

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Week 179 – Mark 3:13-4:12**

**Day 891: Mark 3:13-19****Verse 13**

Καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος καὶ προσκαλεῖται οὓς ἠθέλεν αὐτός, καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς αὐτόν.

ἀναβαινω go up, ascend  
ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

To escape the crowds.

προσκαλεομαι call to oneself, summon  
ἠθέλεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s θελω  
wish, will

"Stresses the initiative of Jesus." Cranfield.

ἀπῆλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl  
ἀπερχομαι

**Verse 14**

καὶ ἐποίησεν δωδεκα [οὓς καὶ ἀποστόλους ὠνόμασεν] ἵνα ᾧσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ αὐτοὺς κηρῦσσειν

ἐποίησεν is here used in the sense 'appointed', 'not a classical meaning of the verb, but one that it sometimes has in the LXX." Cranfield.

δωδεκα twelve

"It seems likely that the number Twelve was deliberately chosen with the tribes of Israel in mind. If it was, then it would seem evidence that Jesus thought of himself as beginning to gather together an obedient people of God (of which the Twelve were to be the nucleus)." Cranfield.

ὀνομαζω name, call

Cranfield thinks that the phrase οὓς καὶ ἀποστόλους ὠνόμασεν "is probably an assimilation to Lk 6:13 and should almost certainly not be read. It is omitted by A C<sup>C</sup> D L f<sup>1</sup> [and many versions]." France similarly argues that the clause is probably not original to Mark saying that Mark does not use the term ἀποστολος as a title for the Twelve. Concerning these words, however, Metzger and the UBS Committee were "of the opinion that the external evidence is too strong in their favour to warrant their ejection from the text."

ἀποστελλω send, send out

They have first to be with him and to learn of him before they can be sent out to minister for him.

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

**Verse 15**

καὶ ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια· ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power  
ἐκβαλλω throw out, expel, cast out  
δαιμονιον, ου n demon, evil spirit

"The summary in 6:13 indicates that the exorcistic ministry of the Twelve was broadly successful, but 9:14-29 offers a note of caution: there is nothing automatic about the ἐξουσία, and their 'success rate' cannot match that of Jesus himself, from whom their ἐξουσία is necessarily derived. The absence of healing (the most prominent activity of Jesus so far in the gospel) from their terms of reference is surprising (and is therefore remedied by many later MSS and versions, which add θεραπευειν τας νοσους και after ἐξουσιαν, under the influence of Mt 10:1). The fact that in 6:12-13 healing will take its place along with preaching and exorcism as part of the normal mission of the Twelve suggests that its absence here is more a matter of summary reporting than of deliberate exclusion." France.

**Verse 16**

[καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς δωδεκα,] καὶ ἐπέθηκεν ὄνομα τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρον,

"The words καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς δωδεκα, though read by x B C\* Δ 565 579, should probably be omitted with A C<sup>C</sup> D L W Θ and other uncials, all minuscules other than those mentioned ... They are probably to be explained either as dittography of καὶ ἐποίησεν δωδεκα in v.14, or as added in order to make a smoother text, as they pick up the thread of the ἵνα-clauses." Cranfield. In order to reflect the balance of both external evidence (which favours exclusion) and internal considerations, which seem to require the phrase, the UBS Committee retain the words but in square brackets.

ἐπέθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐπιτιθημι  
place on, add

ὄνομα, τος n name, title

"Generally πέτρος means boulder or stone, while πέτρα means rather the living rock; but in Greek usage the distinction is not always observed, and in Aramaic *kepa*, which has only the one form (the final s of the transliterated form being added to give it a Greek ending), does for both meanings, and it is of course *kepa* that lies behind Πέτρος here ... The attempt to explain the name psychologically as describing Peter's character is mistaken; for rock-like firmness is not a feature of the N.T. picture of Simon Peter ... The name rather denotes the part which was to be played by him, during the lifetime of Jesus, as spokesman and representative of the chosen twelve, and then for a short period after the Resurrection and Pentecost, as the acknowledged leader of the Primitive Church." Cranfield.

### Verse 17

καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Ἰακώβου, καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτοῖς ὄνομα[τα] Βοανηργές, ὃ ἐστὶν Υἱοὶ Βροντῆς·

France writes, "Most witnesses read the plural ὀνοματα. Since only one name is mentioned this is the more difficult reading and should be preferred to the singular ὄνομα (B D etc.), an obvious correction."

βροντη, ης f thunder

"The reason for the name is most probably to be found in such outbursts as are related in 9:38; Lk 9:54." Cranfield.

### Verse 18

καὶ Ἀνδρέαν καὶ Φίλιππον καὶ Βαρθολομαῖον καὶ Μαθθαῖον καὶ Θωμᾶν καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ἀλφαίου καὶ Θαδδαῖον καὶ Σίμωνα τὸν Καναναῖον

"The problem of the identity of the obscure twelfth member of the group ... has led to the Western reading Λεββαῖον (more widely represented in Matthew, where some MSS give Θαδδαῖος as a second name of Λεββαῖος, or vice versa), probably representing an alternative way of getting the Λευι of 2:14 into the apostolic list, if he was not identified with Μαθθαῖος." France.

### Verse 19

καὶ Ἰούδαν Ἰσκαριωθ, ὃς καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτόν.

παραδιδωμι hand over, deliver up

## Day 892: Mark 3:20-27

### Verse 20

Καὶ ἔρχεται εἰς οἶκον· καὶ συνέρχεται πάλιν [ὁ] ὄχλος, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι αὐτοὺς μηδὲ ἄρτον φαγεῖν.

Verses 20 & 21 are peculiar to Mark.

συνερχομαι come together, assemble

Perhaps at the house of Simon and Andrew in Capernaum, cf. 1:29; 2:1. Some, however, think that the anarthrous εἰς οἶκον could be read as 'home' and imply that Jesus had his own home in Capernaum.

παλιν see v.1

ὄχλος, ου m see v.9

ὥστε see v.10

δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of

μηδε nor, and not, not even

ἄρτος, ου m bread, a loaf, food

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθιω eat

ἄρτος φαγεῖν "A Semitic expression for taking food of any sort (cf. e.g. Gen 3:19)." Cranfield.

### Verse 21

καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξῆλθον κρατῆσαι αὐτόν, ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξέστη.

οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ An idiomatic expression in Koine Greek meaning those closely connected with someone. Here meaning his family. This original reading appears to have proved so embarrassing that it prompted several scribal alterations, replacing the family with οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ, anticipating the following verse.

κρατεω hold, hold fast, sieze

ἐξίστημι be amazed, be out of one's mind

Cf. Jn 7:5.

"Jesus' people back home have heard reports of the rowdy scenes in Capernaum, and decide that it is time to take Jesus in hand for his own sake and the family's reputation, on the assumption that, to use a modern idiom, he has 'flipped'. But before they can arrive to make their (unsuccessful) attempt to get hold of him, an even more damaging accusation comes from a different quarter, illustrating precisely the sort of unfavourable official notice which the family had perhaps been planning to avert." France. The arrival of the family is taken up in v 31.

### Verses 22-30

Cf. Mt 12:22-32; Lk 11:14-23; 12:10.

"Exorcism has been so far, and will remain throughout the Galilean period, one of the most prominent aspects of Jesus' public activity... At this point, more than anywhere in the gospel, exorcism becomes the subject of theological consideration. No new incident of exorcism is here narrated (in contrast to Matthew and Luke), but the significance of the whole exorcistic enterprise (in which Jesus' disciples as well as he himself are now involved, v 15; cf. 6:7, 13) is opened up for discussion. Exorcism not only exhibits the power of Jesus (and of those who derive their ἐξουσία from him, 3:14-15). It also reveals something of what is happening at the level of the supernatural power struggle which underlies the earthly ministry of Jesus, of which 1:12-13 has already given notice. Jesus' control over demonic powers speaks of the collapse of the βασιλεια του Σατανα (vv 24-26) in the face of the incoming of the βασιλεια του θεου. The power of Satan, hitherto a real (though not unlimited) force in the world, has entered terminal decline (cf. τελος ἔχει, v 26). The strong man is now bound, and his possessions left vulnerable to the stronger one who now confronts him (v. 27). The ministry of Jesus thus represents the decisive turning point in the contest between good and evil for the control of the world and its people. All this is so clearly manifest to any unprejudiced observer that to attempt to explain it away by interpreting the ministry of Jesus as exercised in support of Satan's power rather than for its subversion is to commit the unforgivable sin of calling good evil and evil good, of confusing the Spirit of God with the spirit of darkness (vv. 28-30). Jesus is thus declared to be the one in and through whom the Spirit of God is now dramatically at work (as 1:8, 10, 12-13 have led us to expect). In Jesus and his ministry the lines are clearly drawn, and the question turns out to be not simply one of rival interpretations of miracles, but of who Jesus really is. The ultimate significance of the exorcisms is christological." France.

### Verse 22

καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καταβάντες ἔλεγον ὅτι Βεελζεβούλ ἔχει, καὶ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια.

καταβαινω come or go down

"The inclusion of καταβάντες indicates that these are not just scribes who happen to live in Galilee, but rather a newly arrived delegation from the capital. Their immediately hostile accusation does not suggest a neutral fact-finding visit; they have come looking for a fight. The imperfect ἔλεγον here and in v. 30 suggests not a passing comment but a sustained campaign of vilification." France.

Βεελζεβουλ may mean 'lord of the dwelling' (cf. Mt 10:25 and the reference to οἶκια in vv. 25 & 27). By the Scribes it seems to have been used simply as the name of a prince of demons.

"It is the charge of being possessed, rather than simply of drawing on demonic power as in Matthew and Luke, which Mark regards as making the scribes' allegation unforgivable." France.

ἄρχων, οντος m ruler  
δαιμονιον, ου n demon, evil spirit  
ἐκβαλλω throw out, expel, cast out

### Verse 23

καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Πῶς δύναται Σατανᾶς Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν;

προσκαλεσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc,  
m nom s προσκαλεομαι call to  
oneself, summon

"Mark quite often uses προσκαλεσάμενος as a narrative device to introduce a significant statement or act of Jesus (7:14; 8:1, 34; 10:42; 12:43; cf. 6:7). Here it implies that while the scribes were speaking about Jesus rather than directly to him, he now initiates a direct confrontation." France.

Παραβολη is here used with reference to "the picturesque and allusive maxims which follow and by which the charge of acting under the power of the ruler of the demons is rebutted." Taylor.

### Verses 24-26

"These parabolic sayings all develop the same basic theme, that since strength depends on unity, an attack on any part of Satan's domain is a sign not of collusion with him but of threat to his power. Jesus thus ridicules the strange notion expressed in v 22b that the ruler of demons might allow his power to be used against his own forces." France.

**Verse 24**

καὶ ἐὰν βασιλεία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν μερισθῆ, οὐ δύναται σταθῆναι ἢ βασιλεία ἐκείνη·

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself  
μερισθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s μεριζω  
divide

σταθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin ἰστημι  
stand, stop, stand firm, hold ground.  
ἐκεινος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

**Verse 25**

καὶ ἐὰν οἰκία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν μερισθῆ, οὐ δυνήσεται ἢ οἰκία ἐκείνη σταθῆναι.

**Verse 26**

καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀνέστη ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἔμερισθη, οὐ δύναται στήναι ἀλλὰ τέλος ἔχει.

ἀνέστη Verb, 2 aor act indic, 3 s ἀνίστημι  
2 aor rise, stand up

στήναι Verb, 2 aor act infin ἰστημι

"No distinction of meaning is intended between σταθῆναι and στήναι" Cranfield.

τελος, ους n end, conclusion, termination

"The exorcisms show that Satan's kingdom *is* in fact under attack: if this is not from the inside, then he is facing an external enemy, and the successes of that enemy point to his downfall, not through civil strife but through conquest by a stronger power. While τέλος ἔχει is formally hypothetical, the wider context reveals that it in fact expresses the reality of the new situation introduced by Jesus' exorcistic ministry, which v. 27 will vividly, though still parabolically describe... It is not a matter of a kingdom divided, but of two rival kingdoms in conflict. As proclaimer of the kingdom of God Jesus is necessarily engaged in the destruction of the kingdom of Satan. It is from that quarter, not from within, that Satan's τέλος is coming." France.

**Verse 27**

ἀλλ' οὐ δύναται οὐδεὶς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ εἰσελθὼν τὰ σκευὴ αὐτοῦ διαρπάσαι ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν δῆσῃ, καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει.

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing  
ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful  
σκευος, ους n object, thing

διαρπαζω plunder, steal, take away

ἐὰν μὴ except, unless

πρωτον adv. first, first of all

δήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s δεω bind, tie

"The implication of ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν δῆσῃ is, since Jesus is freeing Satan's thralls, that Jesus has already bound Satan.

But there is a tension between vv. 27 and 23b-26. Jesus has already won a decisive victory (most notably in the Temptation). But this does not mean that Satan's power is finished; on the contrary, the point of vv. 23b-26 is precisely that it is still strong. Even after the Cross and Resurrection and Ascension have completed the victory, the power of Satan, though broken, will still be strong. It is the tension between ἐφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμας ἡ βασιλεια του Θεου (Mt 12:28) and ἐλθατω ἡ βασιλεια σου (Mt 6:10), the paradox of Heb 2:8. Not till the Parousia will it be resolved." Cranfield.

France refers to the "argument of E Best that 3:27 assumes that Satan is already subdued, and that therefore we should understand 1:12-13 as portraying his decisive defeat." France comments, "The logic of 3:27 is not necessarily as tight as that. Nothing may be seized from the strong man until he is bound, but this does not require that he be bound once for all, after which there is no further contest. Rather, each individual confrontation with Satan (in the person of one of the possessing demons who are under his control) will involve a 'power encounter', in which Jesus must assert his superior authority. There is no suggestion that the outcome will ever be in doubt (except in one case where Jesus' disciples attempt to draw on his authority without adequate spiritual preparation, 9:14-29) since the proclamation of God's kingship has brought about a new situation of eschatological victory over Satan; but, as in NT eschatology generally, that victory in principle must still be implemented in reality through real conflict. That is how Jesus' exorcisms are to be understood."

τοτε then, at that time

Cf. Is 49:24f & 53:12. "If reminiscence of Is 53:12 is reflected here, then it would be a trace of Jesus' consciousness of being the Servant of the Lord." Cranfield.

**Day 893: Mark 3:28-35****Verse 28**

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πάντα ἀφεθήσεται  
τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὰ ἁμαρτήματα  
καὶ αἱ βλασφημίαι ὅσα ἐὰν  
βλασφημησῶσιν·

"In the gospels ἀμην occurs only on the lips of Jesus (apart from Mk 16:20); Mt., thirty times; Mk, thirteen; Lk, six (Luke occasionally translates Jesus *amen* by ἀληθως, ἐπ ἀληθειας); Jn, twenty five (always doubled). So it is a highly significant characteristic of Jesus' speech. It is always followed by λεγω ὑμῖν (σοι). By its use he solemnly guarantees the truth of what he is about to say."

Cranfield. Schlier says, "in the ἀμην before the λεγω ὑμῖν of Jesus all Christology is contained in a nutshell: He who sets up His word as something true (that is permanent), is at the same time the One who acknowledges it and confirms it in His life, and so in turn, makes it, once he has fulfilled it, a demand upon others."

"There is no parallel to Jesus' introductory use of ἀμην in pre-Christian Jewish literature. Still less is there any instance of a Jewish teacher using the pphrase ἀμην λεγω ὑμῖν. The one nonresponsorial use of *amen* in the OT adds a further and remarkable dimension to Jesus' usage; Is 65:16 uses *elohe-amen* 'God of the Amen' as a divine title. A saying thus introduced is not to be taken lightly." France.

ἀφεθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s

ἀφιημι cancel, forgive

ἁμαρτημα, τος n sin, sinful deed

βλασφημια, ας f slander, blasphemy

ὅσος ἄν, ὅσος ἐάν whoever, whatever

βλασφημειω slander, blaspheme

**Verse 29**

ὃς δ' ἂν βλασφημήσῃ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ  
ἅγιον οὐκ ἔχει ἄφεσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα,  
ἀλλὰ ἔνοχος ἐστὶν αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος -

ὃς ἄν whoever

πνευμα, ατος n wind, breath, spirit

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

"the scribes are blaspheming against the Holy Spirit in that they are attributing to the agency of Satan exorcisms wrought by Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit." Cranfield.

ἀφεσις, εως f forgiveness, cancellation  
(of sins)

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

ἐνοχος, ον liable, answerable, guilty

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Cranfield points out that Jesus does not necessarily imply that the scribes *have* committed such a sin; he warns them of the danger of committing it. He adds, "It is a matter of great importance pastorally that we can say with absolute certainty to anyone who is overwhelmed by fear that he has committed this sin, that the fact that he is so troubled is itself sure proof that he has not committed it." Such a sin is not merely a matter of words but consists in a fixed attitude of mind. Cranfield suggests that "those who most particularly should heed the warning of this verse today are the theological teachers and the official leaders of the churches."

"It is a warning to those who adopt a position of deliberate rejection and antagonism, not an attempt to frighten those of a tender conscience." France.

**Verse 30**

ὅτι ἔλεγον, Πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον ἔχει.

ἀκαθαρος, ον unclean

Cf. v.22.

**Verses 31-35**

Cf. Mt. 12:46-50; Lk 8:19-21.

In Mark these verses complete the account begun in vv 20-21. "These verses also, however, bring back into view the 'Jesus circle' (literally κυκλω v. 34), whose chosen representatives have been introduced in vv 13-19, and who now surround Jesus in the house while the family stand outside... It is not so much a narrative as a tableau, enabling us to see graphically the contrast between insiders and outsiders. The focus is on Jesus' words in vv. 33-35, in which the element of dismissal of his natural family is balanced by the positive affirmation of a new 'family' of the true people of God... The contrast between insiders and outsiders is vividly depicted by the spacial imagery of the scene. The members of Jesus' family are ἐξω στηκοντες (v. 31), and are again described as ἐξω in v. 32, while the crowd of supporters ἐκαθητο περι αὐτον (v. 32) and are again depicted as περι αὐτον κυκλω καθημενους in v. 34. Each of these phrases will be picked up in the subsequent pericope in which the insider/outsider contrast is brought to the centre of attention, οἱ περι αὐτον to denote the privileged recipients of revelation, and οἱ ἐξω those to whom it is not given (4:10-11)." France.

**Verse 31**

Καὶ ἔρχεται ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔξω στήκοντες ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν καλοῦντες αὐτόν.

ἔξω adv. out, outside, away

στήκοντες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl

ἴστημι stand, stop

ἀποστελλω send, send out

Cranfield says that the absence of mention of Joseph suggests that he was probably dead.

**Verse 32**

καὶ ἐκάθητο περὶ αὐτὸν ὄχλος, καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ἴδου ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου [καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί σου] ἔξω ζητοῦσίν σε.

καθίμαι sit, sit down, live

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

ἀδελφη, ης f sister, female believer

Cranfield suggests that "καὶ ἀδελφαί σου should probably be omitted with κ B C W Θ f<sup>1</sup> f<sup>3</sup> vg ... Perhaps as an assimilation to v.35 or 6:3." Metzger also agrees, stating, "From a historical point of view, it is extremely unlikely that Jesus' sisters would have joined in publicly seeking to check him in his ministry."

ζητεω seek, search for, look for

σε Pronoun, acc s ου

**Verse 33**

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτοῖς λέγει, Τίς ἐστὶν ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί [μου];

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say

"This construction [ἀποκρθεις λεγει] occurs for the first time in Mk here. It is due to Semitic usage either directly or as reflected in the LXX." Cranfield.

The words of Jesus in this verse seem an implied criticism of his own family – an awareness of their unbelief. Taylor uses this to cast doubt on the historicity of the Virgin Birth. Cranfield responds by saying that the Virgin Birth is "a pointer to *his* uniqueness, but does not mean that she [Mary] was not a sinner. We have no grounds for expecting it to have made her for the rest of her life exempt from the possibility of unbelief."

**Verse 34**

καὶ περιβλεψάμενος τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν κύκλω καθημένους λέγει, Ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί μου.

περιβλεπομαι look around

κύκλω adv in a circle, round about

**Verse 35**

ὃς [γὰρ] ἂν ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀδελφὴ καὶ μήτηρ ἐστίν.

ὃς ἂν see v.29

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"Obedience to God rather than physical relationship binds men close to Jesus." Cranfield. The 'will of God' spoken of here is linked by France to "Jesus' proclamation of the coming of the kingdom of God, with its consequent call to repentance and belief of the εὐαγγελιον (1:14-15), which is the only general injunction of Jesus which Mark has so far recorded. It is that call which both scribes and family have, in their different ways, rejected, and in so doing have put themselves outside το θέλημα του θεου." Christ "admits all His disciples and all believers to the same honourable rank, as if they were His nearest relatives, or rather He places them in the room of His mother and brethren." Calvin.

**Day 894: Mark 4:1-6****Verses 1-9**

Cf Mt 13:1-9; Lk 8:4-8.

France writes concerning this section of Jesus' teaching in 4:1-34, "The βασιλεια του θεου, which was announced with such fanfare in 1:14-15 but has not been mentioned directly since, now comes back into focus... This is, therefore, a discourse about God's kingship, and it aims to explain the paradoxical fact that a proclamation of such ultimate importance can be ignored or even opposed by some who hear it. It reveals a fundamental clash between divine and human values, and the necessity of a more-than-human insight if the purpose of God is to be understood and welcomed."

**Verse 1**

Καὶ πάλιν ἤρξατο διδάσκειν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν. καὶ συνάγεται πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄχλος πλείστος, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς πλοῖον ἐμβάντα καθῆσθαι ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἦσαν.

πάλιν again, once more

Cf. 2:13.

ἄρχω midd begin

συναγω gather, assemble

πλείστος, η, ον (superl. of πολυς) large

ὥστε so that, with the result that  
 πλοῖον, οὐκ ἔστιν πλοῖον  
 ἐμβάντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s ἐμβαινω  
 get into, embark

Sitting was the normal posture for teaching.

### Verse 2

καὶ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς ἐν παραβολαῖς  
 πολλά, καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ  
 αὐτοῦ,

Cranfield says that "The key to an understanding of παραβολή in the Synoptic Gospels is the use of the Hebrew word *masal* in the OT (together with its Aramaic equivalent *m'tal, matla*) in Rabbinic literature... The *masal* covers a wide range of meanings including the ethical maxim, the short sentence of popular wisdom, proverbs generally, by-word, taunt-song, oracle, riddle, comparison, allegory, fable, in addition to what is meant by 'parable' in the strict sense." France comments, "παραβολή is perhaps best defined negatively as the opposite of prosaic, propositional speech. It is speech whose meaning does not lie on the surface, but demands enquiry and insight, so that the degree of communication which it achieves will depend on the extent to which the hearer shares the background of thought and the values of the speaker."

France quotes with commendation the following from C. F. D. Moule, "A parable is like a modern political cartoon. A good cartoon presents an interpretative analogy, and it is for the viewer to work out its meaning, first by understanding it, then by reacting to it critically and, finally, by taking action accordingly. If the viewer is half-witted or stupid or so shallow as to be virtually incapable of being educated, no doubt he will see nothing but the mere picture, and he will not get further than saying that he likes it or dislikes it. But anyone with a grain of intelligence will respond in one way or another. He will say 'Yes, of course that is exactly what is happening. I hadn't seen it so clearly before, but now I know I mustn't vote Conservative [or whatever it may be] again'. Or perhaps he will say, 'Yes, I see what the cartoonist is getting at, but I don't think his interpretation is fair. He is being cruel to X, who isn't really doing what the hog in the picture is doing.' The moment the viewer is responding in one way or another, he and the cartoonist have entered into a partnership in creating something; education is proceeding."

διδαχή, ἡς f teaching, what is taught

### Verse 3

Ἄκούετε. ἰδοὺ ἐξήλθεν ὁ σπείρων σπείραι.

"The fact that the following parable is both introduced and concluded by an appeal to hear marks it out as specially important."

Cranfield.

France points out that 'hearing' is a key theme in this discourse (cf. vv 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24).

σπειρω sow

### Verse 4

καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ σπείρειν ὃ μὲν ἔπεσεν  
 παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν, καὶ ἦλθεν τὰ πετεινὰ καὶ  
 κατέφαγεν αὐτό.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

γίνομαι

ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πιπτω fall

ὁδος, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁδος, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁδος

πετεινον, οὐκ ἔστιν πετεινον

κατέφαγεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

κατεσθιω eat up, devour

Seed was normally ploughed in after sowing. Seed which fell at the edge of the field would not have been ploughed in and would be vulnerable.

### Verse 5

καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ πετρῶδες ὅπου  
 οὐκ εἶχεν γῆν πολλήν, καὶ εὐθὺς  
 ἐξανέτειλεν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν βάθος γῆς·

ἄλλος, ἡ, ο another, other

πετρῶδες, οὐκ ἔστιν πετρῶδες

ὅπου adv. where

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω

γῆ, γῆς f earth

ἐξανέτειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἐξανατελλω sprout, spring up

βαθος, οὐκ ἔστιν βαθος

"Verse 5b appears to suggest that the lack of soil actually causes seed sown in such a place to grow up more quickly, but this makes little agricultural sense. The focus is rather on the contrast between impressive upward growth and inadequate roots, resulting in initial success and subsequent failure." France.

### Verse 6

καὶ ὅτε ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος ἐκαυματίσθη,  
 καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ἀνέτειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἀνατελλω rise, dawn, shine

ἥλιος, οὐκ ἔστιν ἥλιος

ἐκαυματίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

καυματιζω scorch, burn

ρίζα, ης f root  
 ἐξηράνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s  
 ξηραίνω dry up; pass wither

### Day 895: Mark 4:7-12

#### Verse 7

καὶ ἄλλο ἔπεσεν εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας, καὶ  
 ἀνέβησαν αἱ ἀκανθαὶ καὶ συνέπνιξαν  
 αὐτό, καὶ καρπὸν οὐκ ἔδωκεν.

ἀκανθα, ης f thorn-plant  
 ἀναβαίνω go up, come up  
 συμπνιγώ choke  
 καρπός, ους m fruit, grain, harvest  
 ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδωμι

καρπὸν οὐκ ἔδωκεν A Semitism.  
 "There has ... been a progression in the three  
 failed seeds, which is probably intended to be  
 noticed in drawing out the symbolism: the first  
 never started, the second started but died, the  
 third survived but could not produce grain.  
 But in the end none is of any value to the  
 farmer, since he is looking for grain, not mere  
 survival." France.

#### Verse 8

καὶ ἄλλα ἔπεσεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν καλήν,  
 καὶ ἐδίδου καρπὸν ἀναβαίνοντα καὶ  
 αὐξανόμενα, καὶ ἔφερον ἕν τριάκοντα καὶ  
 ἕν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἕν ἑκατόν.

The plural ἄλλα now directs attention to  
 individual seeds.

καλός, η, ον good, proper, fine  
 ἐδίδου Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s διδωμι  
 αὐξάνω and αὐξώ grow, spread,  
 increase, reach full growth  
 φέρω bring, carry, bear, lead  
 εἷς, μια, ἕν gen ἑνός, μιας, ἑνός one  
 τριακόντα thirty  
 ἑξήκοντα sixty  
 ἑκατόν one hundred

"By carefully depicting the state of *six* seeds  
 Mark has effectively ruled out any notion that  
 those who fail are in a majority. Rather here,  
 by contrast with the three types of failure, are  
 three further seeds which represent what  
 should be the norm. The contrast is marked  
 even by the way the sentence is constructed:  
 the fate of each of the preceding seeds was  
 described in the aorist, and in terms of what  
 was done to it (eaten by birds, scorched by  
 sun, choked by weeds) or what it failed to  
 achieve (καρπὸν οὐκ ἔδωκεν); but the seeds  
 which fell in the good ground are the subject  
 of an active sentence, with imperfect verbs  
 (ἐδίδου, ἔφερον) filled out by two present  
 participles denoting continuous growth  
 (ἀναβαίνοντα καὶ αὐξανόμενα ...)... The  
 yield of the seeds in good ground represents  
 what a farmer might reasonably hope for in a  
 very good year." France.

#### Verse 9

καὶ ἔλεγεν, Ὅς ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω.  
 οὖς, ὠτός n ear, hearing

Cf. v.3. "The feature which is emphasised is  
 the fact of differences of soil. This is the point  
 at which the hearers are challenged to take  
 action: they are summoned to ask themselves  
 which sort of ground they are. The parable  
 indicates the situation of the hearers in the face  
 of the message of the kingdom of God and  
 challenges them to hear the message aright. It  
 is a parable about the hearing of the Word of  
 God." Cranfield.

#### Verses 10-12

Cf. Mt 13:10-15; Lk 8:9f.

"The sandwiching of these verses (which deal  
 with parables in general) between the parable  
 of the sower and its interpretation undoubtedly  
 indicates Mark's belief that each throws light  
 on the other." France.

#### Verse 10

Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο κατὰ μόνας, ἠρωτῶν  
 αὐτὸν οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα τὰς  
 παραβολὰς.

ὅτε conj when, at which time  
 μόνος, η, ον adj only, alone; κατα μονας  
 alone

ἠρωτῶ ask, request, beg, urge

France suggests that the imperfect may imply  
 "not simply a single enquiry, but a regular  
 pattern of response to Jesus' parables on the  
 part of οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα. The  
 related general summary in vv. 33-34 will also  
 use imperfect tenses throughout."

δωδεκα twelve

"The neat distinction between those in the boat and those on the shore is ... deliberately blurred, and the circle of privileged revelation (v. 11) is drawn more widely than the now closed group of the Twelve... Among the large crowd there were some, and only some, who were sufficiently interested in what they had heard to join the Twelve in demanding further elucidation, while others went away having heard nothing but παραβολαι. On the principle to be enunciated in v. 25, to those who had this degree of curiosity, more would be given, but those who lacked it would lose any benefit they might have gained from hearing the παραβολαι. The gift of special revelation (v. 11) is thus not restricted to a predetermined circle of favoured followers into which no one else is allowed access, but is offered to those who ask for it. The group of those περι αυτων is self-selected rather than predestined." France.

### Verse 11

καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐκεῖνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὰ πάντα γίνεται,

μυστηριον, ου η secret, mystery

"In the Pauline Epistles the word is used to denote, not something that must not be divulged to the uninitiated, but something that could not be known by men except by divine revelation but that, though once hidden, has now been revealed in Christ and is to be proclaimed so that all who have ears may hear it; and behind Paul's use of it and also its use here we may recognise the O.T. idea of God's *sod* or 'secret' (e.g. Amos 3:7; Ps 25:14; Prov 3:32; Job 15:8)... Here ... it is the secret that the kingdom of God has come in the person and words and works of Jesus. That is a secret because God has chosen to reveal himself indirectly and in a veiled way. The incarnate Word is not obvious. Only faith could recognise the Son of God in the lowly figure of Jesus of Nazareth. The secret of the Kingdom of God is the secret of the person of Jesus." Cranfield.

France argues that "the true sense of μυστηριον is better captured by the English 'secret', which denotes not incomprehensibility but hiddenness. A secret is that which is not divulged – but when known it need not be hard to grasp. It is privileged information rather than a puzzle."

δέδοται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s διδωμι

by God.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, those  
ἐξω adv. outside; ὁ ἐξω outsider,  
unbeliever

The sense is that to those 'outside' (the kingdom) all things are obscure. France comments, "It is probably misleading to pose the exegetical question of this verse in terms of the intention of parables either to reveal or to conceal, to attract or to repel potential adherents. The parable of the sower, which surrounds this brief pericope, suggests a different understanding. The intention of the sower is to produce a crop, but whether or not this is achieved depends not on a change in his intention, but on the condition of the soil into which the seed falls. The same seed produces contrasting results. So it is with parables. The same parable produces enlightenment in one and no response in another; the result is appropriate to the condition of the hearer (and that is why 'how you hear' is so central to the theme of the chapter... Thus the same parable which to some brings an understanding of the secret of God's kingship will leave others cold. They are the ones who remain ἐξω, and for them there is nothing but parable."

### Verse 12

ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν, καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιῶσιν, μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἀφεθῆ ἑαυτοῖς.

Cf. Isa 6:9f. "If ... the ἵνα is given its proper final force, its significance is that the fact that the secret of the kingdom of God, in accordance with O.T. prophecy, remains hidden from many is something that is within the purpose of God." Cranfield.

France suggests that one of the ways of viewing ἵνα is "that while the lexical meaning indicates purpose, this is to be understood within the context of Semitic thought which tends to suppress second causes, so that human decisions are attributed to the overriding providence of God. This ... observation, while in no way removing the normal force of the conjunction, does help us to set it in the appropriate theological context. The ultimate outcome falls within the overall purpose of God, and, as Is 6:9-10 reminds us, this can embrace the rejection as well as the acceptance of the prophet's message."

France adds, "A sensitive discussion of this passage for Bible translators by B. Hollenbach concludes that both Is 6:9-10 and, derivatively, Mk 4:12 are to be understood as ironical, and proposes the following translation for the latter: '... so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; because the last thing they want is to turn and have their sins forgiven!' In this rendering the exclamation mark is the crucial element; without it, the irony remains invisible on the printed page." Peterson's *The Message* has a similar translation.

Linking this with the parable of the sower, France comments, "Whereas the Isaiah passage gives no clear indication that there will be *any* response, the parable of the sower balances bad soil with good, and v. 11 envisages responsive 'insiders' as well as 'outsiders'. The difference depends on how they hear (or, in the terms of the parable, what sort of soil they are), and parables are a uniquely effective way to bring out that difference."

βλεπω see, look

ἴδωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl ὄραω see, observe, perceive, recognise

συνιημι and συνιω understand, comprehend

μηποτε i) conj. lest, otherwise; ii) interrog. particle whether perhaps, perhaps

ἐπιστρεφω turn back, return, turn round  
ἀφεθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἀφιημι cancel, forgive

It is worth including here an extensive quotation from Cranfield, who says, "God's kingly intervention in the person, works and words of Jesus is a secret (μυστηριον) in the sense that it can only be recognised by God-given faith (δεδοται). This secret of the kingdom of God is the secret of Jesus' Messiahship and the secret of his divine Sonship. God's self-revelation is indirect and veiled. (While the eye of faith sees through the veil and grasps the secret, for the unbeliever, so long as he remains an unbeliever, the veil is unpenetrated, and everything is still simply ἐν παραβολαις.) No outwardly compelling evidence of divine glory illumines the ministry of Jesus. It is a necessary part of the gracious self-abasement of the Incarnation that the Son of God should submit to conditions under which his claim to authority cannot but appear altogether problematic and paradoxical. In the last hours of his life his incognito deepens until in the helplessness, nakedness and agony of the Cross, abandoned by God and man, he

becomes the absolute antithesis of everything the world understands by divinity and by kingship. But this veiledness is not simply designed to prevent men from recognising the truth. God's self-revelation is truly revelation; it is precisely *veiled revelation*. Throughout the ministry we can see these two motives (revealing and veiling) at work. On the one hand, Jesus gathers the crowds around him and teaches them, sends out the Twelve to preach, and reveals the power and compassion of God by his miracles. God's self-revelation is not to be accomplished in a corner. On the other hand, Jesus teaches the crowd indirectly by means of parables, seeks to conceal his miracles, and forbids the demoniacs to declare his identity. The two motives, both of which are necessary to the divine purpose, are constantly in tension – a fact which explains some apparent inconsistencies (e.g. between the command ἐγειρε εἰς το μεσον in 3:3 and the frequent injunctions to silence).

"By this veiled revelation men are placed in a situation of crisis, a separation between faith and unbelief is brought about, and the blindness and sinfulness of men are shown up for what they are. That this judgement (cf. Jn 9:39) is part of the divine purpose is indicated by the ἵνα in v.12; but it is not the whole purpose of God. His ultimate purpose is salvation, and the latter part of v.12 (μηποτε ἐπιστρεψωσιν και ἀφεθη αὐτοις) is perhaps to be interpreted, as was suggested above, as hinting at this. God's self-revelation is veiled, in order that men may be left sufficient room in which to make a personal decision. A real turning to God or repentance (ἐπιστρεφειν) is made possible by the inward divine enabling of the Holy Spirit (δεδοται), but would be rendered impossible by the external compulsion of a manifestation of the unveiled divine majesty."