

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS: **THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS**

We begin a new study on “Encounters with Jesus” from the Gospel of Mark. Mark’s Gospel is the shortest of the four Gospels. It’s a fast-paced, focused, and streamlined portrait of Jesus Christ’s ministry and mission.

I. **The Protagonist of the Gospel** — Mk 1:1

A. The Docudrama of Mark’s Gospel

- The Gospel of Mark is like a *docudrama* of Jesus’ life. It’s not a strict biographical account.
- Mark tells a fast-paced, concise story about Jesus’ actions and teachings. The resulting book is like a mosaic of the life of Jesus.

B. Purpose of the Docudrama

- To convey the truth about the identity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- **Verse 1** says, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
- The gospel is about Jesus Christ. It is more than a set of propositional truths, or even a set of beliefs. It is a **Person** (“the gospel of Jesus Christ”).
- One scholar called Jesus “the chief artery of the Gospel.” From him, and through him flows all life and salvation for fallen, hopeless humanity.

II. **The Authority of Jesus Heard in His Words** — Mk 1:21-22

- Jesus observed the traditional habits of Jewish piety. He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath.
- Since Jesus was the visiting rabbi, he was invited to give the sermon (v. 21).
- The crowd was astonished at his teaching (v. 22). They were left “thunderstruck” because Jesus’ preaching carried a powerful punch. His explanation of the gospel, faith and repentance, and the kingdom of God was persuasive and moving.

III. **The Authority of Jesus Seen in His Works** — Mk. 1:23-26

- Mark contrasts the words and deeds of Christ. But notice the order. It’s important. Jesus’ teaching comes *first*, then his deeds. His primary purpose was to proclaim the kingdom of God—to teach, preach, and instruct (Mk 1:14-15). *Then* came the miracles—the exorcisms, casting out demons, healings—that accompanied his teaching and validated his divine power and authority.
- The works of Jesus are contrasted with the works of the devil. According to 1 John 3:8, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”

- Even the demons know who Jesus is. They believe in his identity and power (“I know who you are”). James 2:19 says, “Even the demons believe and shudder.” The demon’s knowledge of Jesus was not personal or relational.
- Martin Luther says, “The life of Christianity consists in possessive pronouns.” It is one thing to say that Christ *is* a Savior. It is quite another to say “Christ is *my* Savior and *my* Lord.”

Conclusion: In this encounter with Jesus, we witness his authority and power. He came to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8). This hopeless man had writhed and convulsed on the synagogue floor in bondage, but now he stood up a free man. He’d been made whole. Jesus had healed him. There is hope for the worst of us—for the hardest heart, for the most degraded sinner. Satan is no match for the strong arm of Jesus. Christ has the power. We hear it in his words. We see it in his works.