

1. **Introduction:** Mark began with the dramatic statement “*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*”
  - He was writing in Rome at a time of great turmoil for Christians not long before Peter was martyred.
  - Christians were being severely persecuted. A great fire had burned a large part of Rome. Rumors circulated that the fire had been ordered by Nero the Emperor.
  - To stop the detrimental effects of the rumors against him, Nero blamed the fire on Christians and caused them to be severely persecuted in the years 64-68 AD.
  - What was done to Christians defied imagination. They were often covered in skins of beasts and torn to pieces by dogs or other animals or nailed to crosses.
  - That dreadful situation is the background in which Mark was writing. He wrote to encourage believers as they dealt with the issues of persecution as a cost of believing.
2. **Jesus Calls Disciples:** Did Jesus know the men He called to be His disciples before He called them? Apparently, He did know at least some of them. He also knew His forerunner John the Baptist.
  - Mary, the mother of Jesus, visited her cousin, Elizabeth when Mary was pregnant with Jesus and Elizabeth was pregnant with John. John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins.
  - From Mark 1:19 we know John and his older brother, James, were sons of Zebedee.
  - If you compare Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40; 16:1 and 15:40 with John 19:25, it seems that John’s mother is Salome who is the sister of Jesus’ mother, Mary.
  - That means John and James were first cousins of Jesus.
  - So, not only were John and James disciples of Jesus from the beginning of His earthly ministry to the end, but they were relatives who likely knew the family well.
  - James was the older of the two brothers. John was perhaps no more than 20 at the time of the crucifixion.
  - Salome, their mother was one of the women who provided for Jesus out of their means (Luke 8:3, Mark 15:40).
  - John was eyewitness to Jesus’ teaching, miracles, crucifixion, death, and resurrection.
  - John was dearly loved by Jesus. As Jesus died, He gave the earthly care of His mother to John (John 19:26-27).
  - It is not known if Jesus was related to other disciples. It is possible that He knew Simon and Andrew.
  - We should recognize that when Jesus called each of His disciples, He saw them both as they were and as they were to become.
  - The same thing is true for each of us.

- He calls us, seeing us as the sinners we are and as the glorified believers we will become.
  - When Jesus called these 4 men, He gave them a new purpose in life. He said that He would make them fishers of men.
3. **Ministry in Galilee:** After hearing that John the Baptizer had been arrested, Jesus began to minister in Galilee making Capernaum His headquarters.
4. **Mark 1:21-28:** *“And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. <sup>22</sup>And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, <sup>24</sup>“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.” <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup>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.” <sup>28</sup>And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.”*
- Jesus taught the truth with clarity and passion. He demonstrated the authority of His teaching with actions that extended even to the supernatural realm.
  - The people were astonished.
  - Where did Jesus begin His teaching ministry?
5. **Luke 4:14-15:** *“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup>And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”*
- Then Luke says Jesus was rejected at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30) and records the Capernaum Synagogue event in Luke 4:31-37.
6. **Mark 1:14-15:** *“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*
- The next event recorded in Mark is the calling of Simon and Andrew and then James and John, the sons of Zebedee.
  - Then we have the event at Capernaum.
7. **Comparing the Gospels:** If we compare the Gospels, we find that the order of some events differs from one Gospel to another. For example, compare Mark to Luke.
- In Mark, the calling of the disciples is in 1:16-20. In Luke it is in 5:1-11.
  - In Mark, casting out a demon in the Synagogue is in 1:23-28. In Luke, the same event is in 4:33-37.

- In Mark, healing Simon's mother-in-law is in 1:29-31. In Luke, that event is in 4:38-39.
  - About Capernaum, Matthew says in 4:12-14, 17, *"Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. <sup>13</sup>And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup>so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. <sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*
  - From comparing events recorded in the different Gospels leads to several *conclusions*.
  - (1.) Each Gospel writer, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, intentionally omitted things that were included by other authors. (2.) Each writer intentionally changed the order of certain events for topical "teaching purposes."
  - While each writer did some rearranging along topical lines, each author has many sections that are arranged chronologically.
8. **Back to Mark 1:21-28:** Upon hearing of the arrest of John the Baptizer, Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum which was the home of Simon Peter.
- Capernaum was on the northwestern bank of the Sea of Galilee. It was thus about 700 feet below the level of the Mediterranean.
  - A few miles further around the lake to the northeast was Bethsaida, home of at least 3 of the disciples.
  - The Capernaum episode in 1:21-28 is presented as an example from several months of Jesus' ministry in the region. It is a particularly dramatic event which shows why crowds of people were coming to hear and see Jesus.
  - The episode begins with Jesus entering the synagogue of Capernaum on a Sabbath along with most Jews in the town.
  - The synagogue served 3 primary purposes for the Jews. (1.) It was a place of instruction on the Sabbath.
  - (2.) It was a center of Jewish culture and literature where children received instruction about the law and learned how to read and interpret the *Torah*.
  - (3.) It was also a civil meeting place much like a courthouse of our day. Cases were heard and tried, disputes resolved, contracts recorded, and marriages conducted.
  - The Synagogue in a town was vital to Jewish life.
  - By the time Jesus appeared in this Synagogue, it appears He was recognized as a very special teacher. His ministry in Galilee had a large following.
  - He was called on by the Synagogue ruler to read the scroll and exposit the passage.
  - His exposition bore an unmistakable mark of authority. The people were astonished by His understanding. He spoke from His own authority, appealed only to Scripture itself.
  - As He was preaching in the Capernaum Synagogue, a demon-possessed man confronted Jesus. Many people struggled to understand Jesus' identity, but the demon did not.

- The demon recognized Jesus as ***“The Holy One of God.”***
- Holy things are consecrated (or set apart) to God. The demon was the opposite of holy being unclean and unacceptable, dedicated to opposing God’s purpose.
- “God in the flesh” encountered a literal embodiment of evil.
- The demon asks two questions. (1.) ***“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?”*** (2.) ***Have you come to destroy us?***
- Jesus’ responds with two commands. (1.) ***“Be silent.”*** (2.) ***“Come out of him!”***
- The unclean spirit had no option but to obey, but it did throw a tantrum as it left causing its human host to convulse.
- Luke’s account of this incident (Luke 4:1-37) stresses the power of Jesus to deal with evil. Mark stresses Jesus’ authority to deal with evil. The people were amazed both at Jesus’ preaching and His power and authority over the demon.
- Mark’s stress on Jesus, His authority and power in all that He did should remind us that Jesus Christ is the central focus of all Scripture and that truth should be obvious in every sermon and every teaching session.

9. **What is Next:** Begin with Mark 1:29.