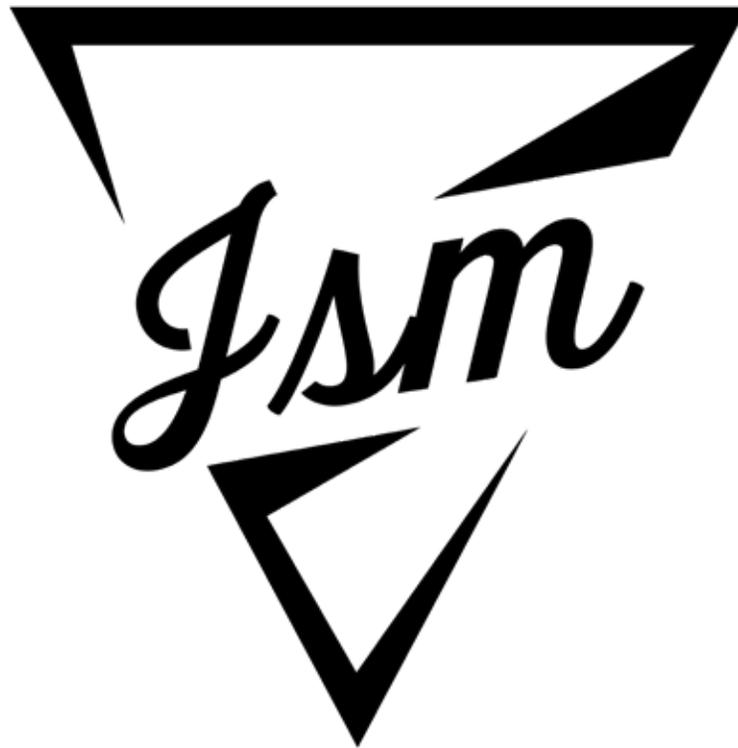


# GOSPEL OF MARK

JOURNEY STUDENT MINISTRIES

## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

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# PROCESS

## 1 PRAY

Ask God to speak through His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the text and apply it to your life!

## 2 READ THE TEXT

Read through the text slowly and carefully. Pay attention to the details, notice the people, places, language and overall themes in the scripture.

## 3 TALK IT OVER/WRITE IT DOWN

What stands out to you? What makes you think? What questions do you have after reading the text?

## 4 READ A DIFFERENT TRANSLATION

Read the passage a second time, but in a different translation. Sometimes it can be helpful to utilize a paraphrase translation, like the Message Translation, because it can help us understand the heart of the passage instead of just logical side.

## 5 CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

Who is the author? Who was his intended audience? When was the book written? What is the book about? What is happening in the verses before and after those you are reading? Who are the key players in the text? What cultural influences might be impactful to the text?

## 6 CONSULT THE COMMENTARY

Read the experts. Many theologians have dedicated their life's work to studying the bible. Glean from their learning and insights. Learn from the historical and literary critical analysis of the text. This can be the key to shed light of the texts that confuse us or that we might be prone to misinterpret and abuse.

## 7 DISCUSS THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPALS

What timeless principles are taught in this passage? The meaning of a passage will be applied differently at different times and in different places, but the underlying truths of Scripture will be applicable in some way at all times and places. Before we can apply a passage, we must understand its theological principals.

## 8 APPLY THE TEXT

How do you feel God speaking to you through this passage? What area of your life is the passage speaking to? What did you learn, and how does it impact your understanding of who God is and who you are? How can you live in light of that?

# PRAY

## Pray the Apprentice Prayer

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Jesus, I love you! Father, I adore you! Holy Spirit, I rely on you!

Thank you Jesus for your cross. Thank you Father for your eternal love. Thank you Holy Spirit for your presence and power. Holy Trinity I praise you.

Lord Jesus, you're my Teacher. I seek to live as your apprentice in all that I do today. My life is your school for teaching me. I relinquish my agenda for this day and I submit myself to you and your kingdom purposes. In all situations I abandon outcomes to you, praying, "Your will, your way, your time."

Dear Father, I ask you to ordain the events of this day and use them to make me more like Jesus. I ask and trust you, Sovereign Lord, that you won't let anything happen to my

family or me today, except that it passes through your loving hands. So no matter what problems, hardships, or injustices I face today help me not to worry or get frustrated, but instead to relax in the yoke of your providence. Yes, today I will rejoice because I am in your eternal kingdom, you love me, and you are teaching me!

My Creator and Redeemer, I devote my whole self to you. I want to be all and only for Jesus!

Today, I love you with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind, all my strength, and all my relationships.

Today, I depend on you, Holy Spirit, not my own resources. Help me to keep in step with you.

Today, I look to love others as you love me, dear God, blessing everyone I meet, even those who mistreat me.

Today, I'm ready to lead people to follow you, Jesus.

Amen.

# READ THE TEXT

Mark 1:1-13 NIV

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The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.' "And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The 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. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And 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. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.



# READ A DIFFERENT TRANSLATION

Mark 1:1-13 The Message

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The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!—begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Watch closely: I'm sending my preacher ahead of you; He'll make the road smooth for you. Thunder in the desert! Prepare for God's arrival! Make the road smooth and straight! John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins. People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by him in the Jordan River into a changed life. John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey. As he preached he said, "The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will change your life. I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out." At this time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. The moment he came out of the water, he saw the sky split open and God's Spirit, looking like a dove, come down on him. Along with the Spirit, a voice: "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life." At once, this same Spirit pushed Jesus out into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by Satan. Wild animals were his companions, and angels took care of him.

# CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

Context determines  
meaning

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Every passage of scripture was God's word to other people before it became God's word to us. In order to properly and fully understand a text we must determine what the original author intended to communicate to their original audience. If we come up with an application that would have been foreign to the original audience, there is a very strong possibility that we did not interpret the passage correctly. Once we are confident that we understand what the text meant to its original hearers, we then need to determine the width of the chasm between us and them. In other words, what are the differences in language, time, culture, geography, setting and situation? All of these must be taken into account before application can be made. Once the width of the chasm has been measured, we can then attempt to build the bridge over the chasm by finding the commonalities between the original audience and ourselves. Finally, we can then find application for ourselves in our time and situation.

## The Gospel According to Mark

Author: Unknown

- Like the other 3 Gospels, the Gospel of Mark nowhere identifies its author.
- Church tradition attributes this book to John Mark.
- John Mark was not an apostle, but early writings talk of John Mark as a faithful interpreter of the testimony of the apostle Peter.

Date Written: Unknown

- Nowhere in the Gospel is any specific information given by which it could be dated.
- Historical and textual analysis brings many theologians to believe the book was composed around the year A.D. 65. Making it the first of the Gospels to be written.

Audience and location: Greek Gentiles in Rome

- Church tradition and literary analysis hold that Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome
- Mark rarely quotes the OT, and he explains Jewish customs unfamiliar to his readers.
- Primary audience would have been unfamiliar with the Jewish ethos of Jesus.

Narrative Structure: Mark falls naturally into two halves, the first concerning Jesus' ministry in Galilee (1:1–8:26), and the second his journey to Jerusalem and his passion there (8:27–16:8).

Mark 1:1-13 Structure:

- I. Prologue (1:1–13)
  - A. Title of the Gospel: The Beginning of the Good News About Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:1)
  - B. The Ministry of John the Baptizer (1:2–8)
  - C. Jesus' Baptism (1:9–11)
  - D. Testing in the Desert (1:12–13)

# CONSULT THE COMMENTARY

## Pillar New Testament Commentary

Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (pp. 25–26). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

**V.1** - Ancient writings normally begin either with a formal dedication describing the purpose of the book or with an opening line treating the first subject discussed. The formal introductions of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts follow the former pattern. The Gospel of Mark begins in the latter way, “The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1). If Mark intended his work to have a title, this is it.

V.1 - The Greek word translated “beginning,” *archē*, can incorporate two meanings: first in order of temporal sequence, or first in terms of origin or principle. It is the latter sense in which the term is here used, since Mark intends the whole Gospel, and not merely its opening part, to be incorporated by *archē*. “Beginning” thus identifies in the initial word of the Gospel the authority from whom the Gospel derives, God himself, the author and originator of all that is. Lohmeyer is correct in saying that “beginning” signals the “fulfillment of God’s everlasting word.”<sup>3</sup> For Mark the introduction of Jesus is no less momentous than the creation of the world, for in Jesus a new creation is at hand

V.1 - The word for “gospel” (Gk. *euangelion*) literally means “good news.” In both the OT and in Greek literature *euangelion* was commonly used of reports of victory from the battlefield.

V.1 - If, as seems probable, Mark is the first evangelist, then he also inaugurates a new literary genre in applying the term “gospel” to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. For Mark, the gospel refers to the fulfillment of God’s reign and salvation in the fullness of time (Isa 52:7; 61:1). In the appearance of Jesus in Galilee, a new age has dawned that requires repentance and faith. Mark’s written record of Jesus’ life

is itself called a Gospel, and thus this same Jesus who overcame the grave in the resurrection from the dead is now the living Lord who is at work in the church and world, calling people to faith in the gospel. In Mark’s understanding, therefore, the gospel is more than a set of truths, or even a set of beliefs. It is a person, “the gospel of Jesus Christ.” The kingdom that God inaugurates is bodily present in Jesus of Nazareth.

V.1-2 - Jesus, whose name in Hebrew is a variant of “Yehoshua” (Eng. “Joshua”), meaning “God is salvation,” is defined in Mark’s prologue as the “Christ” and “Son of God...” “The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ the Son of God” (1:1) is the prologue, indeed the topic sentence, of Mark’s Gospel. It may even be considered the title of the Gospel, as long as it is not divorced from what follows, as the connection with John the Baptist in v. 2 evinces. In v. 1 Mark declares the essential content of the euangelion, the “good news.” The Gospel of Mark is thus not a mystery story in which readers must piece together clues here and there to discover its meaning; nor is it a pedestrian chronicle of dates and places without purpose or significance; nor is it reducible to a mere system of thought. Rather, from the outset Mark announces that the content of the gospel is the person of Jesus, who is the Christ and Son of God. It is a brief confession of faith, the meaning of which will unfold only as the reader follows Mark’s presentation of Jesus in the Gospel.

V.2-3 - The quotation of 1:2–3 is identified as coming from the prophet Isaiah, although it is actually a tapestry of three OT passages. The reference to the sending of the messenger in v. 2 follows the first half of both Exod 23:20 and Mal 3:1, although there is no exact counterpart in the OT to the latter half of v. 2 (“who will prepare your way”). The greater part of the tapestry comes in v. 3, which reproduces Isa 40:3 nearly exactly. Isaiah 40:3 is quoted by all four Gospels with reference to John the Baptizer as the forerunner of Jesus (Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:76; John 1:23). The Isaiah quotation in v. 3 was deemed the defining element of the tapestry of quotations. Thus, the whole is attributed to Isaiah, who was considered the greatest of the prophets, and whose authority in the early church superseded that of both Exodus and Malachi... In the quotation, several of the pronouns and “the way for the Lord” refer to God. Mark, however, applies these texts with reference to Jesus. This indicates that the Baptizer is not simply the herald of the Messiah but of God himself, appearing in Jesus of Nazareth.

# COMMENTARY CONTINUED

## Pillar New Testament Commentary

Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (pp. 25–26). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

V.2-3 - 1:2–3 thus introduce John as the divinely ordained precursor of Jesus, and Jesus as the manifestation of God. The quotation has the further effect of linking the life and ministry of Jesus to the OT. Jesus is not an afterthought of God, as though an earlier plan of salvation had gone awry. Rather, Jesus stands in continuity with the work of God in Israel, the fulfiller of the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17). The introductory tapestry of OT quotations not only links the person and ministry of Jesus inseparably with the preceding revelation of God in the OT, but it makes the person and ministry of Jesus nonunderstandable apart from it. From a Christian theological perspective, this unites the NT uniquely and inseparably to the OT. The gospel is understandable only as the completion of something that God began in the history of Israel.

V.9-11 - As the inaugural event of Jesus' public ministry, the baptism tells us not what Jesus does but what God does to him. A reference in Acts 1:21–22 testifies that from the earliest days of the Christian movement the baptism was regarded as a defining and indispensable fact of Jesus' life. When the apostles found it necessary to choose a replacement for Judas, the main criterion was finding someone who had accompanied Jesus from his baptism onward. Although the Gospel of John commences with the preexistence of the Word of God and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke with the portentous circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth, Mark begins the story of Jesus with the inaugural event that the church from its very inception regarded as commencing the saving significance of Jesus' life and ministry, his baptism in the Jordan by John.

V. 9-11 - When Jesus comes up from the water he experiences three things that in Jewish tradition signified the inauguration of God's

eschatological kingdom: the heavens were opened above him, the Spirit descended into him, and the heavenly voice spoke to him. The concurrence of these momentous events at the baptism signals that Jesus is the "more powerful one" (1:7) promised in the OT and the inaugurator of God's eschatological kingdom.

V.10 - The rending or opening of heaven is highly significant because Second Temple Judaism commonly believed that with the cessation of the great OT prophets the Holy Spirit had ceased speaking directly to God's people. The absence of the Spirit quenched prophecy, and God was believed to speak to the faithful only in a distant echo, a *batqol* (Heb. "daughter of a voice"). The opening of the heavens at the baptism thus inaugurates the long-awaited return of God's Spirit. A period of grace begins in Jesus, in whom God reveals himself in the world in an unparalleled manner.

V.9-11 - The baptism is the keystone in the life and ministry of Jesus. The empowerment by the Spirit to be God's Servant, and the declaration from heaven, "You are my Son," enable Jesus not only to speak and act for God but as God... It is not coincidental that when Jesus is later confronted by the Sanhedrin asking, "By what authority do you do these things?" he drives his questioners back to his baptism (11:27–33). What Jesus does as God's servant ultimately has meaning only because of who he is as God's Son

V.12-13 - The Spirit that empowers the Son for ministry now tests him to determine whether he will use his divine Sonship for his own advantage or submit himself in obedience to God.... The temptation establishes the free, sovereign agency of Jesus, who, like all human agents, must choose to make God's will his own.

V.12-13 - The forty-day trial of God's Son continues the baptismal theme of Jesus as Israel-reduced-to-one. Israel was in the wilderness forty years (Deut 8:2), Moses was on Mt. Sinai forty days and nights (Exod 34:28), and Elijah was led for forty days and nights to Mt. Horeb (1 Kgs 19:8). In each instance the wilderness was a proving ground, a test of faithfulness, and a promise of deliverance. The same contrasts are present in Jesus' temptation, for in the wilderness Jesus is both tempted by Satan and attended by angels.

V.12-13 - Although God leads Jesus into the test in the wilderness—as he leads Mark's Roman readers—God does not abandon either Jesus or them in it. The imperfect tense of the Greek verb for "attended" indicates that the angels ministered to Jesus not at the end of the test (so Matt 4:11), but throughout the forty days.



# APPLY THE TEXT

What is God's invitation  
to you in this passage?



A series of 20 horizontal lines for writing, arranged in a column.

