# **The Gospel According to St. Mark**

**Mark 2:1-17**

**Concordia Commentary – Dr. James Voelz, 2013**

## **Mark 2:1-12 – The Son of Man Heals**

* At home – Simon Peter’s?
	+ Archaeological Find?
		- Built around 63BC
		- 20’ x 20’ square central structure
		- One story high
		- Roof of twigs, branches, and plant materials with a clay overlay
		- Main door opens to an L-shaped courtyard
		- Renovated multiple times from AD 50 – 550
			* Only house to at some point have plaster over the floors, walls, and ceilings.
				+ Plaster helped illuminate interior areas for gatherings
				+ Pottery finds also suggest it was not used for home use.
				+ Graffiti on the plaster mentioning Jesus as “Lord” and “Christ” with other Christian symbols.
			* A house church to a church proper after the legitimation of Christianity.
				+ Spanish nun in the late 4th Century wrote:

“In Capernaum a house-church… was made out of the home of the prince of the apostles, whose walls still stand today as they were.”

* + - * + Mid 6th Century, an octagonal basilica was built over the central room.

Byzantine time frame

Style used to commemorate special sites.

* Preaching the Word
	+ “word” in the sense of a message or account
	+ The proclamation of the Word is the focus of Jesus’ ministry
* Your sins are actually/right now being forgiven
	+ Critical statement in the present tense
	+ Strong assertion of Jesus’ divinity
	+ Jesus is declaring that forgiveness is being applies AS HE IS SPEAKING
	+ Strong testimony to the presence of the eschatological reign and rule of God as God is visiting His people with ACTUAL forgiveness of sins.
	+ Another new teaching
* 2:6
	+ A turn in action from the man and his helpers to Jesus’ opponents
	+ Note what the scribes are doing!
		- Sitting
		- Questioning in their hearts
* Scribes
	+ Leadership group that arose during the exile
	+ Concerned themselves with the study of the Hebrew text
	+ Concerned with Scriptural interpretation
	+ Allied with the Pharisees
		- Conservative group
* Blaspheming!
	+ Demeaning God by claiming to oneself what is appropriate to God alone
* Perceiving in His Spirit
	+ Jesus knows what is going on in their hearts!
	+ If the Holy Spirit motivates Jesus, who is motivating the Scribes?
* Which is easier?
	+ It is easier to say “sins are forgiven” because you cannot see
	+ It is easier to say “rise and walk” because only God can forgive sins.
	+ Jesus’ first use of rhetoric
* Who is this “Son of Man?”
	+ Although we have come to accept this term and connection to Jesus, it is not so easy to come to a clear understanding of why Jesus uses this term for Himself.
	+ Connections in Scripture:
		- OT Connection
			* Psalm 8:4-6
			* Daniel 7:13-18
				+ “one like A son of man” used to describe the glorious, triumphant, single figure to whom dominion and glory and a kingdom are given.

A corporate figure

“The saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever and ever”

The saints who endure suffering in 7:21, 25

* + - NT Connection
			* Hebrews 2:5-9 (with Psalm 8)
			* We recall that Jesus is Israel reduced to One, and Israel is described as God’s Son (Exodus 4:22)
				+ We also heard this affirmation at Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan (1:11)
		- “The Son of Man” is used to affirm that Jesus Himself is THE Son of Man… humanity reduced to One.
	+ Taking on the role
		- At His baptism in the Jordan, Jesus takes on the role of humanity
			* Fulfills Joel 3:1
			* Not as just another human being, but as God/Son of God Himself.
		- To call Himself “The Son of Man,” is for Jesus to take upon Himself the role of humanity as God/The Son of God Himself.
	+ An Aramaic idiom for self-reference
		- It occurs in a number of Aramaic texts with the sense of an individual man, but with some kind of reference to the speaker, generally as he belongs to a particular class of people.
	+ Not a Title
		- Nobody really reacts to Jesus calling Himself this.
		- A term conceived by Jesus?
			* Expresses deep theological truths not common to first century hearers
			* Allows Jesus to assert things about Himself while “flying under the radar”
				+ Helps prevent premature arrest
	+ Lack of use in the early church
		- “The Son of Man” is very rare in post-Gospel writings compared to “Messiah” or “Son of God”
		- The early church recognized, “The Son of Man” as a self-designation used by Jesus.
* The Son of Man’s authority
	+ Jesus is THE Son of Man
		- Embodies both the people of God and humanity itself in His own person, but does so *as the Son of God* Himself
			* No understanding of a Son of Man figure in the OT allows that figure to forgive sins.
			* Forgiveness has been possible ONLY when God is involved.
				+ (We can understand the scribes position)
		- Here forgiveness IS possible BECAUSE *the* Son of Man appears
	+ On Earth
		- God has come to earth to forgive sins in the person of this Jesus
		- Forgiveness is NOT far off, but real and in your face, right here, right now.
	+ Forgiveness is the focus of this section.
		- What is more important?
			* Forgiveness
			* Physical healing
		- There is no real restoration apart from the saving action of God incarnate.
* There he goes…
	+ Nobody stops him!

## **Mark 2:13-17 – Look At What Jesus is Doing!!**

* Jesus is teaching
* Calling of Levi
	+ Some confusion between Levi/Matthew or Levi/Jacob/James
		- Multiple names were not uncommon
	+ Tax/Toll Booth
		- Capernaum was in Herod Antipas’ territory and the first stop for travelers and merchants from the Decapolis (Herod Philipp’s territory)
		- Such booths collected taxes on the transport of goods.
		- Ruling authorities farmed out the collecting of tolls to the highest bidder.
			* The winner could then charge as much as their little-old-hearts desired.
	+ “Follow Me”
		- The Power of the Word and Jesus’ authority
		- Levi leaves it all behind.
* At Levi’s House
	+ Note where Levi followed Jesus to!
	+ Recline at table
		- No chairs
		- Common for the Greco-Roman world
			* Jews followed this practice at times
				+ Regular meals they sat at tables
		- Table fellowship
			* Especially important in Middle Easter society.
			* For Jesus to eat openly with those who lived contrary to basic understandings of Scripture and traditions is not good for a “holy” man.
		- Jesus is not like John the Baptizer!
			* Jesus is not one who abstains from the good gifts of God’s creation but participates in them, anticipating the full restoration of God’s created order.
	+ Sinners
		- He is with “unclean” people again!
		- Those who do not obey the Law and the oral traditions
			* The traditions taught by the scribes and Pharisees.
			* Not necessarily those who were leading openly sinful lives against the Ten Commandments.
		- May have included those who dealt with Gentiles for business purposes.
		- Galatians 2:15
			* The Gentiles would not have observed food, purity, and Sabbath laws
				+ Things that make a Jew “good”
	+ Disciple
		- First time the word is used in Mark’s Gospel
		- Pupils of a rabbi or master.
		- In Mark it may denote the Twelve
			* But can refer to a larger group
		- “Ya know, there were many who followed Him.”
	+ Pharisees
		- People who separate (Hebrew) or abstain (Aramaic) from what God deemed to be impure.
		- Spiritual heirs of the Hasidim
			* Traditionalists who sought to keep God’s Law during the era of the Seleucid occupation of Palestine in the Second Century BC.
			* The Hasidim resisted with their lives both the imposition of Greek ways and the effort to stamp out the beliefs and practices of their Scriptures and traditions.
				+ Much of this is portrayed in 1 and 2 Maccabees in the Apocrypha
			* By this, we can have a better understanding of the Pharisees’ aversion to the slightest threat to God’s Law or the traditions.
		- Some Pharisees were also Scribes
			* Acts 23:9
			* Heirs of the priest Ezra (served the people of Judah while in Babylonian exile, and upon their return worked to preserve the Law (Ezra 7:14).)
			* Scriptural scholars came into importance during the exile
				+ Need for interpretation and application of the Law in a new environment.
			* Scribes were to “be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Law”
				+ Fences made new laws to protect the Law
	+ Who’s Jesus Gonna Call??
		- Sinners!
			* Righteous are like the strong who need no physician.
			* Are there any righteous people??
				+ Nope
				+ Everyone needs Jesus

But some think they are righteous and not sinners

Those who object to Jesus eating with these folks