



Jacob Lawrence
The Great Migration
1941

Resources for Dismantling Racism: the Gospel of Mark

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Washington, DC

The Rev. Joshua Daniel PhD

Fall 2021

Understanding

- ❖ What is Jesus' message? What is his proclamation?



Understanding

- ❖ The difficulty and importance of understanding the Bible
- ❖ Proverbs 13:24

Those who spare the rod hate their children,
but those who love them are diligent to discipline them.



Understanding

Those who spare the **rod** hate their children,
but those who love them are diligent to discipline
them.

- ❖ שִׁבְטוֹ (shibto) (b̄ə·tōw)
- ❖ *Rod, staff/club*
- ❖ *Rod: the “crook” which gently redirects sheep*
- ❖ *Staff/club: the stick part that shepherds use to beat wolves*



Understanding

- ❖ Similarly, Mark will challenge nearly all our presumptions about faith
- ❖ Messiah, Sin, Demon, Faith



Understanding

- ❖ 30,000 feet (first half of Mark)
- ❖ Old Story: Christianity is about shaming people who do wrong, who don't believe in God (people not in the right tribe)



First Half of Mark

Claim

- ❖ Jesus aligns himself with sinners (the poor)
- ❖ Jesus condemns the religious and political establishment (the powerful)
- ❖ Jesus willfully breaks the law and redefine's holiness

Reference

- ❖ *I have come to call not the righteous but sinners (2:17)*
- ❖ *Jesus is angered and grieved by their "hardness of heart" (3:5)*
- ❖ *The Son of Man (Human One) is lord even of the sabbath (2:27) ... Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother (3:35).*

Themes in First Half of Mark

Claim

- ❖ Jesus aligns himself with sinners (the poor)
Economic Inequality
- ❖ Jesus condemns the religious and political establishment (the powerful)
Religious Nationalism
- ❖ Jesus willfully breaks the law and redefine's holiness
Ethnic / racial prejudice

Reference

- ❖ Radical redistribution of wealth (mass feedings in Chapter 6 and 8; and rejection of wealth in Chapter 10)
- ❖ Fundamental rejection of religious nationalism and the Davidic covenant (especially in Chapter 1 and 12)
- ❖ Reorientation away from tribe to equality before God (especially in Chapter 3, 5, 6, 7)

Movements of Jesus in Mark

Calls Disciples (Chapter 1)



Dismantles systems of oppression (Chapters 2-3)



Teaches (Chapters 4)



Constructs new kingdom (Chapters 5-7)

Calls Disciples (8:27-9:13)



Dismantles systems of oppression (11:1-13:3)



Teaches (13)



Constructs new kingdom (8-10)

Mark 1:1-20

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

Close Reading

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

→ “The Beginning”

- *...In the beginning God created (Genesis 1)*
- Apocalyptic start: a new heaven and new earth
- A regeneration of salvation history
- The 2nd Beginning (a pointer from Mark 16:7)

Close Reading

The beginning of **the good news** of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

→ Aka *The Gospel*

- A technical term for victory (esp military battles)
- At the birth of the emperor: the message is *proclaimed* (a favorite use of Mark to describe the living out of the Gospel)
- Ancient inscription: *The birthday of the god was for the world the beginning of the joyful message which have gone forth because of him*

Close Reading

The beginning of the good news of Jesus **Christ**,
the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

→ Aka *the Messiah*

- A continuation of the imperial theme: the one many Judeans believed who was promised to restore the power of Jerusalem / temple and remove by force the Roman colonizers
- A title Jesus does not accept until Mark 15
- Instead Mark has Jesus prefer “the Son of Man” (Human One)
- The Human One is itself an apocalyptic image from the book of Daniel

Close Reading

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

- Quotation is actually a supercut from Exodus, Isaiah, and Malachi
- Subtle subversion: Mark’s peers would have assumed that the last prophet from God was Malachi
- Subtext: The Word of God still lives, even now

Close Reading

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

- More literally, *See, I am sending my messenger before your face.*
- *Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the land I have prepared for you [Ex 23:20].*
- *Behold I dispatch my messenger to make a way before me [Mal 3:1a].*
- *The Way* is Mark’s favorite form of characterizing the path of discipleship — accepting the call to follow Jesus

Larger Themes

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “**The time is fulfilled**, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee...

- Plotted time versus Story-time
- Plotted time can be sped up, slowed down, out of order.
- Story-time a chronological account of events (which may or may not be accounted for)

Larger Themes

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee...

- How long was Jesus in the wilderness? Days, months, years?
- John's arrest was on par with Jesus' arrest in terms of the fear and devastation it represented for his movement but we hear none of that

Larger Themes

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee...

- Subverting expectations again
- Time is fulfilled and Jesus goes to Galilee!!?!?
- The heavens are torn apart and Jesus goes to the wilderness!?!?

Larger Themes

As Jesus passed along **the Sea of Galilee**, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the **hired men**, and followed him.

- Meaning versus facts
- The way in which Mark both uses high symbolism and also gives an ordinary account (grounded in historical fact) of Palestinian life
- *Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children ... who will not receive a hundredfold ... Mark 10:29 (also Mark 3:35)*

Larger Themes

As Jesus passed along **the Sea of Galilee**, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the **hired men**, and followed him.

- Meaning versus facts
- *Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children ... who will not receive a hundredfold ... Mark 10:29 (also Mark 3:35)*
- Consider the ramifications:

Why Dismantling Racism?

- ❖ Resisting Colonial readings of ancient, non-Western texts
- ❖ A history of racism
- ❖ What is faith?
- *See, I am sending my messenger before your face.*



Future Classes

Chapter 2: Socio-economic context of ancient Palestine (especially Galilee), systems of purity and debt culture

Chapter 3: Rival religious traditions: Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.

Chapter 4: Apocalypse as literature

Chapter 5: Mission to the Gentiles

Chapter 6: Mission to the Poor

Chapter 7: What is Faith?



Stuff I Missed

- ❖ Apocalyptic and ordinary
- ❖ A new heaven and a new earth, yes
- ❖ But also: Jesus calls fisherman; Jesus does not remain in the wilderness (in heaven) but jumps in to the chaos with both feet



Palestine



Why Dismantling Racism?

- ❖ Resisting Colonial readings of ancient, non-Western texts
- ❖ A history of racism
- ❖ What is faith?
- *See, I am sending my messenger before your face.*





Jacob Lawrence
The Great Migration
1941

Resources for Dismantling Racism: the Gospel of Mark

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Washington, DC

The Rev. Joshua Daniel PhD

Fall 2021

Judea

