

# **JESUS FACES OPPOSITION**

Mark 3:20-35

## **GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT MARK:**

- Shorter, minimalist in details, focused on his theology of Jesus
- A move away from the oral Jesus tradition to a written “Life of Jesus”
- Not a biography, or a historical record.
- But a distinct form of literature that arose to preserve the traditional material about Jesus.
- So the gospels are theological writings, authors are concerned with beliefs about God and Jesus and their relationships with humans than with history.

## GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT MARK:

- Mark – likely written first, Matthew and Luke used it as a basis for their Gospel accounts.
- One of the three “Synoptic Gospels” as they are all quite similar.
  - **Matthew** reproduces 90% of Mark’s content, and is like an amplified version meant for a particularly Jewish audience.
  - **Luke** reproduces just over 50% of Mark’s content.
    - He is writing to Gentiles,
    - Maybe used Mark as an outline, Matthew to flesh it out, and then added his own elements.

## MARK 3:20-35

*<sup>20</sup> Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.<sup>21</sup> When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”*

*<sup>22</sup> And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”*

## MARK 3:20-35

*<sup>23</sup> So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. <sup>27</sup> In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. <sup>28</sup> Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”*

*<sup>30</sup> He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”*

## MARK 3:20-35

*<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."*

*<sup>33</sup> "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.*

*<sup>34</sup> Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>35</sup> Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."*

# CONTEXT

- Mark provides little context,
- likely this story didn't happen in all in one episode.
- Likely he was in Capernaum, the epicenter of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.
- Part of a longer section outlining the start of Jesus being rejected by his own people and family (3:3-6:6).
- It highlights how people, begin to misunderstand and reject Jesus.

# THE STORY

- Jesus goes into a house, so crowded and busy he can't eat
- Matthew – Jesus had just cast out a demon
- His family makes plans to “take charge of him”
- Who are the family?
- Scribes – sent from Jerusalem, can't deny the miracles, but come up with a counter-narrative
- Jesus deals with their slander directly



# HIS DEFENCE

- Example: a house divided
  - Why would Satan cast himself out? Why would he work against his own purposes?
- Example: tying up the strongman
  - Someone who would protect his plunder – needs to be tied up first – then can take his loot
- Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
  - The range of pardon for sin is wide
  - But attributing the work of the Spirit to Satan is an “eternal sin”

# SATAN AND EVIL

- Satan in the Gospels – an evil spirit at the head of inferior evil spirits (demons), the “prince of demons”.
- Beelzebul – used as a vile descriptor
- Main purpose: oppose the redemptive purpose of God.
- The Temptation: turn Jesus away from his mission of being the Suffering Servant
- The Kingdom of God – Jesus has come to invade the “god of this age”
- Their powers are not dualistic/comparable

# SATAN AND EVIL

- They are helpless/powerless before God
- All spiritual powers are creatures of God and therefore subject to his power
- Evil – is not imposed by God on humankind
- Has its roots in personality – fallen creatures
- Can either be resisted or yielded to
- Not disorganized, but under the direction of a single will

# THEOLOGY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- One of conflict and conquest over the activity of Satan
- The activity of the “god of this age” is the backdrop for the mission of Christ
- Conflict with the spirit world at the heart of Messianic mission
- The Gospel – Christ coming to rescue and redeem humanity from Satan

# JESUS AND HIS FAMILY

- His mother and other relatives come to claim authority over him
- Thought he was not acting rationally, “losing his mind”
- Maybe the rumors started by the scribes worried them
  - They were fine with his mission when it was going well
  - Now things are getting dangerous and impactful on the family
- Jesus has no patience for this

# JESUS AND HIS FAMILY

- Asks who are my mother and brothers and sisters?
- Who his family really is – those who are at one with Jesus by doing the will of God
- No such thing as spiritual succession or privilege
- Christ moves all his followers to the rank of family

# WHY DOES MARK TELL US THIS STORY

- The strongman has been tied up and Jesus is taking his loot
- Do we allow Christ to fight on our behalf? Where in your life do you need him to work for you, and will you let him?
- Satan opposes our purpose of being one with Christ
  - But he has been overcome!
  - Jesus resists temptation, heals ills of all kinds, overcomes death through sacrifice on the cross and resurrection, and in the end Satan is vanquished once and for all.

# WHY DOES MARK TELL US THIS STORY

- So what do we focus on?
- “Fix your eyes on Jesus” (Heb.12:2)
- Christ is our focus of attention



# FOCUS ON CHRIST – ST. PATRICK

- Born around 450 in Brittan
- Captured by raiders, sold as a slave to Ireland
- Turned to Christ in captivity, later escaped
- Returned after having a vision to preach the Gospel as a missionary
- Returns to face and forgive his former captors and enemies
- His prayer – the Lorica – brings us back to our focus on Christ

## Lorica of Saint Patrick (abridged)

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,

Through a belief in the Threeness,

Through confession of the Oneness

Of the Creator of creation.

I arise today

Through the strength of Christ's birth and His baptism,

Through the strength of His crucifixion and His burial,

Through the strength of His resurrection and His ascension,

Through the strength of His descent for the judgment of  
doom.

I arise today  
Through God's strength to pilot me;  
God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me,  
God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me,  
God's hosts to save me  
From snares of the devil,  
From temptations of vices,  
From every one who desires me ill,  
Afar and anear,  
Alone or in a multitude.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
Christ in the eye that sees me,  
Christ in the ear that hears me.

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,

Through a belief in the Threeness,

Through a confession of the Oneness

Of the Creator of creation