

Handout 4: Gospel of Mark Notes (Talk 15)

Ryan Carroll, Reformation Fellowship, May 16, 2021

Summary:

One of the themes found in Mark's gospel is the consistent confusion/questions which occurred on the part of people encountering Jesus' teaching and deeds during his ministry. These questions inevitably focused on Jesus' identity. The specific question, "Who then is this?" asked by the disciples after Jesus calms the storm becomes paradigmatic during the rest of Jesus' ministry in the Galilee before heading to Jerusalem. Mark chooses to reflect this historical reality in the material he selects, beginning with Jesus and the disciples crossing the lake in a boat bound for stormy weather and culminating with Peter's assertion in chapter 8 that Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God.

Outline:

1. Review from last week:

- a. The three seed parables of Mark 4
- b. Mystery of the Kingdom
- c. Judgement on those not willing to truly "listen"

2. Next Episode: Jesus Stills the Storm (4:35-41)

- a. Context: "On that day when evening had come"
 - i. "Let us go to the other side"—where and why?
 - ii. "They took him just as he was"—just as he was?
 - iii. "Other boats with them" ?
- b. The event:
 - i. Storms on the sea of Galilee
 - ii. Jesus asleep
 - iii. "Do you not care that we are perishing"
 - iv. Jesus "rebukes" the wind and the sea
 1. Jesus speaks directly to the natural powers: "Hush, be still!"
 - v. "And it became perfectly calm"

- c. The Aftermath
 - i. Jesus questions disciples
 - ii. Disciples become “greatly afraid”
 - iii. Disciples ask a question: “Who then is this...?”
 - 1. Miracle pushes the question of Jesus’ identity
 - d. What is the true climactic moment of this episode?
 - e. What are the disciples more afraid of—the storm or the man who commands the wind and the sea?
- 3. The paradigmatic nature of the disciples’ response to Jesus after he stills the storm for Mark’s narrative:**
- a. Mark’s narrative structure developed around Jesus’ veiled identity
 - i. From the beginning of the account up to Mk. 8:30 (half-way through the account), no person around Jesus recognizes him as Messiah.
 - 1. All (except demons) are questioning and wrestling with Jesus’ identity.
 - a. After Mk. 8:30 and the realization of Jesus’ identity as Messiah, there is a new wrestling that needs to take place on the part of the disciples
 - ii. Dynamic of knowledge between reader and historical persons in the narrative: advantage reader
 - 1. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God as written by Isaiah the prophet...”
 - iii. Mark’s emphasis on Jesus’ identity being a kept a secret:
 - 1. Demons know what others do not
 - 2. Jesus’ commands them to “tell no one!”
 - a. Compare to John’s Gospel
- 4. Parables of word (ch. 4) lead into parabolic actions (ch. 5) on Jesus’ part**
- a. Miraculous deeds become parabolic—creating the question: who is this man?
 - i. Just like with the parables of word, the one watching these deeds must “Pay attention!”—do you have eyes to see?
 - b. Following parables, Mark includes four miraculous deeds in a row (4:35-6:1)

1. (1) Stilling the Storm, (2) Exorcising “Legion”, (3) Healing of the woman with a hemorrhage, (4) Raising Jairus’ daughter from the dead
 - a. Each deed/miracle creating “fear” or astonishment on the part of witnesses
 - b. Each deed/miracle creating an opportunity to respond and reflect on what the deed might mean
 - i. Stilling the storm: questioning Jesus’ identity
 - ii. Exorcising the Legion of demons:
 1. Witnesses: demand Jesus depart from their land
 2. Healed man: proclaimed the good news about what Jesus had done
 - iii. Woman Healed of a Hemorrhage: bowed down before Jesus and “told the whole truth”
 - iv. Jairus’ daughter raised from the dead:
 1. Parents and disciples: Astonished
- ii. Those four notable miracles lead to confusion directly following:
 1. Jesus back in his home town of Nazareth (6:1-6)
 - a. His teaching AND news about his deeds creates astonishment, leading to confusion about the identity of the home-town man they thought they knew
 - i. Where did this man get this wisdom?
 - ii. How is he doing these miracles?
 - iii. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?
 1. Their confusion and the cognitive dissonance created by being stuck between what they thought they “knew” about him, and what they are now seeing and hearing, cause them to take offense at Him

2. Confusion on Herod's part about Jesus' identity (6:14)
 - a. He's John the Baptist risen from the dead!
3. Confusion on the part of "others" about Jesus' identity (6:15)
 - a. He's Elijah, John the Baptist, or one of the prophets!

5. The disciples struggling to understand (Ch. 6-8)

- a. Following the lingering questions about Jesus' identity in chapter 6, and the disciples' own question in chapter 4, Mark continues to record events from Jesus' ministry that further push the question of Jesus' identity for those witnessing the events, especially the disciples
 - i. Feeding of the 5,000
 - ii. Walking on water and stilling the storm (part 2)
 - iii. Authority to define purity over against religious establishment
 - iv. Healing a deaf and mute man
 - v. Feeding of the 4,000
 - vi. Healing a blind man
 - b. All events leading to Mark's gospel's hinge point: 8:27-31
 - i. "Who do people say that I am?"
 1. "Some say John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets"
 - ii. "Who do YOU say that I am?"
 1. "You are the Messiah, the Son of God"
6. Where to from here?
- a. Jesus identity and me
 - b. Given this overview of chapters 5-8, I would like to select the following events to drill down on:
 - i. The two miracles of feeding (in parallel to each other)
 - ii. Jesus' teaching/authority about clean and unclean
 - c. Questions on other events?