

An Identity Commentary on the Gospel of Mark

And looking up he said "I see men, that as trees I see walking!" [Mark 8:24]

The Gospel of Mark - Part 5: Preventing the Decay

In our previous presentation we read Peter's personal account of the healing of his mother-in-law, whom we identified as a type for the woman of Israel who is often depicted in the prophets as the symbolic mother of the nation. After having healed her fever, a type for the sores and bruises of Israel's wrongdoing, she was raised and proceeded to serve the house, mirroring how the children of Israel were released from the penalty of death (raised) and then commanded to serve the house of their brethren anew. As Paul wrote in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, "**For you have been called on to freedom [from the penalty of death], brethren, only not that freedom for occasion in the flesh; but through love you serve one another.**"¹

Christ Himself set the example of service, declaring in the Gospel that "**The Son of Man has come not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many**"² and so after being served by one of His daughters in the house of Peter and Andrew, He then turned to serve the diseased and demon-possessed who were later gathering at the door, it was late in the day and even so He served them, for He said in John's gospel that "**My Father labors until now, and I labor!**"³ Those were words which He said in Jerusalem during Sabbath, and it also appears that the events recorded from Mark 1:21-39 all happened on the same Sabbath day. (Later in the gospel Christ is hounded by His adversaries devoid of brotherly love for helping His people on the Sabbath.)

Finally, in an account which is understandably most detailed here in Mark since it is indeed Peter's gospel, we read that Christ rose early in the night to pray in solitude, and then that Peter and those with him diligently searched for Him, akin to sheep seeking after their Shepherd, saying that "**they all seek you!**" Afterwards would the ninety-nine sheep of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Europe and Asia Minor diligently seek out their God, just as it was written that "**Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days**"⁴

But first it was necessary for Christ to carry out the works for which He was sent, such as to proclaim the good news and to cast out demons throughout Galilee and Judaea, therefore He responded to the exclamation made by Peter and those with him by saying "**We should go elsewhere into the neighboring towns, in order that I shall proclaim there. For this reason have I come.**"⁵ As Christ continues to shine His Light in Galilee, we will see in this presentation that nothing can separate an Israelite from the mercy which is found in Him - not height nor depth nor even the deathly condition of leprosy, for Yahshua came to justify all the seed of Israel without exception.

¹ Galatians 5:13

² Mark 10:45

³ John 5:17 [...]

⁴ Hosea 3:5

⁵ Mark 1:38

1:40 And there comes to Him a leper, exhorting Him saying to Him that "If You desire, You are able to cleanse me!" 41 And being deeply moved, extending His hand He touched him and says to him "I desire, be cleansed!" 42 And immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he had been cleansed. 43 And admonishing him at once He drove him away 44 and says to him: "See that you say nothing to no one, but go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing that which Moses has commanded, for a testimony to them." 45 But going off he began to proclaim many things and to spread the account, so that for Him to no longer be able to enter openly into the city, but He was outside in the desert places, and they came to Him from everywhere.

This account is recorded in all three synoptic gospels and is found at *Matthew 8:1-4* where it is comparatively terse, and then at *Luke 5:12-16* where it is quite similar to how it reads here, but of the three it is most detailed in Mark; and that is apparently the case for at least many of the accounts shared between the gospels.

Matthew records the cleansing of this leper as having happened sometime after Yahshua descended from the mountain where He gave His Sermon on the Mount, and the apostle then records his calling as having taken place sometime around that period (it is probably impossible for us to be any more precise). The placement of his calling does agree with Mark and Luke, as those two gospels present the cleansing of the leper, healing of the paralytic, and calling of the apostle Matthew in the same direct order; Matthew's gospel follows the same sequence but shuffles a few accounts in between the leper and paralytic but still follows their same order.

- **Cleansing of the leper:** Mark 1:40–45; Luke 5:12–16 [Matthew 8:1–4]
- **Healing of the paralytic:** Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26 [Matthew 9:1–8]
- **Calling of Matthew:** Mark 2:13–14; Luke 5:27–28 [Matthew 9:9]
- **Reception at Matthew's house:** Mark 2:15–22; Luke 5:29–39 [Matthew 9:10–17]

So while the precise timeline remains difficult to determine, it is evident that the cleansing of this leprous man occurred sometime *after* the Sermon on the Mount and *before* the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum, and Matthew's tax office was likely located in or near that settlement.

1:40 And there comes to Him a leper, exhorting Him saying to Him that "If You desire, You are able to cleanse me!"

No matter where they lived lepers endured difficult lives of uncertainty, and this was especially true for the children of Israel, who alone of all nations were given the [uncorrupt light of the law](#),⁶ something which Zechariah and Haggai praised Yahweh God for in the 147th Psalm. And so in the Book of Kings we can see that Naaman was a mighty man of valor, an impressive but still technically attainable feat for a leper among the Arameans,⁷ but such an accomplishment would have likely been impossible for an Israelite, for to whom much is given more is demanded. They are the wife of the household and the rest of the Adamic race are solely the children.

Israel is sanctified unto their God and the law commands that they remain a holy nation even to this very day, just as Peter relates in his first epistle and also Paul in various places. This means that we are to remain separate from the unclean races and also from all things defiled, so for that reason lepers were commanded to remain separate from the camp. For lepers to be cut off from civil life in that way was to be cut off from the vocations which bring bread to the table - and so many of them resorted to begging in order to survive, and if they could not find some means of sustenance then the path quickly straightened towards death.

It was a painful existence, but not all lepers were consigned to such a fate for their entire lives. We will assume that Yahweh would not have instituted Levitical rites and offerings for cleansed lepers if He were to never heal them at diverse times and places. Indeed, such mercy would have been a leper's only recourse, and that is true for all trials in life, for Yahweh God is the only true Physician. That is one lesson of the account in Kings: that the idols of Syria were vain and only the One True God was capable of healing Naaman.

⁶ Wisdom 18:4

⁷ Antiquities 3.11.4

The children of Israel being raised with the law and prophets would know these truths by heart, and here the leper acts upon his knowledge in a show of great faith. We cannot know what inspired him; maybe it was the report from Capernaum or another testimony; perhaps he observed Yahshua or even heard His discourse on the mountain (as Matthew places the event). Whatever it was - something stirred his Adamic Spirit, and he demonstrates a good fruit of his good family tree when he does not aggravate or prod as the Canaanite dog later did.⁸ Even though he is living out an absolutely horrible existence, he still submits to Yahshua's authority and willingly puts his fate into the hands of the Overseer of his soul, saying "If You desire, You are able to cleanse me!" It is the desire of Yahweh God which matters and men should trust in His plans, for Christ was an example to us all when He prayed to be spared from a horrible execution and yet exclaimed "But it is not My desire, rather it must be Yours."⁹ The leper's meekness here may have been one reason as to why Yahshua was so deeply moved.

There is also great significance behind the leper's words when we consider the testimony of the law and prophets, of which he would have undoubtedly been familiar with. He is attributing an ability to Yahshua which only belongs to Yahweh God.¹⁰ For instance we read in the book of Kings in the account of Naaman:

2 Kings 5:6-7 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

The king rightfully understood that only God can kill and make alive, which is a reference to the words of Yahweh in the Song of Moses, where He said, "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."¹¹ Therefore when the Heavenly Father had punished Mariam with leprosy, He said "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again."¹² There Yahweh connected leprosy to spitting in the face, because it is an easy thing for the Almighty to wound, and we will see that it is just as easy a thing for Him to heal:

1:41 And being deeply moved, extending His hand He touched him and says to him "I desire, be cleansed!"

Matthew and Luke make no mention of Christ's emotion. Mark alone adds this detail.

*[The Codex Bezae (D) has **indignant** (ὀργίζω) here instead of **deeply moved** (σπλαγγισθεὶς), and some have argued that **indignant** is internally supported where Christ afterwards admonishes and drives away the leper (v.43). There does not need to be any inconsistency in emotion here. The leper is still unclean until he provides the offerings and washes himself (as we will see in Leviticus 14), and we will assume that Christ strictly charges the leper on account of the importance and urgency of those commandments. The 5th century Codex Bezae is infamous for its liberties and often read with suspicion, so perhaps it's fitting that it is the only codex bearing this different reading. It appears that a scribe attempted to rectify what he perceived as an inconsistency in emotion, but men should never tamper with the word of God, and they will all be found as liars in the end. (Pro 30:6)]*

Again, leprosy was akin to a sentence of death being that you were cut off from all livelihood and affection, as Aaron said to Moses in a symbolic sense concerning Miriam's leprosy, "Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb."¹³ We see a similar perspective expressed by Josephus where he wrote in Antiquities "But for the lepers, he [Moses]

⁸ Matthew 15:23

⁹ Luke 22:42 [...]

¹⁰ In the following account of the paralytic we will see several witnesses that Christ is Yahweh in the flesh.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 32:39

¹² Numbers 12:14

¹³ Numbers 12:12

suffered them not to come into the city at all; nor to live with any others; as if they were in effect dead persons.”¹⁴

The severity of leprosy brings out another type in this account. Just as the mother-in-law of Peter was a type so too is this man, whose often fatal condition mirrors the covenant with death which the children of Israel had made on account of their transgressions, and even Adam before them whose covenant with death passed onto all. As Moses said “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” But they did not choose life, instead they chose to rebel against the law and as Paul said “the provision of error is death” and then James that “the error being accomplished brings forth death”¹⁵ On several occasions¹⁶ Yahweh had punished men with leprosy on account of their wrongdoing, such as Miriam, but also Gehazi, Azariah, and Uzziah, and such punishment was akin to death, and all of Israel was subject to that condemnation on account of their adultery.

But in spite of Israel’s rebellion and rightful condemnation to destruction, Yahweh God the Lover of Life could never delight in such a fate for the children of Israel. Therefore Solomon wrote in Wisdom, “God did not make death nor has He delight in the destruction of the living.”; and Jeremiah later agreed in his lamentation of the destruction of Jerusalem where he wrote, “For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.”¹⁷Yahweh also directly expressed this truth Himself to the prophet Ezekiel, where He instructed him and said:

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Even a general perusal of the prophets reveals that Yahweh always gave generous allowances and windows for repentance. As it is written several times in the prophet Isaiah, “For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.”¹⁸ But despite His patience and long-suffering the children of Israel never reached out to grab His hand, and so they repeated the pattern which Solomon had before expressed in Proverbs, where he personified the voice of Wisdom and wrote, “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded”¹⁹

But here the deathly leper *does* reach out and *does* plea for rescue from the fate which Yahweh urged His people to return from in the prophets. As we read in Isaiah from a passage which Paul quoted in Romans, “I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name [Hosea 1:8]. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts”²⁰

Yahshua’s emotional response is perhaps reflective of those same testimonies. Again, it is alone recorded in Mark that Yahshua was deeply moved, and the word used is *πλαγχνίζομαι*²¹ which has a root in the noun *σπλάγγνον*,²²which is most literally the *inward parts* or *bowels*, and was used as a metaphor for *the seat of feelings and affections* (Liddell and Scott). So we read here in Mark that a man consigned to a fate associated with death comes before God and moves Him, and with that in mind we may also read a passage from Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31:18-20 I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, [even some of the worst punishments such as death (of which leprosy is a type) are only for correction when Yahweh had promised to save all of Israel] as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even

¹⁴ Antiquities 3.11.3

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 30:19 | Romans 6:23 [...] | James 1:15 [...]

¹⁶ 2 Kings 5:27, 2 Kings 15:5, 2 Chronicles 26:19-21

¹⁷ Wisdom 1:13 [...] | Lamentations 3:33

¹⁸ Isaiah 5:25, 9:12, 9:17, 9:21, 10:4

¹⁹ Proverbs 1:24

²⁰ Isaiah 65:1-2

²¹ #4697

²² #4698

confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD. We can see in the Gospel that Yahshua was deeply moved when His people actually *sought Him*. (Matthew 14:13-14)

Yahweh had beforehand expressed a similar affection for Ephraim in the prophet Hosea, where He said:

Hosea 11:8-9 (ESV) How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? [Canaanite cities of the plain destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah - death and destruction] My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; [think of leprosy and its type] for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

Therefore even though the children of Israel were consigned to death - just like the cities of Admah and Zeboiim which were consumed in flames - their Redeemer's bowels were moved for Ephraim and He desired to save them from such a fate, just as His bowels were moved for the leper here whose condition is symbolic of that death.

Then the leper being touched was healed of his condition which was akin to death (and thus also iniquity), just as the coal touched the lips of Isaiah as a signal of the purging of His sins, where we read in its sixth chapter, "And he [the seraph] laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; (perhaps Leviticus 13:45 can come to mind) and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."²³

Indeed, only Yahweh can forgive sin, but what the seraph did in the vision was symbolic of Yahweh's forgiveness, just as His touching and cleansing the leper here was symbolic of His coming forgiveness for all of Israel.

It was for the sake of the unconditional promises which Yahweh made to their forefather Abraham that He cleansed their iniquity: it was His desire that such mercy be accomplished. And so just as Christ, the son of David, says to the deathly condemned leper, "I desire, be cleansed!", so too did He express through the mouths of His prophet that He desired and would accomplish the sure mercies of David, saying "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."²⁴ Indeed men are trees walking, and later in this account we will see this leper is one of those trees clapping his hands.

1:42 And immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he had been cleansed.

There are two distinct records of Christ healing lepers in the Gospel (the second is when He heals the ten lepers). Though it certainly appears that He had done so on more occasions than just these. (Matthew 11:15, Luke 7:22)

As we read in the song of Moses: it is Yahweh alone who kills and it is Yahweh alone who makes alive. So just as He wounded Gehazi the servant of Elisha or king Uzziah with leprosy in a mere moment²⁵ - so too can He heal from decay in a very instant, and even in the dart of an eye He will change the form of our bodies of humiliation at the appointed hour. Who else can do such things?

In light of the types we have discussed so far we can interpret another in this leprous body of decay being cleansed and brought to health, with the former body representing death and the latter body representing life. This is a looking-glass into what will soon be fulfilled, for Paul of Tarsus connected the promised changing of our decaying and corrupt bodies with the final victory over death:

²³ Isaiah 6:7

²⁴ Isaiah 55:11-12

²⁵ 2 Kings 5:27 | 2 Chronicles 26:19

1 Corinthians 15:50-55 But this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood are not able to inherit the kingdom of Yahweh, nor does decay inherit incorruption. Behold I tell you a mystery, we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed. In an instant, in a dart of an eye, with the last trumpet; for it shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. This decay wants to be clothed in incorruptibility, and this mortal to be clothed in immortality. And when this decay shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then the word that has been written shall come to pass: "Death has been swallowed in victory." "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?"

Through Christ the leprosy departed from this man's body and he was clothed with a healthy one, just as our bodies of decay will inherit incorruptibility upon His imminent return, and Paul connected this with the final victory over death, which leprosy indeed represents. This is a far vision fulfillment, and all of these things are accomplished through Christ.

In these miracles we also see Christ pointing towards something which was going to be accomplished much sooner. While our earthly bodies are still subject to decay until Christ returns and changes their form, the actual condemnation of death passed from Israel when He died upon the cross. The penalty of law is death and the wife of Israel was subject to that condemnation on account of her adultery, but for the sake of unconditional promises made to her forefather Abraham she was released from it, with her Husband Yahweh God achieving her salvation through His death on the cross.

This mechanism was explained as Paul in Romans 7, where he wrote in part "For a woman [Israel] married to a living husband is bound by law; but if the husband [Yahweh] should die, she is discharged from the law of the husband [no longer liable to its penalties]".²⁶ And so after having elaborated upon that fact Paul later wrote that "there is no condemnation to those among the number of Christ Yahshua. Indeed the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Yahshua has liberated you from the law of guilt and death."²⁷

Being liberated from the penalty of the law the children of Israel would not have their sin accounted to them. Therefore John wrote that "Each who has been born from of Yahweh does not create wrongdoing, because His seed abides in him, and he is not able to do wrong, because from of Yahweh he has been born." John did not mean that Israelites do not sin, but that the penalty of sin (death) is no longer dealt out and in that sense their sin is not recognized. Thus the sacrifice of Christ resulted in a perpetual cleansing of sins.

Therefore just as the deathly leper was cleansed so too was Israel, just as Yahweh had promised in the prophets, such as in Jeremiah where He said, "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me."²⁸

Just because we are no longer liable to the death penalty doesn't mean that we should use our liberty to live wretched lives. The apostles all warned against such behavior, and those who use their liberty as a license will be resurrected with shame.

The laws which Christ is about to reference will show that the prescribed offerings for cleansed lepers were prophetic of the washing away of Israel's sins from the beginning:

1:43 And admonishing him at once He drove him away 44 and says to him: "See that you say nothing to no one, but go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing that which Moses has commanded, for a testimony to them."

Verse 43 is unique to Mark and is representative of the evocative language common throughout this gospel.

Christ is our Guide, there is no hypocrisy in Him, and He follows the instructions which He has given to us with perfection. So He admonishes this man to tell no one of the merciful gift with which he was

²⁶ Romans 7:2

²⁷ Romans 8:1-2

²⁸ Jeremiah 33:8

blessed, for that is what He instructed His students to do on the Sermon on the Mount not that long previously (according to Matthew's reckoning):

Matthew 6:1-4 Now offer your righteousness not to do before men, for them to behold, yet otherwise, you have no reward from your Father who is in the heavens. Therefore when you should do an act of charity, you should not trumpet it before you, even as the hypocrites do in the assembly halls and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they receive their reward! But upon your doing an act of charity, your left hand must not know what your right hand does, that your act of charity would be in secret, and your Father who sees would repay you in secret.

There are many recorded examples of Christ secretly doing good for His brethren, such as with the healing of the deaf and dumb man at the borders of Dekapolis (an account unique to Mark²⁹), or even the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead.³⁰ And which one of us is able to do deeds as great as these? What reason do we have then to boast? We should know that if we trumpet our deeds in public then we have our reward - the praise of men! But Yahweh our God desires love without acting, brotherly love affectioned towards one another, and He knows the intents of the heart.³¹

As for the admonishment which Christ expresses here, the verb is quite severe, as ἐμβριμάομαι³² often refers to *urgent admonishment* or even *rebuke* (Liddell and Scott), and the use here is likely related to the urgency of His instructions. The law is to be taken seriously. The leper was to first present offerings before he could lawfully dwell again among the people, and so He is driven away with haste so that the commandments are not tarried upon.

Leviticus 14:1-7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, this shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest: And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper; then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

After providing these offerings the cleansed leper was to then wash his clothes, shave his hair, and bathe in water. Afterwards he would be clean and for seven days permitted to come into the camp and tarry abroad out of his tent:

Leviticus 14:8 And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. [so it was urgent for the cleansed leper to be driven off to do what was first necessary before dwelling among his people]

Then on the eighth day the cleansed leper was to present a second offering of two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. We will not present that portion here, but it is found in the same chapter.

These prescribed offerings which were to be given on the first and eighth days after a leper's cleansing were certainly patterns and shadows of heavenly things, as Paul explained to the Hebrews, and they cannot be understood in this life. This was expressed in the law itself where Moses said that "**The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.**"³³ There are heavenly things which we as men are not meant to know, at least in this life, and we should not pretend to be able to search them out. David understood this where he humbly wrote in the 131st Psalm, "**LORD, my heart is not**

²⁹ Mark 7:36

³⁰ Mark 5:43

³¹ Romans 12:9-21, 1 John 3:18-20

³² #1690

³³ Deuteronomy 29:29

haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.”³⁴To know the heavenly concepts which the rituals represented is impossible without any insight into the heavenly places, and therefore we must humble our hearts and not exercise ourselves in the things too high for us.

But there are different prophetic shadows which *can* be at least partly understood in this life, because Paul of Tarsus also wrote to the Hebrews that the gifts and sacrifices were “a parable for the present time”,³⁵ (that present time being his own), a reference to how the sacrifices were revealed in that time to have always been a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. The blood of bulls and goats were never able to bring one man to perfection, but the Gospel revealed that they were always a symbolic model for the coming mercy in Christ from the first place. And so then, perhaps there is at least one aspect of the offerings for cleansed lepers which can be compounded with the Gospel. For instance, the patterns of hyssop and washing can bring to mind a certain psalm which David wrote in repentance for his wrongdoing:

Psalm 51:1-7 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

David wrote this psalm after Nathan rebuked him for having taken Bathsheba, and the repentant heart which David displays for his adultery can be read as a hopeful type for the whorish children of Israel:

Jeremiah 13:27 I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?

Israel the wife committed adultery and was liable to death (of which leprosy is associated), and then David committing adultery and being liable to death prayed and said “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” and then repeating the same thing with prophetic language “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”: both things being prescribed for cleansed lepers in the law, for leprosy is akin to the death penalty which adulterous Israel was under. Therefore in the offerings of hyssop, in the washing, and also in the sprinkling of blood (but we will not do a full commentary on Leviticus), we see foreshadowed the ultimate forgiveness of adulterous Israel in Christ. He annulled their covenant with death just as He healed lepers of their deathly conditions, for He said to the helpless leper, “**I desire, be cleansed**”, and then in Isaiah concerning that sure mercy for His people Israel, that He would “**accomplish that which I please**”³⁶ Indeed, all the seed of Israel washed and whitened their robes in the blood of the Lamb, just as David prayed to be washed and made white as snow:

Revelation 7:13-14 And one from among the elders responded, saying to me: "These who are cloaked in white robes, who are they? And from where have they come?" And I said to him: "My lord, you know!" And he said to me: "These are they coming from out of the great tribulation and they have washed their robes and have whitened them in the blood of the Lamb.

Yahshua told the leper to “go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing that which Moses has commanded, for a testimony to them”, and the testimony of those offerings is magnified further in the Gospel, for the law was “a shadow of the coming good”³⁷ and that good was accomplished in Christ who came to fulfill every iota of its nuance! For this reason Paul also said that Christ came to be “high

³⁴ Psalm 131:1

³⁵ Hebrews 9:9 [...]

³⁶ Isaiah 55:11

³⁷ Hebrews 10:1 [...]

priest of the coming good things”³⁸, and quoting from Isaiah 52:7 to the Romans, “How fair are the feet of those bringing the good news of good things.”³⁹

Indeed, what a great thing it is for the entire seed of Israel to be justified in the cleansing of their sin without exception, with no one left behind, not the lame or the deaf or even the lepers who were often abhorred.

Continuing with Mark we will see the leper spreading the account abroad like one of those birds which flew free, or one of those trees clapping their hands in gratitude of the sure mercies of David, even though he was instructed not to tell anyone of the blessing:

(Today the peculiar rites and rituals of the Levitical priesthood are done away with, for Christ is the final and ultimate sacrifice once for all, and He is High Priest over Israel according to the order of Melchizedek. This Paul explained at length in his epistle to the Hebrews, but also elsewhere in his epistles where he explained that the rituals (or works) of the law were done away with.)

1:45 But going off he began to proclaim many things and to spread the account, so that for Him to no longer be able to enter openly into the city, but He was outside in the desert places, and they came to Him from everywhere.

We can sympathize with the leper for his overwhelming excitement but cannot defend his actions. In the end, Yahshua being Yahweh certainly knew that the leper would spread the account and that it would be recorded in the Gospel for our edification. Because this account [λόγος] spread so widely is the reason why it survived to this very day, and so Luke methodically organizing testimonies such as this one wrote that he did it so that those who love Yahweh “may decide concerning the certainty of the accounts [λόγος]” which they were taught.⁴⁰

There are other recorded instances of Christ telling people to keep His charity a quiet secret who then proceeded to publish it loudly, such as with the deaf and dumb man later in this gospel, where after healing him “He ordered them that they should tell it to no one, but as much as He commanded them, still more abundantly they proclaimed it.”⁴¹

The word for *spread* here is διαφημίζω,⁴² and it is defined by Liddell and Scott to mean to *make known, spread abroad*, and in certain implicit contexts *to be celebrated*. The word is used only three times in the New Testament and this is its sole appearance in Mark.

This detail that Christ was *no longer able to enter openly into the city* is unique to the gospel of Mark, and it might be surprising to read since it wasn’t even mentioned until now that He and the leper were in a city. It is however transparent from the start of Luke’s account, where he wrote “While He was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy.”⁴³

The context is logical since Christ was certainly traveling from town to town after leaving Capernaum, for we read earlier in Mark that “He went proclaiming in their assembly halls and casting out demons in the whole of Galilaia”, and then in Luke that “He was proclaiming in the assembly halls of Judaea.”⁴⁴ It is logical that Christ went and proclaimed in Judaea after Galilee, but it isn’t said in either Mark or Luke where this city was (Matthew is entirely silent on there even being a city). But there are clues in all three gospels which demonstrate that Galilee is the most likely candidate.

In Matthew, the leper approached Christ after He descended from the mountain where He gave His *sermon on the mount*, and the apostle last recorded Him as being in Galilee before ascending the mountain (4:23), so we will assume that He didn’t leave the province. If Luke’s *sermon on the plain* is

³⁸ Hebrews 9:11

³⁹ Romans 10:15

⁴⁰ Luke 1:4

⁴¹ Mark 7:36

⁴² #1310

⁴³ Luke 5:12

⁴⁴ Luke 4:44

a record of the same day, then we can see that the sermon was given on a level place from the mountain where Christ named His apostles, which was certainly in Galilee (Matthew 28:16). While Matthew and Luke flip on how they place the leper's cleansing (Matthew has it after the sermon and Luke has it before), we should firstly remember that neither men were eyewitness to these things, and secondly that the two sermons could have been distinct events since Christ likely repeated those teachings often. But sermons aside, Luke's account of the leper's cleansing still supports it having happened in Galilee, since he records Christ as being in Galilee before and after the account (as does Mark). So while it cannot be said with certainty, the evidence does fall most with the city being in Galilee. For whatever reason the gospel writers did not think it pertinent to identify the city, which could have just been a minor settlement, since the word πόλις⁴⁵ is not descriptive of size or population.

Before the leper's proclamation Yahshua was just another anonymous face in the city, but now He is no longer able to enter *openly* on account of His fame, and would have to enter *secretly* if He were to avoid a crowd like the one which followed Him when He entered Jericho openly near the end of His ministry:

Luke 18:35-37 Then it happened upon His coming near to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing the crowd passing through he inquired what this could be. So they announced to him that "Yahshua the Nazoraian is passing by."

The response to Bartimaeus' question as to the noise of the crowd was that "Yahshua the Nazoraian is passing by", as if they expected the blind beggar to know who this carpenter from Nazareth was even as far as Jericho, and while in that city the short-statured Zacchaeus would have to climb a mulberry tree just to see a glimpse of Christ through the sea of crowds excitedly surrounding Him.⁴⁶ If we want to imagine how large in size these crowds could swell, we should remember that five thousand men (besides women and children)⁴⁷ followed Him into the wilderness to be taught⁴⁸ and healed⁴⁹ by Him. He was a celebrity and the only deserved One. Indeed, as Yahshua's ministry progressed it evolved an absolute phenomenon threatening the supposed authorities of the time, who at the crescendo of Yahshua's triumphant entry into Jerusalem complained saying "Behold, Society goes off after Him!"⁵⁰

Returning to Mark, even as early as this account the fact that Yahshua could no longer enter the city *openly* shows that secrecy was the only approach which could avoid excitement. Later in His ministry Yahshua had to enter Jerusalem secretly for the feast of tabernacles which He was lawfully required to attend, on account of the Judaeans who were seeking to kill Him:

John 7:10-11 But as His brothers went up to the feast, then He also went up, not openly but as if in secret. Then the Judaeans sought Him at the feast and said "Where is He?"

So on account of danger He had to enter Jerusalem secretly, and while there is not yet any sign of His enemies seeking to kill Him yet in Mark's gospel, it is likely on account of danger that Christ did not want to enter this city as well. It is a different attitude from when Yahshua entered Jericho openly near the end of His ministry, or when He allowed the crowds to proclaim Him as King during the final Passover, because both were near the appointed hour of His death and there was no need for secrecy. Therefore He told the Pharisees who admonished the students prophetically celebrating His triumphal entry and announcing His rightful kingship, "I say to you, if they should stay silent, the stones shall cry out!"⁵¹

Before that appointed hour arrived Yahshua would not allow anyone to openly proclaim His Kingship, and it was for our sake, ensuring that His death would not be premature and the needed works accomplished, and for the same reason did He silence the demons who said that He was the Christ earlier in this opening chapter of Mark. These patterns of the Gospel are the most logical reason for His

⁴⁵ #4172

⁴⁶ Luke 19:3-4

⁴⁷ Matthew 14:21

⁴⁸ Mark 6:34

⁴⁹ Matthew 14:14

⁵⁰ John 12:19

⁵¹ Luke 19:40

departure into the desert here, as it was a necessary thing for Him to temper His fame with seclusion, as He did later after feeding the five-thousand:

John 6:13-15 So they gathered and had filled twelve baskets of fragments from the five barley loaves which had been left over by those who had eaten. Then the men, seeing the sign which He had made, said that "this is truly the Prophet who is coming into the Society!" Then Yahshua, knowing that they were going to come and to seize Him in order that they would make Him king, He alone withdrew back into the mountain.

And the other gospels mention that He departed into the mountain for the sake of prayer also:

Matthew 14:23 And releasing the crowds He went up into the mountain by Himself to pray. And it becoming late He was there alone. (Mark 6:46, Luke 9:18)

The crowds sought to seize Him and make Him king, and He withdrew alone into the mountain and prayed. It is not apparent in Mark but we know from Luke that Yahshua went to pray after departing from the city of the leper:

Luke 5:15-16 And still more there spread around the report concerning Him, and many crowds gathered to Him to listen and to be cured from their illnesses. And He was retiring into the deserts and praying.

So Yahshua withdrew into a solitary place alone and prayed after the enthusiasm of the crowds risked His mission, and we see in John that He also employed this strategy when the Judaeans sought to kill Him after raising Lazarus:

John 11:53-54 Therefore from that day they determined that they would kill Him. Therefore Yahshua no longer walked openly among the Judaeans, but departed from there to a place near the desert, to a city called Ephraim, and there He remained with the students.

These accounts demonstrate that the safety of the mission was the most reasonable motivation behind Yahshua's departure into the desert here in Mark, and the leper having gone and proclaimed despite being told not to was in fact endangering, (although Yahshua was of course is in control and knew that the leper would proclaim). Regardless of the Almighty's prescience, there is still a lesson to be learned: that we should always do what we are told by our God for He alone is wise and knows all ends.⁵²

The people coming to Christ from everywhere is unique to Mark's account of these events, and the word πανταχόθεν which he uses means *from all quarters*, and is only used here in the New Testament.⁵³ (It is derived the word πανταχοῦ⁵⁴ - *everywhere* - the suffix *θεν* meaning *from*.)

The crowds hearing the proclamation and coming to Christ in the desert [ἔρημος]⁵⁵ from *all quarters* or *all directions* are perhaps prophetic of how the nations of Israel scattered to *the four winds*⁵⁶ in the dry wilderness⁵⁷ were reconciled and in that sense gathered to Christ after receiving the watered word of the Gospel, whether they were the Dorian Corinthians, Zerah-Judah Romans, or any other of the nations of Abraham's genetic loins primarily in Europe or Asia Minor.

As Paul wrote in an apparent allusion to the 19th psalm after having rhetorically asked how the nations of Israel would hear apart from proclamation:⁵⁸ "into all the land went out their voice [those spreading the Gospel], and to the western extremities of the habitable world their words."⁵⁹ And then Peter after the first Christian Pentecost, "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those in the

⁵² An example: Yahweh knows the ill effects of pork on our health, so why do men not listen?

⁵³ #3836

⁵⁴ #3837

⁵⁵ #2048

⁵⁶ Genesis 28:14, Deuteronomy 32:26, Zechariah 2:6, et al

⁵⁷ Jeremiah 31:2, Ezekiel 19:13, Ezekiel 34:5-6

⁵⁸ Romans 10:14

⁵⁹ The Christogenea New Testament's translation of Romans 10:18 is explained [in their commentary](#).

distance, as many as the Prince our God should call."⁶⁰ Even the enemies of Paul complained that he testified “everywhere” in reference to his ministry in Europe.⁶¹

The people here seek Christ in the desert, just as the children of Israel scattered abroad in the proverbial wilderness of Europe and Asia Minor sought out⁶² their King. Those sheep represented the majority of the population of Israel as opposed to comparative single sheep in the pen of Palestine; they were the “ninety-nine in the wilderness. [ἑρμῆς]”⁶³ who found grace and were nourished with the comforting words of the Gospel for 1,260 days (years).⁶⁴

This passage may also be a type for the future, when all of the tribes of Israel who come and dwell in the wilderness after the fall of Mystery Babylon are literally gathered to Christ upon His Second Coming.⁶⁵

Types aside, the healing of this leper was an incredible thing for the people to behold. The healing of lepers were one example among many miracles which proved that Yahshua was the Christ, as He Himself explained to the students of John the Baptist:

Matthew 11:2-6 Then Iohannes, hearing in the prison the works of Christ, sending through his students said to Him: "Are You He who is coming, or do we expect another?" And responding Yahshua said to them: "Going report to Iohannes the things which you hear and see: 'the blind see again and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf-mutes hear, and the dead are raised and the poor have the good message announced'. And blessed is he who would not be offended by Me!"

We will see one of those instances where “the lame walk” when we proceed into the second chapter of Mark’s gospel, Yahweh willing.

This concludes our commentary on the first chapter of the gospel of Mark.

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⁶⁰ Acts 2:39 (only Israel is called by God - Isaiah 48:12, 44:7, et al)

⁶¹ Acts 21:28

⁶² Hosea 3:5

⁶³ Luke 15:4 [...]

⁶⁴ Jeremiah 31:2, Hosea 2:14, Revelation 12:6

⁶⁵ Matthew 24:31, Mark 13:27 | Isaiah 11:12, 43:5-6 - et al