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 978-1-107-68006-7 - St. Mark: The Revised Version
 Edited with Introduction and Notes for the Use of Schools by
 Sir A. F. Hort and Mary Dyson Hort
 Excerpt
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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MARK.

I. 1-13.

INTRODUCTION, including (a) Title, 1. (b) Preparatory Mission of John, 2-8. (c) Preparation of Jesus for the Ministry, 9-13.

(a). 1. Title.

THE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son 1
of God.

(b). 2-8. Preparatory Mission of John.

Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 2
Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way ;

(a). 1. Title.

[*Matt. iii. 1-12. Luke iii. 1-18. John i. 15-34.*]

I. 1. This *v.* is either a general title to the book or indicates John's ministry as 'the beginning of the good news.' Cf. Acts i. 1. **the gospel.** In the N.T. the word='good news.' Later, the meaning was 'a book recording the good news.' **Jesus.** A common Jewish name, given to our Lord at His birth (*Matt. i. 21, 25*) with special significance, as it means 'Lord,' 'Saviour.' **Christ.** A title, meaning 'the Anointed,' and representing the Heb. 'Messiah.' The two names are not used together in the *narrative* of the gospels.

(b). 2-8. Preparatory Mission of John.

2. foll. To grasp the meaning of the passage read first 4, 'John came.....', then 'Even as it is written.' **Isaiah** (xl. 3). The only O.T. passage quoted by St Mark himself. See *Intro. p. xv.* Cf. *Matt. iii. 3; Luke iii. 4; John i. 23.* The passage is from the great prophecy *Is. xl.-lxvi.*, now generally attributed to a 'second Isaiah,' who wrote during the Captivity. It was taken by the Jews as referring to the Messiah, though its first reference was to the Return from Babylon. The words 'Behold, ...thy way' are not however from Isaiah, but from *Mal. iii. 1.* Possibly Mark quotes from a collection of Messianic prophecies.

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2

ST MARK

I 3-8

- 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
 Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
 Make his paths straight ;
- 4 John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached
 5 the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. And
 there went out unto him all the country of Judæa,
 and all they of Jerusalem ; and they were baptized
 6 of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And
 John was clothed with camel's hair, and *had* a leathern
 girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild
 7 honey. And he preached, saying, There cometh after me
 he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes
 8 I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized

3. **Make straight.** As the road was cleared and levelled before a conqueror's advance.

4. **the wilderness.** The W. of Judæa, near the Baptist's early home (Luke i. 39). The actual site was probably the *southern* ford of the Jordan, 5 m. above its mouth, on the high-road to Jerusalem from the East¹. See also John i. 28, iii. 23. **preached.** See Luke iii. 2-14 for the character of his preaching. **baptism of repentance.** The washing was the outward *sign* of repentance. **unto remission,** i.e. repentance, 'change of heart,' *led to* forgiveness. John, like the earlier prophets, insisted on *moral* reform, not on religious observances.

5. Note the general interest in this revival of prophecy. **were baptized.** The Jews already admitted proselytes by baptism. They would understand therefore that John's rite admitted them to some new life which needed fresh initiation².

6. The traditional prophet's dress, see Zech. xiii. 4. Also cf. Luke i. 15, the Nazirite vows. The Jews expected Elijah to reappear as the Messiah's forerunner (see Mal. iv. 5 ; Matt. xi. 14). **camel's hair.** A rough cloth woven from the hair. **locusts.** Still eaten in the desert, and said to taste like shrimps. **wild honey.** See 1 Sam. xiv. 25-27.

7. John preached first repentance, and then the coming of Christ. See also Luke iii. 15. John declared himself unworthy to act even as His bath-slave, i.e. to perform the service of the lowest menial in a household. Cf. Christ's own action John xiii.

4. **the latchet,** i.e. 'the thong' of the sandals ; 'latchet' is the old English word for 'lace.'

¹ Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, 'John the Baptist.'

² Cf. Edersheim, *Life*, i. 273, 274, Appendix XII, (vol. II.).

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I 9-11

ST MARK

3

you with water ; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

(c). 9-13. *Preparation of Jesus for the Ministry.*

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came 9
 from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the
 Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he 10
 saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove de-
 scending upon him : and a voice came out of the heavens, 11
 Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

8. baptize you with the Holy Ghost. A startling metaphor, but intelligible to those familiar with such passages as Joel ii. 28, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh," part of a Messianic prophecy.

(c). 9-13. *Preparation of Jesus for the Ministry.*

[*Matt. iii. 13-17. Luke iii. 21, 22. John i. 32-34.*]

9. in those days. Probably at the end of the year 26 A.D. The following was a sabbatical year, when the people, freed from agricultural duties, would be able to follow a new teacher¹. **Nazareth.** The village stood on the hills of S. Galilee, not far from the Plain of Esdraelon, the battlefield of O.T. history, crossed by the chief high-roads to Egypt, Jerusalem, and the East. Thus our Lord's boyhood was not passed in entire seclusion from the busy world². The natural route for Jesus would have been across this plain to Beth-shean, and thence down the Jordan Valley. See Map.

10. And straightway. Mark's usual phrase to introduce a new incident. **as a dove.** Perhaps a symbol of God's mercy towards mankind, as at the Flood, Gen. viii. 10, 11. The dove appears nowhere in the O.T. as an emblem of the Holy Spirit. See Luke iii. 21 for further detail.

11. a voice. Such a voice was heard again at the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 5) and in the Temple Courts in the Last Week (John xii. 28). **beloved.** The adjective is used in the Septuagint for the Heb. word translated 'only-begotten.' It was also a recognized title of the Messiah. Cf. also Gen. xxii. 2. **I am well pleased.** Possibly an echo of Is. xlii. 1, lxii. 4, both recognized as Messianic prophecies. Jesus recognized John as a true prophet, and submitted to be baptized by him (1) as a devout Israelite, who must 'fulfil all righteousness' (Matt. iii. 15)

¹ This edition follows the chronology adopted by Dr Sanday in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, 'Jesus Christ.'

² G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog. of the Holy Land*, 432-435.

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4

ST MARK

I 12-15

12 And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the
 13 wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days
 tempted of Satan ; and he was with the wild beasts ; and
 the angels ministered unto him.

I. 14—IX. 50.

PART I. INCIDENTS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY, arranged
 in two groups. *a.* In Eastern Galilee. *β.* In Northern
 Galilee. Each of these may be subdivided, *a* into three
 sections, *β* into two.

FIRST SECTION. [I. 14—iii. 12.]

A. (a). 14-38. *First preaching in Galilee. Group of miracles.*

14 Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came
 15 into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying,

and submit therefore to whatever the prophet might decree as
 essential : (2) in order to declare the continuity of His own work
 with that of the Baptist : (3) to share Himself in an ordinance
 which He intended His followers to maintain (Matt. xxviii. 19) :
 (4) that thus He might be consecrated in a special way for the
 great work of His ministry. 'In Him was no sin,' so that in His
 case there needed no 'washing away' of sinfulness. From this
 time forward His 'call' is manifest to the nation, to whom John
 points Him out as the true 'Lamb of God,' John i. 29-34.

12. **the wilderness.** We are not told where this was. The
 Jews believed that evil spirits specially haunted the deserts.

13. **forty days.** Cf. the account of Elijah's retirement,
 1 Kings xix. 8. **the wild beasts.** The hyenas and jackals
 of the desert. This picturesque detail is characteristic of Mark's
 style. Details of the Temptation are given Matt. iv. 1-11 ;
 Luke iv. 1-12. Attempts to produce failure in faith and misuse
 of powers entrusted to Him were the weapons tried vainly
 against Jesus by the 'Adversary' (the lit. meaning of the word
 'Satan'). See refs. to later temptations, Mark xiv. 35, 36 ;
 Luke xxii. 28. **angels ministered.** Cf. Elijah's experience,
 1 Kings xix. 5. See also Heb. i. 14, and 1 Tim. iii. 16.

A. (a). 14-38. *First preaching in Galilee. Group of miracles.*

[*Matt. iv. 12-22, viii. 14-17. Luke iv. 14-41, v. 1-11.*

John iv. 43-54.]

14. There is a gap in time between the events of *vv.* 13 and
 14, corresponding to the Ministry in Judaea and the incidents
 immediately following, recorded by John (ii. 13-v.). The period

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The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand :
repent ye, and believe in the gospel.

And passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw 16
Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net

omitted by Mark probably covered rather more than a year. **John was delivered up.** A reference to his imprisonment by Herod Antipas, see vi. 17-29. That whole passage belongs *in time* to this place, for John was imprisoned after the Ministry in Judaea, and before this first tour in Galilee. **into Galilee.** On His way Jesus passed through Samaria. See John iv. 1-42 for a full account. 'Galilee' = 'circle,' i.e. 'district.' Its area was about that of Oxfordshire and it comprised the lower hills of the Lebanon range and the Plain of Esdraelon. It was thickly populated and fairly fertile, and was crossed by the great high-roads from Damascus and the East to Phoenicia and Egypt. Many Gentiles (Greek-speaking Syrians in our Lord's time) were settled in the district, whence its original name 'Galilee of the Gentiles.'

15. Cf. our Lord's message with the Baptist's (i. 4). The new proclamation completed the first, and added the message of 'good tidings' to that of 'repentance.' **the kingdom of God.** Probably the phrase was familiar, though the Jews' conception of its meaning was very different from our Lord's, which He gradually unfolded to His hearers in discourse, exhortation, and parable. Material riches, power, and glory, were expected by the Jews as the signs of Messiah's kingdom. Jesus showed them its spiritual character, and the error of these expectations. See iv. 11-32 (parables of the Kingdom), x. 24, 37 (misconceptions of it). Also Matt. v. 1-20, the Laws of the Kingdom. **believe in the gospel.** Belief *in* the 'good tidings' leads to belief *on* Christ.

16. Here Luke (iv. 16-30) places the preaching and rejection at Nazareth. Mark inserts it later (vi. 1-6). **sea of Galilee.** Called also Chinnereth, Gennesaret, and Tiberias. It is a lake 13 miles long by 8 broad, and is nearly 700 ft. below the level of the sea. Its shores were then the busiest part of Palestine, being the centre of a great fishing industry, supplying fish to all parts of the Roman Empire, and bringing hundreds of traders to the district. Our Lord therefore chose for the beginning of His Ministry the most crowded centres of population¹. **Simon and Andrew.** They had been already 'called' (John i. 35-37, 40) and had been on a short tour with Jesus (John iii. 22, iv. 2), but this second summons was evidently a more definite and formal 'call' to discipleship². See Luke v. 1-11.

¹ G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog. of the Holy Land*, ch. xxii.

² Latham, *Pastor Pastorum*, 197, 198.

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6

ST MARK

I 17-23

- 17 in the sea : for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become
 18 fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets, and
 19 followed him. And going on a little further, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who
 20 also were in the boat mending the nets. And straightway he called them : and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.
- 21 And they go into Capernaum ; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and
 22 taught. And they were astonished at his teaching : for he taught them as having authority, and not as the
 23 scribes. And straightway there was in their synagogue

19. **James...and John.** Partners in the fishing industry with Simon and Andrew (Luke v. 7, 10). Their mother was Salome.

21. **Capernaum** = 'village of Nahum,' probably on the N. W. of the Lake¹. For site, which is disputed, see Map. **synagogue** (see Luke vii. 5). These buildings were used : (1) for the Sabbath service, (2) as schools, (3) as courts of justice (cf. xiii. 9). The service consisted of prayer, a Scripture lesson, and an exposition, given by any competent Jew whom the 'ruler' called upon.

22. **were astonished.** Mark specially calls attention to the effect of our Lord's words on the people and on the scribes. **he taught.** Probably He expounded some passage of the Jewish Scriptures (cf. Luke iv. 16), showing the *spirit* of the Law, rather than its literal interpretation, instead of merely quoting the usual traditional explanations of the Rabbinic commentators. **the scribes.** A better title would be 'teachers of the Law,' for they were the authorised expounders of the written Law and its traditional explanations, and formed the learned class of the nation. They taught elaborate and fanciful interpretations to the people, which tended to hamper their daily life with minute and impossible rules of conduct². See Matt. xv. 9, xxiii. 2-36.

23. **an unclean spirit.** The man was apparently what we should term 'a lunatic,' though the form of his insanity is not easy to determine. The Jews believed that disease was the work of evil spirits, and that lunatics and epileptics were 'possessed' by demons, who spoke through the medium of their victims.

¹ G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog. of the Holy Land*, 456 note.

² Robertson Smith, *The O.T. in the Jewish Church*, 42 foll. *Ecce Homo*, ch. xxi. Moorhouse, *The Teaching of Christ*, Lect. iv.

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I 24-32

ST MARK

7

a man with an unclean spirit ; and he cried out, saying, **24**
 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. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, **25**
 Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean **26**
 spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came
 out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that **27**
 they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this ?
 a new teaching ! with authority he commandeth even the
 unclean spirits, and they obey him. And the report of **28**
 him went out straightway everywhere into all the region
 of Galilee round about.

And straightway, when they were come out of the **29**
 synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and
 Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's wife's **30**
 mother lay sick of a fever ; and straightway they tell him
 of her : and he came and took her by the hand, and **31**
 raised her up ; and the fever left her, and she ministered
 unto them.

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto **32**

Our Lord evidently took the current beliefs on the subject as He found them, just as He accepted the popular interpretations of the O.T.¹

24. The lunatic cries out, 'What have we (evil spirits) in common with thee?' In some way he recognizes the power of Jesus. **the Holy One of God.** A Messianic title, applied to Jesus by Peter (John vi. 69). It means literally 'the consecrated,' i.e. to God, in this case. Cf. Ps. xvi. 10, cvii. 16.

25: **Hold thy peace,** lit. 'Be gagged.' The same verb is used in iv. 39, and Matt. xxii. 34.

26. **tearing him,** R.V. Marg. 'convulsing,' a medical term.

30. Peter's wife is mentioned by St Paul, see 1 Cor. ix. 5.

31. **ministered unto them.** Probably she served the mid-day meal after the synagogue service. The detail shows her complete recovery.

32. **at even.** The Sabbath ended at sunset, and the people were then free to bring their sick, without fear of 'breaking the Sabbath.'

¹ Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, 'Jesus Christ.'

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him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with
 33 devils. And all the city was gathered together at the
 34 door. And he healed many that were sick with divers
 diseases, and cast out many devils; and he suffered not
 the devils to speak, because they knew him.

35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose
 up and went out, and departed into a desert place,
 36 and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with
 37 him followed after him; and they found him, and say
 38 unto him, All are seeking thee. And he saith unto them,
 Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may
 39 preach there also; for to this end came I forth. And
 he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee,
 preaching and casting out devils.

A. (b). 40-45. First Preaching Tour in Synagogues of Galilee.

40 And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and

34. Jesus would not obtain notoriety through unworthy channels. Cf. *v.* 25. R.V. Marg. adds to the words **they knew Him** 'to be Christ'; see Luke iv. 41, whence the words are probably copied.

35. **a desert place.** Probably a ravine leading down to the Lake from the mountains. **and there prayed.** Cf. vi. 46, xiv. 32; Luke vi. 12, ix. 18, 28, xi. 1, for instances of other occasions when He felt the necessity of prayer for guidance.

38. **the next towns.** The Greek word used denotes small country towns, of which there were many in Galilee.

preach. Note our Lord's own definition here of His work and mission. **came I forth,** i.e. 'from the Father.' Cf. John viii. 42, xiii. 3.

A. (b). 40-45. First Preaching Tour in Synagogues of Galilee.

[*Matt. iv. 23, viii. 2-4. Luke iv. 42-44.*]

39. This *v.* covers the work of several weeks, while 21-34 record the events of one Sabbath-day. Only one incident in this tour is given in detail. It is described also by Matt. and Luke, but in different contexts. Luke (iv. 44) says the tour extended to Judaea also. Evidently insanity in some peculiar form (see note on *v.* 23) was extraordinarily common in Palestine at this time.

40. **a leper.** They were forbidden to enter a town, not

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I 41-45

ST MARK

9

kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And being moved with **41** compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and **42** he was made clean. And he strictly charged him, and **43** straightway sent him out, and saith unto him, See thou **44** say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he **45** went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more

from fear of infection, but because leprosy was regarded by the Law as symbolical of sin, and those suffering from it were treated as moral outcasts. Jesus in curing and especially in *touching* this leper acted a parable, while He performed a miracle, for He showed forth His attitude towards sin¹.

41. touched him, thus breaking the Law, and showing thereby His disregard for its purely ceremonial side, when occasion demanded such a breach. **I will**. The patient's own faith was necessary to the cure, cf. vi. 5, 6; Matt. xiii. 58.

43. strictly, R.V. marg. 'sternly.' Jesus had no wish to attain cheap popularity as a wonder-worker, such as the people already looked for in their low and utterly mistaken conceptions of the Messiah. Also His work would have been hampered by large crowds in attendance, especially as their enthusiasm was likely to take some undesirable form, as on the occasion described in John vi. 15.

44. shew thyself. A reference to the careful rules for such a case given in Lev. xiii., xiv. Jesus here observed the Law, though He broke it where its regulations conflicted with the higher *spiritual* law, as in the case of Sabbath-observance (ii. 27, iii. 4) and ceremonial washings (vii. 2-8). Cf. also the incident of the half-shekel, Matt. xvii. 24-27². **Moses**, the reputed author of the whole Pentateuch. Jesus, as always in such cases, accepts the ordinary belief.

a testimony unto them, i.e. the priests, who must be told of this new Power that they might then consider whether He might not be indeed the Messiah. The leper's disobedience put an end to the preaching tour amongst the synagogues.

¹ Plumptre on Matt. viii. 1-4. Edersheim, *Life*, i. 491 foll.

² Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 28-30.

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openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places :
 and they came to him from every quarter.

A. (c). ii. 1-iii. 12. Second Visit to Capernaum.

2 And when he entered again into Capernaum after
2 some days, it was noised that he was in the house. And
 many were gathered together, so that there was no longer
 room *for them*, no, not even about the door : and he
3 spake the word unto them. And they come, bringing
4 unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. And
 when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd,
 they uncovered the roof where he was : and when they
 had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick
5 of the palsy lay. And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto
6 the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven. But
 there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and

A. (c). ii. 1-iii. 12. Second Visit to Capernaum.

[*Matt. ix. 1-17, xii. 1-21. Luke v. 17-39, vi. 1-11.*]

II. 1. **after some days**, a quite vague interval of time.
in the house. R.V. marg. 'at home.' Possibly Simon's
 house: cf. i. 29-34.

2. **the word**, here practically = 'the Gospel,' in which sense
 the Greek word was used at a later time: e.g. Acts viii. 4.

4. **uncovered the roof**, i.e. took off some of the projecting
 wooden tiles and the pressed-down earth with which the roof
 would be covered. The description is not detailed enough to
 make quite clear the construction of the house¹. The Gk word
 used for 'bed' here stands for a mat or goatskin rug.

5. **seeing their faith**, see note on i. 41. Here the faith of
 the man's *friends* was sufficient. **thy sins**. Jesus saw that
 the man's heart was heavy with a sense of sin (just as in v. 8
 He read the scribes' thoughts). The Jews held that disease
 was a punishment for sin, so that the method used by Jesus
 would appeal at once to the patient². Jesus claims him by
 using the title 'son' (lit. 'child'), the word used elsewhere of
 disciples.

6. Luke explains that scribes had come from Jerusalem to
 watch Jesus. No doubt they had come across Him at Jerusalem
 (see John ii. 23) the year before.

¹ See Edersheim, *Life*, i. 501 foll.

² *Id. ibid.* i. 507 foll. (Rabbinical teaching on sin and forgiveness).