



# The Gospel of Mark

A Living Word Independent Bible Study



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## Part 2

### Mark 1:14-28

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# Mark 1:14 (NIV)

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

“After John was put in prison”

John’s message was not well received by the authorities.

This is a foreshadowing of how Jesus will be received.

Remember 1:7 – “after me will come one more powerful than I”. The more powerful one HAS come, and the lesser’s role has ended.

“Jesus went into Galilee”

Where he had first come from (1:9), his homeland.

Jesus does not go to Jerusalem (the capital), or even any of Galilee’s major cities.

Rather, we see him in rural settings at first.

We begin to see here the theological understanding that God often chooses to show his glory in small, obscure, supposedly insignificant places.

“proclaiming the good news of God”

Isaiah 52:7 – “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation.”

Isaiah 61:1 – “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”

The one proclaiming “good news” brings the day of salvation for Israel. This IS God’s good news!

## Mark 1:15 (NIV)

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

We now read the CONTENT of the good news.

“the time has come”

This implies that a specific, expected, appointed moment in time has arrived.

Daniel 7:22 – “until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.”

Ezekiel 7:10-12 – “The day is here! It has come! Doom has burst forth, the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed! Violence has grown into a rod to punish wickedness: none of the people will be left, none of that crowd – no wealth, nothing of value. The time has come, the day has arrived. Let not the buyer rejoice nor the seller grieve, for wrath is upon the whole crowd.”

“the kingdom of God is near”

Some translations say “has drawn near”, rather than “is near”.

The implication is that God’s sovereignty will now be an acknowledged reality.

God has initiated its “nearness” – and it is now close enough that we can ENTER it!

## Mark 1:15 (NIV)

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

“Repent”

To turn away, turn around, re-align.

It is an imperative verb – a command.

Fundamentally, this is a negative message! It says, you are not presently aligned with Kingdom values.

“believe the good news”

This is again stated as in imperative – a command.

John’s message was – “It’s coming!”

Jesus message is – “It’s here, now!”

The implication is that beginning NOW, with Jesus, God is starting to rescue and renew the whole world, all people, the entire creation!

“the time has come” versus “it is near”

Is it HERE, or is it NEAR?

There are both NOW and FUTURE dimensions to the Kingdom of God.

## Mark 1:16 (NIV)

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

Mark now describes the calling of the first disciples

Old Testament context of calling a disciple:

1 Kings 19:19-21 – “So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. ‘Let me kiss my father and mother good-by,’ he said, ‘and then I will come with you.’ ‘Go back,’ Elijah replied, ‘What have I done to you?’ So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.”

Notice that Elisha completely turns away from his prior commitment, slaughtering his oxen and burning his equipment. However, after the call, he goes back to take care of details. Jesus’ disciples will follow at once.

Jesus is thus demonstrated to be the greater “prophet”.

# Mark 1:16 (NIV)

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

“beside the Sea of Galilee”

The Sea of Galilee is really an inland, fresh-water lake, but has historically been called a “sea”.

The region of Galilee, to the west of the sea, had a mixed Jewish/Gentile population.

In general, it was not viewed highly by the Judean Jews to the south, in the vicinity of the capital, Jerusalem



<http://gods-word-first.org/bible-maps/jordan-river.html>

“Simon and Andrew”

Both of these are GREEK names! Although, “Simon” does have a near Hebrew equivalent in “Shimon” or “Simeon”

“fishermen”

Fishing was a very profitable business in this world

Note ahead, in 1:20, the presence of “hired hands”

This implies that Simon and Andrew were NOT merely “hired hands”. Likely, they were more “managers” than “laborers”, contrary to our typical image, although they still would have been involved in the actual business of fishing.

## Mark 1:17 (NIV)

“Come, follow me,”  
Jesus said, “and I will  
make you fishers of  
men.”

“Come, follow me”

Jesus now calls his OWN disciples.

He calls them to follow HIM, not to follow an interpretation of the Law that he espouses.

The call is to become attached to the person of Jesus.

Jesus begins forming this group at the OUTSET of his ministry.

Later, after his death and resurrection, the fact that the disciples have been present from the beginning will make them legitimate bearers of Jesus’ message.

“I will make you”

Jesus declares himself able to accomplish the life transformation he invites them into.

They do not do it for themselves, Jesus does it TO them.

“fishers of men”

Jesus is offering a new way of life, but in terms that are relatable to them.

Their new life’s purpose will be to reach others with the good news Jesus proclaims, in effect, rescuing them from the “sea” they are immersed in.

# Mark 1:18 (NIV)

At once they left their nets and followed him.

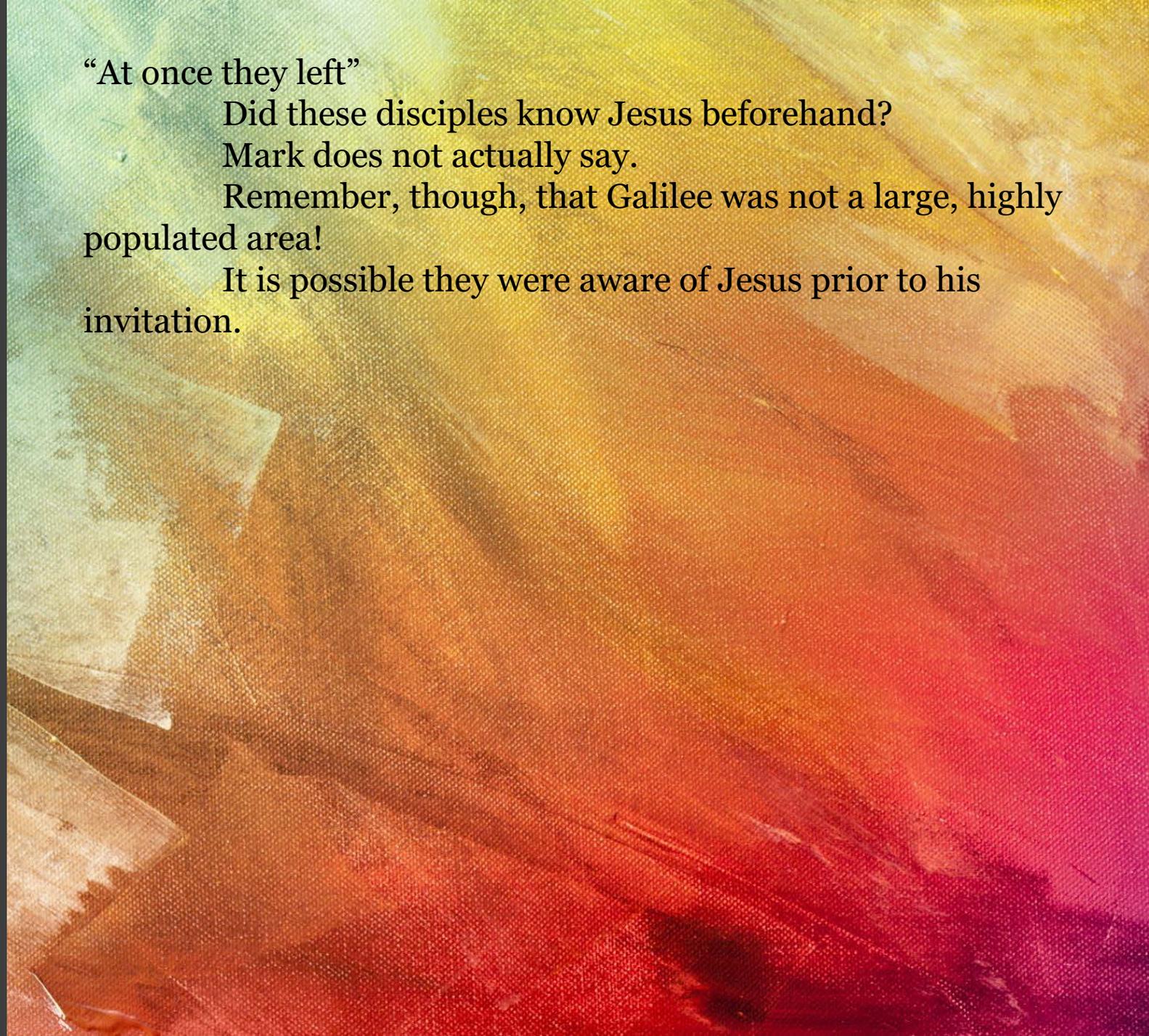
“At once they left”

Did these disciples know Jesus beforehand?

Mark does not actually say.

Remember, though, that Galilee was not a large, highly populated area!

It is possible they were aware of Jesus prior to his invitation.



## Mark 1:19-20 (NIV)

When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

“a little farther”

The actual Greek words used suggest that James and John worked physically close to where Andrew and Simon worked. The Gospel of Luke says they were actually partners.

Luke 5:10 – “and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners”

“James and John”

These are HEBREW names – “Jakob”, “Johanan”

This James is most likely not the same person as James, the brother of Jesus (see 6:3 for the reference to James, brother of Jesus), or James the son of Alphaeus (see 3:18, and the list of disciples), or James the Less (see 15:40, and the women at Jesus’ tomb).

Various scholars believe these references to “James” are referring to one, two, three, or even four unique persons.

As Jesus’ longest companions, Simon (who would become known as Peter), Andrew, James, and John (the sons of Zebedee) created an “inner circle” among the disciples.

“followed”

Following will have both positive and negative consequences. They are empowered to share and continue Jesus’ work, but must leave behind their way of life and former ties. The cost of discipleship intensifies throughout the Gospel.

## Mark 1:21 (NIV)

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.

After the calling of the first disciples, Mark now shares the story of Jesus' first exorcism.

“Capernaum”

Capernaum was a small Town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee

“the Sabbath”

Saturday, the seventh day of the week. God's resting on the seventh day of creation served as the model for the commandment to rest on the Sabbath. It was also a day for prayer and learning at the synagogue, the community gathering place.

“into the synagogue to teach”

What was Jesus teaching?

How, or why, was Jesus permitted to teach?

We don't know!



<https://bibleatlas.org/capernaum.htm>

## Mark 1:22 (NIV)

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

“amazed at his teaching”

Mark really emphasizes Jesus’ teaching role throughout his Gospel.

“one who had authority”

Jesus did not appeal to others’ authority, the way the rabbis did.

He taught as one who HAD inherent authority.

Because of his identity as the Son of God, he HAD authority.

“teachers of the law”

These men are referred to as “scribes” in many biblical translations.

They had three main functions:

Develop and interpret the law pertinent to their time

Teach students the law

Act in judicial situations relative to the law

They are always shown in counterpoint to Jesus in Mark’s gospel ... starting here!

## Mark 1:23-24 (NIV)

Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!”

“evil spirit”

Actually, the phrase is an “unclean spirit” in Greek.

This is a synonym in Mark’s Gospel for a “demon” – a word he also uses, with the same meaning.

Notice that we don’t get the man’s history – how or why he came to be possessed.

“What do you want with us”

Very likely, this is an idiom, equivalent to today’s phrase “Leave us alone!”

“us”

Who exactly is “us” here?

The demons? The people of Capernaum? The synagogue? The issue comes down to: Who would fear being destroyed by Jesus?

## Mark 1:23-24 (NIV)

Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!”

“I know who you are”

The unclean spirit KNOWS Jesus’ identity.

The unclean spirit acknowledges Jesus’ superiority in the situation.

“the Holy One of God”

Old Testament context for those who were set apart as holy by or for God:

Psalms 106:16 – “In the camp they grew envious of Moses and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the LORD.” (Moses and Aaron)

2 Kings 4:9 – “She said to her husband, ‘I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God.’” (Elisha)

Judges 16:17 – “So he told her everything, ‘No razor has ever been used on my head,’ he said, ‘because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth.’” (Samson)

# Mark 1:25-26

(NIV)

“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

“said Jesus sternly”

The Greek here has “Jesus warned him”, with the nuance of subduing another, as one with authority would do, rather than simply “spoke sternly”.

“Be quiet!”

Again, authority is here demonstrated through an IMPERATIVE command.

“Come out of him!”

And again – an imperative command to the evil spirit.

“Shook the man violently and came out of him”

The effectiveness of Jesus’ authority is demonstrated, although not without a “last word” from the demon – the shriek!

## Mark 1:27-28 (NIV)

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching – and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

“What is this?”

This is very similar to the question, “Who is this?” which is a key question of identity throughout Mark’s Gospel.

“a new teaching – and with authority!”

It is new, because the Kingdom of God is breaking in. We see it in both words (teaching in the synagogue) and in deeds (the exorcism).

The people acknowledge that Jesus has an authority they have not seen before.

“News about him spread quickly”

We see that Jesus’ fame is beginning to spread. For now, in Galilee.



## Bibliography

The following materials have been used as sources for this Bible study:

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