

# **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

**2**

## **JESUS AND HIS KINGDOM: AUTHORITY, POWER, AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

**Mark 1: 14–39**

**By Elizabeth B. Crawford**

*“Jesus came as a divine invader to destroy demons and release men and women to eternal life, which explains why the Lords’ presence caused demons to tremble and fear. Jesus’ ministry was marked by continual conflict with Satan and demons for the purpose of establishing God’s reign on earth.”*

John Wimber and Kevin Springer

## AIM OF STUDY

- To put spiritual warfare in the context of the Kingdom of God as Jesus confronts the powers of evil with his words and works.

## KEY VERSE

“The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.’”  
Mark 1:27

## PREPARATION

Read over the notes on “**how to teach the Bible in small group**” and “**some practical suggestions for leading a small group discussion**” in Vineyard Church of Columbus’ *Small Group Leadership Training Manual*. Before you read over the Scripture, pray that God would give you direction for leading your group and teach you something relevant. Then read the passage and the Bible study below. **You will need to go over the questions and choose which ones you want to emphasize and which you could eliminate if your time is limited.** Note that the application questions are marked with an asterisk (\*). Rather than leaving these to the end of the study, ask one or two as you work through the passage so people are being confronted by Scripture’s truths and applying them to their own lives. If you find you are falling behind schedule and need to move ahead, you could summarize some of the passage and then go to the final questions.

These studies contain more background material and information on the passages than any group will cover in a meeting. The authors are providing this for the leaders’ benefit—to help reduce your study and preparation time; to help resource you for possible questions group members may raise; and to clarify some gray areas of doctrine that may be in your mind as you prepare. Obviously we cannot exhaust any one subject in a document like this, so you may want to do further reading and discuss doctrine with your pastor. We highly recommend *The New Bible Dictionary* or *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* as excellent resources for study.

You might also want to review material included in Marlene Nathan’s small group Bible studies on *The Kingdom of God*.

## OPENERS

Our niece recently graduated from high school. Looking at some of her prom photos, we were taken aback at how much she resembled her maternal grandmother. In one snapshot, because her hairstyle and pose were nearly identical to a picture of her Nana, she might have passed for a twin. While none of us were confused by the similarities, we still marveled at how her features and expressions echoed those of my mother-in-law who had passed away eight years before. This reminds me of Jesus’

words to His disciples shortly before His death, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9b). When we read Jesus’ words and examine His actions, we are glimpsing the thoughts and purposes of Almighty God. When we see Jesus acting with compassion—forgiving, feeding, or healing people—we are witnessing the Father’s heart of mercy and love. When we read about Jesus confronting hypocrisy or casting out demonic spirits, He is revealing the authority and power of the Father. Thus the message proclaimed and the power demonstrated by Jesus are those of His Father (John 5:19-20, 30).

In a similar way, when we see powers opposing Jesus, we are seeing a reflection of the intentions and actions of the evil one. In Mark 3:22, Jesus was accused of driving out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Jesus challenged this thought by asking, “How can Satan drive out Satan?” (Mark 3:23) indicating that Satan and his demons were of the same nature. So as we study Jesus’ ministry and the opposition that surfaces, we are really seeing the great spiritual conflict between God and the enemy, played out between God’s people and those who are influenced by the kingdom of darkness (Lane, p.60).

**When have you had a glimpse of the spiritual conflict that opposes the forward movement of Jesus’ words and works?**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

Mark’s gospel was probably the first of the four written, around A.D. 64 (Keener, p.132). Much of the text is included in Matthew and Luke. Mark wrote with a minimum of words yet gave eyewitness details. Since Mark was not one of the twelve disciples in Jesus’ inner circle, many scholars believe he relied on Peter’s account as a basis for the material in this book. Interestingly, Peter is revealed in all his weakness more than any of the other disciples (Martin, pp.248-259). We do have some biblical evidence about the author, John Mark. He is called a relative of Barnabas and traveled with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary trip (Acts 13:5). However, at Perga in Pamphylia, he left the team and returned home (Acts 13:13). Before their next journey, Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about Mark’s involvement and split into separate teams. Paul chose Silas while Barnabas and John Mark traveled to Cyprus (Acts 15:37-40). But in later letters, Paul referred to John Mark with affection and admiration (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11). And Scripture seems to verify the early church traditions that John Mark was a valuable companion to Peter (1 Pet. 5:13).

## **STUDY THE PASSAGE: Mark 1:14-39**

John the Baptist, the first true prophet of Israel in over 400 years, was in the desert near the Jordan River. He preached to the Jews a need to turn away from their sins, to be cleansed in water baptism, and to prepare for the long-awaited Anointed One from God. Among those who traveled to the desert to be washed in the Jordan River was his relative, Jesus of Nazareth (Luke 1:36). The Gospel of Mark barely mentions these details since what God does at Jesus’ baptism is front and center. His Spirit

descends on Jesus and His voice from heaven testifies to His love and pleasure in His special Son (Mark 1:9-11). Immediately, the Spirit sends Jesus to a deserted place where he battles Satan's temptations.

Mark then tells us that King Herod put John in prison in Jerusalem, in the center of Israel. Was silencing a true prophet of God a victory for the kingdom of darkness? Would this setback thwart the arrival of God's Anointed One? Instead of stopping God's plans, the removal of John from the public eye put all attention on Jesus. He traveled north to the region of Galilee, not the center of Judaism by any means (John 1:46). There Jesus publicly announced that the time of God's kingdom had come, requiring people to turn and believe His good news (Mark 1:14-15). We'll be studying how Jesus proclaimed and demonstrated the kingly rule of God, and the opposition that arose.

**1. Have a couple people read aloud Mark 1:14-19; 21-28; 29-34; and 35-39. What was the message Jesus announced publicly (14-15)?**

Jesus proclaimed, "...the good news of God. "The time has come.... The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

**\*What do you think of when you hear the words 'the kingdom of God'?**

Although we do not find a simple definition of the kingdom of God in Scripture, "the kingdom of God can be understood as the reign and rule of God. God is king..." (M. Nathan, p. 11). Whenever people receive the forgiveness through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ on the cross and are justified by faith in His blood, they receive Him as their Savior, Lord, and King. When His authority and power are exercised in their lives or through them, or when He exerts His will in a situation, then the kingdom of God is expressed. There is also a future sense to the kingdom of God that Scripture points to. There will be a day when Jesus returns, destroys all who oppose His rule, and then His followers will experience the fulfillment of all the promises of God dwelling with them sharing not only His person but His blessings (Is. 2:1-5; Zech. 14; Dan. 7:9-14; Mark 1:62; Rev. 19-22). Keener puts it simply, "God's future rule is established in the lives of those who obey him in the present, and over all the world when Jesus returns" (p.136).

**2. What does it mean to repent? What did the people need to turn from? What did they need to turn towards?**

To "repent" means to turn around. Many today associate the word *repent* with the call to turn from sin in order to receive forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ. But Tom Wright points out that Jesus was also calling God's people to turn away from their earthly expectations and political agenda of having God restore the nation of Israel as a dominant and prosperous government. Instead, Jesus was calling the chosen of God to return to a loyal, obedient, and loving relationship with God (p. 9).

### **3. What was the good news so far?**

The good news is that God is a good king (Nathan, p. 11), and He is coming to exercise His perfect will on behalf of His people. The people of Jesus' day would know many Old Testament promises about the kingdom of God, and would have rejoiced that He was coming to deliver them. However, they expected the Messiah primarily to be a political deliverer and didn't fully grasp that Jesus had come to deliver them spiritually from the evil kingdom of darkness. For those who know of Jesus' cross, resurrection, and ascension, there is even better news than what first century Jews would have understood. God knows we are incapable of obeying Him perfectly, so He did what we could not do for ourselves. He saw that we were slaves to sin, captives in the kingdom of darkness. To free us from the enemy, He paid the penalty for our disobedience to His holy laws through the sacrificial death of His Son. Thus, all we are required to do is to put our confidence in the perfect life and obedient death of Jesus in order to be cleared of condemnation for offending God. When we trust in Him and invite Him to rule in our lives, God not only makes us alive to Him spiritually, but He comes to live His life in us and empower our transformation into the people who please and obey Him. We are set free from the power of sin and can live victoriously by relying on the Spirit of God at work in us. We are joined to Christ forever, and will experience the full effect of that when we enter the aspects of His kingdom that haven't yet been expressed.

### **4. What did Jesus say to the fishermen (vv. 17, 20)?**

Jesus calls Simon and Andrew, James and John to follow Him with a promise to make them into fishers of men. We usually think of this as a call to go with Him, undergo training as His apprentices, and then take over His work when He leaves the earth physically. What we might not realize is the Old Testament meaning for fishing for men: God or a conquering nation would be coming to judge people for their sin (Jer. 16:16; Ezek. 29:4; Ezek. 38:4; Hab. 1:14-17). So, Jesus is calling these men to leave fishing for fish and become fellow gatherers with Him of those God will ultimately judge. Those who put faith in Jesus will be saved, and those who reject Jesus will be destroyed (Lane, p.67). R. T. France sees a contrast between the Old Testament fishing as judgment whereas Jesus' fishing will mean being saved from judgment—provided one responds with faith in Jesus (p. 104).

### **5. What was different about Jesus' call to Simon, Andrew, James and John from His general call to repent and believe?**

The general call of the kingdom confronted the Jews with a decision to admit their need and turn back to God. The fishermen were called to immediately turn from their vocation, their families, their security, their hometown, and turn to God. They were not only turning towards God but also joining

themselves to His Son as their teacher. They would one day join themselves to Him as their only means of salvation, too. Another unusual aspect of Jesus' call to the fishermen was that disciples usually chose who their teacher would be, but in this case, Jesus selected them (Keener, p. 137).

**6. How did the fishermen respond (vv. 18, 20)? Why do you think they left everything, and left so quickly?**

Mark tells us that both times Jesus called the pairs of brothers while they were at work; they dropped everything and left with Him. It seems remarkable that James and John actually leave their father, Zebedee, in his boat with his hired men, and walk out. This shows us that they certainly were not poor since their father could afford to pay workers. Since most disciples chose their own teacher, and not vice versa as in this case, it doesn't seem logical or natural for the four fishermen to leave so abruptly. Garland proposes that Mark's brief but vivid language emphasizes Jesus' powerful impact on others, especially as He calls these men to take a decisive step—to follow Him now (pp. 78-79). We have the advantage of knowing who Jesus is when He begins His ministry. It is also a disadvantage in a way because we might miss the radical nature of His calling individuals. It resembles God's unexpected call to Abraham to leave everything familiar and comfortable and follow this not-fully-revealed deity to another land, where Abraham would not have a permanent home (Wright, p.8).

While Mark doesn't record prior interaction with Jesus, The Gospel of John tells us that Andrew and another disciple, perhaps John himself, were introduced indirectly by John the Baptist, their teacher, to Jesus. From John's witness, Andrew and his companion followed Jesus, spent the night with Him, and in the morning, Andrew sought out his brother Simon, and took him to meet Jesus as well (John 1:29-42). We also learn that Philip, from Andrew and Simon Peter's hometown of Capernaum, was invited the next day to follow Him. Philip found Nathaniel and talked to him about Jesus. When Nathaniel met Jesus, his skepticism became awe, and Jesus seemed to have at least four followers by now. (Nathaniel may be the one whom the other gospels refer to as Bartholomew.) If the unnamed disciple in John 1:35 was John himself, he may have joined the group, too. These men joined Jesus and his mother at the wedding in Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-2). We later learn that Jesus, his mother, brothers and his disciples went to Capernaum in Galilee, and stayed a few days (John 2:12). Thus we know that Jesus has been in Galilee prior to the incident that Mark described in 1:16-20.

John also tells of a visit to the temple in Jerusalem at Passover, in which Jesus cleared the temple. His disciples are referred to as remembering Ps. 69:9 describing the zeal Jesus exhibited for the temple, so it seems very clear that they were with Him there. John also tells us that Jesus performed miraculous signs, met with Nicodemus, ministered in the Judean countryside, but left for Galilee when the Pharisees learned Jesus was gaining more disciples than

John the Baptist (John 4:1-3). The disciples were clearly with Him as he journeyed through Samaria, encountered the woman at Jacob's well, stayed with the townsfolk, and taught for two days (John 4:4-42). Finally, John tells us that Jesus returned to Galilee where the Galileans welcomed Him because they had seen all He had done in Jerusalem (John 4:43-45).

None of the gospel writers can be proven to follow a strict historical chronology, so it is sometimes difficult to place events that appear only in one book within a timeline. But it does seem that the four fishermen had contact and awareness of Jesus prior to the specific call to follow Him and become a new kind of fishermen.

Scholars think that there is even more reason for the immediate response of these men. They imagine the tone of voice, the urgency, the imperative nature of Jesus' call, and conclude that Jesus was not someone to be ignored or postponed. Jesus was announcing that the long-awaited coming of God's intervention to save His people was near, and though the disciples didn't know what that would ultimately look like, they were very responsive to this good news (Lane, pp. 64-69).

## **7. What might have deterred them from leaving?**

Keener points out that not only was the Zebedee family successful enough to hire workers, but also leaving their father was going against one of the most important commands for Jews: honoring one's parents (p. 137). James and John, and their partners, Andrew and Simon, weren't running away from a bad job. We even learn that Peter was married Mark 1:29-30)! Of course Satan and his demonic realm could have played a part in trying to dissuade the fishermen from making such a costly sacrifice since even in the first chapter Jesus encounters Satan in the desert and demons in the synagogue and among the townsfolk who gather at the doorway.

**\*What often gets in the way of your responding to God quickly?**

## **8. What was remarkable about Jesus' teaching in the synagogue (vv. 21-22)?**

Mark tells us that Jesus' teaching amazed the people because He spoke with such authority. The word translated "authority" here is *exousia*, which refers to Jesus' power, authority and freedom to act on God's behalf (Betz, pp. 609-610). Because God—who has ultimate rule over all things in heaven and earth—sends Jesus, Jesus has the right or privilege of speaking and acting as God's representative. This should not be confused with *dynamis*, which is Jesus' power or might which comes from His being anointed or filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus shows power when He works a miracle, but He does so not merely by God's power but also by God's permission (authority delegated). Likewise, Jesus teaches with His own authority, not having to quote someone other than Himself or the Father. Note that in Scripture, any power (might) or

authority (permission) that Satan has is given also by God but is limited by His goodness and justice. Satan is merely a created being, so he is not able to be present everywhere at once, nor is he all knowing or all-powerful.

**9. What were the members of the synagogue used to hearing?**

Their reactions show they were comparing Jesus' words with those of the teachers of the law. Local teachers were often scribes who wrote and interpreted legal documents for others and taught Scripture to the children (Keener, p. 137). Or, the people may have been comparing Jesus' absolute words with those of the rabbi, an ordained leader, who often referred to the traditions of the elders as they had understood and interpreted the Old Testament writings. In either case, Jesus is God in the flesh, bringing His Father's message much like the main prophets of the Old Testament but with even more certainty and significance (Lane, pp. 72-73).

**10. Who interrupted Jesus' sermon (v. 23)?**

A man in the synagogue who was demonized by an unclean spirit cried out to Jesus. While the words may have come from the man's mouth, they probably express the thoughts and intentions of the evil spirit (Page, p. 141). While we teach in the Vineyard that a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon, we do believe that Christians can be influenced and oppressed to varying degrees by the demonic realm. [For more on this topic, see *Power Healing* by Wimber and Springer, especially Chapter 6, "Healing the Demonized."] However, in this case, we know nothing more about this man than that he was present when Jesus taught in the synagogue, and can assume he was a Jew or he would have already drawn attention in the service by his lack of familiarity or welcome. (See also answer to #5 below.)

**11. Why do you think the demon cried out at this time?**

We don't know the exact words Jesus spoke there, but Mark tells us earlier that Jesus was going through Galilee speaking about the kingdom of God. Thus Jesus was announcing that God's rule was being established once again among His people, and His enemies from the kingdom of darkness challenged that.

**12. What did the demon ask (v. 24)? What did the demon know?**

The demon seems to know that Jesus intends to destroy not just this one demon but also the whole kingdom of darkness since it uses the pronoun "us" in its question. It seems the demon wants to know if eternal destruction is going to take place now, or at some other point in history. Page sees the demon actually acknowledging that Jesus has final authority and control by even asking this question. It also knows who Jesus is—not only who He is humanly, Jesus of Nazareth, but also who His divine identity is, the Holy One

of God. Admitting that Jesus is the One sent from God and filled with the Holy Spirit (John 6:69) brings into sharper focus the unclean nature of this demon and highlights the conflict between Jesus and all forms of evil (Page, p. 142).

Many say the demon claiming out loud to know Jesus' true name/identity parallels the occult practice of gaining power over someone by using their name. Therefore they believe that this might be an attempt, although ineffective, to try to gain some control over Jesus (Lane, pp.74-75).

### **13. How did Jesus handle the demon (v. 25)?**

Jesus demonstrates His authority (right or privilege) and His power (might or strength) by commanding the demon both to be quiet and to come out of the man. We see Jesus telling other demons to keep quiet in v. 34, and Mark adds that He didn't want them speaking because they knew who He was. Throughout this gospel, Jesus maintains tight control over who knows His true identity. This could be for various reasons, including the Jews' misconception that He would rescue them politically by overthrowing the Roman occupiers and re-establish a political kingdom on earth. Jesus might also have been avoiding stirring up hostility from those who feared His growing popularity and would plot one day to have him executed. And, He didn't want to use the powers of darkness as His press agents testifying to His Holiness or His kingdom come (Garland, p. 71). He recognized that many who sought Him were not true believers but more enthralled with the miracles He worked, but Jesus didn't want to be considered another sensational miracle worker (Garland, pp. 76-77). On the other hand, Jesus could not ignore this demonic encounter since He came to initiate the destruction of the realm of darkness (Lane, p. 75).

He does make concrete the announcement that God's rule over all things is being established, as He sets this man free from the evil ruler of darkness. Jesus did not condemn this man or call for his repentance. In fact, Mark presents those with demons or unclean spirits as victims (Garland, p.70). Jesus probably wanted to preserve the man's dignity, as well, and ending the spectacle quickly would help accomplish this. Please note that this Bible study does not intend to teach extensively about exorcism, so some questions your group might have would be better addressed after studying portions of *Power Healing* or listening to teaching tapes from Vineyard conferences that have dealt with praying for those with demonic affliction.

### **14. How did the demon respond to Jesus (v. 26)? What resulted?**

Although the demon shook the man violently and shrieked as it surrendered, it had to comply with Jesus' commands.

### **15. What was the people's reaction (v. 27)? What resulted from this encounter with evil powers (v. 28)?**

The eyewitnesses are now amazed by the power that backed up Jesus' authoritative teaching. They have seen God's salvation/rescue of one of their own in a matter of seconds. We can imagine the man might have been restored to his family, his job and his community. Mark says the news about his healing/exorcism spread quickly over the entire area of Galilee. Did Jesus' authoritative teaching—His good news—spread as well, or was it just the sensational miracle? We'll see that because of this, many will seek Him at the end of the Sabbath for healing and release from demonic oppression (vv.32-34).

#### **16. What was Jesus demonstrating about God's kingdom?**

Jesus is backing up His word that the time has come for God's kingly rule (1:15) by demonstrating the power and compassion of the King of Kings. He is not seeking sensational publicity [as we'll see later on] but rather doing the liberating work that the kingdom of light and life represents. He also is giving reason for hope to those who have been trapped by the enemy and to those who have been patiently longing and praying for God's deliverance. Garland points out that Jesus is not just talking about the coming of the kingdom but actualizing it in people's lives. He shows that He does have power over the realm of Satan by freeing those who have been subjected to his reign (p.81).

#### **17. Where did Jesus and His new followers go (v. 29)?**

After the synagogue service, He went to the home of Simon and Andrew along with James and John. It would be customary to invite a guest to dinner, especially since a faithful Jew would not travel far or engage in other "work" on the Sabbath.

#### **18. What did the disciples tell Jesus (v. 30)? What did this say about their faith in Him?**

Jesus learns that Peter's mother-in-law was in bed, ill, with a fever. Luke notes that it was a high fever (Luke 4:38). By telling Jesus this, they probably weren't making excuses for why the meal wasn't up to their usual standards or not fully prepared. It seems they were expecting Him to heal her since He had previously demonstrated His authority even over a stubborn demon!

#### **19. How did Jesus deal with the fever (v. 31)?**

Mark doesn't record Jesus saying anything! He simply wrote that Jesus went to her, took her hand and helped her up. Luke adds that Jesus "bent over her and rebuked the fever" (4:39). John Wimber stated "in a prayer of rebuke we break demons' hold on a person, contain their power, and eliminate their presence" (p.209). Since Jesus never erred, He must have discerned the presence of an evil spirit causing this fever, rather than a physiological illness.

Was Peter's mother-in-law the target of a demonic attack because she was going to host Jesus and His disciples? Did God allow her to become ill in order to test the disciples faith or so that Jesus could glorify His Father again? The Scriptures leave some things a mystery, and we cannot know for sure why she was inflicted by this spiritual illness.

**20. What was Simon's mother-in-law's response to her healing?**

She immediately began to serve them. This says more than she was restored to do domestic work, since a high fever could have left her weak once it had left. But this probably also depicts her gratitude for Jesus' mercy.

**\*When have you seen God's healing power at work?**

**\*What have you done as a result of God's work on your behalf?**

Thankfulness is an important attitude to demonstrate towards the Lord for who He is and all He has done. One way to respond to His mercy in our lives is to worship. We may also feel compelled to turn away from destructive behaviors and thought patterns in order to more closely follow our Savior. Another is to witness to others by sharing about God's intervention on our behalf. When we have experienced God's work in our own lives, praying for God's kingdom to move forward or interceding on behalf of others is another natural result. And serving the needs of others in the power and attitude of Jesus is another way to honor Him.

**21. What did many people do that evening when the Sabbath had ended (vv. 32-33)?**

"After sunset" means that the Sabbath day had ended, so it was permissible for Jews to travel. The people of Capernaum brought the sick and demon afflicted folks to the door of Simon's house and waited to see what Jesus would do. They had heard His authoritative teaching, His message of the kingdom of God, and now they wanted to see more of the miraculous. No doubt many had been hopeless for years about the condition of a loved one, but now some must have taken courage from the display of authority and power they saw Jesus exercise over the demon.

**22. How did Jesus respond to their needs (v. 34)?**

Mark records that Jesus healed many suffering from various diseases and also drove out many demons. Luke's account of this event says "Jesus laid hands on each one and he healed them" Luke 4:41). If someone in the group asks whether Jesus healed every individual who needed healing, explain that this passage is vague. Mark indicates that in Capernaum, many were healed of diseases and many delivered of demons. We do know at times Jesus

healed selectively John 5:1-9), but since He was His Father's perfect Son, He must have healed in response to His Father's instructions John 5:19-20, 30).

**23. How did He handle the demons He drove out? Why was Jesus commanding the unclean spirits to be quiet?**

Jesus forbade the demons to speak, just as He had done in the synagogue. Mark tells us that the demons knew who Jesus was, but He did not allow them to broadcast this. Jesus did not need to talk with the demons that are opposed to His rule, His people, and His will. He did not call attention to His authority and power needlessly, either. He dealt quickly and decisively with His enemies, who had to obey His every breath. See question 5 above for more thoughts on Jesus silencing demons.

**24. What did Jesus do the next day (v. 35)? Why do you think He wanted to be alone?**

After a busy day of teaching, healing, and fellowshiping, and a night of ministering to those in need, Jesus cut short his sleep and went to a place to be alone with the Father. Many of us would want to sleep in, have a couple of leisurely cups of coffee, and read the paper, but Jesus operated differently. He knew He needed both refreshing and further instructions from the Father.

**\*When and how often do you try to be alone with God?**

**25. Who interrupted Him (vv. 36-37)?**

Simon Peter and several companions, full of excitement, found Jesus and exclaimed, "Everyone is looking for you!" No doubt these men were thrilled that Jesus' few hours in Capernaum had born such a good response numerically, and they probably foresaw a movement of followers beginning to take shape. Lane suggests that the disciples were reproaching Jesus as if to say, "What are you doing here when you should be in the midst of the multitudes who are clamoring for you?" (p. 82).

But Jesus didn't get elated over the people's response. He also didn't meet the disciples' assumptions that He would capitalize on this attention. Jesus didn't take this news as an informal poll and celebrate the momentum that His kingdom was gaining. While we may only see the human dimension of the disciples' actions and words, beneath the surface, this posed another temptation for Jesus to overcome. Just as He refused to bow down to Satan in order to receive all the kingdoms of the world (Matt. 4:8-10), so Jesus had to refuse the popular notions of a military and political deliverer. He couldn't follow the people's wishes to do away with Rome and at the same time obey His Father's wishes that Rome and the religious leaders do away with Him. Just as He later had to denounce Peter's rebuke when He spoke of suffering and dying (Matt. 16:21-23), Jesus here had to repel Peter's idea that He take

advantage of a growing popularity. Jesus could only fulfill His Father's will by the means His Father intended—to preach and demonstrate the kingdom; to be rejected, tortured and killed; and to be raised from the dead, in order that His blood would ransom us from the death sentence of sin (Matt. 16:21).

**26. What was Jesus' main concern instead (v. 38)? How did Jesus put His mission into action (v. 39)?**

Jesus stated that His mission was to keep preaching the news of the kingdom of God. Mark records that as He traveled throughout the region of Galilee, He preached and drove out demons. This serves as a kind of summary statement about Jesus' ministry, which later the disciples imitate when Jesus sends them out with authority over evil spirits and they preach, cast out demons, and heal (Mark 6:12-13).

**27. What did He continue to encounter? What did His actions say about the kingly rule of God?**

Jesus continued to meet opposition in the form of demons, as well as people whose hearts were hardened and did not receive Him or the Father (Mark 3:1-6; Mark 3:20-21; Mark 5:1-17; Mark 6:1-6). Nonetheless, He spoke good news and showed God's power and mercy to many, regardless of their ultimate response to Him. Jesus told His disciples later on, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9b). So, as we see the authority, power, and mercy of Jesus, we see the very character of the Most High God who rules, speaks truth, confronts evil, but also serves our deepest needs out of His infinite love.

**\*What do your actions and priorities say about God's rule in your life?**

**APPLYING THE TEXT**

**\*What are some of the implications of Jesus Christ calling you to follow Him?**

**\*How fully have you left everything and joined Him in His mission?**

**\*Where do you see opposition to God's rule: in the world, in our community, in your family and friends, and in your life?**

**\*How are you responding to that opposition?**

**\*How are you moving on with the message of the kingdom?**

### **WRAPPING IT UP**

We have seen Jesus announcing the news that God's kingdom is for the here and now, not just a promise we await after death. Forces opposed to Almighty God try to counter Jesus' words and actions, testing His authority and power to rule on earth. As His disciples, we too will face opposition from the kingdom of darkness in various forms. Our encouragement comes from reading about Jesus' defeat of Satan, his forces, and death setting many free from illness and oppression. As we continue in this series, we'll study how God enables us to fight forces hostile to the Kingdom of God and how to triumphantly carry His message of good news to others so they too might share in the blessings of His kingdom.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Betz, Otto and C. Blendinger. "Might, Authority, Throne." *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 2: G-Pre*. Ed. Colin Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980, sixth edition.
- France, R. T. *The Gospel According to Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Ed. Leon Morris. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988.
- Garland, David E. *Mark*. The NIV Application Commentary. Ed. Terry C. Muck. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Lane, William L. *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Ed. F.F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979.
- Martin, Ralph P. "Mark, Gospel According To." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 3: K-P*. Ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986.
- Nathan, Marlene. *The Kingdom of God* [five studies]. Westerville, OH: Vineyard Church of Columbus, ca. 1993.
- Page, Sydney H.T. *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- Wimber, John and Kevin Springer. *Power Healing*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.
- Wright, Tom. *Mark for Everyone*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2001.