

Bible Study Notes and Questions on the Gospel of Mark

Introductory Overview

It is believed this gospel of Mark was the first of the four gospels to be written in about **60-70 AD** although opinions vary over the date from as early as **40** to **75 AD** at the latest.

The writer had a Jewish name called John whilst his other name Mark was his Latin name. John Mark was the son of Mary who was active in the Church in Jerusalem. It was in her house in Jerusalem that there was a prayer meeting that had engaged in much prayer for Peter who was to be put to death (**Acts 12:12**). Peter was miraculously delivered by an angel from impending execution (**Acts 12:3-17**).

John Mark was a cousin of Barnabas (**Colossians 4:10**) who had accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey. Mark had also come on this missionary journey but departed from Paul and Barnabas in Perga in Pamphylia to return to Jerusalem (**Acts 13:5, 13**). Paul had refused to take Mark on his second missionary journey but Barnabas gave Mark another chance in taking him to Cyprus having separated from Paul who took Silas with him to go to Syria and Cilicia (**Acts 15:36-41**). However, later on, Paul had a change of attitude towards Mark in commending him as a faithful and fellow labourer with him (**2 Timothy 4:10 & Philemon 24**). Mark was also an associate of Peter in Rome (**1 Peter 5:13** – it is believed by many that Babylon refers to Rome). It is likely that much of what Mark wrote down in his gospel was the information he received from Peter who was an eyewitness to the work that Jesus Christ did. It seems probable that Mark put together this gospel in Rome. There are a number of Latin words in this gospel such as “centurion” (**Mark 15:39, 44-45**), “legion” (**Mark 5:9, 15**) and “praetorium” (**Mark 15:16**). Mark had written to the Gentile (non-Jewish) Christian readers especially the Romans hence the information on Jewish customs (**Mark 1:44; &:3-5**).

Nowhere in this gospel is the author mentioned but much support for the authorship of this gospel being that of Mark has been shown by the writings of the early Church fathers in the first four centuries namely from Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius and Jerome.

Mark has portrayed Jesus Christ very much as a servant king (**Philippians 2:7-8**) who has shown his authority in preaching the word of God and exercising his authority over all sicknesses and casting out evil spirits. What Jesus taught was authenticated by the works that he did. No one could accuse Jesus of hypocrisy.

Although the shortest gospel of the four, Mark has shown detail focussing very much on what Jesus did in action rather than what he said. The gospel begins immediately with being at the Jordan where Jesus Christ was baptised and then led by the Holy Spirit for a time of forty days tempted in the wilderness. He then comes out calling four of his disciples before going on immediately to start his ministry in Capernaum.

Mark has shown Jesus Christ as God’s perfect servant as seen in:

- 1) His preparation for his ministry, **1:1-13**.
- 2) His early ministry in the Galilee region, **1:14-3:12**.
- 3) His call and training of his disciples, **3:13-8:38**.
- 4) His journey to Jerusalem (**Chapters 9 & 10**).
- 5) His ministry in Jerusalem (**Chapter 11 & 12**).
- 6) His Olivet Discourse (**Chapter 13**).
- 7) His passion and death (**Chapters 14 & 15**).
- 8) His triumph in his resurrection and his work to continue through his disciples (**Chapter 16**)

Chapter One

- Q.1)** What was known of John the Baptist in **1:2-8,14**? See also **Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3**.
- Q.2)** What do we know of who Jesus Christ is in **1:1-13**? See particularly **verses 1,3,7,11-13**.
- Q.3)** What did Jesus preach in view of what is said in **1:15**?
- Q.4)** Show the activity of God the Father and the Holy Spirit after Jesus was baptised. See **1:9-12** and compare with **Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34**.
- Q.5)** Why did Simon, Andrew, James and John respond in the way they did when Jesus called them in **1:16-20**? Look again at **Mark 1:1-13** and see also **John 1:29-51**.
- Q.6)** Show the authority Jesus had in his preaching and in doing miracles. See **1:21-42**.
- Q.7)** What is known about the character of evil and unclean spirits and show how Jesus dealt with them. See **1:23-27, 32-34** and also **3:11-12**.
- Q.8)** What can we learn from **1:41-42** in the way the leper approached Jesus in his prayer and the response shown by Jesus? How did the healed leper cause problems? What should he have done after Jesus healed him? Read **1:43-45**.

Chapter Two

- Q.1)** Read **1:1-12**. How did Jesus prove his deity?
- Q.2)** Who were the people that were responding to Jesus' ministry? Read carefully **2:1-16**.
- Q.3)** What three lessons can we learn from Jesus in read carefully **2:16-22**?
- Q.4)** What do you think you can do on the sabbath? Should we regard the sabbath as the Lord's day? Read **2:23-28**.
- Q.5)** Read carefully through **2:1-28** and show the objections to the ministry of Jesus and show how Jesus dealt with each objection.

Chapter Three

- Q.1)** Show the reaction of the Pharisees to the healing of a man with a withered hand on the sabbath. Read **3:1-6**. How did Jesus react to the Pharisees and show their hypocrisy?
- Q.2)** How did the common people respond to Jesus in **3:7-12, 20**?
- Q.3)** Make a list of the disciples in **3:13-19**. What is known of them. It is helpful to read **Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 6:13-16; John 1:35-51; 21:1-3; Acts 1:13**. Can you suggest the kind of social background the disciples came from and whether any were very wealthy or any of high social standing.
- Q.4)** Read carefully **3:22-30**. Show how evil this opposition was to Jesus' ministry. Consider what the scribes accused Jesus of doing. Show how Jesus replied to their accusations. There are at least three parts to Jesus' reply to this accusation.
- Q.5)** Why did Jesus' earthly family and friends misunderstand him and who did Jesus regard as being part of his family? Read **3:21, 31-35**.

Chapter Four

- Q.1)** Read carefully **4:1-20**. What is Jesus teaching in the parable of the sower regarding the four kinds of hearers.
- Q.2)** Why did Jesus speak in parables? Read **4:2, 10-13, 21-25, 33-34**. It is helpful to read **2Samuel 12:1-14**.
- Q.3)** What is the secret/mystery of the kingdom? Read **4:11-12, 26-32** and see also **Colossians 1:13; Matthew 6:33**.
- Q.4)** Read carefully **4:23-25**. How should we hear if we want to grow spiritually?
- Q.5)** Read the story of the storm in **4:35-41**. What is revealed of **A)** the reaction of the disciples to this storm, **B)** the humanity and divinity of Jesus, **C)** the response of the disciples when the sea had become calm? How should we respond in any storms (physically, emotionally and spiritually) that we may experience at some point in our time here on earth?

Chapter Five

- Q.1)** What can we learn about evil spirits and what could happen to people under the influence of them as seen by the demoniac in **5:1-16**?
- Q.2)** Why did Jesus cast out the evil spirits into the pigs? See **5:10-17**.
- Q.3)** Show how the man was transformed when delivered from evil spirits. What was he told to do by Jesus now that he was set free? Read again **5:1-20**.
- Q.4)** Why did the people of the city nearby reject Jesus in telling him to depart? See **5:14-17**.
- Q.5)** What is known about the attitude of Jairus one of the rulers of the synagogue and the woman with internal bleeding towards Jesus Christ? Read carefully **5:21-43**.
- Q.6)** Show the response of Jesus towards the woman and to Jairus. Read again **5:21-43**.
- Q.7)** Read again **chapter five**. What lessons can we learn about: **A)** The authority of Jesus **B)** The fears that were seen in this chapter considering whether we have experienced any of these fears. **C)** The strengthening of our faith in regard to the demoniac, the sick woman and Jairus encountering Jesus Christ. Read also **Matthew 10:7-8**.

Chapter Six

- Q.1)** Why was Jesus received so badly in his home town of Nazareth? Read **6:1-6** and see also **Matthew 13:53-58 & Luke 4:16-30**.
- Q.2)** Consider how the disciples were to carry out their mission. What kind of ministry were the twelve disciples to have when Jesus gave them instructions before sending them out. Read **6:7-13** and see also **Matthew 10:6-15**.
- Q.3)** Read **6:14-29**. What is known of Herod? **A)** Show his attitude towards John the Baptist. **B)** Show any weaknesses as seen in his birthday celebration.
- Q.4)** Why did Herodias resent John the Baptist? See **6:17-19**.
- Q.5)** Show the difference in attitude towards the crowd between Jesus and the disciples. Read **6:30-44**. Can you suggest the reason for such differences?
- Q.6)** Read carefully **6:30-44**. What is significant about the miracle done by Jesus to feed 5000 men (and women and children if you read **Matthew 14:21**). It is helpful to read **Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15**. What precious lessons did the disciples learn through this miracle of feeding the crowd? Can we learn similar lessons as a result of this miracle?
- Q.7)** Read carefully **6:45-52**. See also **John 6:15-21**. **A)** Why did Jesus leave the disciples to struggle in the boat going to Bethsaida? **B)** Why did the disciples show hardness of heart?
- Q.8)** What is known of the reaction of the people in the land of Gennesaret when they knew Jesus had come? See **6:53-56**.

Chapter Seven

- Q.1)** Show the evidence that the Pharisees and the scribes were upholding the traditions of men and rejecting the commandments God. Read **7:1-13**. How did Jesus rebuke them?
- Q.2)** What was Jesus teaching that made men unclean and how did his teaching differ from that of the Pharisees and the scribes? See **7:14-23**.
- Q.3)** Why were the disciples slow to understand some of the simplest teaching of Jesus? Read carefully **7:18-19**.
- Q.4)** Read carefully **7:24-30**. Why did Jesus appear to delay responding to the request made by the Syrophenician woman? What can we learn from her response and the Lord's answer to her request?
- Q.5)** What do we know about the people who brought the deaf and dumb man to Jesus? Read **7:31-32**.
- Q.6)** Why did Jesus heal the deaf and dumb man in the way that he did and show the response of other people present in seeing this miracle? See **7:33-37**.

Chapter Eight

- Q.1)** Why did the disciples show unbelief in seeing Jesus meet the need of the 4000 even though they saw the miracle of 5000 men with women and children fed. Read **8:1-4 & 6:52**.
- Q.2)** Compare how Jesus fed the 4000 with the 5000 men with women and children. Can you see any differences? Read **8:1-9** and read again **6:33-44**. See also **Matthew 15:32-39**.
- Q.3)** Why did Jesus refuse to give a sign requested by the Pharisees? Read **8:10-12**.
- Q.4)** What did the disciples fail to understand in **8:13-21**?
- Q.5)** What was unusual about the way Jesus healed the blind man and why Jesus told him not to tell anyone in the town (Bethsaida) about his healing? Read **8:22-26**.
- Q.6)** Why did many people think of Jesus as one of the prophets? Suggest the different answers people today may give of who Jesus is. Read **8:27-30**.
- Q.7)** Why did Peter react the way he did after Jesus had told the twelve disciples of his death and resurrection? How did Jesus deal with Peter's rebuke? Read **8:31-33**.
- Q.8)** What does it mean to recognise Jesus as the Christ and to follow him in **8:34-35**? What will happen to men who choose to reject Jesus Christ? See **8:36-38**.

Chapter Nine

- Q.1)** What did Jesus mean in **9:1** that some people standing listening him will not taste death till they have seen the kingdom of God come in power? Consider whether this prophecy has been fulfilled or still has a future fulfilment.
- Q.2)** What changes happened to Jesus when he and the three disciples had climbed a high mountain? See **9:2-8**.
- Q.3)** Show the significance of Elijah and Moses on the mount with Jesus? See **9:4-8**.
- Q.4)** What was the purpose of God's voice in saying "*This is my beloved Son: hear him*". Read **9:5-8**. See also **Deuteronomy 18:14-22 & Malachi 4:5**.
- Q.5)** Why was Jesus so insistent on telling the three disciples not to tell anyone until he had risen from the dead? Read **9:9-10**.
- Q.6)** What is the question asked by the disciples to Jesus in **9:11-13**? How did Jesus reply to this question? Show the similarities between Elijah and John the Baptist. See **Luke 1:16-17**.
- Q.7)** Read **9:14-19**. Why did Jesus seem so harsh in what is recorded in **9:19**?
- Q.8)** What is encouraging about the conversation between Jesus and the father of the boy with a dumb spirit? See **9:20-27**?
- Q.9)** Why did the disciples fail to cast out the dumb spirit from the boy? See **9:19, 23-24** and **Matthew 17:20**.
- Q.10)** Why did the disciples fail to understand what Jesus said about his death and resurrection? See **9:30-32**.
- Q.11)** Show the important principle taught in **9:33-37** that Jesus stressed to his disciples.
- Q.12)** Show the reasons that John acted wrongly in **9:38-41**.
- Q.13)** What did Jesus teach the disciples in **9:42-48**?
- Q.14)** Consider the significance of the words, "salt" and "fire" in **9:43-50**. What is meant by being "*salted with fire*" in **v49**?

Chapter Ten

- Q.1)** Read carefully **10:1-12**. What is being taught about divorce by Jesus Christ? It is helpful to read **Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-12** and **1Corinthians 7:10-15**.
- Q.2)** What lessons can we learn from Jesus' attitude towards children in **10:13-16**.
- Q.3)** Explain the meaning "*to receive the kingdom of God as a little child*" in **10:15**. See also **Matthew 18:2-4**.
- Q.4)** Read **10:17-25**. What is known of the rich young man and show what was hindering him from entering the kingdom of God? See also **Matthew 19:16-24 & Luke 18:18-25**.

Chapter Ten continued

Q.5) Show what was troubling the disciples in **10:26-28** and the promises Jesus made to reassure those who were willing to follow him without reservation in **10:29-30**.

See also **Matthew 19:25-29 & Luke 18:26-30**.

Q.6) What is the meaning of **10:31**: "*But many (that are) first shall be last: and the last first*". Compare with **9:35**.

Q.7) Look carefully at Jesus' prediction of his death in **10:32-34** and compare with **8:31 & 9:31**. What do we notice about the reaction of the disciples when they see Jesus going up to Jerusalem?

Q.8) Read **10:35-45**. Consider carefully: **A)** The spiritual shallowness of James and John in their request to Jesus in **10:35-37**. **B)** The reply Jesus made to James and John in **10:38-40**. **C)** The way to become effective in true Christian ministry in **10:41-45**.

Q.9) What spiritual insight can we learn from blind Bartimaeus when he heard Jesus was passing by? Read **10:46-52**.

Chapter Eleven

Q.1) Read **11:1-11** and show why this event was so significant. See also **Zechariah 9:9** and compare with **Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:37-40 & John 12:12-19**.

Q.2) What was the purpose of Jesus cursing the fig tree? Read **11:12-14, 20-21**. What did the fig tree represent? Consider also **Jeremiah 8:13; 29:17; Hosea 9:10-17; Joel 1:7**.

Q.3) Why was Jesus angry when he saw what took place in the temple in **11:15-17**?

Q.4) What was the temple to be used for? See again **11:15-17**.

Compare with **Matthew 21:13-16 & Luke 21:46-48**.

Q.5) Show the reaction of the chief priests and scribes towards Jesus in hearing what he had done in the temple. Read **11:15-17** and compare with **Luke 19:47-48**.

Q.6) What is Jesus teaching us about prayer in **11:22-26**?

Q.7) Why did Jesus refuse to answer the chief priests, scribes and elders regarding his authority? Consider the motives of these religious leaders. Read **11:27-35** in asking such a question on Jesus' authority. Compare with **Matthew 21:23-27 & Luke 20:1-8**.

Chapter Twelve

Q.1) Read **12:1-12**. What is Jesus teaching from the parable of the tenants/husbandman/farmers/vine growers? Consider the following:

A) Who are the tenants? **B)** Who is the owner of the vineyard? **C)** Who are the servants and the son? **D)** Who is to be the cornerstone? **E)** Why were the religious leaders wanting to kill Jesus?

Q.2) Read carefully **12:13-17**. **A)** How did this event show the wisdom of Jesus and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the Herodians? **B)** What was Jesus teaching his questioners?

C) What relevance does this incident have for us? See also **Romans 13:1-2, 6-7**.

Q.3) Read **12:18-27**. What was Jesus teaching about the resurrection and show just how ignorant the Sadducees were in their knowledge of the resurrection.

Q.4) Show what is really needed to fulfil the law of God in **12:28-34** which one of scribes seemed to appreciate. What do you think the scribe still needed to do to enter in to the kingdom of God? Compare **Matthew 22:35-40**.

Q.5) Read **12:35-44**. What lessons can we learn in this final section of this chapter?

A) Why Jesus Christ can be seen as Jesus son of David as well as being Son of God?

Compare with **Matthew 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44; Psalm 110:1-7**

B) The condemnation of Jesus towards the scribes in **12:38-40** and compare with **Luke 20:45-47**. Show what is being revealed of the characteristics of the religious leaders.

C) The giving that pleases God in **12:41-44**. Compare with **Luke 21:1-4**.

Chapter Thirteen

Q.1) What questions are the four disciples asking Jesus about the future? See **13:1-4**.

Read also **Matthew 24:3 & Luke 21:7**.

Q.2) Read carefully **13:5-13** and make a list of the warnings that Jesus has said will take place. In making such a list can you see if such a list is relevant to us today?

Q.3) There are differences of opinion whether **13:14-23** has been fulfilled or partially fulfilled or even entirely unfulfilled with all the events to happen in the future. Discuss if you can with others to consider if part of the prophecy has been fulfilled and what has been foretold.

Q.4) Read carefully **13:24-27** which refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Consider:

A) What are the signs just prior to this event? **B)** What will happen when Jesus Christ comes?

C) What will take place immediately after Jesus Christ returns?

See also **Matthew 24:27-31 & Luke 21:25-28**.

Q.5) What do we understand about the parable of the fig tree? See **13:28-31**.

Q.6) Show the reasons why we need to watch in view of what is written in **13:32-37**. How should we be living if we are expecting Jesus Christ to come for his Church?

Chapter Fourteen

Q.1) Read **14:1-2,10-11**. How do you think the chief priests and the scribes wanted to arrest Jesus?

Q.2) Read **14:3-9**. Compare with **Matthew 26:6-13 & John 12:1-9**. Consider the following:

A) Who could have been present in this house? **B)** What was the attitude of those present when the woman poured ointment on the head of Jesus? **C)** What was known of this ointment?

D) What was Jesus' response to the woman with the alabaster box?

E) What was known of the woman?

Q.3) What is known Judas Iscariot in **14:10-11, 18-21, 42-45**? See also **Matthew 26:14-16, 21-25, 46-50; Luke 22:3-6, 47-48; John 13:21-30; John 18:2-3**. What had motivated him to betray Jesus?

Q.4) Read carefully **14:13-26**. What lessons can we learn in the preparation of the Passover and in what took place during the meal itself? See also **Matthew 26:17-30 & Luke 22:7-39**.

Q.5) What did Jesus foretell would happen to the disciples in **14:27-31**? Is it true to say they still did not seem to understand what was about to take place?

Q.6) Show the significance of the time spent in Gethsemane in **14:32-42** where Jesus wrestled in prayer. Do you think Jesus had prepared himself to face his arrest and coming death?

Compare **Matthew 26:36-46 & Luke 22:39-46**.

Q.7) How did Jesus respond to his arrest in **14:46-49**? See also **Matthew 26:50-56; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:4-12**.

Q.8) What lessons can we learn regarding discipleship by the example Jesus shows at his trial? Read carefully **14:53-65**.

Q.9) Why was Peter unable to acknowledge his relationship to Jesus? See **14:50, 54, 66-72**. What can we learn from Peter's denial of Jesus that will help us to resist temptation to deny Jesus Christ in difficult situations?

Chapter Fifteen

Q.1) Read **15:1-15**. What is known about those characters present?

A) The chief priests **15:1, 3, 10-14**. **B)** Jesus **15:1-5, 8-14**. **C)** The crowd **15:8, 11**.

D) Barabbas **15:5-8**. **E)** Pilate **15:1-5, 9-15**.

Q.2) Why did Jesus submit to such cruelty? Read **15:15-20**. Compare with **Matthew 27:27-31**. What can we learn about Jesus through the mockery of the soldiers? See also **Isaiah 53:7; Philippians 2:5-11; 1Peter 2:21-24**.

Q.3) What was known of Simon a Cyrenian in **15:21**? See also **Matthew 27:32; Luke 23:26; Romans 16:13**.

Chapter Fifteen continued

- Q.4)** Read carefully **15:22-41** showing the event of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Consider the following: **A)** Who were the people present at the crucifixion and their attitude towards Jesus? **B)** The significance of the superscription on the cross: "*THE KING OF THE JEWS*". **C)** The fulfilment of scripture in **v28 & v34**. See **Isaiah 53:12 & Psalm 22**. It is helpful to read carefully the entire psalm to see what is revealed of the experiences Jesus went through. **D)** The events that happened when Jesus died in **15:37-39**. Compare with **Matthew 27:50-54; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:30-37**. What is the significance of the veil torn from top to bottom? Read also **Hebrews 9:8; 10:18-22**.
- Q.5)** What is known of Joseph of Arimathea in **15:42-47**? Show the qualities of his character in his attitude towards Jesus Christ. It is helpful to read **Matthew 27:57-60; Luke 23:50-55; John 19:38-42**.

Chapter Sixteen

- Q.1)** What did the women expect to do on going to the sepulchre/tomb? See **16:1-3**.
- Q.2)** Show the evidence that Jesus had risen in **16:4-8**. Consider also **A)** The response of the women to what they were told by the angel. **B)** Why the angel mentioned Peter by name?
- Q.3)** What were the three appearances of Jesus Christ that have been recorded in **16:9-14**? Why did Jesus rebuke his disciples in **16:14**? Can you recall any times in your relationship with the Lord when he rebuked you? See **Hebrews 3:12-13**.
- Q.4)** Read carefully **16:15-20**? What should we expect to happen when the gospel is faithfully preached? Bear in mind **Romans 10:11-15**.
- Q.5)** Look again at **16:19**. Where is Jesus Christ at this point in time? See also **Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; 12:2; 1Peter 3:22; Revelation 3:21**. What do you think Jesus Christ is doing at this point in time? See **Hebrews 7:25**.

Miscellaneous Questions

The following questions require more extensive study. They can be attempted individually but where possible group study is also encouraged.

- Q.1)** What does this gospel reveal of the character of Jesus Christ? Read the entire gospel.
- Q.2)** Can you find any key words throughout this gospel? For example: gospel, immediately.
- Q.3)** Read through this gospel and show why Mark has stressed Jesus as the servant king. See **10:13-45** – please study carefully. It is helpful to read **1:40-45; 3:1-12; 7:31-37; 8:22-26, 34-38; 12:38-44; 14:17-26, 32-50; 15:1-5, 12-47**. See also **Philippians 2:7-8**.
- Q.4)** Consider why the miracles were such an important part of Jesus' ministry and what can we learn from these miracles? Should we be seeing such power displayed today?
- Q.5)** Show the lessons we can learn regarding discipleship in Mark's gospel. It is helpful to read **1:16-20; 3:13-19; 6:7-13; 8:27-10:52; 13:1-14:52; 15:42-16:8**.
- Q.6)** What is known of the eschatology (end times teaching) in this gospel? Read **8:38; 9:1, 47; 10:23; 11:12-14; 12:35-40; 13:1-37; 14:25; 15:43**. Compare with **Matthew 24 & Luke 21:1-36**.
- Q.7)** Look carefully at the references on the kingdom of God. Try to find out what is being taught of the kingdom of God in this gospel. If you have attempted **Q.6** you will see that the kingdom of God has its place in eschatology.
- Q.8)** What was known of the opposition to the ministry of Jesus Christ? In what ways was Jesus criticised and how did he respond? See **Chapters 2 & 3; 7:1-23; 12:1-34; 14:53-65**
- Q.9)** Study carefully the following scriptures: **1:25, 34, 43-44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:24, 36; 8:26, 30; 9:9, 30** and see also **John 14-15**. What was the purpose in Jesus Christ hiding his identity?

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