

Mark

**JOHN PREPARES FOR
JESUS** (1:1–8; Matt. 3:1–12;
Luke 3:1–18; John 1:19–28)

1 This is the beginning of the ·Good News

2 “[Look; †Behold,] I ·will send [am sending] my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way [Mal. 3:1].”

3 “This is a voice of one who ·calls out [shouts; cries out] in the ·desert [wilderness]: ‘Prepare the way for the Lord. Make ·the road straight [a clear path] for him [Is. 40:3].”

4 John [c^cthe Baptist] was baptizing people in the ·desert [wilderness] and preaching a baptism of ·changed hearts and lives [turning from sin; repentance] for the ·forgiveness [remission] of sins.

5 All the people from Judea and Jerusalem were going out to him. They confessed their sins and were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made from camel’s hair, had a leather belt around his waist [c^creminiscent of the prophet Elijah; 2 Kin. 1:8], and ate locusts and wild honey [c^csignifies living off the land].

7 This is what John preached to the people: “There is one coming after me who is ·greater [mightier; more powerful] than I; I am not ·good enough [fit; qualified] even to kneel down and untie [L^Lthe thong/strap of] his sandals [c^ca task of a servant or slave].

8 I baptize you with water, but he will

baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**JESUS IS BAPTIZED
AND TESTED** (1:9–13; Matt.
3:13–17; 4:1–11; Luke 3:21–22;
4:1–13)

9. **At that time** [In those days] **Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan River.**

10. **Immediately, as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw ·heaven** [the sky] **·open** [split open]. **The Holy Spirit** [L-Spirit] **·came down** [descended] **on him like a dove** [c^either in the form of a dove, or in bird-like descent],

11. **and a voice came from heaven: “You are my ·Son, whom I love** [dearly beloved Son; Ps. 2:7; Gen. 22:2], **·and I am very pleased with you** [in whom I take great delight; Is. 42:1].”

12. **Then** [Immediately] **the Spirit ·sent** [drove; compelled] **Jesus into the ·desert** [wilderness].

13. **He was in the ·desert** [wilderness] **forty days** [c^analogous to Israel’s forty years] **and was ·tempted** [or tested] **by Satan** [c^as both Adam and Eve and the nation Israel in the wilderness were tempted, but failed]. **He was with the wild animals** [c^dangerous or perhaps Eden-like conditions], **and the angels came and ·took care of** [served; ministered to] **him.**

**JESUS ANNOUNCES
THE GOOD NEWS** (1:14–
15; Matt. 4:17)

14. **After John was put in prison** [c^by Herod Antipas; cf. 6:14–29], **Jesus went into Galilee, preaching the ·Good News**

[Gospel] ·**from** [about] **God**.

15 **He said**, “**The ·right time has come** [L-time is fulfilled]. ·**The kingdom of God** [God’s sovereign rule] **is ·near** [at hand]. ·**Change your hearts and lives** [Turn from your sins; Repent] **and believe the ·Good News** [Gospel]!”

JESUS CHOOSES HIS FIRST FOLLOWERS

(1:16–20; Matt. 4:18–22; Luke 5:2–11; John 1:35–42)

16 **When Jesus was walking by ·Lake Galilee** [Tthe Sea of Galilee], **he saw Simon** [CPeter; cf. 3:16] **and his brother Andrew ·throwing** [casting] **a net into the lake because they were fishermen**.

17 **Jesus said to them**, “**Come ·follow me** [be my disciples], **and I will ·make you** [teach you how to] **fish for people**.”

18 **So Simon and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed him**.

19 **Going a little farther, Jesus saw two more brothers, ·James and John, the sons of Zebedee** [L-James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John]. **They were in a boat, ·mending** [preparing] **their nets**.

20 **Jesus immediately called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers and followed Jesus**.

JESUS FORCES OUT AN EVIL SPIRIT *(1:21–28; Luke 4:31–37)*

21 **Jesus and his ·followers** [disciples] **went to Capernaum** [Ca town on the northwest shore of Lake Galilee; it became Jesus’ home base]. **On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue and began to teach**.

²²The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught ·like [as] a person who had authority, not ·like [as] ·their teachers of the law [the scribes; ^cexperts in the law of Moses]. ²³Just then, a man was there in the synagogue who had an ·evil [defiling; ^Lunclean] spirit in him. [^cDemons were viewed as “unclean” or defiling spirit-beings.] He shouted,
²⁴“Jesus ·of Nazareth [the Nazarene]! ·What do you want with us? [Let us alone!; What business do we have with each other? ^LWhat to us and to you?] Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are—God’s Holy One!”
²⁵Jesus ·commanded [reprimanded; rebuked] the evil spirit, “Be quiet! Come out of the man!”
²⁶The ·evil [defiling; ^Lunclean] spirit ·shook the man violently [threw him into convulsions], gave a ·loud cry [shriek], and then came out of him.
²⁷The people were [all] so amazed they asked each other, “What is happening here? This man is teaching something new, and with authority. He even gives ·commands [orders] to ·evil [defiling; ^Lunclean] spirits, and they obey him.”
²⁸And the ·news [report; fame] about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the area of Galilee.

**JESUS HEALS MANY
PEOPLE** (1:29–39; Matt.
8:14–17; Luke 4:38–43)

29 **As soon as Jesus and his followers** [disciples] **left the synagogue, they went to the home of Simon** [cPeter] **and Andrew, together with James and John.**

30 **Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, and the people** [Lthey; ceither the people or the disciples] **told Jesus about her.**

31 **So Jesus went to her bed, took her hand, and helped** [raised] **her up. The fever left her, and she began serving them** [waiting on them; cpresumably meal preparation].

32 **That evening, after the sun went down, the people brought to Jesus all who were sick and had demons in them** [were demon-possessed]. 33 **The whole town gathered at the door.**

34 **Jesus healed many who had different kinds of sicknesses, and he forced many demons to leave people** [Ldrove/cast out many demons]. **But he would not allow the demons to speak, because they knew who he was.** [cThey knew he was the Messiah; Jesus wanted to avoid premature publicity.]

35 [Very] **Early the next morning, while it was still dark, Jesus woke** [got up] **and left the house. He went to a lonely** [isolated; deserted] **place, where he prayed.**

36 **Simon and his friends** [companions] **went to look for Jesus.**

37 **When they found him, they said,**
“Everyone is looking for you!”

38 **Jesus answered, “We should [Let us] go to other towns around here so I can preach there, too. That is the reason I came.”**

39 **So he went everywhere in Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and forcing [driving; casting] out demons.**

**JESUS HEALS A SICK
MAN** (1:40–45; Matt. 8:1–4;
Luke 5:12–16)

40 **A man with a skin disease*** [Tleprosy; cthe term does not refer to modern leprosy (Hansen’s disease), but to various skin disorders; Lev. 14] **came to Jesus. He fell to his knees and begged* Jesus, “You can heal* me [Lmake me clean; cleprosy rendered a person ceremonially defiled (“unclean”), and so unable to participate in Israel’s religious life] if you will [are willing; want to].”**

41 **Jesus felt sorryⁿ [compassion*] for the man, so he reached out* his hand and touched* him and said, “I will [am willing; want to]. Be healed* [Lcleansed]!”**

42 **Immediately the disease* [Tleprosy] left the man, and he was healed* [Lcleansed].**

43 **Jesus told the man to go away at once, but he warned* him strongly,**

44 **“Don’t tell anyone about this. But go and show* yourself to the priest. And offer the gift* [offering; sacrifices] Moses commanded for people who are made**

well* [your cleansing; Lev. 14:1–32]. This will ·show* the people [be a public testimony to; be evidence for] what I have done.”

45 The man left there, but he began to tell everyone that Jesus had healed* him, and so he spread* ·the news about Jesus [the message; the word]. As a result, Jesus could not enter a town ·if people saw him [publicly]. He stayed in ·places where nobody lived [secluded/ deserted places], but people ·came [kept coming] to him from everywhere.

**JESUS HEALS A
PARALYZED MAN** (2:1–12;
Matt. 9:1–8; Luke 5:17–26)

2 A few days later*, when Jesus came back to Capernaum*, the news spread that he was at home.

2 Many people gathered together* so that there was no room in the house, not even ·outside [near; in front of] the door. And Jesus was ·teaching* them God’s message* [speaking the word to them].

3 Four people came, carrying a paralyzed* man.

4 Since they could not get to Jesus because of the crowd*, they dug a hole in the roof* right above where he was speaking. [cPalestinian roofs were generally flat and made of thatch and dried mud.] When they got through*, they lowered* the ·mat* [cot] with the paralyzed* man on it.

5 **When Jesus saw the faith* of these people, he said to the paralyzed* man,** “**Young man*** [Child; Son], **your sins* are forgiven*.**”

6 **Some of the teachers* of the law** [scribes] **were sitting there, thinking* to themselves,**

7 “**Why does this man say* things like that** [speak this way]? **He is speaking* as if he were God** [Lblaspheming]. **Only God can forgive* sins*.**” [L“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”; cf. Is. 43:25].

8 **Jesus knew* immediately** [in his spirit] **what these teachers* of the law were thinking*.** **So he said* to them,** “**Why are you thinking* these things** [Lin your hearts]?”

9 **Which is easier*: to tell* this paralyzed* man, ‘Your sins* are forgiven*,’ or to tell* him, ‘Stand up*. Take your mat* [cot] and walk*?’**

10 **But I will prove* to you** [Lso that you may know] **that the Son of Man*** [Ca title for the Messiah; Dan. 7:13–14] **has authority* on earth to forgive* sins*.** **So Jesus said* to the paralyzed* man,**

11 “**I tell* you, stand up*, take your mat* [cot], and go home*.**”

12 **Immediately the paralyzed* man stood up*, took his mat* [cot], and walked out* while everyone was watching* him.** **The**

people were [all] amazed* and praised* God. They said*, “We have never seen* anything like this!”

¹³Jesus went to the lake again*. The whole crowd ·followed* him [came to him] there, and he taught* them.

¹⁴While he was walking along, he saw* a man named Levi* son of Alphaeus* sitting in the tax collector’s booth* [^cprobably a tariff booth for taxing goods in transit]. Jesus said to him, “Follow* me,” and he stood up and followed* Jesus.

¹⁵Later, as Jesus was ·having dinner* [L-reclining; ^caround a low table, the posture for a formal banquet or dinner party] at Levi’s house, many tax collectors* and sinners* were eating* there with Jesus and his followers*. Many people like this followed* Jesus.

¹⁶When the ·teachers* of the law* [scribes] who were Pharisees* saw Jesus eating* with the tax collectors* and sinners*, they asked his followers*, “Why does he eat* with tax collectors* and sinners*?” [^cTax collectors were despised because they worked for the Roman rulers and were notorious for corruption and extortion.]

¹⁷Jesus heard this and said to them, “It is not the healthy* people who need a doctor*, but the sick*. I did not come to ·invite* [call] ·good* people [the righteous;

☉meaning the “self-righteous” who feel no need to repent] **but to ·invite*** [call] **sinner*** [☉those who recognize their need to repent].”

**JESUS IS QUESTIONED
ABOUT FASTING** (2:18–22;
Matt. 9:14–17; Luke 5:33–39;
John 3:29–30)

18**Now the ·followers** [disciples] **of John** [☉the Baptist; 1:4–8] **and the Pharisees often fasted** [☉giving up eating for spiritual purposes]. **·Some people** [☉They] **came to Jesus and said, “Why do John’s ·followers** [disciples] **and the ·followers** [disciples] **of the Pharisees often fast, but your ·followers** [disciples] **don’t?”**

19**Jesus answered, “The ·friends of the bridegroom** [or wedding guests; ☉children of the wedding hall] **do not fast while the bridegroom is still with them** [☉Jesus is referring to himself; John 3:29; Rev. 19:7]. **As long as the bridegroom is with them, they cannot fast.**

20**But the ·time** [☉days] **will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and ·then** [in that day] **they will fast.**

21**“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth over a hole in an old ·coat** [garment]. **Otherwise, the patch will shrink and pull away—the new patch will pull away from the old ·coat** [garment]. **Then the ·hole** [tear] **will be worse.**

²² **Also, no one ever pours new wine into old leather bags** [wineskins]. **Otherwise, the new wine will break the bags** [skins; as the wine ferments and expands], **and the wine will be ruined along with the bags** [skins]. **But new wine should be put into new leather bags** [wineskins].”

JESUS IS LORD OF THE SABBATH (2:23–28; Matt. 12:1–8; Luke 6:1–5)

²³ **One Sabbath day, as Jesus was walking through some fields of grain, his followers** [disciples] **began to** [make a path and] **pick some grain to eat** [Deut. 23:25].

²⁴ **The Pharisees said to Jesus, “Why are your followers doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath day?”** [cGleaning was viewed as work, and therefore forbidden on the Sabbath; Ex. 34:21.]

²⁵ **Jesus answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and those with him** [his companions] **were hungry and needed food** [1 Sam. 21:1–6]?”

²⁶ **During the time of Abiathar** [or, In the account about Abiathar] **the high priest, David went into God’s house and ate the holy bread** [consecrated bread; bread of presentation], **which is lawful only for priests to eat** [Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5–9]. **And David also gave some of the bread to those who were with him.**”

²⁷ **Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, “The Sabbath day was made to help people**

[Tfor man]; **·they were not made to be ruled by** [Tnot man for] **the Sabbath day.**

²⁸ **So then, the Son of Man is** ·Lord [Master] **even of the Sabbath day.”**

JESUS HEALS A MAN'S HAND (3:1–6; Matt. 12:9–14; Luke 6:6–11)

3 **Another time when Jesus went into a synagogue, a man with a** ·crippled [paralyzed; deformed; shriveled] **hand was there.**

2·Some people [LThey; cprobably the Pharisees; see 2:24, 27] **watched Jesus closely to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath day so they could accuse him.**

3Jesus **said to the man with the crippled hand, “Stand up here in** ·the middle [front] **of everyone.”**

4Then Jesus **asked** ·the people [Lthem; cprobably the Pharisees], **“Which is lawful** [caccording to the law of Moses] **on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?”** **But they** ·said **nothing to answer him** [remained silent].

5Jesus **was angry as he looked at them, and he felt very** ·sad [distressed; grieved] **because** ·they were **stubborn** [of their hard hearts]. **Then he said to the man, “**·Hold out [stretch out] **your hand.”** **The man** ·held out [stretched out] **his hand and it was** ·healed [restored].

6 **Then the Pharisees left and** [immediately] **began** ·making plans [plotting] **with the Herodians** [ca political group that supported king Herod and his family] **about**

a way to **kill** [destroy] **Jesus**.

**MANY PEOPLE FOLLOW
JESUS** (3:7–12; Matt. 12:15–
16; Luke 6:17–19)

7 **[But]** **Jesus** left with his **followers**
[disciples] **for the lake, and a large crowd**
from Galilee followed him.

8 **Also many people came from Judea,**
from Jerusalem, from Idumea [located to
the south], **from the lands across the**
Jordan River, and from the area of Tyre
and Sidon [located to the north]. **When**
they heard what Jesus was doing, many
people came to him.

9 **When Jesus saw the crowds, he told his**
followers [disciples] **to get a boat ready**
for him to keep people from crowding
against [crushing] **him.**

10 **[For]** **He had healed many people, so all**
the sick were pushing toward him to
touch him. 11 **When evil** [defiling;
Unclean; see 1:23] **spirits** [within people]
saw Jesus, they fell down before him and
shouted, “You are the Son of God!”

12 **But Jesus strongly warned** [rebuked;
ordered] **them not to tell who he was.**

**JESUS CHOOSES HIS
TWELVE APOSTLES**
(3:13–19; Matt. 10:1–4; Luke
6:12–16)

13 **Then Jesus went up on a mountain** [to
the hills] **and called to him those he**
wanted, and they came to him.

14 **Jesus chose** [appointed] **twelve**
[paralleling the twelve tribes of Israel] **and**
called them apostlesⁿ [“apostle” means a
messenger, or someone sent with a

commission]. **He wanted them to be with him, and he wanted to send them out to preach**

¹⁵ **and to have the authority to force** [drive; cast] **demons out of people.**

¹⁶ **These are the twelve he chose** [appointed]: **Simon (Jesus named him Peter),**

¹⁷ **James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Jesus named them Boanerges, which** [in Aramaic] **means “Sons of Thunder”),**

¹⁸ **Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot** [either religiously zealous, or a (former) member of the revolutionary movement known as Zealots],

¹⁹ **and Judas Iscariot** [Iscariot probably means “man of Kerioth”], **who later turned against** [betrayed] **Jesus.**

**SOME PEOPLE SAY
JESUS IS POSSESSED
BY AN EVIL SPIRIT** (3:20–
30; Matt. 9:32–34; 12:24–37;
Luke 11:14–15, 17–23; 12:10)

²⁰ **Then Jesus went home** [into a house], **but again a crowd gathered. There were so many people that Jesus and his followers could not eat.**

²¹ **When his family** [own people] **heard this, they went to get** [seize; take charge of] **him because they thought he was out of his mind.**

²² **But** [what’s more] **the teachers of the law** [scribes] **from Jerusalem were saying, “Beelzebul** [another name for Satan] **is living inside** [possessing] **him! He uses power**

from the ·ruler [prince] **of demons to ·force** [drive; cast] **demons out of people.**”

²³ **So Jesus called the people together and ·taught them with stories** [spoke to them in parables; ^cGreek *parabole*, which can mean stories and analogies of various kinds]. **He said, “Satan will not force himself out of people.** [“How can Satan drive out Satan?]

²⁴ **A kingdom that is ·divided** [at war with itself] **cannot ·continue** [stand],

²⁵ **and a ·family** [household; ^Lhouse] **that is divided cannot ·continue** [stand].

²⁶ **And** [then, so] **if Satan ·is** [rises; rebels] **against himself and ·fights against his own people** [is divided], **he cannot ·continue** [stand]; **that is the end of Satan.**

²⁷ **No one can enter a strong man’s house and ·steal** [seize; plunder] **his things unless he first ·ties up** [binds] **the strong man** [Is. 49:24–25]. **Then he can ·steal** [seize; plunder] **things from the house.**

[^cSatan is the strong man and his possessions are the people Jesus is freeing from Satan’s power.]

²⁸ **I tell you the truth, all sins that people do and all ·the things people say against God** [blasphemies] **can be forgiven.**

²⁹ **But anyone who ·speaks against** [blasphemes] **the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of ·a sin that continues forever** [a sin with eternal consequences; ^Lan eternal sin].”

³⁰ **Jesus said this because the teachers of the law said that he had an ·evil** [defiling; ^Lunclean] **spirit inside him.**

JESUS' TRUE FAMILY
(3:31–35; Matt. 12:46–50; Luke
8:19–21)

31 **Then Jesus' mother and brothers** [or brothers and sisters; ^cthe Greek word can mean “siblings”; cf. 6:3] **arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to tell him to come out.**

32 **Many people were sitting around Jesus, and they said to him, “Your mother and brothersⁿ are waiting** [looking; asking] **for you outside.”**

33 **Jesus asked, “Who are my mother and my brothers** [and sisters]?”

34 **Then he looked at those sitting around him and said, “Here are** [Look; ^TBehold,] **my mother and my brothers** [and sisters]!

35 **My true brother and sister and mother are those who do what God wants** [the will of God].”

**A STORY ABOUT
PLANTING SEED** (4:1–9;
Matt. 13:1–9; Luke 8:4–8)

4 **Again Jesus began teaching by the lake** [^cthe Sea of Galilee]. **A great crowd gathered around him, so he sat down in a boat near the shore. All the people stayed on the shore close to the water.**

2 **Jesus taught them many things, using stories** [parables; see 3:23]. **He said,**

3 **“Listen! A farmer** [sower] **went out to plant** [sow] **his seed.**

4 **While he was planting** [sowing], **some seed fell by the road** [along the path], **and the birds came and ate it up.**

5 **Some seed fell on rocky ground where there wasn't much dirt. That seed grew** [sprang up] **very fast, because the ground was not deep.**

6 **But when the sun rose, the plants dried up** [were scorched and withered] **because**

they did not have deep roots.

⁷ Some other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not produce a crop [grain].

⁸ Some other seed fell on good ground and began to grow. It got taller and produced a crop [grain]. Some plants made thirty times more, some made sixty times more, and some made a hundred times more.”

⁹ Then Jesus said, “Let those with ears use them and listen!” [“Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”]

**JESUS TELLS WHY HE
USED STORIES** (4:10–
12; Matt. 13:10–17; Luke 8:9–
10)

¹⁰ Later, when Jesus was alone, the twelve apostles and others around him asked him about the stories [parables; see 3:23].

¹¹ Jesus said, “You can know [To you has been given] the secret about the kingdom of God. But to other people [outsiders] I tell everything by using stories [parables]

¹² so that: ‘They will look and look, but they will not learn [perceive]. They will listen and listen, but they will not understand. If they did learn and understand [Otherwise], they would [might] come back [return] to me and be forgiven [Is. 6:9–10; cf. Is. 43:8; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2].’”

**JESUS EXPLAINS THE
SEED STORY** (4:13–20; Matt.
13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15)

¹³ Then Jesus said to his followers [Lthem], “Don’t you understand this story [parable]? If you don’t, how will you understand any story [parable; see 3:23]?”

¹⁴ The farmer plants God’s message in

people [LThe sower sows the word].
15 Sometimes the ·teaching [word; message] falls ·on the road [along the path]. This is like the people who hear the ·teaching of God [word; message], but Satan quickly comes and takes away the ·teaching [word; message] that was ·planted [sown] in them.

16 Others are like the seed ·planted [sown] on rocky ground. They hear the ·teaching [word; message] and quickly accept it with joy.

17 ·But since they don't allow the teaching to go deep into their lives [LBut since they have no root in themselves], they keep it only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the ·teaching they accepted [word; message], they quickly ·give up [fall away; stumble].

18 Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the ·teaching [word; message],

19 but the worries of this ·life [world; age], the ·temptation [deceitfulness; seduction] of wealth, and ·many other evil desires [desires for other things] ·keep the teaching from growing and producing fruit in their lives [Lcome in and choke the word, making it unfruitful].

20 Others are like the seed ·planted [sown] in the good ground. They hear the ·teaching [word; message] and accept it. Then they grow and produce ·fruit [a crop]—sometimes thirty times more, sometimes sixty times more, and sometimes a hundred times more.”

USE WHAT YOU HAVE

(4:21–25; Luke 8:16–18)

21 **Then Jesus said to them, “Do you hide a lamp under a bowl [basket] or under a bed? No! You put the lamp on a lampstand.**

22 **For everything that is hidden will be made clear [revealed; disclosed] and every secret [concealed] thing will be made known [brought to light/into the open].**

23. **Let those with ears use them and listen!**
[“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”]

24 **And he said to them, “think carefully about [Pay attention to] what you hear. The way you give to others is the way God will give to you [or The standard you use to judge others will be the standard used for you; With the measure you measure, it will be measured to you], but God will give you even more [and even more will be added to you].**

25 **Those who have understanding [have] will be given more. But those who do not have understanding [have], even what they have will be taken away from them.**
[The Greek does not say *what* they have; but the context suggests spiritual understanding to comprehend the mysteries of the kingdom (v. 11).]

**JESUS TELLS A STORY
ABOUT SEED (Mark 4:26-29)**

26 **Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like someone who plants seed in [scatters seed on] the ground.**

27 **Night and day, whether the person is asleep or awake, the seed still [sprouts and] grows, but the person does not know how it grows.**

28 **By itself the earth produces grain. First the ·plant** [blade; stalk] **grows, then the head, and then ·all the** [the ripe] **grain in the head.**

29 **When the grain is ready, the farmer cuts it** [with a sickle], **because this is the harvest time.”**

**A STORY ABOUT
MUSTARD SEED** (4:30–
34; Matt. 13:31–32, 34; Luke
13:18–21)

30 **Then Jesus said, “How can I show you what the kingdom of God is like? What ·story** [parable; see 3:23] **can I use to explain it?**

31 **The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, the smallest seed you plant in the ground.** [cThe mustard seed was the smallest seed known to Jesus’ hearers.]

32 **But when planted, this seed grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants. It produces large branches, and the wild birds can make nests in its shade.”**

33 **Jesus used many ·stories** [parables] **like these to teach the crowd God’s ·message** [word]—**as much as they could ·understand** [hear].

34 **He always used ·stories** [parables] **to teach them. But when he and his ·followers** [disciples] **were alone, Jesus explained everything to them.**