

# Mark

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus  
Christ, the Son of God”

Mark 1:1

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## Tools for Studying Scripture

### 1. Repeated Words/Phrases

It is one thing to see a repeated word such as, “the” and “a.” However, when you see a unique word/phrase repeated even twice, it is very important to understanding the message. Oftentimes unique words that are repeated become a key to understanding the main point of a text.

### 2. How the Text Begins & Ends

Sometimes a text will begin and end with the same concept, and the verses in between help fill in that concept. Other times a text will begin with one concept and end with another, and there is a logical flow that the verses in between explain.

### 3. Contrasts (Look especially for the word, “but” to see contrasts)

All throughout the Scripture, contrasts help us see major differences in people and concepts. If you put a square or circle around words that draw a contrast, it will help you understand the argument of the text.

### 4. Poetic Imagery (Focus on the words, “as” and “like” to see imagery)

Scripture is filled with poetic imagery – even the New Testament! Whenever you see the words, “as” and “like” you will often find a way to imagine what is being said. For example, James 1:6 says, “...*for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.*” James wants us to imagine someone who prays while doubting. To help us get the image, he wants us to picture a wave on the sea that is tossed everywhere. The word, “like” is what clues us in to the fact that poetic language is being used to imagine the concept. It is not the case that every single time “like” or “as” are used that poetry is involved.

### 5. Important Linking Words

- a. “Therefore” – draws a conclusion from things previously said.
- b. “And” – connects two words, concepts, and ideas.
- c. “Because”, “for”, and “so that” – explains a reason for something stated.
- d. “If” – describes something that is conditional.

### 6. Commands

Another tool for observing a text is simply to look for the things that are commanded. Whenever you see something that we are commanded to do, the surrounding verses often help us understand how to obey it or why we ought to obey.

## Class Schedule

Class 1	Mark Intro & 1:1-20	Sunday – Nov. 17
Class 2	Mark 1:21-45	Wednesday – Nov. 20
Class 3	Mark 2:1-3:6	Sunday – Nov. 24
Class 4	Mark 3:7-4:34	Wednesday – Nov. 27
Class 5	Mark 4:35-5:43	Sunday – Dec. 1
Class 6	Mark 6:1-52	Wednesday – Dec. 4
Class 7	Mark 6:53-8:26	Sunday – Dec. 8
Class 8	Mark 8:27-9:50	Wednesday – Dec. 11
Class 9	Mark 10:1-52	Sunday – Dec. 15
Class 10	Mark 11:1-12:44	Wednesday – Dec. 18
Class 11	Mark 13:1-37	Sunday – Dec. 22
Class 12	Mark 14:1-15:15	Wednesday – Dec. 25
Class 13	Mark 15:16-16:20	Sunday – Dec. 29

# Lesson 1A – Introduction to Mark

1. Author

- a. Who was related to Mark? (Acts 12:12; Colossians 4:10)
  
- b. Describe the relationship between Mark and Paul (Acts 15:36-41; 2 Timothy 4:11).
  
- c. Describe the Relationship between Mark and Peter (1 Peter 5:13).

2. **Audience:** Mark’s Gospel is likely written to a Roman audience. If Mark were writing to a Jewish audience, explanations of Jewish customs would not be necessary (Mark 7:3-4). Additionally, Aramaic and Hebrew were not familiar to the Romans. Mark will translate Hebrew and Aramaic phrases into Greek, allowing non-Jews to understand the meaning (3:17, 5:41, 7:11, 10:46, 14:36, 15:22, 15:34).

3. Outline & Message

- a. How would you change or add to the chart below? Write your thoughts on the chart.
  
- b. What is the main theme of Mark?

## Mark The Servant King

<b>King</b>		<b>Cross</b>	
<p style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God" 1:1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1-8</p>	<p style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">Peter answered Him, "You are the Christ" 8:29</p> <p style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">"... they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise" 9:31</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9-16</p>		
<b>Service</b>		<b>Sacrifice</b>	
<b>Mainly Galilee &amp; Judea (1-10)</b>		<b>Mainly Jerusalem (11-16)</b>	
<b>About Three Years (1-10)</b>		<b>About Eight Days (11-16)</b>	

## Lesson 1B – Mark 1:1-20

4. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 1:1-20?

5. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 1:1-8:** The significance of going into the Jordan River connects to the book of Joshua. Before Israel conquered the Promised Land they had to cross this same river (Joshua 3). John the Baptist is calling the Israelite's back to this same river, indicating there is a new conquest that must take place. This new conquest is against the sin in their own lives.

i. In what way is John preparing the way for Jesus?

ii. Why is John's diet and clothing described? Who else in the Old Testament dressed like this? (2 Kings 1:8)

iii. The Old Testament gives promises of the coming Spirit (Isaiah 32:14-17; 44:1-5; Ezekiel 37:1-14). Based on these prophecies, what does John mean when he speaks about the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

b. **Mark 1:9-11:** The Gospel of Mark begins and ends with something being "torn" followed by a declaration that Jesus is the son of God. The first time is when Jesus is baptized and the sky tears open with the Father's declaration. The second instance is when Jesus breathes His final breath and the veil in the Temple is torn. When this happens the centurion standing by – a Gentile no less – makes this same declaration (Mark 15:38-39). From beginning to end, Mark is teaching us that Jesus is the Son of God.

i. If Jesus didn't need to repent of any sin, why was He baptized?

ii. Jesus "came up out" of the water. What does this show us about baptism?

c. **Mark 1:12-13:** The Spirit Jesus received in baptism now drives Him to the wilderness to be tempted. Mark's account indicates the angels were helping Jesus during the whole period of 40 days. The Bible teaches that angels come to the aid of those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews

1:14). Today when someone is baptized, they may experience temptations and trials, but God is also helping us through it.

i. What is the significance of Jesus being tempted 40 days?

ii. Why do you think the angels “ministered” to Jesus? What purpose do angels serve? (Hebrews 1:14; Psalm 91:11-13).

d. **Mark 1:14-15:** We learn why John is arrested later in the Gospel (Mark 6:14-29). Even though the important forerunner of Jesus has been arrested, Jesus begins preaching about the Kingdom. This good news does not cease to be good news even when someone as important as John is arrested. No earthly trial takes away from the reality of God’s Kingdom.

i. John is the forerunner for Jesus. However John is treated predicts how Jesus will be treated. What does the arrest of John foreshadow about Jesus?

ii. What is the “Kingdom of God”?

e. **Mark 1:16-20:** Every King needs followers. Jesus’ first four disciples were fishermen. At least three of these four disciples become Jesus’ inner circle (Mark 5:37, 9:2, 13:3, 14:33). Some societies value their career and other societies value their families. In this text, we see the first followers give up both career and family to follow Jesus. The Gospel will confront every culture and force the question: will my priority be Jesus and His Kingdom?

i. Jesus says these people will become “fishers of men.” What similarities do fishing and evangelism have with one another?

ii. What were these disciples willing to give up in order to follow Jesus?

6. In what ways does Mark 1:1-20 challenge you to grow?





## Lesson 2 – Mark 1:21-45

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 1:21-45?

2. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 1:21-28:** The Scribes were known for quoting other Rabbi's in their lessons. They would rely on the "authority" of other people to make their points. Jesus comes and teaches in a different manner. He teaches as if His words were Scripture. This passage asserts and proves that Jesus is the one with authority.

i. What astonished people about Jesus' teaching? How was His teaching confirmed?

ii. The demons are afraid of being destroyed in verse 24. How would a demon be destroyed?

b. **Mark 1:29-31:** Simon Peter had a mother-in-law. We know from 1 Corinthians 9:5 that Peter's wife would travel with him as he labored for the Gospel. In order to support Peter as an elder (1 Peter 5), she must have been a godly woman. Perhaps this healing left an impression on Peter's wife. This story pictures God's purpose in healing us.

i. What does Simon's mother-in-law do after she is healed? How is this a pattern for us?

ii. After a fever breaks people still need to rest and regain their strength. For Peter's mother-in-law to begin serving right away shows how fully she was healed. What does this teach us about Jesus?

c. **Mark 1:32-34:** The Jews were restricted in the distance they could travel on the Sabbath (cf. Acts 1:12; Derived from Numbers 35:5). When the Sabbath day was over at sunset, these restrictions were lifted. After Jesus healed the man in the synagogue (1:21-28), the people in the city seemed eager for the day to be over at sunset to be healed as well.

i. What impresses you about Jesus in this scene?

ii. Why is Jesus silencing the demons?

d. **Mark 1:35-39**: The Gospel of Mark shows Jesus praying on three separate occasions (1:35, 6:46, 14:39). If prayer was something that was important for Jesus to do, it certainly is important for each Christian. Jesus even woke up early before everyone else in order to spend time with His Father in prayer. Prayer must become a priority in our lives as well.

i. How can we find moments of solitude in a “desolate place” like Jesus did?

ii. Jesus’ primary mission was to preach the Gospel. What are some examples of how churches forget this?

e. **Mark 1:40-45**: The laws for dealing with leprosy are found in Leviticus 13-14. Specifically, Leviticus 13:45-46 stipulates that lepers would live alone, outside the camp. In order to be reinstated with the people of Israel, the priests would function like a doctor and determine if someone were healed (Leviticus 14:3-5). Ironically, this man would have been in in “desolate places” at the beginning of the scene. However, in the end Jesus is in “desolate places.” It is as if Jesus and the leper switched places.

i. How is leprosy an effective illustration of what sin does to us?

ii. Some believe Jesus is able to help, but question if He is willing. Others believe Jesus is willing, but question if He is able. Which did the leper believe?

iii. What can we learn from the leper’s disobedience?

3. In what ways does Mark 1:21-45 challenge you to grow?

## Lesson 3 – Mark 2:1-3:6

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 2:1-3:6?
  
2. Breaking Down the Text
  - a. **Mark 2:1-12:** This text introduces us to the theme of the “crowds” in Mark. Throughout the Gospel, the crowds are never described as repenting and sincerely following Jesus. Rather, they become obstacles for people of sincere faith to reach Jesus. In this case, four people carrying a paralyzed friend work around the crowds to reach Jesus. This man is forgiven and healed. The significance of healing the lame connects to Isaiah 35:5-6 and Isaiah 33:22-24. These are prophecies of the Messiah that explain the lame will be able to walk. For Jesus to heal this man indicates the time of the Messiah has arrived.
    - i. What accusation do the scribes “think” against Jesus?
  
    - ii. What is the answer to Jesus’ question in verse 9?
  
  - b. **Mark 2:13-17:** There were two categories of taxes imposed by the Roman Empire. First, there was the general tax. This would include things like estate tax, income tax, property tax, and poll tax. These taxes were fixed and therefore predictable. The second category of taxes was tariffs for transported goods. There was a quota these tax collectors had to reach. They pocketed everything above their quota. Therefore, the rates would change regularly and they often overcharged people to enrich themselves. This is why they had a terrible reputation and were excluded from many social gatherings.
    - i. What can we learn from Levi about hospitality?
  
    - ii. Who are the sick and who are the “righteous” Jesus is referring to in verse 17?
  
  - c. **Mark 2:18-22:** In the Old Testament there was one commanded day of fasting. This was the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29). All other instances of fasting are circumstantial. In Jesus’ time, the Pharisees fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12). Unlike the Pharisees, Jesus was feasting. In the context, Jesus was feasting with tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2:15-17). Therefore, Jesus and His disciples appeared “less religious” than the Pharisees. Sometimes those who simply seek to please the Father will find themselves in similar situations.

- i. What is the purpose of fasting?
- ii. Why was it appropriate for Jesus to feast? (cf. Hosea 1-3)
- iii. Explain the meaning of verses 21-22.

d. **Mark 2:23-28:** The Old Testament was relatively vague about what someone could not do in the Sabbath. They couldn't work (Exodus 20:10), harvest (Exodus 34:21), kindle a fire (Exodus 35:3), and carry a burden (Jeremiah 17:21). When the Scripture is vague about something, sometimes people are more tempted to create rules to "fill in the gaps." The Law permitted people to pluck heads of grain from their neighbor's field (Deuteronomy 23:25). Therefore, what the disciples are doing here could not be construed as stealing. Rather, the Pharisees may believe they are violating the command against harvesting on the Sabbath. Common sense says there is a difference between harvesting and plucking a head of grain, but the Pharisees did not see it that way.

- i. Was it okay for David to eat the bread? Why does Jesus bring up this story?
- ii. What does it mean that Jesus is lord of the Sabbath?

e. **Mark 3:1-6:** In verse 4, Jesus asks if it is lawful to do "good or to do harm" on the Sabbath. In verse 6, the Pharisees and Herodians begin plotting how to destroy Jesus. The reason is because Jesus broke tradition and healed on the Sabbath. Clearly, Jesus believed in doing good on the Sabbath while His opponents believed in doing harm. It appears their hearts were just as withered as the man's hand.

- i. What did Jesus' enemies realize He could do? (vs. 2)
- ii. How did the hard heartedness of the Jewish leaders make Jesus feel? (vs. 5)

3. In what ways does Mark 1:21-45 challenge you to grow?

## Lesson 4 – Mark 3:7-4:35

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 3:7-4:35?

2. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 3:7-19:** John the Baptist had stated that Jesus was greater. In Mark 1:5, the people of Judea and Jerusalem were flocking to John. Here, people from as far as Idumea are flocking to Jesus (120 miles from the South). With Jesus' growing popularity, there is more work to be done. It would follow, therefore, that Jesus would appoint 12 Apostles. These Apostles will be able to assist in the increased work.

i. What is an Apostle? How is it different from being a disciple?

ii. What is significant about the number 12?

b. **Mark 3:20-35:** This is the first example in Mark's Gospel of a "sandwich" story. This is where there is a story within a story. In verses 20-21 we are introduced to Jesus' family. This story is interrupted to learn about Jesus enemies in verses 22-30. Finally, the text returns to Jesus' family in verses 31-35.

i. What does it mean to "blaspheme against the Spirit"?

ii. How are Jesus' biological family and the Scribes similar? How are they different?

iii. What are the characteristics of Jesus' true family?

c. **Mark 4:1-20:** The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes Jesus' teaching with five major portions of teaching (Matthew 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24-25). The Gospel of Mark has only two major sections of Jesus' teaching (Mark 4; 13). Parables were introduced in the previous chapter (Mark 3:23), but chapter 4 is a concentrated section on parables. There are four parables in Mark 4, and three of them are agricultural.

i. Why did Jesus teach in parables? (vs. 10-12)

ii. What happens with each soil?

1. Path
2. Rocky Ground
3. Thorny Soil
4. Good Soil

d. **Mark 4:21-34:** You also see in verse 33 that Jesus spoke the word, as they were able to hear it. In other words, Jesus never said anything that was beyond comprehension. There are some professors, preachers, and teachers who enjoy using big words and saying things in the most complicated way possible; this gives the impression the speaker is highly educated. Jesus taught in such a way that if people worked to understand, they would be able to. The word of God is not impossible to understand.

i. Verses 21-25 employ similar language found in Matthew 5:15-16. However, in this passage Jesus is using this same imagery to make a different point. What is the “light” referring to in this passage?

ii. How does the parable in verses 26-29 help us understand the process of evangelism and personal growth?

iii. In what ways did/has Jesus’ kingdom grown like a mustard seed?

3. In what ways does Mark 3:7-4:34 challenge you to grow?

## Lesson 5 – Mark 4:35-5:43

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 4:35-5:43?

2. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 4:35-41**: This is the first of three boat stories in Mark (4:35-41; 6:45-52; 8:14-21). These stories become important teaching moments for the disciples. Throughout the Old Testament, God is the one who can calm storms and control the waters. For example, in Genesis 1 the world began as a giant mass of water that God formed and shaped. God was the One who parted the Red Sea and caused the Jordan River to stand still. Psalm 89:9 says, *“You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.”* Psalm 107:29 also says, *“He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.”* To the Jewish mind, only God could control the Sea. Thus, in this story we are getting a clearer picture that Jesus is God.

i. There are several details in this story that do not appear to add to the overall point. We learn about the time of day, the presence of other boats, and that Jesus sleeping in the stern on the cushion. Why would these details be included in this scene?

ii. How does this story compare/contrast with Jonah?

b. **Mark 5:1-20**: Jesus’ power was revealed in a new way when He calmed the storm. The fifth chapter of Mark shows three people falling at Jesus’ feet (vs. 6, 22, 33). This power to calm the storm becomes personal as it calms three people with severe problems. After Jesus heals the demon-possessed man, He instructs the man to go to his hometown and tell his friends. Did this man have an impact in his hometown? It appears he did. The next time Jesus comes to this region is in Mark 7:31-32, which says, <sup>31</sup>*Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.* <sup>32</sup>*And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.”* There is a crowd waiting for Jesus the next time He goes to this region. It is possible this crowd is waiting because this one man went back and told people about Jesus.

i. What “unclean” things do you see in this story?

ii. Why did the townspeople react like they did? (vs. 14-17)

iii. What does this story teach you about evangelism?

c. **Mark 5:21-43**: This is the second “sandwich” story in Mark (cf. 3:20-35). We are introduced to Jairus in verses 21-23. The story of the woman interrupts Jairus in verses 24-34. Finally, the text returns to Jairus in verses 35-43.

i. What contrasts do you see between Jairus and the woman?

ii. What similarities do you see between Jairus and the woman?

iii. How do Jairus and the woman contrast from the rest of the crowd?

3. In what ways does Mark 4:35-5:43 challenge you to grow?



## Lesson 6 – Mark 6:1-52

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 6:1-52?

2. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 6:1-6:** There is a phrase that says “familiarity breeds contempt.” When Jesus preaches at the synagogue in His hometown they are offended. These people grew up with Jesus. They thought that they had understood Him. Mark emphasizes Jesus’ emotions more than any other Gospel and this is another (3:5, 6:6, 8:12, 10:14, 11:15-17, 14:34). The unbelief of Jesus’ hometown causes Him to “marvel”.

i. Why did Jesus’ hometown reject Him?

ii. Why couldn’t Jesus do “mighty work” in His hometown?

b. **Mark 6:7-13:** After the disciples see Jesus’ hometown reject Him they are sent out to preach for their first time. They have seen enough to go out on a “limited commission” but they need more time with Jesus before they are given the “great commission” (Mark 16:14-20).

i. In sharing the Gospel with others, how can we tell when to shake the dust off our feet?

ii. Why are the disciples instructed to take nothing for their journey? (cf. Exodus 12:11)

c. **Mark 6:14-29:** On the opening page of Mark we learned that John the Baptist was arrested (Mark 1:14). It is finally in this text where the reader learns why John was arrested. Not only do we learn why he was arrested, but also we learn where his incarceration led. John was executed. It is true that John was executed because of his convictions. Generally speaking, Christians must hold firm to the teachings of Scripture. Specifically, John was executed for “his views” on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Herod and Herodias did not belong together and John was vocal about this. For John, this was “hill to die on.”

i. How does John fate predict the fate of Jesus and the Apostles?

ii. Why did Herod need to separate from Herodias? Are there times today when people who are married may need to separate?

d. **Mark 6:30-44:** Herod put on an elaborate feast. The prestigious and important and wealthy of society attended. John's fate proves this was a banquet filled with hatred. By way of contrast, Jesus will host a different kind of banquet. Instead of being in a palace, it is in the wilderness. The people in Jesus' banquet are "sheep without a shepherd". They are the dregs of society. This banquet isn't about killing; it is about giving life.

i. Jesus gave an impossible command for the Apostles to fulfill by feeding the crowd. However, with Jesus' power He helped them obey the command. What commands seem impossible for you to obey? How does this story help you trust more in Jesus?

ii. What parallels do you see between this passage and Psalm 23?

e. **Mark 6:45-52:** This is the second of three boat stories in Mark (4:35-41; 6:45-52; 8:14-21). Jesus' Apostles are going through a training program and need to mature. How does Jesus help people grow? Sometimes He allows people to go through challenging circumstances in order to rely on Him (cf. 2 Cor. 1:9). The Apostles are struggling and straining in their boat. Jesus is fully aware of what they are going through. Discipline is not enjoyable in the moment, but afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11). The times we are straining at the oars do not take away the reality of God's love. Sometimes they are evidence of it.

i. Why would Jesus intend to pass by the struggling Apostles?

ii. What should they have understood about the "loaves"? (vs. 52)

3. In what ways does Mark 6:1-52 challenge you to grow?

## Lesson 7 – Mark 6:53-8:26

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 6:53-8:26?

2. Breaking Down the Text

- a. **Mark 6:53-7:23:** Notice the connection in 6:56 and 7:4 with the word “marketplace.” It seems Jesus and His disciples were in the marketplace serving people in need. As they did this, they likely purchased some food and ate with ritually unwashed hands. The Pharisees have come all the way from Jerusalem to challenge Jesus and His disciples in the marketplace. There is now a “marketplace of ideas” being exchanged.
  - i. Why did the Pharisees wash their hands before eating?
  - ii. How can we place traditions of men above God’s word?
  - iii. What do verses 18-19 mean?
- b. **Mark 7:24-37:** In verses 17-18 the disciples failed to understand the meaning of Jesus’ words. Now in verses 24-30 there is a Gentile lady who immediately understands Jesus’ parable about dogs and crumbs. Sometimes, like the disciples, we find ourselves having difficulty understanding Jesus’ words. Can He make us who are deaf and mute to become people who can hear and speak? If we want to be more like the woman in verses 24-30, we are shown in verses 31-37 that Jesus can take such people and transform them.
  - i. Why does Jesus compare the woman to a “dog”? Is He being mean to her?
  - ii. Why does Jesus heal the deaf man in this manner?
- c. **Mark 8:1-10:** Is this is déjà vu? A shockingly similar miracle happened in Mark 6:30-44. Lest anyone think this is a recording of the same miracle, there are notable differences. In this scene Jesus begins with seven loaves of bread; in the first story Jesus began with five. In this scene there are seven large baskets leftover; in the first story there were 12. In this scene, Jesus feeds 4,000 people; in the first Jesus fed 5,000.

- i. Verse 1 begins by saying, “in those days...” In the context Jesus was in Gentile regions. Who is Jesus for the Gentiles?
  - ii. How could the disciples be unprepared for a moment like this when they had already gone through something so similar?
- d. **Mark 8:11-21**: Unbelief comes in different forms. The Pharisees (vs. 11-13) and the disciples (vs. 14-21) are united in hard heartedness. However, there is a stark difference between the natures of their unbelief. The Pharisees are willfully stubborn, demanding astronomical signs from heaven. Such are the people Jesus leaves on the shore. The disciples are slow learners. They are struggling, but they are still in the same boat with Jesus. They are thinking about earthly things as Jesus is seeking to warn them about the potential impact the Pharisees could have on them. Oftentimes we become more concerned about bread than the possibility of sin growing in our hearts.
- i. What might it look like today to have the same attitude as the Pharisees in this text?
  - ii. What might it look like today to have the same attitude as the disciples in this text?
- e. **Mark 8:22-26**: This is a unique miracle in that Jesus heals this blind man in two steps. Mark has demonstrated that Jesus could heal and perform miracles with His words (1:25-26; 2:11-12, 3:5; 4:39; 5:13; 5:41; 7:29-30). Blindness has not suddenly become something too powerful for Jesus to heal with one word. Rather, there is a deeper meaning to healing in this manner. In the context, the disciples are seeing Jesus in a blurry way. They are further than they were at first, but they are not seeing clearly. This miracle offers hope that Jesus can not only take people being blind to blurry, but also from blurry to clear.
- i. Why would Jesus heal this man privately?
  - ii. How can Jesus give us a “second touch” to see clearly?

3. In what ways does Mark 6:53-8:26 challenge you to grow?

# Lesson 8 – Mark 8:27-9:50

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 8:27-9:50?

## 2. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 8:27-9:1:** Jesus and His disciples are at Caesarea Philippi. This city was about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee and at the base of Mount Hermon. This town was named after Augustus Caesar and it was a Roman outpost. If you asked anyone in that town who the King was, their answer would be the Roman Emperor. For anyone to say that someone else was the King would be politically risky. Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, which is a claim that He is King. The book of Acts shows this was one reason for persecution against the early Christians (Acts 17:6-7).

i. Based on Old Testament prophecies, what was Peter likely expecting the Messiah to accomplish? (Psalm 2, 110). How does this help us understand Peter's rebuke of Jesus?

ii. What does it mean to take up the cross?

b. **Mark 9:2-13:** "Veiled in the flesh the godhead see; hail the incarnate deity." Hark! the Harold Angels Sing is a beloved hymn by many. To veil something is to cover and conceal it. When Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John He is taking some of the veil away. Jesus is radiant and bright. Not only is Jesus being transfigured, but the Apostles understanding of Jesus is being transfigured as well.

i. What do Moses and Elijah represent? What happens to them in this scene?

ii. How does Elijah and John the Baptist parallel one another?

c. **Mark 9:14-29:** Some of the people suggest the boy actually died when the demon came out. In verse 27, Jesus takes the child by the hand and lifts him up, and he "arose." That word for "arose" is the same word also used to describe Jesus rising from the dead (Mark 14:28). At this point in Mark Jesus has been speaking clearly about His death and resurrection (Mark 8:31-32; 9:9). In this context, Jesus "raises" up a boy whom everyone thought was dead. It is as if Jesus is giving a demonstration of what He has been saying will happen to Himself.

i. What does the father mean in verse 24?

ii. Contrast the disciples with the father. What observations do you see?

d. **Mark 9:30-37**: Jesus is continuing to speak about His death while the disciples continue to miss the point. They are arguing over which was the greatest. Perhaps Peter, James, and John believe they are greater because they witnessed the transfiguration while the others failed to cast out the demon (Mark 9:18). Regardless of the specific content of these these arguments, the bottom line is that the Apostles are focused on their own glory. Jesus is staying the course and consistently teaching them a different way.

i. Why might the disciples be afraid to ask Jesus about His teaching?

ii. How does receiving a child demonstrate true service?

e. **Mark 9:38-50**: In Luke 10:1-12 Jesus sends out 72 other disciples with miraculous abilities. Perhaps this explains the existence of others who are casting out demons. Because the disciples had recently failed to cast out a demon (Mark 9:18) one can imagine why this might be a sore subject for them. In seeking to stop these people from casting out demons, Jesus seems to indicate they are being a stumbling block to genuine servants.

i. In what ways can we hinder others from serving God?

ii. Feet, hands, and eyes are not inherently sinful. Why would Jesus say it is appropriate to amputate/remove these things? What is the meaning of this illustration?

iii. Explain the meaning of verses 49-50.

3. In what ways does Mark 8:27-9:50 challenge you to grow?

## Lesson 9 – Mark 10:1-52

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 10:1-52?

2. Breaking Down the Text

- a. **Mark 10:1-12:** While Jesus is teaching in Judea the Pharisees came and tested Jesus with a question about divorce. Recall that in Mark 6 King Herod had married his brother Philip's wife. She had divorced her husband to marry Herod. John the Baptist had rebuked the King over this marriage. This led to John's death. Depending on how Jesus answers this question, he could find Himself in trouble with the King. If Jesus believes the same thing as John the Baptist, maybe they can get him executed as well. Mark leaves out the exception for divorce and remarriage, which is found in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9.
  - i. Explain why Moses wrote the commandment about a certificate of divorce (Deut. 24:1-4).
  - ii. If God intends marriage for one man and one woman, what relationships are excluded?
  - iii. In what circumstances would a married couple need to separate?
- b. **Mark 10:13-31:** The Jews believed the rich were blessed by God and would be the most important in the Kingdom. Children on the other hand were not accomplished or significant. These two scenes flow together to show us that Jesus' Kingdom flips the values of the world upside down.
  - i. How are children held up as good examples for adults in this text?
  - ii. Does Jesus deny His deity in verse 18?
  - iii. Why is it difficult for the wealthy to enter the kingdom?
- c. **Mark 10:32-45:** The same pattern from Mark 9:30-37 occurs here; Jesus is talking about His sacrifice while the disciples are fighting over their own glory. More details are provided about

Jesus' death in this third prediction (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). Several chapters before these things happen Jesus knows His fate. Still, He presses on to Jerusalem.

- i. Why do you think the disciples are amazed and afraid? (Vs. 32)
- ii. What do people in the world consider greatness? How does it contrast with Jesus' Kingdom?

d. **Mark 10:46-52:** Recall that in Mark 8:22-26 Jesus performed a two-step healing for someone who was blind. Now at the end of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, we find another healing of a blind man. This time it is not a two-step process. Jesus heals Bartimaeus right away. Why would this section begin and end with blind people being healed? Maybe this represents the disciples who will eventually have opened eyes. Notice that in the previous story and in this one that Jesus asks the same question – “What do you want me to do for you?” (vs. 36, 51). The disciples are still blind whereas Bartimaeus, though physically blind, perceives Jesus as the Son of David.

- i. Bartimaeus couldn't see Jesus, but he believed in Him. How are we in a similar situation to Bartimaeus?
- ii. What impresses you about Jesus' treatment of Bartimaeus?

3. In what ways does Mark 10:1-52 challenge you to grow?



# Lesson 10 – Mark 11:1-12:44

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 11:1-12:44?

2. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 11:1-26:** One of the more neglected purposes of the Temple was for Gentiles to come and pray to God (1 Kings 8:41-43; Isaiah 56:7). The Temple had a court where the Gentiles could indeed come and draw near to God. During the Passover celebration people would travel hundreds of miles. Travelling great distances with a sacrificial animal would create problems, so the Jews sold animals in Jerusalem. It seems the Jews sold the animals in the court of the Gentiles, blocking foreigners from being able to worship God. The nation and Temple may have looked beautiful, but there was no fruit – just like the fig tree.

i. Contrast Jesus riding the donkey with what He does in the Temple. What two sides of Jesus does this text show us?

ii. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? What did it represent?

b. **Mark 11:27-12:12:** This text begins a series of questions that various Jewish leaders bring to trap Jesus. After Jesus' cleaned the Temple, they were seeking to kill Him (Mark 11:18). With every question that is asked Jesus, He makes His opponents appear foolish. The efforts to overthrow the wisdom of God always fall flat. Mark 11:27-12:12 is the first of these questions. This section centers on the question of authority. First, Jesus is questioned about His authority (11:27-33). Second, Jesus gives a brief history of how the Israelites consistently have rejected the authority of God (12:1-12).

i. How does Jesus' question in 11:29 challenging to the priests and scribes?

ii. What will Jesus do to the Jews who have rejected God's authority?

c. **Mark 12:13-34:** Taxes, afterlife, and the greatest commandment. The Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and the Scribes all bring their questions to Jesus, hoping to trap Him. Jesus did not back down from controversial topics, but the manner in which He answered was steeped in so much wisdom that nobody could respond. It is good to address controversial topics, but we must do so in a winsome and godly manner.

- i. Describe how each question poses a potential dilemma for Jesus.
    1. Taxes
    2. Resurrection
    3. Greatest Command
  - ii. Explain how Jesus answers each question.
    1. Taxes
    2. Resurrection
    3. Greatest Command
- d. **Mark 12:35-44:** Jesus has answered the previous questions with astonishing insight and now He turns the tables. Jesus had called scribes and Pharisees were called “hypocrites” in Matthew 23. A hypocrite is someone who is acting and pretending. In this section Jesus will remove the mask from the Scribes. He will unmask their lack of knowledge, their character, and the impact they have on those whom they prey.
- i. How would you answer Jesus’ question in verse 37?
  - ii. What do the scribes “like”? How might this look today?
  - iii. How does the story of the widow’s offering fit the context of this passage?
3. In what ways does Mark 11:1-12:44 challenge you to grow?

# Lesson 11 – Mark 13:1-37

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 13:1-37?

2. Breaking Down the Text

- a. **Mark 13:1-4:** We know historically that King Herod was restoring the Temple for 46 years (John 2:20). The work on the Temple was elaborate with much gold and stones as large as 42x11x14 feet. The disciples are struck with the beauty of this place, but Jesus has a different focus. Jesus says the stones will be thrown down. He is predicting that the Temple is going to be destroyed. The fig tree that bore no fruit is indeed cursed (Mark 11:14).
  - i. The disciples are impressed with the beauty of the Temple. How can we have the same focus as the disciples?
  - ii. Many people believe this chapter is talking about the end of the world. What do verses 1-4 show this chapter will be addressing?
- b. **Mark 13:5-13:** News of the Temples' destruction would have been shocking to the Apostles. Here Jesus explains the false signs leading to the destruction. Jesus explains that these things are the "beginning of birth pains." When a woman is in labor, the beginning of the contractions does not always mean the baby is coming right away. In like manner, when these things happen it does not mean that the destruction of Jerusalem is right around the corner. Many have taken the things this passage says and said that it means it is nearing the end of the world. There is a double mistake in this. This is referring to Jerusalem's destruction and it isn't describing the signs that it is imminent.
  - i. List the things that will happen prior to the destruction of the Temple. Where do we see these things fulfilled in the book of Acts?
  - ii. How does this passage prepare Christians to handle persecution?
- c. **Mark 13:14-23:** Jesus now addresses the signs that destruction is imminent. Verse 19 explains in hyperbolic language that this was going to be a horrible period of time (cf. Exodus 11:6; Ezekiel 5:9). Historians say the Romans crucified anyone outside the city and they trapped those inside the city. Mothers resorted to eating their children and Jews were killing one another. The suffering within Jerusalem is so serious that if someone was outside the city farming or on top of his or her

roof, they should leave immediately and not take any possessions. Typically you would run into the city for protection, but for Jesus to say to “flee” means the city will finally meet its end.

- i. What is the abomination of desolation? (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11)
  - ii. How do we know this is not talking about the end of the world? (Look also at Luke 21:20)
- d. **Mark 13:24-27:** Up until this point, everything has clearly been referring to Jerusalem. This section seems to be talking about the end of the world. Notice that in verse 24 Jesus begins by saying, “in those days...” He is still talking about the same period of time. This means these verses must have application to the first century. In order to understand this section, it is critical to know how the Old Testament speaks about localized judgments.
- i. What does the sun and moon being darkened mean? (Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 3:15)
  - ii. What does it mean for the Son of Man to come in the clouds? (Isaiah 19:1; Ezekiel 30:3)
  - iii. What does it mean for the angels to gather the elect? (Isaiah 11:1; 56:8)
- e. **Mark 13:28-37:** Some say that Jesus switches the topic from Jerusalem to the end of the world in verses 28-37. Others say that Jesus is still referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. Regardless of which view you take, there are lessons from this section that can be applied to Final Judgment.
- i. Do you think Jesus is still talking about Jerusalem? Why or why not?
  - ii. What lessons can we learn about being ready for judgment?
3. In what ways does Mark 13:1-37 challenge you to grow?

# Lesson 12 – Mark 14:1-15:15

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 14:1-15:15?

2. Breaking Down the Text

a. **Mark 14:1-11:** In chapter 13, we learned that a storm cloud was coming over Jerusalem, but now beginning in Mark 14 we learn another storm cloud is coming over Jesus. Mark 14 shows Jesus getting abandoned by His followers. Chapter 13 talks about Jerusalem's downfall by Roman hands, and chapter 14 marks the beginning of Jesus' crucifixion by Roman hands. All of this begins with Judas betraying Jesus. Later in this same chapter, three of Jesus' disciples will fall asleep while Jesus is praying. Once He is arrested the disciples will flee (14:50). The one person who seems to show loyalty to Jesus is this woman who anoints Him for burial.

i. What contrasts do you see between Judas and the woman?

ii. Why did the Jewish leaders need Judas' help arresting Jesus?

b. **Mark 14:12-26:** The scene has shifted from guest to host. In verses 1-11, Jesus was a guest in Bethany. In verses 12-26, He is acting as the host of the Passover meal. When Jesus was a guest, the woman made a costly sacrifice for Him. When Jesus is the host, He is helping the disciples understand His costly sacrifice for them.

i. Jesus has foreknowledge in this scene (vs. 12-16). Why is this important leading up to His crucifixion?

ii. When Jesus tells the disciples that one of them will betray Him, they do not point the finger at Judas. Rather, they are self-reflective. How does their example teach us to do the same?

c. **Mark 14:27-52:** Complacency is when we are satisfied with the status quo. The word "complacency" includes the ideas of "comfort" and "place." When this becomes our mindset we stop pursuing excellence and we think we are better than we really are. Warnings are not taken personally. Peter is confident that he is fully dedicated to Jesus despite Jesus' warning to him. At the same time, Jesus is relying on the Father in prayer. This is the final of three passages in Mark where Jesus is seen praying.

i. How does verse 38 broadly apply in helping us overcome temptation?

ii. What is the point of the scene in verses 51-52?

d. **Mark 14:53-72:** This section of Scripture is a sandwich text that is somewhat common in Mark. The beginning of the text mentions Peter, and then it is interrupted by Jesus' trial, and then the text moves back to Peter. Mark has woven these stories together for us to make a contrast. These two scenes are happening at the same time. While Peter is denying his knowledge of Jesus, Jesus is confessing His identity. The Mishnah regulated how Jews were to handle court proceedings. There are several laws created by the Jews that are broken while Jesus is on trial. Protocol has been thrown out the window when the truth is put on trial.

i. Peter said that he would not fall away (Mark 14:29). Even when Jesus was arrested Peter tried to fight with a sword (Mark 14:47). Ironically, Peter denies Jesus when a servant girl inquires of him (Mark 14:66, 69). Why would Peter be willing to fight only to deny Jesus shortly afterward?

ii. In what ways can we put the "truth" on trial like the Jewish leaders?

e. **Mark 15:1-15:** Tiberius Caesar appointed Pilate as the governor in 26 A.D and he reigned until 36 A.D. The Bible does not portray Pilate as a godly man. For example, Luke 13:1 references some, "**...Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.**" Historical records inform us about Pilate. On one occasion Pilate commanded that flags of Tiberius Caesar be raised in Jerusalem. Some Jews protested this and Pilate had them all hacked to pieces. From the human perspective, it is this man who is going to determine Jesus' fate.

i. Why was Jesus crucified? There are at least two reasons in this text.

ii. What does "Barabbas" name mean? Why is this ironic?

3. In what ways does Mark 14:1-15:15 challenge you to grow?

## Lesson 13 – Mark 15:16-16:20

1. What do you think are the main ideas/themes of Mark 15:16-16:20?

2. Breaking Down the Text

- a. **Mark 15:16-32:** One of the people in this scene is Simon of Cyrene. He is mentioned by name in Matthew 27:32 and Luke 23:26. Matthew and Luke do not mention Simon's family members. Mark, however, explains that this Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. We don't know anything else about Alexander in the Bible, but what about Rufus? If it is the same Rufus, he is mentioned in Romans. Romans 16:13 says, "*Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.*" Keep in mind that Mark is written to a Roman audience. Perhaps Rufus is mentioned in this Gospel because he could confirm that this event really happened.
  - i. What does it mean to be "scourged"?
  - ii. Is Jesus' physical pain or verbal attacks emphasized more in this scene? What were the people saying about Jesus?
- b. **Mark 15:33-39:** Mark begins and ends with something being torn followed by a declaration that Jesus is the Son of God. When Jesus was baptized, the skies were torn and the Father declared Jesus to be His son (Mark 1:10-11). The Gospel ends with the Temple curtain tearing and a declaration from a Roman centurion that Jesus is the Son of God. For a Roman to confess this is a hint that Jew or Gentile can confess this reality about Jesus.
  - i. Why did it become dark while Jesus was on the cross?
  - ii. What is significant about the curtain in the Temple being torn?
- c. **Mark 15:40-16:8:** This is the final sandwich story in Mark. The text begins with the women (vs. 15:40-41), then moves to Joseph (vs. 15:42-46), and then comes back to the women (14:47-16:8). For the first time in Mark, we learn that Jesus had female followers. They are named three times in this text (vs. 15:40, 15:47, 16:1). Additionally, verse 41 says there were more unnamed women who also followed Him. The Rabbi's in this day did not have female pupils, but Jesus did.

- i. Why is it surprising that Jesus was already dead?
- ii. What similarities and differences do the women have with Joseph of Arimathea have?
- iii. Why do you think Peter is specified in Mark 16:7?

d. **Mark 16:9-20:** Many Bibles place special brackets around verses 9-20 with a note saying something like, “Some of the Earliest Manuscripts Do Not Include 16:9-20.” The NASB says, “Later Manuscripts Add vs. 9-20.” Does this portion of Scripture belong in our Bibles? There are scholars on both sides of the issue. There are over 5,000 New Testament manuscripts. Two of the most complete and earliest manuscripts do not include verses 9-20. These manuscripts are called codex Sinaiticus and codex Vaticanus. However, the vast majority of ancient manuscripts do include verses 9-20. Originally the Scriptures were written on scrolls. It is not difficult to imagine a scroll tearing off at the end. Perhaps Sinaiticus and Vaticanus were copied from torn scrolls. Because most manuscripts do include this text, it stands to reason that it does belong in our Bibles.

- i. Why were the disciples rebuked?
- ii. What is the purpose of miracles?
- iii. What does verse 16 teach about baptism?

3. In what ways does Mark 15:16-16:20 challenge you to grow?