

The Son of Man Has Authority on Earth

Read Mark 2.1-3.35

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS & SETTING THE CONTEXT

1/ In our last two lessons [[Lesson 1](#) & [Lesson 2](#)], we have emphasized Mark's purpose and themes for writing this Gospel account: to give us vignettes in which Jesus declares and demonstrates that He is **the Son of God**, and to **proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God**. This **Gospel of the Kingdom** is God's covenant purpose to come in the Person of Jesus Christ to inaugurate, introduce, and begin the fulfillment of His eternal **Kingdom** when He will establish His sovereign rule over all His creation – redeeming, reconciling, and restoring it back to His originally-intended order.

2/ Jesus Christ begins to exercise His **Kingdom dominion** and rule over every element and force that opposes His sovereign Lordship ... all the while preaching the **Gospel** that calls us all to **repentance from our sins** and **following Him** - placing our total faith, trust, and the submission of our lives in His substitutionary death He will die for us on His Cross.

3/ As you can see, we will cover a wide range of Gospel Scripture in this lesson. So these Lesson Notes will, of necessity, have to be incomplete and sketchy at the best. We will have to save our comments on each of these passages for our class time. All I can and will attempt to do here in these Lesson Notes / Talking Points is to summarize Jesus' purpose and Gospel theme in each of these vignettes – how each encounter points to His Lordship and further fleshes out and defines His **authority** as the **Son of Man, Son of God**, and promised **Messiah/Christ** who was prophesied would come from the beginning of time.

4/ So let's look for and note these common thread-themes that Mark will weave throughout these vignettes:

- Jesus' **Kingdom authority** over all;
- His direct, personal, and unmistakable claims to be **the Son of God – God the Son**;
- His claims to be the Old Testament promised Messiah, **the Son of Man**;
- the growing divisions between Jesus and the world of unbelievers, especially the unbelievers among the religious leaders/teachers of that day – Pharisees & scribes;
- the escalating enmity and opposition of the religious leaders against Jesus – they begin to form their murderous schemes and plots to kill, assassinate, eliminate Him.

I / ch 2.1-12 / “Son, your sins are forgiven”

Jesus heals the paralytic [lame man] who was carried to Him by four friends and let down through the broken-up roof of the house where He was teaching.

1/ But before Jesus heals him, He pronounces that He forgives the man's sins. He does this by His immediate authority as God – not as an intermediary messenger.

2/ The Jewish leaders immediately accuse and 'indict' Him for blasphemy [punishable by death].

3/ Then Jesus heals the paralytic, **...that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...**

4/ **NOTE: Jesus' primary mission activity is: ‘And He was preaching the Word to them.’** This Word is the entirety of the Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

II / ch 2.13-17 / “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners”

Jesus calls Levi [Matthew] to follow Him as one of His disciples.

1/ Levi, of course, is a tax collector, rendering him a pariah, outcast, untouchable by the Jewish society.

2/ But Jesus has come to demolish all our man-made prejudices, bigotries, and discriminations by His Gospel. We all are **sinners**, and Jesus has come to **call all sinners to repentance**, regardless of our ethnicity,

cultural background, social status and standing – regardless of how we may be judged by the culture-elites around us.

III / ch 2.18-22 / “...when the Bridegroom is taken away from them...then they will fast...”

The question of religious fasting comes up by the Jewish leaders: Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to Him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”

1/ This is just another, one more, attempt by the Jewish leaders to publicly discredit Jesus, cast shade on Him, hopefully to destroy His growing influence and popularity among the populace. They must retain their control over the thinking and lives of the people.

2/ Jesus declares Himself to be the Heavenly Bridegroom who has come to redeem and ‘marry’ His people to Himself and back to God. It would be out of place and inappropriate for His disciples to fast and ‘afflict their souls’ while He is present with them.

3/ **But the days will come when the Bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.** This is the first oblique reference [at least in Mark] that Jesus makes about His upcoming death. See Isaiah 53.8.

IV / ch 2.23-28 / “So the Son of Man is LORD even of the Sabbath”

Jesus is accused again [just one of many such occasions] of violating the Sabbath Day when His disciples plucked some grains of wheat from the field they were passing.

1/ They did this because they were hungry. The Law permitted this. But it violated and ‘broke’ the legalistic strictures imposed by the ruling class of Pharisees/scribes, religious leaders and teachers.

2/ Jesus cites how David and his men did the same sort of thing out of necessity when they were fleeing from murderous King Saul. See 1 Samuel 21.1-10.

3/ Jesus declares His Lordship and sovereignty over this Sabbath creation mandate also: **The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.**

V / ch 3.1-6 / “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?”

Jesus heals another man who had a withered [paralyzed] hand – again on a Sabbath Day.

1/ He did this intentionally in the presence of the Jewish leaders: **And they watched Jesus, to see whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.**

2/ Jesus did this, not only to give a public demonstration again of His Lordship over the Sabbath Day, but also to publicly teach those who were present what God’s original-creation purpose and intent for the Sabbath was...and is: **And He said to them, ‘Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?’**

3/ This additional act of His sovereign Lordship and God-ness ‘sealed His fate’ with the Jewish leaders. **The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians [political allies of Herod Antipas, the client ‘king’ of Galilee], how to destroy Him.** They determined from that point on that they must kill Jesus. See a similar account in John 5.16-18 & 7.19-23.

4/ **NOTE: Mark will begin from this point on to chronicle how the enemies of God and Jesus begin to intensify their opposition to Jesus and the Kingdom purposes of God from merely trying to publicly discredit, contradict, and undermine His influence ... to now making plans to kill Him.** This theme will continue to intensify and increase until they finally crucify Him in the end of the Gospel story.

VI / ch 3.7-12 / “for He had healed many...the unclean spirits...fell down before Him and cried out, ‘You are the Son of God’”

Jesus' fame continues to grow and spread into the contiguous surrounding regions.

1/ ...and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea [S of Judea] and from beyond the Jordan [E of the Jordan River, including Perea and Decapolis] and from around Tyre and Sidon [on the Mediterranean coast NW of Galilee].

2/ Of course, this is much to the consternation, frustration, and panic of the Jewish leaders. Jesus continues to exercise His authority over physical sicknesses / diseases and demon spirits. **See especially ch 1.21-39.**

VII / ch 3.13-19 / “And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles)...”

Jesus chooses twelve core disciples from among the now-more-numerous disciples ... and calls them His apostles.

1/ This is an advanced stage of Jesus' training ministry of those whom He will appoint to be the chief spokesmen for the Gospel of the Kingdom after His death, resurrection, and ascension back into Heaven – to await His return again in the Last Day to bring in the fullness of His eternal Kingdom. NOTE here: **Acts 1.26; 2.42; et. al.**

2/ NOTE the two purposes of His appointment of the Twelve: **...so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.**

VIII / ch 3.20-21 / “When His family heard it, they went out to seize Him... ‘He is out of His mind...’”

Jesus returns once again to Capernaum. Divisions and schisms begin to manifest themselves, first between Jesus and His household family...

1/ Mark inserts this little insight here which he will explain a little more fully in vv 31-35.

2/ The main point Mark wants to make here is how Jesus' Kingdom mission sets Him at odds with the ‘world,’ even among His own family members. **See John 7.5.**

3/ Mark highlights this contrast and division to demonstrate how those who follow Jesus must expect the same reactions from unbelievers, even those who are closest to us.

4/ Jesus' commitment to the mission the Father had sent Him to fulfill is His primary, priority, and preoccupying interest and activity, even to the degree that **...so that they could not even eat.** Jesus' values, interests, orientation, and worldview was focused on His Heavenly mission. His family's were not.

5/ This phrase, **He is out of His mind,** is commonly translated **to be amazed.** It means literally ‘to be standing outside of yourself.’ It also means ‘insane.’ His family's diagnosis is that His preoccupation with His Heavenly mission was causing Him to lose His base-ness. He was going crazy, ‘off His rocker.’

IX / ch 3.22-30 / “...whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness...”

Jesus confronts this stringent public accusation from the Jewish leaders that He is actually acting from the authority and power of Satan himself – not from the Holy Spirit.

1/ The Jewish leaders continue to stalk Jesus everywhere He goes, seeking an occasion to discredit Him before the people and regain control over them for themselves. **“He is possessed by Beelzebub,” and “by the prince of demons He casts out the demons.”**

2/ Jesus' demonstrations of authority over Satan, demons, and the powers of the kingdom of darkness are well-known from numerous exercises of exorcism in many places.

3/ To which accusation Jesus responds, showing how ludicrous it is on its own face: **How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.** That is a simple exercise of logic – Satan will not divide and destroy his own kingdom and control over those who he seeks to destroy.

4/ Then, Jesus illustrates that logical truth with a reiteration of His own sovereignty and authority over Satan – He employs a parable: **But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he can plunder his house.**

- The 'strong man' here is Satan.
- His 'house' is the godless world that Satan is seeking to deceive and lead to destruction.
- The 'goods' in his house are the people whom Jesus is delivering from Satan's dominion.

Jesus has come to 'bind the strong man' and 'plunder his goods' by exercising His own sovereign Kingdom authority over Satan.

5/ Then Jesus condemns the religious leaders/teachers for their own personal unbelief and for their demonic intentions to perpetrate Satan's deceptions over the very people they professed to be teaching.

6/ Let's pay attention to this statement, commonly called 'the unpardonable sin' – it has been commonly misunderstood and mis-applied to any number of other sins and offenses which Jesus clearly teaches can and will be forgiven for those who repent of them.

Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" – for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

7/ Jesus is clearly applying this charge of the 'unpardonable sin' to their accusing Him of acting from the power, spirit, and influence of a demonic spirit ... rather than from the influence and power of the Holy Spirit of God.

8/ The reason this sin is 'unpardonable,' both in this world and in the world to come is because, in so saying, they were rejecting Christ Himself and the only Gospel which can save them.

9/ Paul personally testifies that he was a former enemy of Christ, even a **blasphemer. But I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of all acceptance, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life [1 Timothy 1.12-16].** I have quoted Paul's testimony in some length because Paul reiterates many of the themes that Mark is weaving here in our lesson passage [see Mark 3.17 & 28-30].

X / ch 3.31-35 / "...whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother"

Jesus re-defines who our spiritual relatives and relationships are in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God – not those who are members of our blood kin and family, but those who are members of the Kingdom of God through repentance from sins and faith in Jesus Christ.

1/ Connect this short exchange with vv **20-21** above. His mother and half-siblings had come to stage a 'crisis intervention.' Their intention was to 'seize' Him and take Him by whatever force was necessary to take Him home to 'de-tox' Him from His insanity – what they perceived to be an insane obsession with His mission activities.

2/ When it was announced to Jesus that they were outside and calling Him to come out to them, Jesus responded by claiming His relatives were those who were believing in Him: **And He answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking about at those who sat around Him, He said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."**

"But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ... repent and believe in the Gospel!"