

The Gospel of Mark

A Day in the Ministry of Jesus

Lesson #2 for July 13, 2024

Scriptures: Mark 1:16-45; 5:41; John 1:29-45; Luke 6:12; Leviticus 13-15.

1. The Gospels are each unique in some way. How does the Gospel of Mark recount the beginning of Jesus's ministry?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Each Gospel introduces the beginning of Jesus' ministry in a particular way.

Matthew presents Jesus as calling disciples and then preaching the Sermon on the Mount.

Luke tells the story of Jesus' inaugural sermon on a Sabbath in the synagogue in Nazareth.

John recounts the calling of some of the early disciples and the wedding at Cana, where Jesus performs His first *sign*.

The Gospel of Mark recounts the calling of four disciples and describes a Sabbath in Capernaum and what followed.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, July 6.^{‡§}

2. It is very likely that Peter, Andrew, James, and John were part-time disciples of John the Baptist before the ministry of Jesus began in Galilee. Since, as we discussed in the prior lesson, the Gospel of Mark is actually Peter's Gospel, this Gospel begins with events when John the Baptist was arrested and put in prison. At that time, Jesus, realizing the hazards if He stayed in the area of Jerusalem, left Judea where He had been ministering for about a year and moved to Galilee. There, Jesus established His residence in Capernaum at the home of Peter.
3. This lesson will discuss the numerous miraculous events discussed in Mark 1:16-45.
4. In his Gospel, Mark did not spend a lot of time discussing the sermons or discourses of Jesus. **The emphasis of Mark was on action, especially miraculous healings. Often in Mark, he described the story as moving "immediately" from one event to another.**

Mark 1:16-20: ¹⁶ As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, catching fish with a net. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, **"Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people."** ¹⁸ **At once** they left their nets and went with him.

¹⁹ He went a little farther on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat getting their nets ready. ²⁰ As soon as Jesus saw them, he called them; they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went with Jesus.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Mark 1:16-20). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡}

5. Mark mentioned that James and John worked with their own boat and their father, catching fish. He did not mention that Peter or Andrew had a boat. However, later, it was mentioned by Luke. Remember that the Gospel of Mark is really Peter's gospel; that may explain the difference between the wording about the two sets of brothers.

If all we had was the book of Mark, we would be surprised to see Jesus, walking along the shores of Galilee, suddenly calling two groups of brothers and that they left their work *immediately* and follow Jesus. But, as we noted earlier, when we compare the stories about these disciples particularly with the Gospel of John, we discover that Peter, Andrew, James, and John had been following John the Baptist back at the time when Jesus was baptized. They apparently were following John the Baptist off and on during the next year. They also followed Jesus part-time while He was carrying out His under-the-radar ministry in the territory of Judea. The three synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—spend most of their time discussing events that occurred in Galilee.

6. These men followed Jesus, thinking that He would become the king of the Jews and that they would be exalted to high positions in the new government. What would they have done if they had been able to see what was coming in their futures? As far as we know, all of the disciples except John died martyrs' deaths.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Jesus chose unlearned fishermen because **they had not been schooled in the traditions and erroneous customs of their time. They were men of native ability, and they were humble and teachable,—men whom He could educate for His work. In the common walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, unconscious that he possesses powers which, if called into action, would raise him to an equality with the world's most honored men.** The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse those dormant faculties. It was such men that Jesus called to be His colaborers; and He gave them the advantage of association with Himself. Never had the world's great men such a teacher. When the disciples came forth from the Saviour's training, they were no longer ignorant and uncultured. They had become like Him in mind and character, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.— Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 250.1.†

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7. It is unfortunate that we know so little about that first year of ministry by Jesus in the territory of Judea. Apparently, some of His eventual disciples worked with Him from time to time. However, **the time had come for them to become full-time disciples of Jesus.**
8. By comparing John 1:29-42 with Mark 1, we discover that the baptism of Jesus occurred in the fall of A.D. 27 and that the call of the disciples by the sea happened in the spring of A.D. 29. See the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 5, pages 195-196.
9. Looking back at the story recorded by John, try to imagine how Simon Peter felt when his brother Andrew came to him and said, "We have found the Messiah!" The Jews had been waiting for the Messiah for at least 400 years. Imagine the kind of excitement that announcement might have caused! Or, would it be more likely to cause doubts?
10. It is likely that in Peter's mind, the real ministry of Jesus, His work in Galilee, began when, after John's arrest, Jesus moved His activities to Galilee and when Peter, Andrew, James, and John were called to be full-time disciples.

11. What would you do if you received a call like that from Jesus? Remember that every one of us has been called to be a disciple to spread the good news about Jesus Christ! How are we doing? To put this in perspective, notice this from Ellen White.

[EGW:] Had Adventists [*sic*], after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and **Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward.** But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith.... Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist [*sic*] body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* 695.3.*†‡

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12. Mark began his story in earnest by telling the story of Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum when He was approached by a demon-possessed individual. Jesus did not get excited or run away. He stood up to the demon-possessed man and commanded the demon to leave him. It is very interesting to note that the demons almost immediately recognized who Jesus was. What a contrast with the Jewish religious leaders!
13. Do you think the demon who possessed that man wanted him to acknowledge who Jesus was? How did this demon-possessed man know anything about Jesus? Who informed him about Jesus?

[EGW:] Jesus in the synagogue spoke of the kingdom He had come to establish, and of His mission to set free the captives of Satan. He was interrupted by a shriek of terror. A madman rushed forward from among the people, crying out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God."

All was now confusion and alarm. The attention of the people was diverted from Christ, and His words were unheeded. This was Satan's purpose in leading his victim to the synagogue. But Jesus rebuked the demon, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not."...

He who had conquered Satan in the wilderness of temptation was again brought face to face with His enemy. The demon exerted all his power to retain control of his victim. To lose ground here would be to give Jesus a victory.... But the Saviour spoke with authority, and set the captive free.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 255.2-256.1.‡

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14. As you might have guessed, the news of what happened in Capernaum that day quickly spread through all of Galilee. Many Christians have some kind of experience in their lives

that transformed them to becoming committed Christians. Have you had any life-changing experience?

15. This is an example of something that we see in several places in biblical history. (See Revelation 12:7-12; Jude 9; Exodus 6-9; 1 Kings 17-19; and Matthew 4:1-11.) Whenever there is a direct conflict between Jesus and Satan, Jesus wins! The same thing was happening in this story. The demon would never have identified Jesus except to possibly misrepresent Him. In this case, God took control; the demon-possessed man spoke the truth. The same thing happens in our lives almost every day. Satan wants us to do his will while God wants us to do what is right. We could not in our own power defeat either of these powers; but, **God makes sure that we have freedom to choose**. The only power we have is the power of choice. If we choose God's side, He will make sure we succeed. **If we choose Satan's side, God, in great disappointment, steps back and honors our choice.**

16. In chapter 1, Mark recorded many of Jesus's encounters with demons.

[BSG:] **Notable in Mark is Jesus' confrontation with demons.** The Gospel records the demonic forces that challenge Jesus' ministry (*Mark 1:34, 39; Mark 3:15, 22; Mark 6:13; Mark 7:26, 29, 30; Mark 9:38; Mark 16:9, 17*). These forces are described as evil or as unclean spirits (*Mark 1:23, 26 onward; Mark 3:11, 30; Mark 5:2, 8, 13; Mark 6:7; Mark 7:25; Mark 9:25*). **Mark describes the people whom these demons afflict as demon-possessed (*Mark 1:32, Mark 5:15, Mark 5:18*).** **No other Gospel concentrates on as many references to the forces of evil.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 29.†§

17. As noted in the Bible study guide, there are three aspects of Jesus's encounters with the forces of evil that are important to notice.

1. [BSG:] Evil is present from the beginning of the ministry of Jesus (*Mark 1:23*). Indeed, the first miracle of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of Mark was to cast an evil spirit out of a man in the synagogue of Capernaum (*Mark 1:25*).
2. The demons could recognize what the masters of Israel did not recognize in relation to Jesus and His identity. The demons professed that Jesus was "the Holy One of God" (*Mark 1:24*), "the Son of God" (*Mark 3:11*), and "Son of the Most High God" (*Mark 5:7, NASB*).
3. Jesus always overcame the demons. Mark reports that the demons exclaimed, "Have You come to destroy us?" (*Mark 1:24, NASB*). On another occasion, the demons "would fall down before Him" (*Mark 3:11, NASB*). Jesus cast the demons out of their human hosts, regardless of how many unclean spirits inhabited the life of the demon-possessed (*Mark 5:9, Mark 16:9*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 29.†§

18. Bible verses referenced in the above quotation from the Bible study guide include:

Mark 1:25: Jesus ordered the spirit, "Be quiet, and come out of the man!"—*Good News Bible*.*

Mark 1:24: [The evil spirit screamed:] "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you here to destroy us? I know who you are — you are God's holy messenger!"—*Good News Bible*.*†

Mark 3:11: And whenever the people who had evil spirits in them saw him, they would fall down before him and scream, “You are the Son of God!”—*Good News Bible*.*

Mark 5:7: And [a man with an evil spirit] screamed in a loud voice, “Jesus, Son of the Most High God! What do you want with me? For God’s sake, I beg you, don’t punish me!”—*Good News Bible*.*

Mark 5:9: So Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

The man answered, “My name is ‘Mob’ — there are so many of us!”—*Good News Bible*.*

Mark 16:9: After Jesus rose from death early on Sunday, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had driven out seven demons.—*Good News Bible*.*

19. The Bible study guide continues, saying:

[BSG:] Consider this insightful study, originally written in Spanish, on the liberation of the demon-possessed person in the synagogue: “Jesus has the power because He is the Son of God, the Anointed of God, possessed by the Holy Spirit. The word of Jesus makes the sovereignty of God effective; the impure spirit opposes that sovereignty and challenges Jesus, while desecrating the sacred place of the synagogue. . . . The demons may protest, but they cannot prevent the sovereignty of God from spreading rapidly through the liberating power of the Word of Jesus.”—Ricardo Aguilar, “La liberación de un poseído en una sinagoga (Mc 1,21b–28),” in *Reflexiones Bíblicas para un mundo en Crisis*, ed. Javier Quezada (Mexico: Mission Nosotros A. C., 2010), pp. 190, 193.

Jesus, as the One who has come to establish the kingdom of God (*Mark 1:15*), is supreme above all demoniac spirits. Jesus’ “dominion is an everlasting dominion” (*Dan. 7:14, NASB*). **His dominion includes supremacy over earthly powers and evil spiritual forces alike. In the Gospel of Mark, Satan is designated as a defeated enemy.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 29.†§

20. ***How many people in the synagogue that day really believed that Jesus was the Messiah? What did they think when this demon-possessed man stated that fact?***

21. Meanwhile, the Jewish religious leaders were denying that it was even possible that Jesus could be the Messiah!

[BSG:] **Next, the command to come out of the man is understandable, but why the command, “ ‘Be quiet’ ” (NKJV)?** Beginning here in Mark, a remarkable motif appears: Jesus’ call for silence regarding who He is. **Scholars call this the “Messianic Secret.”**

Jesus’ call for silence makes good sense because of the political overtones of Messianic expectations in His time. It was risky [to claim] to be a messiah. Yet, mixed with the calls for silence are the unmistakable revelations of who Jesus is. What will become clear over time is that Jesus’ identity cannot be hidden, and the truth of who He is becomes the center of the gospel message. People need not only to know who Jesus is but also to make

a decision about how they will respond to His coming and what it means for them.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, July 8.†‡

22. Try to imagine yourself in that synagogue on Sabbath morning when the demon was cast out of that man. You can be sure that every person in town knew about it almost immediately.

Mark 1:29-34: ²⁹ Jesus and his disciples, including James and John, left the synagogue and **went straight to the home of Simon [Peter] and Andrew.** [Remember that this is Simon Peter's Gospel as told to Mark and then written by Mark.] ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, and as soon as Jesus arrived, he was told about her. ³¹He went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her up. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them. [The Gospel of Mark is the only Gospel that mentions this incident.]

³² After the sun had set and evening had come, people brought to Jesus all the sick and those who had demons. ³³All the people of the town gathered in front of the house. ³⁴**Jesus healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases and drove out many demons.** He would not let the demons say anything, because they knew who he was.—*Good News Bible.**†‡

23. But, Jesus can do more than cast out demons! After finishing the service, they proceeded to Peter's house which was very close by. There, Jesus encountered Peter's mother-in-law who was sick. Jesus touched her and made her well; she rose up and served them.

24. It was often the case that Jesus healed by touching. (See examples in Mark 1:41 and Mark 5:41.) But, there were other times when he merely spoke. (See Mark 1:2:1-12; Mark 3:1-6; and Mark 5:7-13.)

25. It is interesting to note that people began to flock to Peter's house after sunset. This is consistent with the fact that Jesus and His disciples regularly and faithfully kept the Sabbath hours.

26. As soon as the sun went down, notice these words from Ellen G. White:

[EGW:] Hour after hour they came and went; for none could know whether tomorrow would find the Healer still among them. Never before had Capernaum witnessed a day like this. The air was filled with the voice of triumph and shouts of deliverance. The Saviour was joyful in the joy He had awakened. As He witnessed the sufferings of those who had come to Him, His heart was stirred with sympathy, and He rejoiced in His power to restore them to health and happiness.

Not until the last sufferer had been relieved did Jesus cease His work. It was far into the night when the multitude departed, and silence settled down upon the home of Simon. The long, exciting day was past, and Jesus sought rest. But while the city was still wrapped in slumber, the Saviour, "rising up a great while before day, ... went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." [Mark 1:35, KJV]—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 259.3-4.‡

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27. As you can imagine, the people of Capernaum were very excited to have Jesus there. When He disappeared very early the next morning as He went out to pray, people went looking for

Him everywhere. But, **Jesus made it clear that His ministry was not going to be just for Capernaum. He had to reach everyone in Galilee.** (See Mark 1:35-39.)

28. Another one of the aspects of Jesus's life that we see beginning here is His commitment to times of prayer.

Luke 6:12: At that time Jesus went up a hill to pray and **spent the whole night there praying to God.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Matthew 14:23: After sending the people away, **he [Jesus] went up a hill by himself to pray.** When evening came, Jesus was there alone.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

Mark 6:46: After saying goodbye to the people **he went away to a hill to pray.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

29. What is your prayer experience like? Do you have set times for prayer? If we were to follow the example of Jesus, we would not only have set times for prayer but also we would take opportunities to pray whenever it seemed appropriate.
30. It is very likely that Jesus spent enough time in prayer every night to discuss with His Father what They were going to do the next day. For example, in Luke 6:12, Jesus spent the entire night in prayer in preparation for choosing His disciples the next morning.
31. What is the relationship in your own life between prayer and your efforts to spread the gospel? What subjects do you think you are comfortable in speaking about to non-Adventist friends? Are there certain people in our society that would qualify as "lepers"? Should we as Adventist Christians be trying to reach out even to them?
32. Another one of the stories about healing by Jesus comes up next in the first chapter of Mark.

Mark 1:40-45: ⁴⁰ A man suffering from a dreaded skin disease came to Jesus, knelt down, and begged him for help. "If you want to," he said, "you can make me clean."

⁴¹ Jesus was filled with pity, and stretched out his hand and touched him. "I do want to," he answered. "Be clean!" ⁴²At once the disease left the man, and he was clean. ⁴³Then Jesus spoke sternly to him and sent him away at once, ⁴⁴after saying to him, "Listen, **don't tell anyone about this.** But go straight to the priest and let him examine you; then in order to prove to everyone that you are cured, offer the sacrifice that Moses ordered."

⁴⁵ **But the man went away and began to spread the news everywhere. Indeed, he talked so much that Jesus could not go into a town publicly. Instead, he stayed out in lonely places, and people came to him from everywhere.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

33. Jesus instructed the man to go to the priest following the regular procedure for checking for uncleanness. The details of how to recover from uncleanness of various kinds are spelled out in Leviticus 13-15.
34. Jesus told the man to be quiet about his healing. However, the man told everyone. Are there some things that we need to be aware of and be quiet about when we are trying to spread the gospel?

[BSG:] What picture of Jesus does Mark 1 present? Jesus has authority to call disciples, and they respond. He is holy in contrast to unclean spirits under

Satan. A great battle is going on between good and evil, and Jesus has more power than the demons. Jesus has compassion for sick people and helps them, touching them when perhaps no one else would.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, July 12.‡

35. As we view Jesus performing some amazing miracles, we need to ask the question: Did Jesus perform miracles in His own power? Or, did He call for the power of the Holy Spirit or the Father to perform all those miracles? What difference would it make?
36. Already in Mark 1, we have discussed something of Jesus's ministry in partnership with the Father, beginning in Capernaum and spreading to all of Galilee. We have talked about His prayer life, His authority, and some of His encounters with demons and also the results.
37. As we have already suggested, the gospel—meaning good news—is embodied in the Scriptures. But, in the life of Jesus, it is lived out. Did Jesus refuse to take credit for performing the miracles Himself because He wanted to make sure that God the Father got credit? Or, was He afraid of what people might think if He claimed divine power Himself?

[BSG quoting Danove:] **“Mark portrays God as agent on seventy-five occasions. The explicit agency of God appears in association with thirty-five occurrences of verbs.”**—Paul L. Danove, *The Rhetoric of the Characterization of God, Jesus, and Jesus' Disciples in the Gospel of Mark* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), p. 30.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 26].†§

38. Can you think of a reason why Peter might have emphasized this cooperation between the Father and the Son so much? (See Mark 5:19; Mark 9:37; Mark 10:6,9; Mark 11:25; and Mark 13:19-20.)
39. It is quite clear from Mark as well as some of the other Gospel writers that Jesus established His Galilean home in Capernaum. Why do you think He did that? See Mark 2:1; 4:13; 9:1.
40. After performing those miracles as recorded in Mark 1 and healing Peter's mother-in-law late into the night, Jesus apparently got up very early the next morning to pray. Do you think this was a regular habit for Jesus?
41. It was obvious that with some of those who had been healed, spreading the news about Him everywhere, Jesus had to stay away from the towns and the cities to avoid being mobbed.
42. Mark noted specifically that Jesus planned some of His moves, following what He learned about what had happened to John the Baptist. When John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus moved His ministry from Judea to Galilee. When John the Baptist was beheaded and John's disciples came to Jesus to tell Him what had happened, Jesus moved His ministry out of Jewish territory completely and into Gentile territory for the next 6 months. Why do you think that was?

[BSG:] Jesus is portrayed in Mark's Gospel as performing one action after another. Mark highlights Jesus' ministry as a series of events happening *immediately* after a previous incident. The **Greek adverb *euthus*—translated as “immediately, at once, suddenly” in English—is found in 51 verses in the four Gospels and 41 times in Mark (Mark 1:21, 29; Mark 6:45, 50; and Mark 14:43, among other verses; see Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-***

English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000], p. 406). **It is evident that Mark's account is the gospel in motion.** However, even though Mark's emphasis is on a very active Jesus as occupied in His ministry, **Mark also underlines Jesus' ministry as revolving around a life of prayer.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 27.†‡§

43. Mark mentioned in several places that Jesus “taught with authority.” What do you think that means?

[BSG quoting Boring:] In his commentary on Mark, M. Eugene Boring mentions that “for Judaism and early Christianity, God was the ultimate authority; the issue was how God's authority is mediated. In Judaism, the divine authority is mediated by the Torah [*sic*], which then must be interpreted through debate and voting by qualified scholars. **For Mark, God's authority is mediated by the word of Jesus, who simply pronounces.**”—M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), p. 63.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 28.]†‡§

44. This explains why almost always when they came in contact with Jesus in opposition to Him, one of the first questions the Sadducees or the Pharisee or the scribes asked was: “Who gave you the authority to do these things?” (Mark 11:27-28)
45. Let us not overlook the fact that the scribes and Pharisees were experts in the Law. Many of them had memorized the entire Old Testament in Hebrew. They knew the *letter of the Law*. But, unfortunately, their lives did not demonstrate any practical dimensions of living out that Law. Jesus, by contrast, as a Master Teacher and Great Exemplar not only recognized the Mosaic Law, which He Himself had given to Moses but also lived it out in His life with actual demonstration of Bible truths.

[BSG:] Mark associates and substantiates Jesus' authority with the miracles He performs. In other words, the authority of Jesus implies *exousia*; that is, it is both “knowledge and power” (Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 353.) **For Mark, Jesus' proclamation of the good news incorporates miracles.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 28.†‡§

[EGW:] The Saviour's life on earth was not a life of ease and devotion to Himself, but He toiled with persistent, earnest, untiring effort for the salvation of lost mankind. From the manger to Calvary He followed the path of self-denial and sought not to be released from arduous tasks, painful travels and exhausting care and labor....

So those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift. They will do all they can to make the world better for their stay in it.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ** 78.1-2.‡

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