

## The Gospel according to

# Mark



### Lesson 1-The Forerunner, Messiah, and His Work

Focus: Mark 1:1-45

1. **Introduction to Mark:** *The writer of this gospel is commonly known as Mark or “John Mark”; “John whose surname was Mark” (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37). Mark’s mother was named Mary (Acts 12:12). Many people used to meet at her house for prayer and worship. Even the Apostle Peter met there at times and had a close relationship to John Mark (Acts 12:13-16; 1 Peter 5:13, “Mark my son,” perhaps in the gospel, not literally his son though). The famous **Barnabas** who went on a number of missionary journeys with the Apostle Paul, **was the cousin of John Mark** (Colossians 4:10). Paul and Barnabas took Mark with them on a trip from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 12:25), and also on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). However, Mark left them early on that trip and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). After that, for some time, Paul felt that John Mark was not a helpful worker to take along on mission trips (Acts 15:36-41); So, Mark had to partner with someone else besides Paul. After some time (at least within less than twelve years), Paul decided that Mark was not so bad after all, and they re-established their friendship, and working relationship (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24). Paul said, “he is useful to me for ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11).*

All the early church leaders clearly attest that Mark wrote this gospel; Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen are among a few who attest to this fact.

Many believe Mark was the first of the four gospels to be written. We believe it should be dated before A.D. 70 because it prophesied of Jerusalem’s destruction, but made no mention of the actual occurrence as having happened yet (Mark 13:2). **The most likely date range for the writing of this book is between A.D. 55 and 65.** Early tradition indicates that this book was written from Rome.

This book is the briefest of all the four gospels and is very much to the point, often using the word “immediately” to describe the sequence of events. Eighteen of Christ’s miracles are mentioned in this book, showing Christ’s power and compassion on suffering human beings.

2. **John the Baptist—the forerunner of Jesus Christ (v.1-8)**
  - a. John the Baptist came in those days, **preaching a straight message** of God’s truth so that people would be prepared to receive the message of Jesus Christ, as Messiah, at His first coming. The Bible had prophesied that one would come with a powerful message to prepare people just before the Messiah would appear. John the Baptist was actually a relative of Jesus through his mother Mary and John’s mother Elisabeth (Luke 1:36). **John preached a strong, Scripture (Bible) based message which converted hearts.** People confessed their sins and were baptized, thus receiving salvation (the gift of eternal life through Jesus). **The people felt the weight of their sins, but they were also pointed to the coming Messiah (Jesus) who could cleanse away and forgive all of our sins.** John had a humble mind, and he dressed and ate a simple diet (like prophets commonly did) (v.6-7). The “locusts” John ate could have been the real bug, which was clean (Leviticus 11:22), or it could have been a common type of plant which was also found in that area.
3. **The Messiah Appears and Begins His work (v.9-20)**
  - a. Jesus set an example for all who would be his followers by being baptized—this was a symbol of cleansing away of sin. Jesus never sinned but He did set this example for all of us (who have

sinned). Those who accept Jesus Christ's gift of salvation and choose to follow him will also be baptized like He was. We too will be called the "beloved" sons and daughters of God, and we'll receive more of His Holy Spirit's blessing in our lives as we take that step in following Jesus (**v.9-11**). Jesus was baptized by immersion—under the water and back out again. We should follow this same symbolic example of total cleansing. **After Christ's baptism**, he was tempted by the devil for forty days in the wilderness. Jesus overcame the devil on every point where men have fallen. **The angels of God took care of Jesus while he was there** (v.12,13). God will take care of us, when we trust in Him, even though the Devil may try to tempt us.

- b. **Jesus preached with power and urgency in his message! (v.14,15).** The "time" which was fulfilled had been prophesied in the book of Daniel (Daniel 9:25). The Messiah had come right on time, in fulfillment of this prophecy. Four hundred eighty-three years after the Persian decree in 457 BC we come to this time of Jesus' appearance—A.D. 27.
- c. **Jesus called his disciples to follow him (v.16-20).** Jesus chose men who were humble, teachable, and willing to follow Him. He gathered them from the common walks of life and made them into extraordinary missionaries by His patient teaching and example. Jesus did not gather his helpers from the Theological Seminary of his day. The needed qualification for faithful service to God was a heart willing and open to God's spiritual teachings and leadings. God will call many of us, from the common walks of life too, and He will make us useful in His service! We must be willing to forsake the things of the world, and to do the work which God has for us to do.

#### **4. Jesus begins Healing, Preaching, and teaching (v.21-45)**

- a. **(v.21-28). Jesus taught with authority and power.** His message was clearly from God's word. The "Scribes" of the day, had been educated in many foolish traditions and man-made ideas of the day. Their teaching was not authoritative because they did not proclaim the word of God as it was. They only gave the opinions of men. Jesus was different. He preached with power at the Sabbath worship services. Even the demons (fallen angels), who had possessed certain men, were afraid of Him, and they knew who He was (previously, they had been cast out of heaven by Christ's power-Revelation 12:7-9).
- b. **(v.29-39) Wherever Jesus went, he touched people's lives, and miraculous things followed Him.** This was on the Sabbath day when Jesus healed this woman (v.21,29). The Sabbath lasts for a whole 24 hours and it ends at evening (v.32). The Sabbath commandment tells us to rest on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). Because of the Rabbi's teaching, many people were afraid to seek healing from Jesus on the Sabbath, so they waited until the evening to come to him (v.32). However, it was not a violation of the Sabbath for Jesus to show compassion and heal someone on this day. Jesus never sinned or broke God's law (John 15:10). Jesus went about his work in a quiet way (though openly); He did not want the devil's to reveal his identity verbally (v.34). **The strength and power of Jesus came from His prayer life (v.35). If you want to see God's strength, power, and yes, even miracles in your life, you need to have a personal prayer life like Jesus. His secret morning-prayer time gave him strength for all the public events, trials, and challenges of the day. Let it be so with us!!**
- c. **(v.40-45)** Jesus tried to keep things quiet for as long as He could. He was not in this work for any kind of self-glory at all. He wanted to glorify the father in heaven, and He didn't want people to swarm over Him to only have miracles worked for them. He wanted them to come and hear His teaching, not just to see his miraculous power. Jesus was willing and able to heal this leper. He also wants to heal us from the leprosy of sin. He will have compassion on us too if we ask for His healing hand in our lives.

### ***Question (s) for the Heart:***

***Would you like to know more of Jesus and to have his compassion and healing in your life? \_\_\_\_\_***