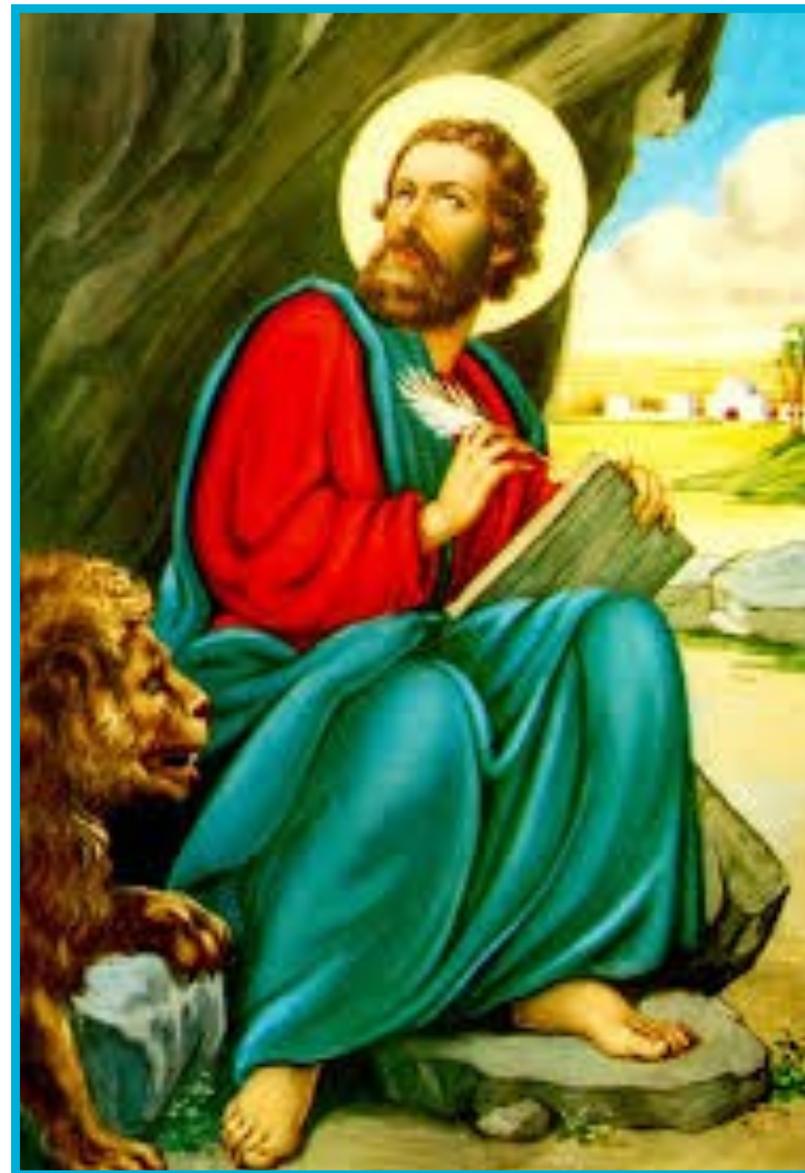




THE GOSPEL OF MARK

CHAPTER 3: 1-35



For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

Mark wrote down Peter's account of the 'good news'. Peter was one of the first twelve of Jesus' disciples, and the first to publicly recognize Him as the Messiah. Peter, through Mark, shows us that Jesus fulfills all the criteria of the Servant-Messiah our Ransom, who was prophesied by Isaiah some 750 years earlier (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:5-7; 52:13-53:12). Jesus is portrayed as a slave, caring for people and serving God (Mark 1:32-35). There are therefore no details of His birth, only of the beginning of His service (Mark 1:1,9).

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Mark 3: 1-35

Douay Rheims Version

*Christ heals the withered hand. He chooses the twelve.
He confutes the blasphemy of the Pharisees.*

1. And he entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there who had a withered hand.
2. And they watched him whether he would heal on the sabbath days; that they might accuse him.
3. And he said to the man who had the withered hand: Stand up in the midst.
4. And he saith to them: Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy? But they held their peace.

Boanerges: so the Arabic, Egyptian, and Persian. The Ethiopic has *Baanerges*. This name is a corruption, for in Hebrew, or rather in Syriac, it would be *Banerges* or *Bonerges*, as it is found in certain MSS., as Franc. Lucas attests in his *Notation*. For the Syrians, like the Bavarians and the Westphalians, pronounce the vowel *a* like *o*, and *e* like *a*. For *Semuel* they say *Samuel*, and for *bene*, or *sons*, *bane*. It may be that *Banerges* has been changed into *Boanerges* by persons ignorantly supposing that *boa* signifies *the sound of thunder*.

Banerges, as Jansen observes, is a compound word, consisting of *בנים*, *bane*, *sons*, and *רעש*, *regesch*, a *roaring*, i.e., of *thunder*. Thus Jupiter is called by the Greeks *ὕψιβρεμέτης*, *loftily roaring*, i.e., *thundering on high*. The Syriac version has in this place *bane reges*, *sons of thunder*, instead of the Hebrew expression, *bene raam*. For Christ here spoke in the Syriac of that age. There is here, then, a metathesis or transposition of the letters *r* and *e*, *banerges*, instead of *bane reges*. A similar transposition is common in many languages, as Angelus Caninius shows (*Hellen*. p. 64). Thus, for *καρδία* the Greek poets say *κραδίη*, *κρατερός* for *καρτερός*; for *νεῦρον* the Latins say *nervus*; for *ἀράραξ*, *rapax*; for *μορφή*, *forma*. Punic has *gerac* for *ἀκρα*, i.e., *arx*, a *citadel*. Etruscan has *bigr*, *virgo*, a virgin; *darag*, *gradus*, a step; *elmara*, *mulier*, a woman; *cabbirim*, cherubim, &c.

The meaning, then, is as follows: Christ called James and John by a new name, *Banerges*, *Sons of thunder*, because He charged them above the rest of the Apostles with the glorious preaching of His Gospel, that by the holiness of their lives and their miracles they might be like thunderbolts, and might, by the power of their voices, shake as with claps of thunder unbelievers and barbarians, and bring them to repentance and a holy life. This appears in the history of S. James. Because of his liberty and zeal in preaching, he was the first among the Apostles to incur the wrath of Herod and the Jews, by whom he was beheaded (Acts xii.). The same converted the Spaniards, and by their means the inhabitants of the East and West Indies, to the faith of Christ. John preached for a very long period, and very efficaciously. He was the last of the Apostles to depart this life, which he did after he had subdued Asia and other provinces to Christ by his preaching. Hence, also, his Gospel begins with divine thunder, as it were an eagle of God crying with a voice of thunder, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (S. Epiphanius, *Hæres*. 73). Wherefore, when he was writing his Gospel, there were lightnings and thunderings from heaven, like as it lightened from Mount Sinai when God gave the law to Moses. So Baronius shows from Metaphrastes (A.D. 99 *in fin*).

See what I have said on Ezek. i. 14, on the words, "They went like a flash of lightning," where I have given a threefold meaning to the expression, *Sons of thunder*. Thus Pericles, as an orator, seemed, says Quintilian, not so much to speak as to thunder and lighten. Wherefore he was called by the poets the Olympian, that is, the heavenly.

Ver. 21. *He is beside himself*. See what has been said on S. Matt. xii. 46. The Arabic has, *saying that He is foolish*. The Greek is *ἐξέστη*, i.e., *He has gone out of his mind*, through too great piety and zeal. The Syriac renders literally. Others render differently, *saying that He has swooned*, from hunger, because, on account of the multitude, He had no leisure to eat.

Saying, Thou art the Son of God. You will ask whether the devils really knew that Jesus was the Messiah or the Christ, the Son of God? I answer, it is plain from this passage, and from S. Matthew viii. 29, and from S. Luke iv. 41, and from the Fathers and commentators generally, that the devils, although they did not fully know Christ at His baptism, and before His baptism, because they afterwards tempted Him, that they might learn who He was; yet subsequently they did recognise who He was, from the many and great miracles, which they clearly saw were true miracles, and far transcending their own power and that of the angels. They saw that what Christ did was wrought alone by the power of God, with this end in view, that He might prove, first, that He was the Messiah promised to the fathers; second, that He was God, and the Son of God. Wherefore, I say that the devils knew that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, especially when they compared the Scriptures and the ancient prophecies with the miracles of Christ. For they saw that Jesus was to be such a person, and would work such miracles, as they had predicted.

Observe, however, that the devils did not so clearly know this truth, as not, on the other hand, when they thought of the greatness of the mystery, and of the infinite dignity and humiliation of Christ incarnate (which would appear a thing of itself incredible, especially to the devil, being most proud), somewhat to hesitate and be in doubt whether Jesus were really Messiah and the Son of God. They the more hesitated, yea, they were ignorant of the object and fruit of this mystery, that indeed by the incarnation and death of Christ men were to be redeemed, and that the kingdom of God was to be erected in them. Especially were they blinded by their hatred of Jesus, because they saw that many souls were delivered from them by Him. Hence they felt that He must be altogether opposed and crushed by them. Whence it came to pass that they, being blinded by their hatred of Jesus, did not understand the Holy Scriptures, otherwise so plain, concerning the cross of Christ and our redemption thereby. Thus, by means of the Jews, they crucified and slew Jesus as an irreconcilable enemy, and thus they ignorantly destroyed their own kingdom. Thus S. Leo (*Serm. 9, de Pass.*), "Nor did the devil himself perceive that by his rage against Christ he destroyed his own principality; who would not have lost the rights he had gained by his ancient fraud if he had refrained from shedding the blood of the Lord Jesus. But by his malice, being greedy of doing harm, when he rushes upon Him, he falls; when he would capture, he is taken; whilst he pursues a mortal, he stumbles against the Saviour."

And Simon He surnamed Peter. Several Greek codices prefix to these words, *πρῶτον Σίμων*, first Peter. The rest omit them. The same thing is sufficiently gathered from the fact that Peter is here first named by Christ, and his name changed, so that he who was first called *Simon*, is afterwards called in Syriac *Cephas*, in Greek and Latin *Petrus*, that is, *a rock*, because he was to be made by Christ the rock and foundation of the Church.

And James the son of Zebedee (James is named first because he was the elder), *and John the brother of James.* And he called the *Boanerges*, which is, *Sons of thunder*. He saith not name, but names, because they were two. They were *thunderers*, thundering forth, as it were, Christ's Gospel and doctrines.

5. And looking round about on them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, he saith to the man: Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored unto him.
6. And the Pharisees going out, immediately made a consultation with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.
7. But Jesus retired with his disciples to the sea; and a great multitude followed him from Galilee and Judea,
8. And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan. And they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing the things which he did, came to him.
9. And he spoke to his disciples that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.
10. For he healed many, so that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had evils.
11. And the unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him: and they cried, saying:
12. Thou art the Son of God. And he strictly charged them that they should not make him known.
13. And going up into a mountain, he called unto him whom he would himself: and they came to him.
14. And he made that twelve should be with him, and that he might send them to preach.
15. And he gave them power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.
16. And to Simon he gave the name Peter:
17. And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he named them *Boanerges*, which is, *The sons of thunder*:
18. And Andrew and Philip, and Bartholomew and Matthew, and Thomas and James of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Cananean:
19. And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.
20. And they come to a house, and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.
21. And when his friends had heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him. For they said: He is become mad.
22. And the scribes who were come down from Jerusalem, said: He hath *Beelzebub*, and by the prince of devils he casteth out devils.
23. And after he had called them together, he said to them in parables: How can Satan cast out Satan?
24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
25. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.
26. And if Satan be risen up against himself, he is divided, and cannot stand, but hath an end.
27. No man can enter into the house of a strong man and rob him of his goods, unless he first bind the strong man, and then shall he plunder his house.
28. Amen I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme:

29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin.

30. Because they said: He hath an unclean spirit.

31. And his mother and his brethren came; and standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32. And the multitude sat about him; and they say to him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33. And answering them, he said: Who is my mother and my brethren?

34. And looking round about on them who sat about him, he saith: Behold my mother and my brethren.

35. For whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

1 Christ healeth the withered hand, 10 and many other infirmities: 11 rebuketh the unclean spirits: 13 chooseth his twelve apostles: 22 convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub: 31 and sheweth who are his brother, sister, and mother.

Ver. 4. *And He saith to them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy? But they held their peace.* The translator reads *ἀπολέσαι*, that is, *to destroy*. We now read *ἀποκτεῖναι*, i.e., *to kill*. But *to destroy* is better. For the Gospel is speaking of a maimed person, who had a withered hand, not of one who was dead. With reference to healing this maimed person, the Scribes had proposed a doubt or scruple, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?* Christ resolved this doubt by means of another question, not dubious, but plain, *Is it lawful to do well on the Sabbath, or to do evil; to save a soul, or to destroy it?* (Vulg.). A *soul*, i.e., *a man*, says S. Augustine. The meaning is, if any one should not succour or do a kindness to one who is sick or heavily afflicted, like this maimed man, on the Sabbath, when he is able to do it, as I, Christ, am able, he does him an injury; for he refuses him the help which is due to him by the law of love. In a similar sense S. Augustine says, "If thou hast not fed the hungry, thou hast killed him," because thou hast allowed him to die of hunger. In like manner, if thou hast not delivered him who was about to be killed by a robber, when thou mightest have done so, thou hast slain him; for his death will be reckoned to thee by God for guilt and punishment, in exactly the same manner as if thou hadst killed him thyself. Christ, therefore, signifies that not to do good on the Sabbath to a sick person, when thou art able, is to do him evil. But it is never lawful to do evil. Therefore it is always lawful to do good to such persons, even on the Sabbath. For the Sabbath is devoted to God and good works. And thus it is a more grievous sin to do evil on the Sabbath than upon other days. For by this means the sanctity of the Sabbath is violated, even as by doing good upon it is the better kept and hallowed.

Ver. 5. *And looking round upon them with anger.* Being angry at their unbelief, says the *Interlinear*, showing by His countenance that He was wroth with the blind, and obstinate, and perverse minds of the Scribes, in that they ascribed Christ's miracles of goodness, which He wrought upon the Sabbath, to a breach of the law enjoining the

observance of that day. From hence it is plain that there was in Christ real anger, sorrow, and the rest of the passions and affections, as they exist in other men, only subject to reason. Wherefore anger was in Him a whetstone of virtue. "Anger," says Franc. Lucas, "is in us a passion; in Christ it was, as it were, an action. It arises spontaneously in us; by Christ it was stirred up in Himself. When it has arisen in us, it disturbs the other faculties of the body and mind, nor can it be repressed at our own pleasure; but when stirred up in Christ, it acts as He wills it to act, it disturbs nothing,—in fine, it ceases when He wills it to cease."

This is what S. Leo (*Epist.* 11) says, "The bodily senses were vigorous in Christ without the law of sin; and the reality of His affections was governed by His soul and deity."

Lactantius says (*lib. de Ira Dei ex Posidon.*), "Anger is the lust of punishing him by whom you think yourself to have been injured." Wherefore anger in other men springs from self-love; but in Christ it sprang from love of God, because He loved God perfectly. Hence He was infinitely grieved and angry at offences against God by reason of sin, and committed by sinners, wishing to compensate for those offences by punishing or correcting sinners and unbelievers. Wherefore Christ's anger was zeal, or seasoned with zeal, even as in the angels and the blessed it is not anger but zeal. (See S. Thomas, 3 p. q. art 9.)

Being grieved at the blindness, Syriac, hardness or callousness, of their hearts. Grieved, Gr. *συλλυπούμενος*, i.e., *condoling with and commiserating* them, because, being blinded and hardened by envy and hatred, they would not acknowledge Him to be the Messiah, but spake evil of His kindness to the sick upon the Sabbath-days. It is meant, therefore, that the anger of Jesus did not proceed from the desire of vengeance, but was mingled with pity; and that Jesus was angry with sin, but sorry for sinners, insomuch as He loved them, and strove to save them. Lastly, all such anger is mingled with sorrow; for he that is angry grieves for the evil at which he is angry. Thus the sorrow for the evil causes and sharpens anger, that it may strive to remove the evil at which it is grieved.

Ver. 9. *That a little ship should wait upon Him.* Gr. *προσκαρτερῆ*, i.e., should be close at hand, that He might betake Himself to it when the multitude pressed upon Him.

Ver. 10. *Plagues, Gr. μάστιγας, i.e., scourgings, viz., strokes and diseases,* with which God chastises and scourges men on account of their sins.

Ver. 11. *And unclean spirits fell down before Him, i.e., they fell clown, deprecating punishment, that He would not drive them out of the men, and banish them to hell.*