

“Jesus, Man of Action”

Mark 4:1-4:12

"To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables, in order that while seeing, they may see and not perceive; and while hearing, they may hear and not understand lest they return and be forgiven. "

Mark 4:11-12, NAS

The Outline

3. Later Phases of the Ministry in Galilee, 3:7 - 6:13
 - A. Withdrawal to the sea, 3:7 - 3:12
 - B. The choice of the Twelve, 3:13 - 3:19a
 - C. The character of Jesus' family, 3:19b - 3:35
 - D. Parables concerning the Kingdom of God, 4:1 - 4:34
 - E. The vanquishing of powers hostile to God, 4:35 - 5:43
 - F. Rejection at Nazareth, 6:1 - 6:6a
 - G. The mission of the twelve in Galilee, 6:6b - 6:13

The Words

Teach - διδάσκω - to provide instruction in a formal or informal setting: *to teach, teaching*. Examples: “Lord, teach us how to pray” Luke 11:1; “as he taught (them), he said” Mark 12:38; “everything written formerly (in the Scriptures) was written to teach us” Romans 15:4.

Very Great Multitude - ὄχλος πλείστος - made up of the following two words:

1. ὄχλος - crowd, multitude; (common) people; mob: (1) *a throng* of people milling around or closely pressed together: *crowd, multitude* (Matthew 5:1); (2) *the (common) people*, in contrast to the authorities: *populace, masses* (Acts 24:12); used contemptuously of the lower classes: *rabble* (John 7:49).
2. πλείστος - much, many (of great crowds; loud mourning; plentiful harvest; deep soil; late hour; long time; etc.).

Boat - πλοῖον - boat, ship; (1) as a seagoing vessel: *ship* (James 3:4); (2) as a fishing vessel: *boat* (Matthew 4:21). Note that this is apparently a larger craft than the one Jesus used in Mark 3:9.

Parable - παραβολή - a rhetorical figure of speech, setting one thing beside another to form a comparison or illustration; a relatively short narrative with symbolic meaning, (1) in the Gospels *parable, illustration* (Matthew 13:3); (2) in Hebrews, a prophetic *symbol, type, figure* (Hebrews 9:9).

Listen - ἀκούετε - “Now y’ all listen up!” Hear; receive news of; give heed to; understand; give a judicial hearing (John 7:51; Acts 25:22).

Behold - ἰδοὺ - Look! See! Listen! There or here is, there or here was, there or here comes, then, suddenly.

Sow - σπείρω - to scatter seed over tilled ground, *to sow*. In many languages there is a problem of translating σπείρω literally as “to scatter seed” since this is interpreted as an exceedingly wasteful manner of sowing, but unless one translates more or less literally and then provides some explanatory footnote, the parable loses much of its significance for many cultures.

Mystery - μυστήριον - secret, mystery the content of that which has not been known before but which has been revealed to an in-group or restricted constituency. In many instances μυστήριον is translated by a phrase meaning “that which was not known before” with the implication of its being revealed at least to some persons.

Outsiders - οἱ ἕξω - those who are not a part of the believing community: *those outside* (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

The Quotation

Mark 4:12 is quoted from the Old Testament:

Go, and tell this people:

Keep on listening, but do not perceive;

Keep on looking, but do not understand.

Render the hearts of this people insensitive,

Their ears dull, And their eyes dim,

Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears,

Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.

Isaiah 6:9-10, NAS