

Mark 3:7-12

Summary of Jesus’ Ministry

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Introduction

In this section, Mark offers a summary of Jesus’ ministry—highlighting key themes he has already introduced. Specifically, these verses focus on three facets of the Lord’s ministry: His popular appeal with the crowds (vv. 7–9), and His power and authority over the demons (vv. 10–12). Mark shows the conflict between Jesus’ popular appeal and the rejection of the religious leaders.

2

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But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea ⁸ and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. ⁹ So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. ¹⁰ For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. ¹¹ And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." ¹² But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

3

Jesus' Appeal

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Mark 3:6 stated, "**Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.**" It was not yet Jesus' time to die on the cross so He "**withdrew with His disciples to the sea.**"

Jesus' popularity was also increasing among the people. They were amazed at His teachings and miracles. The crowds were becoming too large to effectively minister within the confines of a city. Withdrawing to the wilderness allowed Him to minister to larger crowds of people.

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Jesus' disciples consisted of an unknown number of followers. The Greek word translated "**disciple**" means "**learner**" or "**student**" and refers to those who had moved beyond an initial interest in Jesus and desired to follow Him as their teacher. During His earthly ministry, Jesus had numerous disciples, many of whom were superficial and would not remain with Him (cf. John 2:23–25; 6:66). Yet, scattered among this crowd were those men who later became the twelve apostles. Jesus had already called Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathaniel, and Matthew to be His disciples (1:16–20; 2:13–14; John 1:35–51). In our next passage, we will see Jesus calling the rest of the twelve.

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By leaving the city, Jesus separated Himself from those who wanted to kill Him. However, "**a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea⁸ and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him.**" The double use of "**great**" likely indicates thousands if not tens of thousands of people. The size of the multitude was indicative of the fact that Jesus' fame had been spreading over the region of Galilee and throughout Israel (cf. 1:28).

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Mark describes the scope of Jesus' popularity by noting the various geographical regions represented in the crowd of people. Some were from the south—from **Judea**, from **Jerusalem**, and even farther south, from **Idumea**. Idumea is the Greek name for Edom. Others came from the east, from **beyond the Jordan**. Still more traveled from the northwestern vicinity of **Tyre** and **Sidon**, a predominantly Gentile area.

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Those who ventured out to see Jesus experienced miraculous displays unlike anything in history. The blind were given sight, the crippled walked, the deaf heard, the sick were made well, and the leprous cleansed. In an era nearly two thousand years before the development of modern medicine, Jesus banished disease and its effects from the land of Israel for the duration of His ministry. With nothing more than a word and a touch, He brought immediate, complete healing and restoration to those who suffered from diseases and disabilities.

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We saw that people from every region brought sick family members and desperate friends to Jesus. The Lord's miracles were public and undeniable, which is why the people kept coming. No one questioned His miracles. There is no record of any effort to deny any of them. Even His enemies, who would have strongly desired to discredit the reality of His miracles, never suggested they were not factual. Yet, they refused to believe in Him. Unable to deny Jesus' power, these stubborn unbelievers attempted to discredit His person by attributing the source of His power to Satan (3:22).

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Jesus' Appeal

Mark 3:9

So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him.

Despite their opposition, the religious leaders could not keep the people away from Jesus. The crowds were so dense that Jesus told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him. Jesus would sometimes get into a small boat and be pushed out away from the shore to avoid being crushed by the swarms of people. From the boat, Jesus would return to His primary mission – preaching the Kingdom of God.

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Jesus' Power and Authority

Mark 3:10-12

For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. ¹¹ And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." ¹² But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

Jesus' popular appeal with the people was fueled by His miracles, though popularity was not His goal. As manifestations of His divine power, **His supernatural works were signs that authenticated His salvation message** (cf. John 5:36; 10:38) as the divine messianic King. Most of the miracles Jesus performed were acts of healing. Those creative miracles required the instant reversal of disease and decay and the immediate restoration of the human body. **For Jesus, the Creator of the universe, no sickness or disability proved too difficult to heal.** He instantly created new limbs and organs—restoring eyes, ears, hands, feet, and bodies to full health and function.

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The result was "**that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him.**" The Greek word translated afflictions was used by the Jews to speak of a calamity or misfortune sent by God as a punishment. In first-century Judaism, it was common to interpret disease and disability as the judgment of God. Therefore, many of those suffering from physical ailments interpreted their hardship as God's displeasure toward them. That notion made some particularly receptive to the good news of salvation. **Jesus not only offered them physical healing but also spiritual healing — forgiveness from sin, reconciliation with God, and the hope of eternal life.**

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Jesus also cast out demons. Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, "**You are the Son of God!**" And He warned them "**not make Him known**". Demons were unable to conceal themselves from Jesus. In His presence, they panicked, falling down before Him and blurting out His identity. Jesus' authority over demons underscores His divine nature. Not only did they recognize Him as the Son of God, but when He cast them out, they fled under His authority. When He told them to be quiet, they obeyed. Though they were His most vicious enemies, they were constrained to submit to His commands.

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So What ...

Jesus' power over the demons caused the people to wonder who He was.

Who possessed such authority? Who could banish both demons and disease? Who was this Man? Mark's history has repeatedly answered such questions – **He is none other than the Son of God**. The Father declared that reality at His baptism, and even the demons could not help but acknowledge it when He confronted them.

People today should be asking these same questions. Like ancient Israel, so many today are blinded by lies and their hearts are hardened.

Be encouraged. Jesus is still the King of the Universe and is still calling people to Salvation. Do not grow weary of doing good. Share the Good News of Salvation with someone this week!

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