



Dear test person:

In the study of Mark or any of the four gospels, one is sooner or later challenged by each respective writer (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) about the exclusivity of saving faith in Jesus Christ alone. This exclusive formula for attaining eternal life no doubt creates a problem for some who study these books, and yet that singular message continually pops up in all four accounts (Matthew 7:13; Mark 1:15; Luke 24:47; John 14:6). In an expansive sense, and in help of our theological understanding and vocabulary, note the following: A Syncretist would not hold to exclusivity, whereas an Ecumenist might. Let me explain. Syncretism is the attempted union of conflicting religious beliefs. A Syncretist would most likely view salvation as attainable apart from the exclusivity of Christ via a myriad of religious beliefs. An Ecumenist on the other hand, although open to all forms of Christian religious expression (and a desire for unity therein) would most likely hold to Christ's exclusivity. Hope this helps...

INTRODUCTION

Last week I commented about the many evidences Mark provides in his 16 chapter presentation of the life of Christ. These evidences are for the purpose of building an irrefutable case so that one will trust Jesus, and that He can save you. This whole idea is captured in the single English word "efficacy." Efficacy means, "The power or capacity to produce a desired effect." Mark is saying, by what he's providing in his gospel, that Jesus is who He says He is. Trustworthy therefore is His statement: "...the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (1:15). In other words, Jesus has the power and capacity to save if one believes on Him; Mark is proclaiming the efficacy of Christ. In this week's passage we will see more evidences of His efficacy: A reasonable person would think that if Jesus is God incarnate, the second member of the Trinity that He would encounter angels, proclaim the gospel, recruit disciples, teach with authority, and rebuke the devil. He does all of that in this week's study (my outline). What results is tremendous personal credibility, which leads to breadth of impact. What is your marketing formula when running for office? Does your credibility lead to increasing voter confidence? In this regard, notice the last verse (28) in today's study: "And immediately the news about Him went out everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee."

A take-away principle from this week's study:

As Jesus concentrated on the integrity of his ministry, God fanned the breadth of his influence.

the passage

Mark 1:12 And immediately the Spirit impelled Him *to go* out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him. 14 And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching 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." 16 And

as He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in 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 they immediately left the nets and followed Him. 19 And going on a little farther, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. 20 And immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him. 21 And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and *began* to teach. 22 And they were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 saying, "What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are-- the Holy One of God!" 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26 And throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice, and came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." 28 And immediately the news about Him went out everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

Notice what five things created and sustained Jesus' credibility:

I. Jesus encounters angels: verses 12-13

Scripture has much to say about Angelology, or the study of angels. They are real but unseen beings. In this passage we observe them ministering to Jesus during His temptation, **and the angels were ministering to Him**. It is no different for the followers of Jesus during our times of temptation. Psalm 91: 11-12 makes this abundantly clear. "For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways, they will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone." I believe this is how the believer's internal sense of destiny (cf. Eph. 1:4-6) is physically and pragmatically manifest in the fallen world. Further, Hebrews 13:2 informs us that we may have "entertained angels without knowing it." Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 18:1-3), Lot (Gen. 19:1-2) and Gideon (Judges 6:11-24) all entertained angels. We are assured that God's Angel's minister to us, what a comfort! Jesus' encounter with angels imputes credibility to His claims.

II. Jesus proclaims the gospel: verses 14-15

The **Kingdom of God** is a fascinating subject in Scripture.i[1] Jesus is stating that His sphere of reign in the hearts of people has begun (cf. Luke 17:21), it is **at hand**. In the future, His Kingdom reign will be physical, during the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6).ii[2] Next in this portion, note the two requirements for salvation in this passage: to **repent and believe in the gospel**. As God offers His salvation through Christ, one must simply respond by faith. Ephesians 2 verses 8 & 9 states that it is not by working your way to heaven that will save you. Rather it is to believe in the gospel. 1 Cor. 15:3-4 states what the gospel is: "that Christ died for our sins, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day". Salvation is determined by what Christ has done for you, not by what you have done for Christ. One must believe the gospel in order to be saved, responding in repentance and faith which in essence, are both gifts from God as well (cf. 2 Tim. 2:25; Eph. 2:8 resp.) Jesus' heralding imputes credibility to His claims.

III. **jesus recruits his disciples: verses 16-20**

I find this passage radical in the sense of Jesus' call on our lives. He called **Simon and Andrew** from their fishing, and He called **James and John** from their family. Are you and I prepared to follow Christ at such a great personal cost? Do we follow Christ's agenda for our lives as revealed by His Scripture and the promptings of the Holy Spirit, or do we follow Christ to the degree He fits with our agenda? This passage reveals that sometimes there is a radical cost to following Christ. Has following Christ ever cost you?iii[3] Jesus recruitment of followers imputes credibility to His claims.

IV. **jesus teaches with authority: verses 21-22**

He was teaching as one having authority. Such teaching—when truth and character are aligned in the communicator—amazes people. Unfortunately for all, communicators on the Hill today tend to lack one if not both of these ingredients. Could that be why an increasing number of Americans are turned off by politicians? In essence, the industry is losing its authority. Aristotle said one is authoritative to the degree they exhibit ethos, logos and pathos. Ethos is one's character, logos, one's truthfulness and pathos, one's ensuing passion. Obvious from this passage is the fact that Jesus had all three: **And they were amazed at His teaching.** Are people amazed when you speak? Or do you lack something? Jesus' authoritative teaching imputes credibility to His claims.

V. **jesus rebukes the devil: verses 23-27**

Notice that Mark includes the testimony of the Devil, **I know who you are, the Holy one of God.** This inclusion is again illustrative of Mark's thesis regarding his lock-tight case for the efficacy of Christ. If you remember from last week's notes, verse 11 of chapter one is God the Father's testimony regarding who Jesus is,iv[4] here is Satan's. Quite a bit differently than Jesus, Scripture instructs the believer as to how we deal with Satan. James 4:7 says, "...resist the devil and he will flee from you." The Greek word "Resist" means "to take your stand against." Since Satan is a defeated foe, one need display allegiance to the lordship of Christ and like here in Mark, Satan will flee from you too. Jesus' rebuke of Satan imputes credibility to His claims.

application: verse 28

As a follower of Christ, "are you working on your character or your reputation?v[5]" Keep the lesson of this passage in mind: As Jesus was obedient to the Father in the aforementioned areas, His reputation throughout His home district, Galilee, grew immensely. So can it be with your life's purpose too. As you work on the depth of your character, God will take care of the breadth of your influence. Amen.



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- i[1] *The Greatness of the Kingdom* by Alva J. McClain is a wonderful, comprehensive theological work on this subject.
- ii[2] I realize that there are different eschatological (the doctrine of future events) views held by well-meaning believers. Personally, I believe the 1000 year reign spoken of in Revelations 20 refers to a physical period of time in the future.
- iii[3] Cf. Matthew 10:34-39
- iv[4] See also Matthew 17:1-8
- v[5] This is an adaptation of a classic John Wooden quote.