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The Gospel of Mark

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Welcome to our study of Mark

Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ announced, “The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:14). For his remaining time on earth, Jesus demonstrated the reality of his kingdom and showed us that the good news is better than anyone would have imagined. Mark’s Gospel will help us better understand who Jesus is, what he’s accomplished, and what it means to follow him.

Each of the four Gospels has its own unique style. Mark’s is the fast-paced, “action movie” Gospel. It moves quickly and efficiently through Jesus’s ministry. In the spirit of Mark, we’re going to move quickly as well, working through the book one chapter at a time.

The Engage God Daily will give you a section of each chapter to read, some resources to consult, and some things to think and pray over. Take time each day to immerse yourself in the story of Jesus. Imagine yourself among his disciples, hearing Jesus teach, watching him heal, and growing in your realization that he was not the Messiah you expected, but he is definitely the one you need.

Week 1 | Mark 1

### Chapter 1 Summary:

“Mark introduces his Gospel, along with the main characters, John and Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of God. Mark also provides a summary of the kinds of activities Jesus was involved in throughout his ministry. Without being exhaustive, he gives a sense of Jesus’s ministry of *proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom* and *embodying the power of the kingdom through healing and driving out demons*.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

# Day 1

## Read

### Mark 1:1–13 (NIV)

**1** The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God,  2as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way” —

3“a voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,

make straight paths for him.’ ”

4And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

## Study

Get an overview of the Gospel of Mark from The Bible Project. You can watch in [English](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGHqu9-DtXk) or [Spanish](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsXLQkppzUc).

## Think about

* How does Mark characterize his writing in Mark 1:1? How does he indicate that Jesus’ story is connected to the Jewish Scripture? Why do you think that’s important?
* What prophecy is Jesus fulfilling according to Mark? Who is he?

## Pray

One of the central questions that Mark is answering in his Gospel is “who is Jesus?” This is an answer that every one of us has to answer for ourselves. Pray over your answer. Who is Jesus to you?

# Day 2

## Read

### Mark 1:9–13 (NIV)

9At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

12At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

## Study

* According to commentator Alan Cole: “This is one of the great ‘trinitarian’ passages of the New Testament. Here the Spirit and the Father both bear witness to the Son. As in the book of Genesis God created by his word and through the Spirit (Gen. 1:2–3), so it was fitting that, at the very commencement of God’s new work of re-creation, there would be the same operation of the whole Godhead. Here, on Jordan’s banks, God speaks his word again, and again the Spirit is brooding over the waters, as in Genesis (Gen. 1:2).[[2]](#footnote-3)”
* Commentators note that at the beginning of verse 10 we are introduced to one of Mark’s favorite words, “*euthys*.” It also begins verse 12. This term can be translated as “at once,” “just as,” “immediately,” “straight away” or “right then” and gives Mark’s Gospel a sense of urgency as Mark draws attention to something particularly dramatic. He’s telling us “Look at this!”

## Think about

Mark 1:12–13 gives us a succinct version of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. It gets a much more expansive treatment in Matthew and Luke. It makes one thing crystal clear: Jesus’ authority extends over the powers of darkness, and this will be proved over and over in Mark’s Gospel. “The picture of the Son of God doing battle with Satan in the wilderness is the key which will enable us to understand Jesus’ authority over unclean spirits: the stronger One has confronted the prince of demons, and is plundering his house (Mark 3:22–7).”[[3]](#footnote-4)

## Pray

In a spirit of prayer, focus on the picture of the Trinity that Jesus’ baptism reveals. Praise God that he is the Eternal Three-in-One. Then praise Jesus for his power and authority. What comfort can you take today in knowing that Jesus is Lord over all demonic forces?

# Day 3

## Read

### Mark 1:14–20 (NIV)

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

16As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 18At once they left their nets and followed him.

19When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

## Study

* “The longing for God’s kingdom dominated Jewish culture in the centuries leading up to Jesus’s arrival, so that when he came proclaiming the presence of the kingdom, everyone knew what this meant. And God’s people were more than ready for this news. They were being oppressed by Rome, and many of their own leaders were corrupt and exploitative. The arrival of God’s kingdom was “good news” for the oppressed, but it aroused suspicion among those in power. At various levels, many of the leaders among God’s people had built their own “kingdoms” and were exploiting the system surrounding the temple for their own gain (Mark 11:17; 12:7, 38–40). Just as the Old Testament contrasted God’s kingship to all earthly kingdoms and powers, those who have other agendas view God’s kingdom as a threat (cf. Ps 2). This is why Mark begins his narrative with the ominous note that Jesus’s ministry begins just after John is thrown into prison. John’s imprisonment sets the tone for Jesus’s journey to a confrontation in Jerusalem that ends on a cross.”[[4]](#footnote-5)
* To see videos of the Sea of Galilee, visit the *Faithlife Study Bible* note on [Mark 1:16](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Mk1.16). Also read the note on 1:17 to understand the significance of Jesus’ call.

## Think about

Commentator Morna Hooker says, “According to Mark’s summary in 1:15, the Kingdom of God was the central theme of Jesus’ teaching, and this is borne out by the rest of the gospel, as well as by Matthew and Luke. Its arrival is good news, but it brings judgement as well as salvation, and so demands repentance as well as faith.”[[5]](#footnote-6) When you understand the Kingdom, you understand why Jesus first disciples answered his call so quickly, leaving behind their old way of life and embracing the new. What does it mean to you that the with Jesus, “kingdom has come near”? How does it demand both repentance and faith?

## Pray

The disciples committed to following Jesus, even though they weren’t sure where he would lead them. In prayer, invite the Spirit to show you how you can follow Jesus more fully. How can your life more and more reflect Jesus’ kingdom and mission?

# Day 4

## Read

### Mark 1:21–34 (NIV)

21They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

25“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” 28News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

29As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 30Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. 31So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

32That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33The whole town gathered at the door, 34and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

## Study

“Wherever Jesus goes, kingdom power is present, and it inevitably clashes with the kingdom of darkness.”[[6]](#footnote-7) In one twenty-four hour period in Galilee, Mark presents us with themes that he will continue to develop throughout his gospel. He makes it clear that Jesus has authority over all things, whether it be people, dark spiritual forces, or disease.

## Think about

“The news about what Jesus had done ‘spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee’ (v. 28). It is easy to read this as an obviously positive development, but there are a few reasons for a more sober assessment.” We’ll see as Mark progresses, “Jesus is not at all interested in getting the word out about his ministry. In fact, precisely the opposite! Jesus continually warns people not to tell anyone about what he has done for them.”[[7]](#footnote-8)

We’ll explore this question as we work through Mark, but for now, what reasons can you think of for Jesus keeping his true identity a secret at this point in his ministry? Why wouldn’t he want the biggest possible crowds to know who he truly was?

## Pray

Mark makes it clear that the people responded to Jesus’ authority. We don’t always think about authority in a positive light. Sometimes we resemble our ancestors Adam and Eve who were rebellious because they thought they knew better than God. But sometimes we resist God’s authority because we’ve been hurt by people who’ve had authority over us. Spend some time in prayer thinking about how you react to Jesus’ authority over you. Praise God that you can trust and obey him completely because he is powerful, good, and acts out of his great love for you.

# Day 5

## Read

### Mark 1:35–45 (NIV)

35Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

38Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” 39So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

40A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”

41Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” 42Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

43Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: 44“See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.” 45Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

## Study

* As we noted yesterday, Mark 1:28–32 describes a single busy and hectic day of ministry for Jesus. In verses 35–38, Mark slows down the story and takes us to a solitary place with Jesus where he goes to pray. His disciples interrupt him. Apparently, the whole town was looking for him. Jesus is not concerned with what the crowds or the disciples want, he is focused on what the Father has sent him to do. He wants to go to other towns so he can keep sharing the good news of the kingdom.
* Read the *Faithlife Bible Study* note on [Mark 1:41](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Mk1.41) to learn more about Jesus’ strong response to the man with leprosy. Commentators agree that it was unlikely that Jesus was angry at the man he healed, but they aren’t unified as to why Jesus was indignant. Some say his anger is focused on the forces of evil who afflict humanity because of sin and the fall. Others think Jesus is reacting to the lack of care and compassion the man had received from the community. He’d been ostracized and marginalized rather than helped.

## Think about

* In verse 1, Mark introduces Jesus as “the Messiah” (God’s appointed agent of salvation for God’s people) and the “Son of God” (God’s unique Son who *represents* God and *is God himself*). So far in chapter 1, how has Mark highlighted events that show us that Jesus is both?
* Verse 41 tells us that Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man with leprosy. Throughout Mark, we’ll see Jesus reaching out to those who are hurting and in need.

At Christ Fellowship, we want to reach out to those who are lonely, anxious, and addicted. We want to engage in meaningful conversations where people experience Christ through us. Who can you reach out to this week?

## Pray

This week in the pages of Mark, we’ve seen Jesus, Messiah and Son of God do incredible things. Do you expect him to do incredible things in your life? Ask Jesus for what you need and invite him to be the ultimate authority over your life. Ask the Spirit to strengthen your faith and make you a “fisher of men” and someone who reaches out to those in need.

1. Timothy G. Gombis, [*Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/strygdcm62mk?ref=Page.p+18&off=2057&ctx=Mark+1:1%E2%80%9345%0a~Mark+introduces+his+Gospel%2c+), ed. Scot McKnight and Tremper Longman III, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 18–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. R. Alan Cole, [*Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc62mkus?ref=Bible.Mk1.10-11&off=7&ctx=the+context.%0a10%E2%80%9311.+~This+is+one+of+the+g), vol. 2, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Morna D. Hooker, [*The Gospel according to Saint Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/black62mk?ref=Bible.Mk1.13&off=6005&ctx=ometimes+are+today.+~The+picture+of+the+S), Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1991), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Timothy G. Gombis, [Mark](https://ref.ly/logosres/strygdcm62mk?ref=Bible.Mk1.14-15&off=1403&ctx=+45:23%3b+Zech+14:9).%0a~The+longing+for+God%E2%80%99), ed. Scot McKnight and Tremper Longman III, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 36–37. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Morna D. Hooker, [*The Gospel according to Saint Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/black62mk?ref=Page.p+55&off=741&ctx=+the+Kingdom+of+God%0a~According+to+Mark%E2%80%99s+), Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1991), 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Timothy G. Gombis, [*Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/strygdcm62mk?ref=Bible.Mk1.21-28&off=2608&ctx=come+God%E2%80%99s+people.2%0a~Wherever+Jesus+goes%2c), ed. Scot McKnight and Tremper Longman III, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Timothy G. Gombis, 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)