatively and the second positively. These two verbs are instances of what is called the effective aorist. Jesus' healing was immediate. (B)

*leprosy – lepra*, "leprosy." This Greek word is used for a variety of skin diseases. *lepros*; this word means "scaly" and "scabby." Scholars are not sure whether these two are interchangeable. The public healing of lepers by Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke is obviously a sign that the messianic age has arrived. Salvation is in close proximity. Compiled from *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds.; translated and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985]) (p. 529). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

**1:43-44** Jesus commands the leper to tell no one, which may seem a mystery to us. He is only to show himself to the priest, as was the custom of the Mosaic Law, so that the priest could declare him "clean" (cf Lk 17:14, the healing of the ten lepers). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Jesus sent this man to the priest so that he might be officially pronounced clean. Jesus' touch thus resulted in two restorations: first, the man was restored to physical wholeness; second, he was able to resume his rightful place in society. (TLSB)

**1:43** *sternlt charged him* – embrimasamenos means "to snort," the snorting of a spirited horse. In humans it denotes strong emotion of one sort or another. (B)

**1:44** *don't tell this to anyone*. It seems mostly likely, the desire to discourage any publicity which might lead to a false conception of Jesus' Messianic work, of the purpose for which he had come into the world. (B)

*go, show yourself to the priest – offer ... for a proof*. Refers to the offerings and rites by which a leper was pronounced clean and allowed to return to society. (TLSB)

*proof to them*. Jesus wanted the priests to know He had power to heal and was abiding by OT Law. (TLSB)

Only a priest could declare a former leper, now cleansed, as officially clean. Here two things are very clear: 1) Jesus was the fulfillment of the OT Levitical Priesthood but was not identified with it. He was of the tribe of Judah and was an eternal High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4). While on earth he did not arrogate to himself the duties of the Levitical Priesthood;

2) Jesus never departed from the Word of God, the OT. He violated no laws of God. Just because the Messiah had cleansed this leper was no reason for Jesus to

*a testimony to them* – The sacrifices were to be evidence to the priests and the people that the cure was real and that Jesus respected the law. The healing was also a testimony to Jesus' divine power, since Jews believed that only God could cure leprosy (see 2Ki 5:1–14). (CSB)

Only a Levitical Priest could declare a healed leper clean. By the way, so far as we know, it was a rare instance in which this happened. Therefore all so much the more Jesus stuck by what the OT said. disregard what the OT said. (B)

Eis marturion autois amounts to a purpose clause involving an indirect object. (B)

**1:45** *began to talk freely* – Despite Jesus' warning (v 44), the man spoke of Him everywhere. (TLSB)

Jesus' incredible popularity would soon cause conflict with even the scribes and Pharisees (2:1–3:6). (TLSB)

It seems that the leper complied with that part of the Lord' direction which concerned his purification and social rehabilitation, but in respect to the command of silence he used his own mistaken judgment. (B)

Nevertheless, the leper does not restrain himself but proclaims the miracle he has experienced at the hand of Christ. Disobedience to the commands of Christ, even with the best intention, only hinders his work and also denies his lordship in our lives. Still, we might examine our own lives: The leper is healed of his physical plight and is commanded to tell no one—yet, sinfully, he does tell. We, on the other hand, are healed of our sins and iniquities by the outstretched hand of Jesus and his blood shed on Calvary and are commanded to tell everyone. Do we remain sinfully silent? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

*no longer enter a town openly*. Jesus' growing popularity with the people (see 1:28; 3:7–8; Lk 7:17) and the increasing opposition from Jewish leaders (see 2:6–7, 16, 23–24; 3:2, 6, 22) finally made it necessary for him to withdraw from Galilee into surrounding territories. (CSB)

**1:40–45** When a leper seeks Jesus' help, the Lord not only heals him but also makes sure that the man is restored to his rightful place in society. Though we may no longer ostracize people for contracting leprosy, there are a host of ways that people experience alienation from family, church, and the larger community. But Jesus' healing will remedy such alienation. His grace makes peace with God, restores our broken relationships, and thus puts us right with one another.

- Lord, thank You for Your healing power. Hear our cries for help, heal us according to Your wisdom, and then move us to tell others what You have done. Amen. (TLSB)

