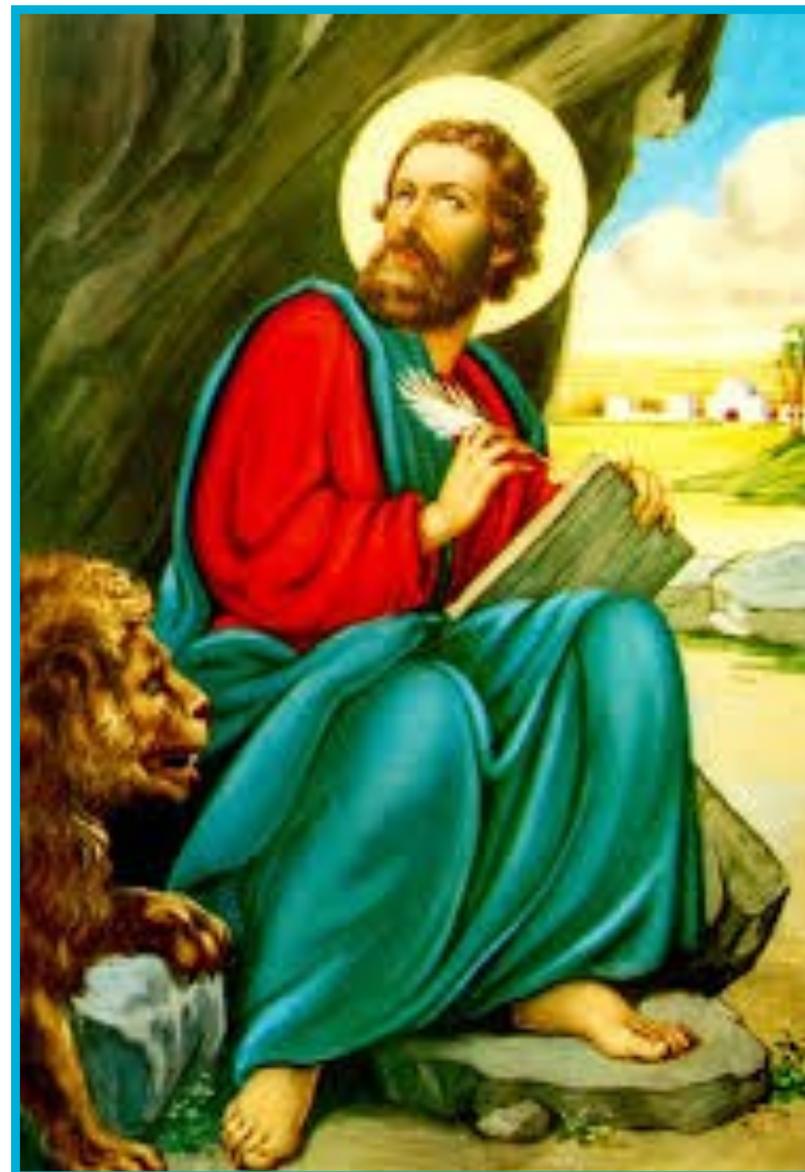




## **THE GOSPEL OF MARK**

**CHAPTER 1: 1-45**



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).

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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 1: 1-45**

Douay Rheims Version

The preaching of John the Baptist. Christ is baptized by him.

He calls his disciples and works many miracles.

1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
2. As it is written in Isaias the prophet: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee.
3. A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.
4. John was in the desert baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance, unto remission of sins.
5. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6. And John was clothed with camel' s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and he ate locusts and wild honey.
7. And he preached, saying: There cometh after me one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.
8. I have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.
9. And it came to pass, in those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.
10. And forthwith coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit as a dove descending, and remaining on him.
11. And there came a voice from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.
12. And immediately the Spirit drove him out into the desert.
13. And he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan; and he was with beasts, and the angels ministered to him.
14. And after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
15. And saying: The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel.
16. And passing by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea (for they were fishermen).
17. And Jesus said to them: Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.
18. And immediately leaving their nets, they followed him.
19. And going on from thence a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship:
20. And forthwith he called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed him.
21. And they entered into Capharnaum, and forthwith upon the sabbath days going into the synagogue, he taught them.
22. And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes.
23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,
24. Saying: What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy One of God.
25. And Jesus threatened him, saying: Speak no more, and go out of the man.
26. And the unclean spirit tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice, went out of him.
27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying: What thing is this? what is this new doctrine? for with power he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.
28. And the fame of him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee.

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29. And immediately going out of the synagogue they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. [

30. And Simon' s wife' s mother lay in a fit of a fever: and forthwith they tell him of her.

31. And coming to her, he lifted her up, taking her by the hand; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32. And when it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all that were ill and that were possessed with devils.

33. And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34. And he healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and he cast out many devils, and he suffered them not to speak, because they knew him.

35. And rising very early, going out, he went into a desert place: and there he prayed.

36. And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37. And when they had found him, they said to him: All seek for thee.

38. And he saith to them: Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come.

39. And he was preaching in their synagogues, and in all Galilee, and casting out devils.

40. And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down said to him: If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41. And Jesus having compassion on him, stretched forth his hand; and touching him, saith to him: I will. Be thou made clean.

42. And when he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean.

43. And he strictly charged him, and forthwith sent him away.

44. And he saith to him: See thou tell no one; but go, shew thyself to the high priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.

45. But he being gone out, began to publish and to blaze abroad the word: so that he could not openly go into the city, but was without in desert places: and they flocked to him from all sides.

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**Verse 1-** *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaias, &c.* Many place a full stop before *as*, thinking that *the beginning of the Gospel, &c.*, is the title of the book. But that these words are not the title, but the introduction of the book, is plain from the word *beginning*, and because they are really dependent upon the clause *as it is written, &c.* Therefore a comma, not a period, must be placed before *as*. The word *Gospel*, then, in this place does not denote the book of the Gospel which Mark wrote, as when we say, *the Gospel of Mark*, but the Gospel preaching of Jesus Christ as it follows. The meaning, therefore, is, "The Gospel preaching of Christ had such a beginning as Isaiah and Malachi foretold, that is to say, the preaching of John the Baptist and his testimony concerning Christ." For John began to preach the kingdom of heaven, that it would be opened by Christ's preaching and death. Wherefore he urged them to repentance, that they might be capable of receiving the grace of Christ, saying, *Repent ye, &c.* For Moses and the ancient Law preached and promised a land flowing with milk and

honey, if the Jews would obey God's commandments. But Christ and the Evangelical Law preach and promise the kingdom of heaven, if men will repent of their sins, and obey the commands of Christ. John's preaching of repentance, therefore, was the preparation for, and the beginning of, Christ's preaching the Gospel.

Observe, Matthew and John commence their Gospels from Christ Himself—John from the divine, Matthew from the human generation of Christ. Mark and Luke begin with John the Baptist—Luke from his nativity, Mark from his preaching.

Vers. 2, 3. As it is written in Isaias the prophet, Behold, I send arty angel before Thy face, who shall prepare the way before Thee. A voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. The former citation in the 2nd verse is from Mal. iii. 1. The latter is from Isa. xl. 3. Wherefore the Greek has, *it is written in the prophets*. But the Vulgate and some Greek copies, also the Syriac and Arabic, have as above. And S. Jerome says that this was formerly the reading of the Greek (*lib. de Opt. Gen. Interpret. Scrip.*).

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You will ask, "Why does Mark only cite Isaias and not Malachi?" I answer, because the prophecy of Isaias is of greatest importance in this place, for the voice of John crying in the desert, *Do penance, &c.*, was *one beginning of the Gospel*. But inasmuch as Malachi shows that John was not sent by man, but by God, to utter these words, therefore Mark prefixes the words of Malachi to arouse the attention of the reader to receive and venerate the voice of John. Besides, Malachi in reality says the same as Isaias. For the angel sent by God to prepare the way of Christ was none other than John himself, *crying*, and preaching repentance, by which the hearts of men must be prepared for the preaching and grace of Christ. This is therefore, as it were, one and the same oracle of two prophets, uttered concerning one and the same John, but in different words, so that they mutually confirm and explain one another. This, then, is the reason why Mark in this place, and the other Evangelists and Apostles, when they cite two prophets, or two or more sentences of the same or different books of the Old Testament, quote them as one and the same testimony. This is plain from 1 Pet. ii. 7, compared with Ps. cxviii. 22 and Isa. viii. 14. Also, 1 Cor. xv. 54, compared with Isa. xxv. 8 and Hos. xiii. 14. The reason, I say, is, because one sentence confirms and explains the other, so that they are in truth not two, but one sentence.

Ver. 4. *John was in the desert baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance unto remission of sins*. That this remission was to be received from Christ and His baptism, which was the perfection and consummation of John's baptism. For Christ, as it were the King of Heaven, preached that the kingdom must be received by His grace, of which the first part is remission of sins, which is given by the baptism of Christ, inasmuch as it is furnished

and, as it were, animated by the Spirit and grace of Christ, according to those words of John (*in Matt. iii. 11*), "I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire."

*And immediately the Spirit drove* (Gr. ἐκβάλλει, i.e., *sends out, expels*) Him out into the desert. *The Spirit, i.e.*, the Holy Spirit, who a little while before had glided down upon Him in His baptism in the form of a dove. *Drove*, that is, impelled Christ with great power of spirit and ardour, that He should, of His own accord, go into the desert, and there, as in a *palæstra*, match Himself in single combat with the devil.

*And He was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted* (Gr. πειραζόμενος, i.e., *suffering temptation*). Whence many think that Christ during the forty days was frequently tempted by Satan, by means of various spectres and horrible monsters, such as the demon presented to S. Anthony, to terrify him and distract his mind from prayer. So Franc. Lucas. But it seems better to take Mark as speaking only of the three well-known temptations (*see what has been said in Matt. iv. 2*).

*And He was with beasts* (Gr. θηζίων, *wild beasts*). This is an intimation of the excessive solitude of the place, as well as of Christ's innocency. Although He was in such a desert place, with lions, wolves, leopards, serpents, yet He did not fear them, nor was He injured by them. Just as Adam, so long as he was innocent, lived with such creatures without harm in Paradise. For they all looked up to him, and revered him as their lord.

*And the angels ministered to Him.* Not before His temptation and victory, as Bede supposes. For if so, Jesus would have been recognised by the devil as the Son of God; nor would the devil have dared to approach Him. But it was after the temptation and the victory, as is plain from *Matt. iv. 11*. And for this reason, that Jesus might show in His own person that consolation and comfort and the ministry of angels has been prepared by God for those who overcome temptations.

*Ver. 14. And after that John was delivered up, &c.* This was the second coming of Christ from Judæa into Galilee, that He might flee from Herod, lest he should cast Him also into prison. For Christ had been preaching and baptizing in Judæa. And the increase of His glory there had excited the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who denounced Him to Herod as though He were a revolutionist. Wherefore this is the same coming of Christ as that mentioned in *Matt. iv. 12*, *Luke iv. 14*, and *John iv. 3* and *43*. Although some say that this last was a different one, and the third advent of Christ into Galilee, because Christ was then fleeing from the Pharisees, as John says; but in His second coming He was fleeing from Herod, as Matthew and Mark say. But, as I have observed, He fled from the Pharisees because He fled from Herod. For they had accused Him to Herod. Wherefore this was the same flight of Christ, and the same coming into Galilee.

*Ver. 15. And saying, Because* (Gr. ὅτι) *the time, &c. The time*, that is, of the advent of

the twenty-four heads of the priests, who each in turn presided for a week over the rest of the priests, and the sacrifices, and the other offices and rites of the Temple, according to the institution of David, as appears from *1 Chron. xxiv. 3, &c.*

*Ver. 45. But he, being gone out, began to publish and to blaze abroad the word, i.e.*, the fact of the miracle of his leprosy having been healed by Christ. For he thought that this was for the glory of God and Christ, although Christ, out of humility and modesty, had enjoined silence; but he himself did not consider this command binding upon him.

*So that he could not openly go into the city*, without feeling His modesty hurt by the honour and applause of the people. Or *could not* may mean *would not*. For so *could* is often put for *would*, as Nazianzen shows by many examples (*Orat. 4, de Theolog.*).

\*It has not been thought necessary to print in full the text of S. Mark. The citation of the few passages commented on is from the Douai Version.

not when he cried, because he uttered cries which signified nothing.” Titus adds, “When the man was restored to himself, then he uttered the speech of a man.”

Ver. 27. *What new doctrine is this, &c.* “What is this heavenly and divine doctrine, which indeed God confirms from heaven by so many and such mighty miracles? For Christ, the Teacher of this doctrine, not by prayers, but of His mere power, and by His command only, orders the devils to go out, *and they obey Him*. Wherefore this must be the Messias, the Son of God, and the true God; for He alone commands the devils by His power.”

Ver. 32. *When the sun had set:* Gr. *ότε έδυ ό ήλιος, i.e.,* when the sun was swallowed up and sunk in the sea. For *δύομαι* means *to be sunk, submerged*, and is spoken of islands which are submerged and drowned by the sea. This is a form of speech adopted from the common people, who think that when the sun sets it is submerged in the ocean.

Ver. 33. *And all the city* (Capernaum, as appears from ver. 21) *was gathered together at the door.* Of the house of Peter and Andrew, where Jesus was being entertained, as is plain from ver. 29.

Ver. 34. *And He healed many, i.e.,* all who presented themselves, for they were many. *Suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him.* Arab., *because they knew that He Himself was He.*

Ver. 35. *And rising very early, &c.:* Gr. *και πζωί έννυχον, i.e., in the morning, whilst it was still night.* For it was at the very first commencement of dawn, whilst it was yet dark. Thus it might be called *night* by S. Mark, although by S. Luke (iv. 42) it is called *day*, because the day was just about beginning to dawn.

*He went into a desert place,* that He might pray thus more quietly and attentively. Wherefore it follows, *and there prayed,* both that after so many miracles He might avoid the praise and applause of men, and to teach us to do the same. Learn here from Christ to give the early morning to prayer, and to rise up with the dawn, so as to have leisure for meditation, and to give the first-fruits of the day to God. For the dawn of day is a friend of the Muses, but a greater friend of God and the angels.

Ver. 43. *And He strictly charged him.* The Gr. is, *And having threatened him, he straightway sent him out.* He severely commanded him with threats to conceal the miracle of healing which He had just wrought; and therefore He dismissed him, and sent him away from Him, that it might not be known that He had cured him of his leprosy; and that this might afford us an example of avoiding the applause of men.

Ver. 44. *Show thyself to the high priest* (Vulg.). Gr. *to the priest.* For not only the High Priest, but any priest might judge concerning leprosy, whether it was healed or no, as is plain from Lev. xiii. 2. It is probable, however, that because the case of leprosy was so grave and difficult, the decision concerning it was, by the interpretation and decree of the pontiffs, reserved for a *Chief Priest*, as is here said, that is, for one of the twenty-four heads of the priests, who each in turn presided for a week over the rest of the priests, and the sacrifices, and the other offices and rites of the Temple,

the Messiah, and the kingdom of heaven. That, indeed, what had been shut for so many thousands of years, Christ by His preaching, His death, and His grace, might open and unclose.

*Repent ye: do penance,* that ye may detest the sins ye have committed, and determine to change your lives for the better. Beautifully says the Scholiast in S. Jerome, “The sweetness of the apple makes up for the bitterness of the root, the hope of gain makes pleasant the perils of the sea, the expectation of health mitigates the nauseousness of medicine. He who desires the kernel breaks the nut; so he who desires the joy of a holy conscience swallows down the bitterness of penance.”

Ver. 19. *James the son of Zebedee and John.* Again beautifully says the Scholiast, “By this chariot of the four fishermen we are carried up to heaven, as Elias was. On these four corner-stones the Church was first built. By four virtues we are changed into the image of God, being obedient by prudence, acting manfully by justice, trampling on the serpent by temperance, and gaining the grace of God by fortitude.” Theophylact says, “*Peter*, that is, *action*, is first called, afterwards *John*, that is, *contemplation.*”

Ver. 23. *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, i.e.,* a man having an unclean spirit, that is to say, *possessed by a devil.* The Greek has, *in an unclean spirit*, and it is a Hebraism. For the Hebrew uses *beth*, i.e., *in*, when one noun governs another in the genitive.

*And he cried out, i.e., the spirit,* by the mouth of the man possessed, “as though he were suffering torment,” says the Scholiast in S. Chrysostom, “as though in pain, as though not able to bear his strokes.” “For,” as Bede says, “the presence of the Saviour is the torment of the devils.” Christ desired that by this public testimony of the demon concerning Him, in the synagogue of Capernaum (for it is plain from ver. 21 that these things occurred there), the Jews who were gathered there might acknowledge Him to be Messias. There is nothing about this demoniac in Matthew, but there is in Luke iv. 33.

*Saying.* The Gr. subjoins *έα*, which the translator of Luke iv. 34 renders by *let alone*, as if the imperative of the verb *εάω*, i.e., *suffer, permit*; as Euthymius says, *dismiss us*. Others take *έα* as an adverb of *grieving, wondering, beseeching*. As it were, “Ah! alas! Lord, in what have I injured Thee?”

Ver. 24. *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know who Thou art, the Holy One of God.* “What is there between us and Thee, O Jesus? We have not attacked Thee, O Christ, who art holy; but sinners, who are, as it were, our own. We have no contention with Thee; do not Thou, then, contend with and destroy us.”

*Come to destroy us.* Some MSS. add, *before the time.* But the words are not found in the Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Arabic received texts. They seem to have been transferred hither from S. Matt. ix. 25. With respect to the meaning, in the first place, Bede says that the demons, beholding the Lord upon earth, supposed that they were to be immediately judged. It was as though they said, "Do not Thou, O Jesus, by Thine advent bring on so quickly the day of judgment, and banish us to the bottomless pit without any hope of coming forth." Second, the Scholiast in S. Chrysostom says, "Thou givest us no place among men when Thou teachest divine things." But this is mystical. Third, and correctly, "Hast Thou come to destroy us, to cast us out from men, and send us to hell?" Whence Theophylact says, "He calls going out of men his destruction." For the highest pleasure of the devils is to possess and vex men.

*I know, &c.* Arab. *O Holy One;* the Gr. *ὁ ἅγιος,* emphatically, *the Holy One.* "Thou who art so holy that Thou communicatest Thy holiness to others, since Thou art, as it were, the Fountain and the Sun of holiness, who sanctifiest all the saints, the Messiah and the Son of God, for whom all are eagerly waiting so many thousand years!" There is an allusion to Dan. ix. 24, "until the Holy of Holies, *i.e.*, Messiah, be anointed."

*I know, i.e., I suspect, I think.* For, as the Scholiast in Chrysostom says, the devil had no firm and certain knowledge of the coming of God. Because, as S. Austin says (*lib. 9, de Civ. c. 21*), He only made known to them as much as He wished; and He only wished as much as was expedient.

Ver. 25. *And Jesus threatened him;* Gr. *ἐπετίμησεν,* *i.e., rebuked, chided him with threats.* That He would punish him unless he were silent.

*Saying, Speak no more:* Arab. *shut thy mouth.* Wherefore? I answer, First, Because it was not fitting that Christ should be commanded by the devil.

Second, That He might not appear to be a friend of the devil, and to hold intercourse with him. For afterwards it was objected to Christ that He cast out devils by the aid of Beelzebub. By acting as He did, Christ has taught us to shun all dealings with the devil; for he is the sworn enemy of God, and is wholly bent upon injuring and destroying us, even when he promises or brings us any corporal aid. Wherefore, as the Scholiast in Chrysostom saith, "Be silent; let thy silence be My praise. Let not thy voice, but thy torments praise Me. I am not pleased that thou shouldst praise Me, but that thou shouldst go forth."

Third, To show that we should resist flattery, that it may not stir up any desire of vainglory in our breast.

Fourth, Euthymius says, "He has taught us never to believe the demons, even when they say what is true. For since they love falsehood, and are most hostile to us, they never speak the truth except to deceive. They make use of the truth as it were a kind of bait." For, liars that they are, they conceal their lies by a colouring of truth. They say certain things that are true at the first, and afterwards interweave with them

what is false, that those who have believed the first may believe also the last. For this cause Paul drove out the spirit of Python, who praised him, Acts xvi. 18.

Fifth, Because the demon in an unseasonable manner, and too speedily, disclosed that Christ was Messiah. For this might have injured Him, and turned the people away from Him. For so mighty a secret should be disclosed gradually, and the people be persuaded of its truth by many miracles; for otherwise they would not at first receive it and believe it. This was why (viii. 30) Christ forbids the Apostles also to say that He was Christ. So Maldonatus and others.

*Symbolically:* Bede, "The devil, because he had deceived Eve with his tongue, is punished by the tongue, that he might not speak."

Ver. 26. *And the unclean spirit tearing him, &c. Tearing* (Vulg. *discerpens*), not by lacerating or mutilating the man who was possessed by him, for Luke says (iv. 35) that he did no harm to him, but by contorting and twisting his limbs this way and that, as if he wished to tear him piecemeal. For the Greek *σπαράττω,* signifies *to pull or tear in pieces.* The devil did this through rage and madness, that being compelled by Christ to go out of the man, he might injure him as much as he could. But the nearer and the more powerful the grace of Christ is, the more impotently does the devil rage. For, observe, the devil only raised a dreadful tempest, but one that was vain and ineffectual. For he cannot hurt when Christ forbids. Christ permitted it for three reasons. 1. That it might be plain that this man was really possessed by the devil. 2. That the malice and wrath of the demon might be made apparent. 3. That it might be clear that the demon went forth, not of his own will, but because he was compelled to do so by Christ.

*Tropologically:* S. Gregory teaches (*Hom. 12, in Ezek.*) that the devil wonderfully tempts and vexes sinners when they are converted. "As soon," he says, "as the mind begins to love heavenly things, as soon as it collects itself for the vision of inward peace with its whole intention, that ancient adversary, who fell from heaven, is envious, and begins to lie in wait more insidiously, and brings to bear sharper temptations than he was wont, so as, for the most part, to try the soul which resists in a way that he had never tried her when he possessed her. Wherefore it is written, My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, stand fast in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation."

*And crying out.* With dreadful howlings, shrieking, and roaring, to show how unwillingly he went out, and what great power was applied to him by Christ. For he uttered no articulate speech. For Christ had forbidden him to speak when He said *shut thy mouth.* Thus Euthymius says, "Being scourged by the Lord's commands, he cried out with a loud voice, and yet he spake