

But I Say to you ...

When Jesus called himself God

By Diana Mitchell, 6/27/2024, 9/29/2026

Some theologians and Bible scholars believe Mark 2:26 is a prime example of an error in the Bible because it has Abiathar as the high priest instead of his father, Ahimelech, who was the high priest that David obtained the shewbread from in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. This is not a mistake on Mark's part, or Jesus' part. In addition to Jesus confirming his own identity, Jesus was affirming Abiathar as the high priest chosen by God. Mark 2:26 echoes back to 1 Samuel 23:9, and 30:7 where David called to Abiathar to bring the ephod. The ephod was a garment that only the high priest had access to, and according to Exodus 28, it housed the Urim and the Thummim in the Breastplate of Judgement. Mark 2:26 also echoes back to 1 Samuel 22:18, where Saul had Ahimelech, and 84 priests of God, murdered because Ahimelech chose to show mercy to a hungry, and innocent, David. It also echoes back to 1 Samuel 28:6, where God did not answer Saul "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."

Prior to Mark 2:26, to establish who Jesus is, Mark sets Jesus':

1. Location in time by building on Numbers 24:1, where Balaam set his face toward "the wilderness;" and, Mark 1:11-12, where Jesus went into "the wilderness."
2. Authority by building on Numbers 23:19, and 24:7 and 19, where God, who has dominion over everything, is described as not being a man or the "son of man;" Daniel 7:13-14 and 27, where one who has dominion over everything is describe as being like the "Son of man;" and, Mark 2:10, where Jesus claims the title, "Son of man." Most important to note in Daniel is that the one described in Daniel 7:13-14, is later described in Daniel 7:27 as being "the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (*see* Genesis 14:18-22, and Numbers 24:16 in regard to the most High's authority). Notice, too, Mark 1:23 in which there was a man "in their synagogue ... with an unclean spirit" that recognized Jesus as having dominion over it by coming out of the man when Jesus told it to in Mark 1:25-26.
3. Personage by building on Numbers 23:19, where Balaam describes God as not being a man or the "son of man;" and, Daniel 7:13-14, where Daniel describes one who is like the "Son of man," whom "they" (the Jews) closely compare to "the Ancient of days"—God—by bringing "him near before him." Daniel's vision in Daniel 7:27 confirms they are one and the same. The scribes (writers) in Mark 2:6-8 conduct this same type of comparison. For example, the Jews knew that only God could heal and forgive sins (*see* Exodus 15:26; Leviticus 4; and Isaiah 43:25, and 44:22). In Mark 2:6-8 "they" reason "in their hearts ... who can forgive sins but God only." In regard to this, Moses in Deuteronomy 18:21 tells them how "they" are to recognize the one who will speak face-to-face with them like he, Moses, spoke face-to-face with God. He writes, when "thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?" they are told in Deuteronomy

18:22, “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” (*see* Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Exodus 20:19). In Mark 2:10-12, after reasoning “in their hearts” in Mark 2:6-8, “they” heard “the Son of man” forgive the lame man and tell him to pick up his bed and walk ... and the lame did just that.

4. “Only God” abilities with Scripture such as Mark 2:6-7 where “they” reasoned “in their hearts” whether or not Jesus could do what only God could do, and probably even more so after hearing Jesus refer to himself as “Son of man” in Mark 2:10 (*see also* Mark 1:21-27, 29-31, and verses 40-44). In other words, “they” made the connection of “only God,” and Jesus took them to the conclusion of the “Immanuel” in Isaiah 7:14 (and *see* “Emmanuel” in Matthew 1:23) by referring to himself as the “Son of man” of Daniel 7:13-14, whom “they” compare to God, both of whom, the Son of man and God, have everlasting dominions and kingdoms, which is something that only God has, not mortal man or any other spiritual being. In addition, from the Jewish perspective, only God can heal, and forgive sins.

By affirming Jesus’ identity prior to Mark 2:26, it can be said that Mark 2:26 was not a mistake by Mark, but an affirmation of who Jesus was according to the prophecies of Moses, Balaam, Isaiah, and Daniel. Only God could choose the high priest. God was the one who chose Abiathar to be the high priest after his father, Ahimelech—the one who had the Urim and the Thummim—was murdered by Saul, and David confirmed Abiathar as the high priest by calling for Abiathar to bring him the ephod (*see* 1 Samuel 23:9, and 30:7)—the garment in which the Urim and the Thummim resided. His father, Ahimelech, like Jesus in Mark 2:23-28, allowed the ones in need to have what would sustain them, instead of strictly adhering to religious rules (*see* 1 Samuel 21:1-6).

If Jesus had just mentioned Ahimelech’s name, the “they” of then and today, would have had no reason to stop and compare “the Son of man,” whom Jesus claimed to be, to God: the one with dominion over every unclean spirit sitting in a church; the one who Jesus demonstrated himself to be: the Ancient of Days, God, most High; and, the one who prefers good be done even on the sabbath days (*see* Mark 3:1-6) rather than strict adherence to religious rules.

In other words, it was one thing to claim to be “the Son of man,” it was another thing for a Jew to get Scripture “wrong”—then, and even now because if Jesus, a Jew who sat in synagogue and taught, got the name of the priest wrong, how could he be “the Son of man”? ... Unless Jesus intentionally got “wrong,” for Mark to record, what every Jew who looked for the son of David (*see* 2 Samuel 7:12-27) probably knew by heart—the story of how Ahimelech had shown mercy and helped David, their greatest king. No, Mark 2:26 is not a mistake in Scripture, it marks one of the times in Scripture when Jesus called himself God.

Please note: All quoted Scripture is from the King James Version (KJV).