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## The Vulgate of Mark

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# Preface

The book you're holding isn't the product of a carefully thought-out plan that was methodically implemented over the years. Instead it's the outcome of the diverse influences, accidental experiences, and various objectives that typically characterize a long career in academia.

As a newly minted PhD in Classical Languages with a specialty in Sophocles, I found myself assigned to teach large survey courses in Western religious thought, something I was wholly unqualified to do. The extent of my training in the area was a slap on the back and the exhortation, "You'll do fine." It was the paradigmatic nightmare all teachers have, where you suddenly find yourself at a podium in front of a large audience with no idea what you're supposed to say or even what the class is about. (In my version of the nightmare I'm not wearing shoes for some reason.) But this was no dream. It was real life.

I approached my problem with a classicist's bias for primary documents and made the sacred texts the only assigned readings on the syllabus. The agenda for the classes was to read from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Koran with fresh eyes, make our own observations, and draw our own conclusions. It was in the two years of teaching this class that I discovered the complexity and historical layers of the Old Testament and the Gospel accounts in the New Testament. We studied the Wellhausen hypothesis that tries to untangle the sources that were blended into the first books of the Old Testament. We learned about the area of study known as the Synoptic Problem that originates in the undeniable literary interdependence of the first three Gospels. In our class discussion we found ourselves practicing Redaction Criticism, which tries to deduce consistent editorial policies that underlie both the similarities and differences in the three Synoptic Gospels. I'll come back to all this later because at this point in the story, I became a tenure-track, tenure-bound classics professor.

The institution where I've spent my career prides itself on providing top-quality, preprofessional training. As a consequence, the humanities in general fit in the mix of requirements as service classes, and language study in particular is largely justified as a résumé enhancer. The language requirement varied over the years from four semesters for all to none for anyone, and finally stabilizing as none for some, two semesters for many, and three for a few. It's a long and interesting story, but the practical outcome is easy to summarize: I had become in the eyes of my students a fussy old pedant. Here's why.

By training, we classicists treat elementary language training as the foundation for more advanced reading in real authors, who are worthy of our time and respect. We force-march our students through grammar and essential vocabulary in the first several semesters with the promise that their suffering will eventually be rewarded. But what happens when only a vanishing fraction of our students, if any at all, go beyond the first two or three semesters?

To me, the answer came in a sudden cold shiver about ten years ago in the middle of a third-semester class. After I had filled two boards with an exquisitely engineered presentation of the sequence of moods, I had an epiphany. In a terrifying instant I saw in my students' faces that they couldn't care less. They'd had it up to here with grammar and syntax, and I saw myself as they must have seen me. I was nothing more than a pitiable, harmless old drudge. They were kind enough to tolerate me until the end of the term, but I was a goofy old uncle, who chatters at length about things that no one's interested in over Thanksgiving dinner. They knew they weren't going on to study more, and they just wanted to find a polite way out of a one-sided conversation.

After wasting several self-absorbed months cursing modernity for making the world unsafe for ancient Greek and Latin, I eventually hit upon a more useful line of thought. If I had only a limited time with my students, I had to get something into their hands they'd find interesting and would give them a sense of accomplishment after their two semesters of Latin or Greek. This brings us back to the Gospels.

Everyone acknowledges that the Greek and Latin of the New Testament are comparatively easy to read. The message may be complex, but beginning and intermediate students won't be researching forms and looking up every other word to get through a sentence. We can also stipulate that every student will have an opinion one way or another about the Jesus story, even if their opinions may not be especially well informed. But no one in

the room will fail to have something to say about it. This can't be said of Xenophon, Caesar, Cicero, even Plato or any of the other canonical third-semester authors in the standard (i.e., mid-twentieth century) curriculum. Rare indeed is the student who begins Greek with a passionate desire to prove that Sophocles is a better dramaturge than Euripides (he is, by the way), or submits to the rigor of Latin because she wants to be able to defend the reputation of Cato the Elder. So to this degree, the Gospels fit nicely into the modern language curriculum on two counts: The language is accessible, a suitable payoff for two semesters of study (or two years at the high school level), and the subject is of inherent interest and will inspire (or incite) classroom discussion. But there were challenges.

When I first began adding biblical texts to the third-semester curriculum, there was some pushback. One above-average Latin student dropped third-semester Latin when she saw the syllabus; she didn't want to read "Bible stories" and claimed she knew "all that stuff already." I tried to explain the difference between the historical/textual approach we'd be using and the pastoral/doxological approach she might have been thinking about, but to no avail. Other students as well were suspicious of my motives and didn't respond well at first. But I plowed ahead undaunted. It seemed to me that the choice was between boring my students or provoking them. I didn't have to think very hard about that one. If inspiring a student isn't an option, irritating him is a good stand-in. I chose provocation over boredom.

Even students from religious backgrounds found the approach challenging at times. Most of them were surprised at how much the Gospel of Mark *didn't* square with their expectations. They were also unaware of the subtle differences in the Synoptics even when narrating the same event. I hoped that these students would come away from the experience with an appreciation of the rich and fascinating complexities of the texts that underlie their faith.

I found, however, that there was nothing on the market on the Vulgate of Mark designed for classroom use. I resorted to handouts and printouts for the first several years, starting with the text of Mark and gradually matching it with the parallels from Matthew and Luke and adding historical and supplemental grammatical notes and a running vocabulary. The body of material grew and eventually stabilized into a book-length manuscript. That in a nutshell is the natural history of the book you're now holding. The text assumes, if not the validity, then at least the usefulness of the priority of Mark as the structural basis of the readings. All this is more fully explained in the book's introduction.

Before I let you go, there are some people I need to acquaint you with who've inspired me over the years to pursue this project and finish it. First to the students at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, where I was fortunate enough to start my career as a two-year visiting assistant professor of classics, and where I first formulated the idea of using the Gospel of Mark as the first "real" author in their language curriculum. Thence to the Harvey Center for Family Learning, an online homeschooling network that graciously allowed me to try out the text with its exceptionally talented students in a semester-long third-semester Latin class. From there the text passed to a private group of friends I've been tutoring in both Greek and Latin online for many years now. They not only encouraged me along the way but also proofed the final draft for me, purgining it of a not insignificant number of errors that might have slipped into the book. I hope they won't mind if I cite them by name: Tony Bell in Alaska, Michael Hopkins in North Carolina, and Jenny and Elizabeth Vo-Phamhi in California. And finally to my father, who has recently developed an active interest in all things classical and has accumulated an impressive video library from the Teaching Company. This has given me the invaluable opportunity to have my own ideas leavened by his extraordinary mind.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to Laurel Draper of Bolchazy-Carducci, who, with unimaginable talent and skill, turned a box of files into a book, and to Bridget Dean, also at Bolchazy-Carducci, who encouraged me to keep at it, even when the complexity of the project seemed impossibly overwhelming.



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1 April 2016

# Introduction

## *Mark and His Gospel*

**W**hat we “know” about the Gospel of Mark in the strict sense of the word is interesting but limited, and well short of what we wish we knew. Mark is the name attached to the second of the four canonical Gospels of the New Testament. It’s the shortest and lacks much of the material contained in the other three. We could go on and count words, tally up the types of grammatical constructions that appear in the text, and tabulate the textual variations of key passages. These are the kinds of things we can say we “know” about the Gospel of Mark. Everything else beyond these straightforward facts and others like them is alloyed with some amount conjecture. We don’t know, for example, when Mark was first written, where it was composed, by whom, for what reason, or from what materials. We can’t even say with certainty who the “Mark” in the title is supposed to be.

There is no Mark ever mentioned in any of the four Gospels. That shouldn’t come as much of a surprise. There’s no Luke in the Gospels either. Even Matthew (a.k.a. Levi), who’s the supposed author of the first Gospel, is a minor figure among Jesus’s disciples and drops out of the story nearly altogether after Jesus’s death. It may be that this Mark is the John Mark mentioned in Acts, where he’s a companion of Paul for a brief time, but that’s far from certain.

A very important ancient source, however, from the third century CE gives us some tantalizing information about Mark and how the Gospel of Mark was composed. The historian Eusebius wrote, among other things, a history of the early church, and he has this to say:

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Concerning Mark, who wrote the gospel, Papias [circa 70–163 CE] put it this way: “And the Elder also said this: ‘Mark was the interpreter [*hermēneutēs*] of Peter and he wrote down accurately, but not in order, the things which were spoken or done by our Lord, as much as he remembered. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him. But later, as I said, he followed Peter, who provided instruction according to what was needed, but so not as to make an orderly account of the Lord’s sayings. So Mark did not err in anything in writing some things this way, that is, as he remembered them. For he was attentive to one thing: not to leave out anything that he heard or to make any false statements in them.” So this is what Papias said about Mark. (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3.39.14–16)

Eusebius is quoting from an earlier source, Papias, who we have reason to believe lived in the first half of the second century CE (70–168). Papias, in turn, is quoting someone he calls the “Elder,” a figure about whom we know very little. If we assume, however, that the “Elder” was older than Papias—which seems to be a reasonable conjecture—then this puts the Elder in the generation before Papias. That takes us to the time when some of the first disciples were still alive. What we potentially have, then, is a very early source of information about the Gospel of Mark, perhaps one that was contemporary with the author himself. This merits serious attention.

This “Elder” informed Papias that Mark never met Jesus but was a companion of the disciple Peter, one of the three leaders of the early church and one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. Mark followed him on his missionary journeys and served as his *hermēneutēs*, a Greek word that often means “translator.” Did Peter need a translator? From what we know about Peter, it’s entirely likely, indeed probable, that he spoke only Aramaic, the local language of his homeland in Galilee. He would have been unable, consequently, to preach in his own words to his intended Greek-speaking audiences when he took his message outside of the province of Palestine. He would have needed a translator.

If Peter is the source for Mark’s Gospel, we need to imagine what Peter was trying to communicate about Jesus and how he would have gone about it. As a preacher, he wouldn’t have been teaching history classes on the life and times of Jesus, any more than a modern preacher does. He was preaching the essence of Jesus’s life and mission, and the essence of this news is easy to summarize: Jesus came to announce that the end of time



as promised by the Old Testament prophets was at hand and that everyone hoping for everlasting life in the coming Kingdom of God should repent and be baptized. There's more to it than that, obviously, but reduced to its barest outline this is his message, or *kerygma* in Greek.

None of this was entirely new to anyone. There had been many prophets before, during and even after Jesus's life who'd been saying pretty much the same thing. What's so special about Jesus? What made this call different in the minds of his followers was that Jesus performed many miracles that were witnessed by hundreds of people: He healed people of various afflictions, cast out demons, brought a young girl back from the dead, walked on water, feed thousands of people from virtually nothing, and more. At one time he was even physically transfigured in the presence of three of his closest followers. He courageously revealed that he was in fact the Messiah (in Mark, at least), when he knew that it would lead to his suffering and death. Most importantly of all, his followers say that he was physically resurrected from the dead after his crucifixion at the hands of the Romans. So in addition to communicating the essential meaning of Jesus's teachings, Peter would surely have wanted to confirm the uniqueness of Jesus by recalling the miraculous events that were a part of his life. So Peter's sermons would have been partly theological and, of necessity, partly historical. Let's return to Eusebius and the testimony of the Elder.

The Elder says that Peter never tried to give an orderly and comprehensive account of Jesus's life and his teachings, and that makes perfect sense. No modern-day preacher ever does that either. Instead, Peter no doubt would have used incidents in Jesus's life to illustrate the general point he was making in the course of his sermon. We can imagine that none of the sermons Peter gave was ever repeated verbatim on other occasions. Peter probably approached an audience or a setting with a general outline of what he wanted to say, but he never memorized a set speech that he delivered again and again, and he never told everything he knew about Jesus in one sitting.

This means that over the years Mark would have heard Peter's different sermons many times. He would have gotten to know very well the story of Jesus's trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, which probably made up the bulk of any of Peter's addresses. Mark would have heard scattered references to Jesus's life and his times with the disciples as well as the many miracles he performed. But never once would Mark have hear the story told from the beginning to the end, with all the events precisely in order, at any one time. When the time came for him to write his Gospel, he would have had to sort through this mass of material and organize it in some way. The Elder gives

Mark a high grade for getting the content of each episode correct, though he's not so generous with how Mark arranged them. To be fair, we don't know what the Elder's objections are and what he meant by "in order." It's possible that he meant some kind of thematic organization and not a chronological one, for Mark's Gospel does follow Jesus's life in a way that is temporally and geographically consistent. Jesus begins modestly in and around the region of Galilee, gradually expanding outward until he arrives at Jerusalem where he is crucified. Aside from a few minor glitches here and there, Mark's account of Jesus's travels are easy to plot out on a map and they make sense geographically.

The Elder's criticism notwithstanding, the Gospel of Mark exhibits precisely the characteristics we'd expect to see based on Mark's source in Peter's sermons.

Anyone reading several contiguous passages from Mark will notice that the first nine chapters or so are made up of short scenes with Jesus as the central figure. Jesus confronts the religious authorities, performs a miracle, cures a sick person, casts out demons, delivers a parable, and so on. These little scenes are strung together with transitional expressions, such as "and then," "straightway," as well as brief editorial comments from Mark to move the setting from one location to another. These little vignettes have all the appearance of having been written down on scraps of paper—a notecard, if you will—and then pasted together to make a longer narrative. Scholars call these short scenes "pericopes" (peh RI koh pees), or a "pericope" in the singular. The word is Greek for "excerpt" and literally means "cut around" or "a cutout." We can imagine that over the years Mark had assembled a collection of several slips of paper with different short episodes on each one. When he sat down to write his account, he would have sorted through these pericopes and organized a chronology of Jesus's life as best he could. Mark perhaps was indifferent as to the question whether the miracle of walking on water preceded or came after the miracle of the fish and loafs; whether Jesus's parable about the sower came before the parable of the mustard seed or after it; and so on. He was primarily concerned, as the Elder said, of getting each episode right, regardless of where it actually fit into the true chronology.

To sum up, the evidence that Eusebius has from Papias, who in turn is relying on the Elder, is consistent with the text of the Gospel as we now have it. Mark got the material for his Gospel from the preaching of Peter and sorted it out as best he could. What then becomes of Mark's Gospel once it's a written document?

## *The Interconnectedness of the First Three Gospels*

Reading at length from the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) produces a repeated experience of déjà vu. In many places, they are strikingly similar, almost identical. We'll look at just one example. Mark records the calling of Levi at 2:13–17, an episode that is repeated by Matthew at 9:9–13 and Luke 5:27–32. The similarities are visually obvious when the three accounts are set next to each other in parallel columns and read horizontally (my translations):

<b>Mark (2:13–17)</b>	<b>Matthew (9:9–13)</b>	<b>Luke (5:27–32)</b>
<b>13</b> Jesus went out again toward the sea. The whole crowd gathered around him, and he preached to them.		
<b>14</b> And while he was passing by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at a tax table, and he said to him, "Follow me." And standing up, he followed him.	<b>9</b> And when he was passing through there, he saw a man sitting at a tax table, Matthew by name, and he said to him, "Follow me." And standing up, he followed him.	<b>27</b> And after this he left and saw a publican, Levi by name, sitting at a tax table, and he said to him, "Follow me." <b>28</b> And leaving everything behind, standing up he followed him.
<b>15</b> And it happened when he was sitting at dinner at that man's house, many publicans and sinners were sitting together with Jesus and his students. For there were many people and they followed him.	<b>10</b> And it happened when he was sitting at dinner at home, behold: many publicans and sinners, coming in, were sitting together with Jesus and his students.	<b>29</b> And it happened that Levi had a big feast for him at his home. And there was a big crowd of publicans and others, who were sitting at the table with them.

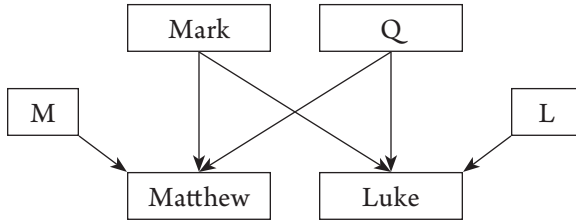
<p><b>16</b> And the scribes of [some] Pharisees, seeing that he was eating with sinners and publicans, said to his students, “Why does he eat with publicans and sinners?”</p>	<p><b>11</b> And [some] Pharisees, looking on, said to his students, “Why does your teacher eat with publicans and sinners?”</p>	<p><b>30</b> And [some] Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his students, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the publicans and sinners?”</p>
<p><b>17</b> And Jesus, this being heard, said to them, “It is not necessary that the healthy have a doctor, but those who are doing poorly. I haven’t come to call the righteous but sinners.”</p>	<p><b>12</b> But hearing, he said, “There is no need for a doctor for the healthy, but for those doing poorly. <b>13</b> Go on and know what this is: ‘I want compassion and not sacrifice.’ For I haven’t come to call the righteous but sinners.”</p>	<p><b>31</b> And responding, Jesus said to them, “Those who are well don’t need a doctor but those who are doing poorly. <b>32</b> I haven’t come to call the righteous to repent but sinners.”</p>

An overview like this is called a “synopsis,” from the Greek word that means “seeing together.” This is why these three Gospels are referred to as the “Synoptic Gospels,” or just the “Synoptics.”

The questions associated with this undeniable interconnectedness of the Synoptics make up what is known as the “Synoptic Problem.” How did it come about? An easy answer to the question is that since they’re all talking about the same events, it’s only natural that Synoptics would be very similar. But this doesn’t take into account why the Synoptics aren’t even more similar. For example, Mark’s Gospel lacks the famous nativity accounts and the complex genealogies that begin the other two Synoptics. It has only a fraction of the Old Testament references. Even more surprisingly it doesn’t report the famed “Beatitudes” and ends before Jesus’s visits with his disciples after the resurrection.

After 150 years of research and careful study, a consensus view has emerged that Mark was the first Gospel to be written, sometime between 60 and 70 CE. It was available to the authors of Matthew and Luke, who used it about twenty years later as the historical framework—the “first draft,” so to speak—of their Gospels. To the stock of material they got from Mark, Matthew and Luke added other texts that were not available to Mark, including,

among other things, a collection of Jesus’s sayings, which is called “Q” (an abbreviation for the German word for “source,” *Quelle*). Finally, Matthew and Luke supplemented all this—Mark and Q—with information each of them had independently of one another. This can get to be extremely complicated fast, but the basic flow of narratives and texts into the three Synoptics can be mapped out like this:



Starting at the top, Mark and Q both flowed independently into Matthew and Luke. (Remember, Mark did not have Q.) Then Matthew added some material only he had, which is represented by the letter “M” off to the left. Similarly, material exclusive to Luke is represented by the letter “L” off to the right. This thesis is known as the “Four Document Hypothesis,” inasmuch as Matthew and Luke demonstrate the existence of four documentary sources:

1. Mark (used by both Matthew and Luke)
2. Q (used by both Matthew and Luke)
3. M (used only by Matthew)
4. L (used only by Luke)

So much for why the three Synoptics have so much in common. A closer inspection, however, shows that neither Matthew nor Luke reproduced the material they got from Mark verbatim. They change an expression here, add an editorial comment there, and even cut out entirely material that was in Mark. Some of the changes can be explained simply as an effort to rephrase or recast Mark’s rough style. For example, in one scene Jesus tells Simon and Andrew that if they follow him, he will make them fishermen of men. Literally, this is what Mark wrote (1:17): “Come after me, and I will make it that you become fishermen of men.” We can understand what he means, but it’s a somewhat clumsy way of putting it. Matthew smooths the original over at 4:19 in his Gospel: “Come after

# Chapter 1

The Gospel of Mark begins when Jesus is already a grown man, unlike the other two Synoptics. Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan River, but his own ministry begins only after John is imprisoned by the authorities. He is driven out into the wilderness, where he is tested for forty days. Jesus returns and calls the first four of his followers. He immediately attracts attention among the local Jews in Galilee because of his cures, his exorcisms, and the unusual way he teaches in a synagogue. As the crowds of people seeking cures increase, Jesus finds it difficult to move around freely in public. At the end of the first chapter, he and his students leave his home district for the city of Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.



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## Mark 1:1–8

### *The First Days of Jesus’s Ministry*

**M**ark’s Gospel begins with the declaration by John the Baptist, a widely honored holy man at the time, that someone even greater than he is will arrive shortly. This was predicted in the Old Testament.

**1** Initium evangelii Iesu Christi filii Dei. **2** Sicut scriptum est in Isaiā prophetā, “Ecce: mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam, qui praeparabit viam tuam.

### Matthew 3:1–11

**1** In diebus autem illis venit Ioannes Baptistā, praedicans in deserto Iudaeae **2** et dicens, “Paenitentiam agite. Appropinquavit enim regnum caelorum.”

### Luke 3:3–16

**3** Et [Ioannes] venit in omnem regionem circa Iordanem, praedicans baptismum paenitentiae in remissionem peccatorum.



## Vocabulary

**ago, -ere, egi, actus**, to make; perform; do

**angelus, -i, m.**, messenger

**appropinquo (1)** + *dative*, to approach; arrive at

**baptismum, -i, n.**, baptism

**baptista, -ae, m.**, baptizer

**caelum, -i, n.**, sky; heaven

**Christus, -i, m.**, anointed one; Messiah

**desertum, -i, n.**, wilderness

**dies, -ei, m./f.**, day

**ecce**, behold

**evangelium, -ii, n.**, good news; good report

**facies, -ei, f.**, face; presence

**Iesus, -us** (*gen. -u, dat. -u, acc. -um, abl. -u*), *m.*, Jesus

**initium, -i, n.**, beginning

**Ioannes, -is, m.**, John

**Iordanes, -is, m.**, the Jordan River

**Isaias, -ae, m.**, Isaiah

**Iudaea, -ae, f.**, Judea

**mitto, -ere, misi, missus**, to send

**paenitentia, -ae, f.**, repentance

**peccatum, -i, n.**, sin; fault

**praedico (1)**, to preach

**propheta, -ae, m.**, prophet

**regio, -ionis, f.**, area; region

**regnum, -i, n.**, kingdom

**remissio, -ionis, f.**, forgiveness; remission

**sicut**, thus; as

**via, -ae, f.**, way; road

## Historical and Grammatical Notes

### MARK 1:1–8

- 1. Initium:** The opening of the Gospel isn't easy to follow. Mark begins with a fragmentary sentence, followed by a complicated Old Testament reference. It may be that the first verse was actually a subtitle for the manuscript (MS) that got worked into the text. Another possibility is that the Old Testament citation was inserted in between *Initium* and its verb *fuisset* that comes two verses later. Leaving out the Old Testament text results in “The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, . . . was John the Baptist . . .” This not only makes the grammar easier to understand, but it's also consistent with events. John's voice in the wilderness predicts a great one who is to come shortly. This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus.
- 2. Sicut scriptum est:** There are other reasons to suspect that the Old Testament citation is a later insertion. For one, this is the only time in Mark that a reference to the Old Testament is made by the narrator—by Mark, in this case. Everywhere else they are made by characters in the narrative. Secondly, it is the only citation from a *specific* book of the Old Testament. All the other references in Mark are more general. They refer simply to the Laws of Moses, for example, or to the prophet Isaiah personally and not to the book of Isaiah. Thirdly, the quotation does not come only from Isaiah. It actually combines two Old Testament references: *Ecce . . . tuam* is from Exodus 23:20 or Malachi 3:1; *vox . . . semitas eius* is from Isaiah 40:3.



## Mark 1:1–8 (cont.)

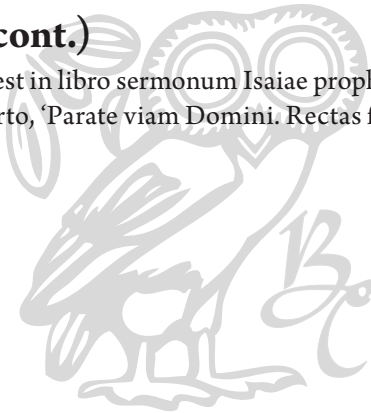
3 Vox clamantis in deserto, ‘Parate viam Domini. Rectas facite semitas eius.’ ” 4 Fuit Ioannes Baptista in deserto, praedicans baptismum paenitentiae in remissionem peccatorum. 5 Et egrediebatur ad illum omnis Iudaeae regio et Hierosolymitae universi, et baptizabantur ab illo in Iordane flumine, confitentes peccata sua. 6 Et erat Ioannes, vestitus pilis cameli et zonā pelliceā circa lumbos eius, et locustas et mel silvestre edebat.

## Matthew 3:1–11 (cont.)

3 Hic est enim qui dictus est per Isaiam prophetam, dicentem, “Vox clamantis in deserto, ‘Parate viam Domini. Rectas facite semitas eius.’ ” 4 Ipse autem Ioannes habebat vestimentum de pilis cameli et zonam pelliceam circa lumbos suos. Esca autem eius erat locustae et mel silvestre. 5 Tunc exibat ad eum Hierosolyma et omnis Iudaea et omnis regio circa Iordanem. 6 Et baptizabantur in Iordane flumine ab eo, confitentes peccata sua.

## Luke 3:3–16 (cont.)

4 Sicut scriptum est in libro sermonum Isaiae prophetae, “Vox clamantis in deserto, ‘Parate viam Domini. Rectas facite semitas eius.’ ”



## Vocabulary

**baptizo (1)**, to baptize

**camelus, -i, m.**, camel

**circa** + *accusative*, around; for

**clamo (1)**, to cry out; shout

**confiteor, -fiteri, -fessus sum**, to confess; admit

**edo, -ere or esse, edi, essus**, to eat

**egredior, -i, -gressus sum**, to go out; depart

**esca, -ae, f.**, food

**exeo, -ire, -ii or -ivi, -itus**, to go out; leave

**flumen, -inis, n.**, river

**Hierosolyma, -ae, f.**, Jerusalem

**Hierosolymitas, -ae, m.**, resident of Jerusalem

**locusta, -ae, f.**, locust; grasshopper

**lumbus, -i, m.**, loin

**mel, mellis, n.**, honey

**pelliceus, -a, -um**, leather; made of animal skin

**pilus, -i, m.**, hair

**rectus, -a, -um**, straight

**semita, -ae, f.**, path

**sermo, -onis, m.**, talk; speech

**silvester, -tris, -tre**, of the woods; wild

**universus, -a, -um**, all; entire

**vestimentum, -i, n.**, clothing

**vestio, -ire, -ii or -ivi, -itus**, to dress

**vox, -cis, f.**, voice

**zona, -ae, f.**, belt

## Historical and Grammatical Notes

### MARK 1:1–8 (CONT.)

- 5. omnis Iudaeae regio et Hierosolymitae universi:** This indicates that John was respected by even the most devout Jews of the time. Judea and Jerusalem represent the heart of orthodox Judaism, unlike Jesus's homeland of Galilee, which had always been seen by devout Jews as somewhat out of the norm, overrun by foreigners and given to a relaxed observation of Mosaic law.
- 6. Ioannes, vestitus pilis cameli . . .:** the traditional garb and behavior of a holy man. In this way, John is further identified with the prophet Elijah, whose return is a precondition for the final judgment (Mal 3:1 and 3:23–24).

### MATTHEW 3:1–11 (CONT.)

- 3. Vox clamantis in deserto:** Matthew improves on Mark's original by embedding the Old Testament prophecy as an object of the participle *dicentem* and by deleting the first half.

## Mark 1:1–8 (cont.)

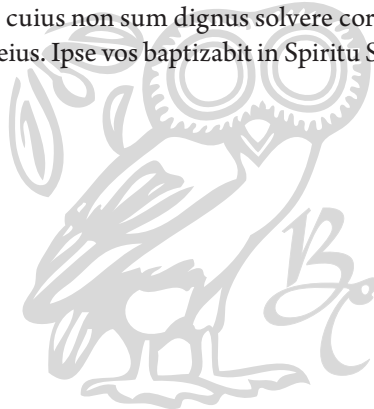
7 Et praedicabat, dicens, “Venit fortior me post me cuius non sum dignus procumbens solvere corrigiam calceamentorum eius. 8 Ego baptizavi vos aquā. Ille vero baptizabit vos in Spiritu Sancto.”

## Matthew 3:1–11 (cont.)

[7–10 John denounces some Pharisees and Sadducees who had come to see him. He also proclaims that the end of time is near.] 11 “Ego quidem vos baptizo in aquā in paenitentiam. Qui autem post me venturus est, fortior me est, cuius non sum dignus calceamenta portare. Ipse vos baptizabit in Spiritu Sancto et igni.”

## Luke 3:3–16 (cont.)

[5–14 John denounces the crowd for their hypocrisy and smugness. He answers questions about how one may be spared the coming wrath of God.] 15 Existimante autem populo et cogitantibus omnibus in cordibus suis de Ioanne, ne forte ipse esset Christus, 16 respondit Ioannes, dicens omnibus, “Ego quidem aquā baptizo vos. Venit autem fortior me, cuius non sum dignus solvere corrigiam calceamentorum eius. Ipse vos baptizabit in Spiritu Sancto et igni . . .”



## Vocabulary

**aqua**, -ae, *f.*, water

**autem**, however, moreover

**calceamentum**, -i, *n.*, shoe

**cogito** (1), to think

**cor**, **cordis**, *n.*, heart

**corrugia**, -ae, *f.*, lace

**dignus**, -a, -um, + *genitive or ablative*,  
or + *infinitive*, worthy; worthy of;

worthy to

**existimo** (1), to wonder

**forte**, by chance; perhaps

**fortis**, -e, strong; powerful

**procumbo**, -cumbere, -cubui,  
-cubitus, to lean down; fall  
forward

**quidem**, indeed; in fact

**solvo**, -vere, -ui or -ii, -utus, to set  
free; untie

**tunc**, then; thereupon

**vero**, truly; but

## Historical and Grammatical Notes

### MARK 1:1–8 (CONT.)

7. **Vēnit**: “there is coming.” **fortior me**: *Me* is ablative of comparison: “stronger than I.” John emphasizes his subordination to Jesus. There is evidence in all four Gospels that there was competition, and even conflict, between the followers of Jesus and the followers of John (Mark 2:18, for example, and Luke 3:15).

### MATTHEW 3:1–11 (CONT.)

11. **Qui**: “he who will come after me.” **venturus est**: = *veniet*. The paraphrastic future—the future active participle with a conjugated form of the verb *sum*—is used interchangeably with the simple future in vulgate Latin. **portare**: complementary infinitive after the adjective *dignus*: “worthy to carry.” **igni**: The addition of fire to Mark’s text can be taken as evidence that Mark was written before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, whereas Matthew’s and Luke’s Gospels were written after. The sack of Jerusalem by the Romans culminated in the burning of the Temple, so the image of baptism by fire would have been a reminder to Christians that even the annihilation of the center of the Jewish world was part of God’s plan.

### LUKE 3:3–16 (CONT.)

15. **Existimante . . . omnibus**: ablative absolute. **ne forte ipse esset Christus**: “whether he might not be the Christ.”

## Mark 1:9–11

### *John Baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River*

**A**fter Jesus is baptized by John, an apparition and voice heard from the sky indicate his special nature.

**9** Et factum est in diebus illis, vēnit Iesus a Nazareth Galilaeae et baptizatus est in Iordane ab Ioanne. **10** Et statim ascendens de aquā vidit apertos caelos et Spiritum tamquam columbam descendentem in ipsum. **11** Et vox facta est de caelis, “Tu es filius meus dilectus. In te complacui.”

## Matthew 3:13–17

**13** Tunc vēnit Iesus a Galilaeā in Iordanem ad Ioannem, ut baptizaretur ab eo. **14** Ioannes autem prohibebat eum, dicens, “Ego a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me?” **15** Respondens autem Iesus dixit ei, “Sine modo. Sic enim decet nos implere omnem iustitiam.” Tunc dimittit eum. **16** Baptizatus autem Iesus confestim ascendit de aquā. Et ecce: aperti sunt ei caeli, et vidit Spiritum Dei descendentem sicut columbam et venientem super se. **17** Et ecce: vox de caelis, dicens, “Hic est filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.”

## Luke 3:21–22

**21** Factum est autem, cum baptizaretur omnis populus, et, Iesu baptizato et orante, apertum est caelum. **22** Et descendit Spiritus Sanctus corporali specie sicut columba super ipsum. Et vox de caelo facta est, “Tu es filius meus dilectus. In te complacui mihi.”

## Vocabulary

<b>aperio, -ire, -ui, -rtus</b> , to uncover	<b>Galilaea, -ae, f.</b> , Galilee
<b>ascendo, -ndere, -ndi, -nsus</b> , to rise	<b>impleo, -ere, -evi, -etus</b> , to fulfill
<b>columba, -ae, f.</b> , dove	<b>iustitia, -ae, f.</b> , divine will; justice
<b>complaceo, -cere, -cui, -citus</b> , to be pleasing to	<b>modo</b> , just now; recently
<b>confestim</b> , immediately	<b>Nazareth (indecl.)</b> , Nazareth
<b>decet, decuit, impers.</b> , it is fitting	<b>oro (1)</b> , to pray
<b>descendo, -ndere, -ndi, -nsus</b> , to descend	<b>sino, sinere, sivi, situs</b> , to allow, permit
<b>dilectus, -a, -um</b> , beloved	<b>species, -ei, f.</b> , appearance
<b>dimitto, -mittere, -misi, -missus</b> , to dismiss; forgive; divorce	<b>statim</b> , immediately
<b>fio, fieri, factus est</b> , to happen	<b>super + accusative or ablative</b> , upon; on; concerning
	<b>tamquam</b> , as; like

## Historical and Grammatical Notes

### MARK 1:9–11

- 9. factum est:** “it came about.” This is a very common transitional introduction to a new pericope in Mark. It looks forward to the next event without necessarily attaching it chronologically to the previous one. Matthew tends to replace this expression with adverbs implying a more precise meaning, such as *tunc*.
- 10. vidit:** The subject is John, since *ipsum* later in the sentence isn’t reflexive. The participle *ascendens* is nominative because John would have been in the water with Jesus during the baptism: “John, coming out of the water, saw the sky open up and saw the Spirit, like a dove, coming down into [onto] to him.”
- 11. In te complacui:** “I have been pleased in [with] you.” In classical Latin, this would have been *complacui mihi*: “you pleased me.”

### MATTHEW 3:13–17

- 13. a Galilaeā:** Why is Nazareth dropped from his Marcan source? A possible explanation is that according to Old Testament prophecy the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem (Mt 2:6). Matthew might have omitted Nazareth so as not to include details that would raise unnecessary questions. Luke will delete both Nazareth and Galilee, perhaps for the same reason.
- 14. Ego a te debeo baptizari:** John asks a question that would have been obvious to Jesus’s later followers, because baptism was preceded by a confession of sin.

### LUKE 3:21–22

- 21. Iesu . . . orante:** ablative absolute: “When Jesus had been baptized and was praying.”
- 22. corporali specie:** ablative of specification: “in bodily appearance.” Luke makes it clear that this is no metaphor. This was a real, physical dove.

## Mark 1:12–13

### *The Temptation of Jesus in the Desert*

**J**esus is driven out into the wilderness by a spirit immediately after his baptism, where he is subjected to forty days and nights of temptations and physical torment.

12 Et statim Spiritus expellit eum in desertum.

## Matthew 4:1–11

1 Tunc Iesus ductus est in desertum a Spiritu ut tentaretur a Diabolo.

## Luke 4:1–13

1 Iesus autem plenus Spiritu Sancto regressus est ab Iordane et agebatur in Spiritu in deserto.



## Vocabulary

**Diabolus**, -i, *m.*, the Devil  
**duco, ducere, duxi, ductus**, to lead;  
 think; marry  
**expello, -pellere, -puli, -pulsus**, to  
 expel; throw out

**plenus, -a, -um** + *ablative or genitive*,  
 filled by; full of  
**regredior, -gredi, -gressus sum**, to  
 withdraw from  
**tento (1)**, to tempt; taunt

## Historical and Grammatical Notes

### MARK 1:12–13

**12. Et statim:** The adverb *statim* nearly loses its basic meaning “immediately” in Mark and becomes merely a conventional way to begin a new pericope: “and thereupon” or “and next.” Notice that both Matthew and Luke tend to replace it with the less abrupt conjunction *autem* or the adverb *tunc*. Some commentators, however, argue that this repeated use of *statim* in Mark builds up the sense of urgency and speed as the events leading to Jesus’s death and resurrection unfold. **desertum:** “wilderness.”

### LUKE 4:1–13

**1. autem:** often best translated as “thereupon,” or just “next.” **ab Iordane:** Luke’s chronology is tighter than Mark’s or Matthew’s. Jesus is driven out into the wilderness *immediately* after his baptism, not just some time after.





## Mark 1:12–13 (cont.)

13 Et erat in deserto quadraginta diebus et tentabatur a Satanā. Eratque cum bestiis, et angeli ministrabant illi.

## Matthew 4:1–11 (cont.)

2 Et cum ieiunasset quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus, postea esuriit. [3–10 *Matthew specifies how the Diabolos tempts Jesus.*] 11 Tunc reliquit eum Diabolus, et ecce: angeli accesserunt et ministrabant ei.

## Luke 4:1–13 (cont.)

2 Diebus quadraginta et tentabatur a Diabolo. Et nihil manducavit in diebus illis, et, consummatis illis, esuriit. [3–12 *Luke details the several temptations that Jesus resists.*] 13 Et consummatā omni tentatione, Diabolus recessit ab illo usque ad tempus.



## Vocabulary

**accedo, -cedere, -cessi, -cessus**, to draw near

**bestia, -ae, f.**, wild animal

**consummo, -ere, -psi, -ptus**, to use up; spend

**esurio, -ire, —, -tus**, to be hungry

**ieiuno (1)**, to fast

**manduco (1)**, to eat

**ministro (1) + dative**, to take care of; tend to

**quadraginta**, forty

**recedo, -cedere, -cessi, -cessum**, to withdraw

**relinquo, -liqui, -lectus**, to leave behind

**Satanas, -ae, m.**, Satan

**tentatio, -ionis, f.**, temptation

**usque**, from everywhere; up until

## Historical and Grammatical Notes

### MARK 1:12–13 (CONT.)

**13. Satanā:** from the Hebrew *satan*, “adversary.” The Greek *diabole* comes from the verb *diaballō*, “to accuse” or “to slander.” This retains the sense that Satan is like a corrupt prosecutor, who tempts people to commit a crime and then arraigns them in court when they do. In this passage, the Diabolos tempts Jesus to sin (if that’s possible), but this is an essential service to prove something about Jesus. The Holy Spirit, after all, drives Jesus out in the desert *in order* that he may be tempted by the Diabolos. In his other appearances in the Synoptic Gospels, however, Satan doesn’t appear to be performing any useful purpose beyond tormenting people with illness and insanity, all small-scale troublemaking unworthy of the archenemy of God. **quadraginta diebus:** = *dies*, accusative of duration of time: “for forty days.” Forty days is a traditional extent of time for Old Testament prophets to endure a test or challenge (Ex 24:18; Dt 9:18, 25; 1 Kgs 19:8). **illi:** dative after *ministrabant*: “they took care of him.”

### MATTHEW 4:1–11 (CONT.)

**2. ieiunasset:** = *ieiunavisset*. The *-vi-* of the third principal part of first conjugation verbs is regularly dropped from some perfect tense forms in both classical and vulgate Latin. *Laudavisse*, for example, can be shortened to *laudasse*; *laudavisse* can be written as *laudasse*. This is called syncopation. So we can say that *ieiunasset* (< *ieiunavisset*) is a syncopated pluperfect subjunctive. This can occur in a small number of third conjugation verbs: *nosse* < *novisse*; *nosti* < *novisti*. Both Matthew and Luke emphasize that Jesus doesn’t eat until after the forty days and nights have been completed. This may be to clarify, or add to, Mark’s account, where Jesus is not specifically said to have fasted during his ordeal.

### LUKE 4:1–13 (CONT.)

**13. consummatā omni tentatione:** ablative absolute: “after each temptation had been played out.”