

# Scrolls

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## Meeting the Messiah The Day Jesus Came to Church

*Week 3*  
*January 19, 2025*

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**Mark 1:21-28**

### WORD STUDY

*Scribe:*

These were people trained in writing skills, and they were used to record events. For our purposes we are talking about specific scribes who copied God's word. In the Old Testament during the time of the Babylonian exile, educated scribes were copying God's word so that they were preserved and taught. By New Testament times, scribes had been developed, most of them being pharisees, they copied scripture and interpreted the Law of Moses. Some of them were the ones who led the plans to kill Jesus and were rebuked by Jesus on different occasions.

### LIFE LESSON

**IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO  
JUST HAVE KNOWLEDGE  
OF WHAT JESUS TAUGHT.  
WE MUST ACCEPT HIM BY  
ACCEPTING HIS  
MESSAGE.**

### I. VV. 21-22

According to Matthew 4:13, Capernaum became the home of Jesus after leaving Nazareth. We are not certain as to why He moved there but it was a good place for ministry because of its strategic location. It was next to the Via Maris which was the main trade route from the Mediterranean coastal plain and Damascus in the north. It was also far enough away from the major cities in the region such as Tiberias, where Herod Antipas made his capital, so that Jesus was able to begin His ministry without too much political or religious interference initially.

Synagogue means "meeting places" and they were where Jews would meet where the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) would be read and expounded. There was only one temple, and it was in Jerusalem so synagogues are where Jews would assemble. Synagogues could be found all throughout the Mediterranean world wherever ten or more Jewish males, thirteen years of age or older, were present. It was not a place of sacrifice since that was only to be done at the Temple.

Why was Jesus' teaching in the synagogue such a big deal? It was not unusual for lay people to speak in synagogues. Each synagogue had what was called "ruler of the synagogue." His responsibilities were administration, planned worship, custodian and possibly schoolteacher. But the ruler did not expound on the Torah on the sabbath, that job went to the laity and on this certain day it was Jesus doing the teaching. Having

guest speakers was not a big deal. What was astonishing about the message that day was not that Jesus taught but what He taught and how He taught.

When Mark said that Jesus' teaching was "not like the scribes" he was not criticizing the scribes but elevating the teaching of Jesus. The scribes would use the Torah to support any statement they would make. This was what they were supposed to do. In our own church we would not criticize our pastor for making a statement then showing support of said statement with a passage of scripture. That is where his authority comes from and the same was true of the scribes. The authority that Jesus spoke with was His own not needing support. The Greek word for authority, *exousia*, usually meant supernatural authority and it was this authority that Jesus had. It was not that He was a better speaker but that He had a message that superseded theirs. His message was not only looking back to the Old Testament but also to the future. We do not have a record of what Jesus taught that particular day so we must assume that Mark is putting the emphasis on Jesus and how just His presence stirred up the crowd. There seems to be a reaction of being afraid or alarmed at Jesus' teaching. Here was this man who was the son of a carpenter that was speaking with His Own authority that was bringing conviction to the crowd in a way that no one had done before. Jesus did not have to quote God's Word; He is God's Word. So, whatever He speaks is the authority of God.

In the presence of Jesus there will be disruption of the human spirit. Revival cannot take place until Jesus is in our presence, and we are all astonished at Him. Conviction in His presence is normal in a revival and if there is unconfessed sin in our lives, He will cause discomfort. The teaching of Jesus calls for a response. He not only gives us the ability to decide, but He compels us to make a decision. We must all respond to the message of Jesus, either yes or no, there is no middle ground.

## **II. VV. 23-26**

It is interesting that the first encounter that Jesus has that is recorded by Mark happens in a synagogue with an evil spirit. This is where we see that in the presence of Jesus evil will be manifested as it is brought into the light (John 1:5). The demon possessed man's

mind had fallen under the control of the evil spirits so much so that they could speak through him. The unclean spirits knew that Jesus was a threat to their very existence and so they were asking if He was coming to destroy them? The man was possessed by multiple demons, but it appears that only one of them spoke with Jesus. By calling Jesus by name, it was an occult custom that you would have control over the one whom you are speaking. But Jesus quickly shows that none of that would apply to Him.

Now the people not only hear the authority of Jesus in His teaching, but they see it in His commanding of the demonic world. We have all seen or heard of exorcisms where the priest calls upon the name of Jesus, God or a saint or uses other mystical rituals to try to cast out demons. Jesus uses none of that. By His own authority He commands the demons to come out and they do. Our biggest problem is not physical but spiritual and now the people see that Jesus has authority over that realm as well.

There are sceptics that believe demon possession was nothing more than a sickness or maybe epilepsy, but we see in scripture where possession and sickness bares a difference. Sick people in the Mark's gospel usually call Jesus "Lord" (7:8), "Teacher" (9:17), "Son of David" (10:47-48), or "Master" (10:51). But demoniacs call Jesus "the Holy One of God" (1:24), "the Son of God" (3:11), or "the Son of the Most High God" (5:7). This shows that the evil spirits had a deeper knowledge of Jesus than did the people who were only physically ill. So, it should not be believed that demon possession was not legitimate. There are plenty of places in the gospels where it is clear that Jesus is healing physical ailments and if these events were only physical then there would be no logic in the gospel writers to call them spiritual possessions.

We do not have to fear demons or Satan as followers of Jesus. However, we do need to realize that we are at war with them and that war impacts our lives and the world around us. We must be alert so that we do not fall into temptation and have every area of our lives covered by the Word of God and faith. This is a real war that we have all seen many fall victim to, but as children of God we know we have been purchased by the very one Who has absolute control over the spiritual realm.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Can you remember a time in your life when you realized that the teachings of Jesus were different than anything that the world was teaching you? If so, when and what was the message?
2. Understanding that Jesus spoke on His own authority, does this encourage you to spend more time reading His word rather than what others have said about His word even though what others say can be very helpful?
3. Are you surprised that the demon possessed man was among believers on the day they were gathering to worship? Why or why not?
4. Is there evidence in your life that shows that after your spiritual condition was changed, that your thinking and behavior has been changed as well?
5. Does the work of Jesus in your life still have you so astounded that you can't help but tell others about it?

## III. VV. 27-28

The word for “amazed” means “to strike” or “astound.” This is not a mixture of joy in the congregation but of alarm. The people had never heard or seen anything like this before. As we will see in chapter five, not only does Jesus expel the demons from possessed people, He also restores the people and reverses the effects that the demons had on them. This is a good illustration of what happens to a person once they get saved. Their greatest need, which is spiritual, is dealt with and then we begin to see the life of the person change in such a way as to show restoration. They begin to think differently and ultimately begin to act differently. Salvation cleans us up from the inside out.

Evidently, what began in the synagogue did not stay in the synagogue. The people went out and started spreading the news about Jesus immediately. What had been experienced that day was so overwhelming that people had to talk about it. With the testimony of the people going forth, William L. Lane writes “The disturbance of men by God had begun.” Even though it would be a while before many would start accepting the gospel, already the word getting people’s attention was beginning to spread. There was and will be many different responses from people when it comes to Jesus. But in the end, the responses only come down to two options, accept Him or reject Him.