

The Gospel of Mark

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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The Gospel of Mark

Course Introduction

As a Bible student, have you ever wished you could sit and learn from someone who knew Jesus in person? From someone who saw Him as He walked this earth and taught people as no one had ever taught before? How about learning from someone who was not only a child in the faith of Jesus' most prominent disciple, Peter, but one who also accompanied the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey?

John Mark, the writer of the second gospel in the New Testament, was one such person. John Mark is perhaps better known as Mark, though sometimes in the Bible he is called John, or John Mark as well (see Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37). Mark's gospel is a gospel of action. He introduces us to Jesus as an adult, ready to begin His ministry. Jesus is revealed as the promised Messiah of Israel, Son of David, Son of Man, and—most prominently—the Son of God.

Mark states his theme in his first verse—Jesus is the son of God (Mk 1:1). Throughout his gospel, Mark records three times God tears open the heavens to announce that Jesus is His Son: At His baptism (Mk 1:9-11), at His transfiguration (Mk 9:2-8), and at His death, seen figuratively in the tearing of the temple veil (Mk 15:37-39). He also shows Jesus having power over the realms of Satan, illness, nature, and humanity.

Throughout his book, Mark gives a detailed description of the cosmic struggle between Jesus and Satan. This struggle is usually behind the scenes; not directly observable from a human perspective. This struggle began before humanity fell in the garden of Eden. The struggle between Jesus and Satan in Mark at least partially fulfills the prediction God made in Genesis 3:14-15 to “bruise Satan's head.” This struggle is evident in His conflicts with demon possession and the topic of Jesus being on the road to Jerusalem (Mk 10:32-34). At the end of that road, the decisive blow is dealt to Satan when Jesus dies for our sin on the cross. As we will later see, Mark illustrates this battle when we take a deeper look at his stories and see beyond the literal words of his gospel.

Total victory comes through Jesus' substitutionary death: His death pays humanity's debt of sin and provides salvation to all who believe in Him (Mk 10:45). On the basis of that victory, Jesus now gives us His authority. We continue His work as His representatives to lost humanity here on earth, as He goes on before us to Galilee (Mk 14:28; 16:7). Galilee in Mark 14:28 and Mark 16:7 is likely symbolic of the mission field Mark and his readers were called to—ministering to the Gentiles.

Throughout history, humanity has felt the barriers separating them personally from God and has longed for their destruction. Like Isaiah, we have a longing for God to break through those barriers and reveal Himself (Isa 64:1). Mark pictures God breaking through those barriers; separating Himself from His created people. In three dramatic breakthroughs—at Jesus' baptism, at His transfiguration, and at His death when the veil of the temple is torn—Mark shows Jesus breaking down the barriers between humanity and God by His taking on flesh and living among us (Mk 1:10; 9:2-9; 15:37-39). Those same three events make Mark's message clear: Jesus is the conquering Son of God who suffered and died to redeem humanity (Mk 10:45). Death could not hold Him so He arose and now leads us on to our mission field (Mk 14:28; 16:7).

Course Outline

Unit 1: Who Is Jesus?

Lesson 1: Jesus Is the Son of God (Mk 1:1-45)

Lesson 2: Rejected by the Jewish Leaders (Mk 2:1–3:35)

Lesson 3: Reaction to the Leaders' Rejection (Mk 4:1–5:43)

Unit 2: Responses to Jesus

Lesson 4: Jewish Rejection (Mk 6:1-56)

Lesson 5: Gentile Acceptance (Mk 7:1–8:13)

Lesson 6: The Disciples' Understanding (Mk 8:14–9:29)

Unit 3: Jesus' Mission Announced

Lesson 7: Jesus' Mission to Jerusalem (Mk 9:30–10:52)

Lesson 8: Presentation of the Son (Mk 11:1–12:12)

Lesson 9: Teaching of the Son (Mk 12:13–13:37)

Unit 4: Jesus' Mission Accomplished

Lesson 10: Preparing for His Death (Mk 14:1-42)

Lesson 11: Drinking His Cup (Mk 14:43–15:23)

Lesson 12: Truly the Son of God (Mk 15:24–16:20)

As you plan your study schedule, decide the dates for when you want to finish each unit. You can then divide this time into study periods for each lesson.

We suggest that you try to do a lesson a week or three lessons per month. You can do this if you study about one hour each day. At this rate, it will take you approximately four months to complete the course. Many will desire to speed this up and do two or three lessons per week.

Mark's Storybook

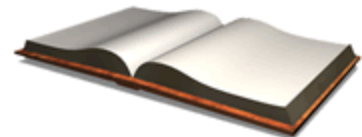
Mark writes his gospel stories using real, historical events. Mark also often arranges his account so that he tells a story behind the literal stories, which we will call the storybook. For example, in his storybook, Jerusalem represents the headquarters of the evil Jewish leaders. Therefore, when John the Baptist calls the Jews to repent and be baptized, he calls people out from Jerusalem—out from that evil system. Then, at the end of his gospel, he calls the disciples to their new meeting place, Galilee. Also in Mark's storybook, John is a prophet of old and therefore he dresses like one—in hairy garments, for example.

To find Mark's story behind the gospel story, you will need to use your imagination. But, though encouraging imagination, he does not give license for our imaginations to run free. One rule that keeps us grounded is that this story behind the story must not contradict the meaning of the literal text Mark writes.

So, what good is this story behind the story? For one thing, all of us like a good story. Stories tend to hold our interest and people tend to learn well when teaching comes in the form of a story. Also, the teaching in this type of story is very powerful, as we will show throughout this study. To Mark, God is ripping open the heavens to tell us the good news: that Jesus in His Son, in whom He is well-pleased. Therefore, He reveals the invisible God and offers salvation to those who believe in Him.

What if you do not see Mark's story behind the story? Or what if you do not see any value in it? That's okay. Look at Mark's Storybook section as an introductory story to that topic or subtopic. Most teachers use some kind of a story to introduce Bible teaching, but in this case Mark's Storybook section is based on another perspective of what is happening within Mark's narrative.

Look for the storybook icon (right) to indicate where the story starts in each section.



Recommended for Further Reading

Garland, David E., *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

Grassmick, John D, *Mark* in the “Bible Knowledge Commentary.” (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983).

Hiebert, D. Edmond. *Mark, A Portrait of the Servant*. (Chicago: Moody, 1974).

Ulansey, David. *The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark’s Cosmic “Inclusio”*. Internet Article. (Originally published in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 110:1 [Spring 1991], pp. 123-25.)

Douglas Greenwold, Executive Director and Secretary, Preserving Bible Times (www.preservingbibletimes.org).

Unit 1: Who Is Jesus?

Mark introduces Jesus not as a child, but as an adult ready to begin His ministry. The other two Synoptic Gospels, Matthew and Luke, trace Jesus' genealogy, from the announcement of the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist, the birth narratives, and the early childhood of Jesus. Meanwhile, the gospel of John gives a spiritual introduction to Jesus before He begins His adult ministry.

Mark shows Jesus' initiation into ministry with His baptism, then immediately Jesus shows His authority. It includes preaching the gospel and calling His disciples. He establishes it over demons, disease, sin, nature, the Sabbath, and tradition, among others. Though His authority is obvious, it is misunderstood and opposed as even His disciples struggle to understand Him!

Lesson 1 reveals the answer to the question "Who is Jesus?" The testimony to His identity includes His forerunner, baptism, temptation, message, and calling His followers. Then Mark includes a long day in Jesus' ministry in which He heals diseases that only God can.

In Lesson 2, He is rejected by the Jewish leaders. He reveals His complete authority over Satan's realm, to the multitudes of people whom He meets and to His own followers and family. His authority to cure extends to the root problem in man: He has the authority to forgive sins! This demonstration of authority leads to immediate opposition as the leaders begin to plot His murder!

Lesson 3 considers Jesus' reaction to the leaders' rejection. The disciples expect that the Messiah will immediately establish His promised kingdom. They cannot imagine that the kingdom can be successfully opposed. To help them understand, He teaches the kingdom of God in parables. Then He opens the invisible curtain on demonic warfare and death and amazes people with authority in those realms as well.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: Jesus Is the Son of God (Mk 1:1-45)

Lesson 2: Rejected by the Jewish Leaders (Mk 2:1-3:35)

Lesson 3: Reaction to the Leaders' Rejection (Mk 4:1-5:43)

Lesson 1: Jesus Is the Son of God (Mk 1:1-45)

Lesson Introduction

Mark's gospel opens with language similar to an announcement of how the reign of a new Roman emperor was announced. It is the dawn of a new age (Mk 1:1). This new age is formally announced by the cry of the herald, John the Baptist, the forerunner and new Elijah (Mk 1:3; see also Mal 4:5). John was dressed as a traditional prophet in a hairy garment who ate the same crude food in the wilderness (Mk 1:6).



John's mission is as if he were a surveyor for a road crew. He takes the winding, mountainous road the Jewish leaders built and prepares the straight course of the Messiah (Mk 1:3). After John's introduction, God Himself proclaims that Jesus is His beloved Son by tearing open the fabric of heaven to announce Him (Mk 1:9-11). This event fulfills Isaiah's longing for God to come down from heaven and have Him rip away the barriers between man and God (Isa 64:1)!

Then the Holy Spirit leads Jesus to face temptation by Satan in the wilderness. This wilderness is full of spiritual dangers but angels minister to Him. Jesus' forty days of trial in the wilderness identify Him symbolically with Israel's forty years of trial in the wilderness (Num 14:32; Deut 8:2).

Though John is arrested, God's message does not stop because Jesus enters the spotlight preaching John's message: "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel" (Mk 1:15). Then, to be sure His message continues after His death, Jesus calls His first disciples from casting nets for fish to casting nets for humanity (Mk 1:16-20).

Jesus' message first goes to the Jewish synagogues (Mk 1:21-28). The spiritual state of this synagogue pictures the then-current spiritual state of Jerusalem. Mark shows that it is the haunt of evil spirits, but Jesus has authority over the demons as well as fevers and leprosy that can be cured only by God (Mk 1:29-45). As Jesus' cures lead to increasing popularity, He seeks solitude and prayer (Mk 1:32-39). He uses these resources to fight His greatest temptation—to usher in His kingdom without the cross when Satan offers Him the kingdoms of the world in exchange for His worship.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Overview and Introduction of Mark (Mk 1:1)

Topic 2: John's Introduction (Mk 1:2-8)

Topic 3: God's Introduction

 In His Baptism (Mk 1:9-11)

 In His Temptation (Mk 1:12-13)

Topic 4: Jesus' Message

 The Gospel of the Kingdom (Mk 1:14-15)

 The Call of the Disciples (Mk 1:16-20)

Topic 5: Divine Authority

Authority over Demons (Mk 1:21-28)

Authority over Fever (Mk 1:29-34)

Authority in Prayer (Mk 1:35-39)

Authority over Leprosy (Mk 1:40-45)

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Lesson Objectives

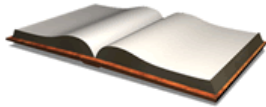
By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the theme of Mark's gospel
- Understand more fully what Jesus' early ministry looked like and how it reflects His character
- Apply the truths taught in Mark 1 to your life

Topic 1: Overview and Introduction of Mark (Mk 1:1)

Mark paints a picture of Jesus as the suffering Son of God who comes with the Father's authority. Since He is truly man, as well as truly God, He is fully qualified as our Messiah and Savior. Mark invites us into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark's gospel tells of good news received directly from God, through His Son. This gospel is about a Savior sent to establish the promised Davidic Kingdom for His covenant people. Instead of receiving it, His people will reject His kingdom offer (Mk 12:1-12). However, this rejected Messiah provides salvation by dying for their sins and rising from the dead (Mk 10:45; 16:1-8).



An Israeli judge named Daniel received a new case one morning. It was his most unusual case in all of the time he had been a member of the Sanhedrin. Judge Daniel had grown up in the district of Galilee around Capernaum, where a man named Jesus had recently started ministering. The judge heard of this man—a new rabbi, some claimed—because reports about Him had reached Jerusalem. As a member of the Sanhedrin, Judge Daniel was assigned the task of determining the source of this new religious leader's authority. His job was to evaluate all the evidence and report to the other leaders with his findings. Since these Jewish leaders sit in Moses' seat, it is their duty to determine the source of authority of the religious leaders in Israel. The Sanhedrin was concerned because some had said that Jesus may be the promised Messiah! The word from Galilee was that he preached that the kingdom of God is about to appear.

Based on what Judge Daniel had heard of the new rabbi, he was intrigued by the attention that Jesus' ministry had drawn. Daniel was contemplating the first steps to take in his investigation and decided it would be best to gather as much information as he could about Jesus. The questions he most wanted answered were:

Where was He born?

How was He born and what were the circumstances?

- Who is His family?
- Was He in the kingly line of David?
- What do others say about Him?
- Who are His followers?
- What are His actions?
- What is His mission?
- What training has He had?

The judge was confident that the answers to these questions would help him come to the right conclusion about Jesus.

These same background facts the judge seeks about Jesus will help us properly interpret what we read about Him also.

After each topic introduction in this course, we will have an **Observing the Text** question. These questions are designed to allow you to write down your own observations of the Bible text that applies to each topic. This will help you to understand the importance of context in interpreting each Bible passage.

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 1. Record your observations in your Life Notebook. Consider answering the following questions:

- What do others say about Him (Mk 1)?
- What are His actions (Mk 1)?
- What is His mission (Mk 1)?

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:43-52; this passage contains Mark’s eyewitness.
- Read Acts 12:1-19, which teaches about the upper room in Mark’s mother’s house and gives background information on Mark’s family.
- Read “Introduction to Mark.”

Introduction to Mark

The information in the list below gives some key facts on the book of Mark:

The Book of Mark	
Date written	AD 55-late 60s
Author’s name	John Mark, meaning large hammer
Place of writing	Rome
Author’s family	Mother: Mary (Acts 12:12); Cousin: Barnabas (Col 4:10)
Audience	The persecuted Christians in Rome
Emphasis	Action, seen in the repetition of the word “immediately” followed by vivid details and descriptions

Mark is most likely a character in his own gospel, since many believe he was an eyewitness of Jesus’ arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:51-52). Scriptural facts and trustworthiness are

established by eyewitness accounts, a principle established in the time of Moses (Deut 17:6). The house his family lived in is also mentioned in his book. Most interpreters think that Mark's mother's house contained the upper room that the Last Supper was eaten in (Mk 14:12-16). This is also the same house mentioned in Acts 12:12.

Mark—also called John—was a helper when he accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-5, 13). For some unexplained reason he left Paul and Barnabas in the middle of this journey after they arrived at Perga (Acts 13:13) and Paul held Mark's desertion against him. When Barnabas insisted on taking Mark with him on the next missionary journey, Paul refused (Acts 15:36-40). Since they couldn't come to an agreement, Barnabas and Paul went out separately on their second missionary journeys. Paul ended up taking Silas to accompany him on his mission. Good resulted out of this disagreement because two missionary teams were sent out instead of only one.

Mark did eventually reconcile to Paul. Paul asked for him shortly before his death, calling him "useful in ministry" (2 Tim 4:11). Whatever happened on that first missionary journey, it didn't become a hindrance to him in his Christian life. Mark seemed to be a special favorite of the apostle Peter. Peter refers to him affectionately as his son (1 Pet 5:13).

Mark wrote to Roman Christians undergoing persecution from Roman authorities. Many were giving their lives as martyrs for the faith. The remaining believers would see, from the example of Jesus, that they were not alone in their suffering. Jesus knew what was before Him on the road to Jerusalem, yet He determinedly continued down that road (Mk 10:32-34). Seeing His example, they should continue in the faith to fulfill their mission as He had finished His.

Jesus is the Son of God. Mark uses this as a basis to outline his gospel. At the beginning of Mark, He is declared the Son of God by the voice of the Father from heaven at His baptism (Mk 1:11). Then again the same Father, in the middle of the book and again with a voice from heaven, declared Jesus His Son on the Mount of transfiguration (Mk 9:7). Finally, near the end, a different voice, that from a Roman centurion who witnessed Jesus' death, declares Jesus the Son of God by the way He died (Mk 15:39). Mark seems to build his story around the desire expressed in Isaiah 64:1 that God would remove the barrier between Him and His people.

The table on the next page shows all of the references in Mark to Jesus being the Son of God:

Son of God Witnesses in Mark		
Reference	Witness	Text
1:11	Father	(At His baptism) "And a voice came out of the heavens: 'You are My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased'"
3:11	Demon	"And whenever the unclean spirits beheld Him, they would fall down before Him and cry out, saying, 'You are the Son of God!'"
5:7	Demon	"And crying out with a loud voice, he said, 'What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?'"
9:7	Father	(The transfiguration) "Then a cloud formed overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!'"
13:32	Jesus	(The Olivet discourse) 'But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.'
14:61-62	Jesus	(At His trial) 'Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."'
15:39	Centurion	(Witnessing Jesus' death) And when the centurion who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said "Truly this man was the Son of God"

QUESTION 2

Please read through Mark 1 once again and match the Scripture with the corresponding section title.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Section Titles</i>
Mark 1:1	Witness of Baptism and Temptation
Mark 1:2-8	Jesus' Message and Call
Mark 1:9-13	Witness of the Forerunner
Mark 1:14-20	Beginning of the Gospel

QUESTION 3

Continue to match the Scripture with the corresponding section title for Mark 1.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Section Titles</i>
Mark 1:21-28	Summary of Jesus' Authority
Mark 1:29-31	Jesus' Exorcism
Mark 1:32-39	A Fever Cured
Mark 1:40-45	A Leper Cured

QUESTION 4

Which of the following does Mark emphasize in his gospel?

- A. Jesus' childhood
- B. Jesus' genealogy
- C. An eyewitness account
- D. Jesus' teachings

QUESTION 5

Please match the Scripture references in Mark with the one who testifies that Jesus is the Son of God.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Who Testifies that He is the Son of God</i>
Mark 3:11	Jesus before the High Priest
Mark 9:7	Roman centurion
Mark 13:32	Demon
Mark 14:61	Father
Mark 15:39	Jesus

QUESTION 6

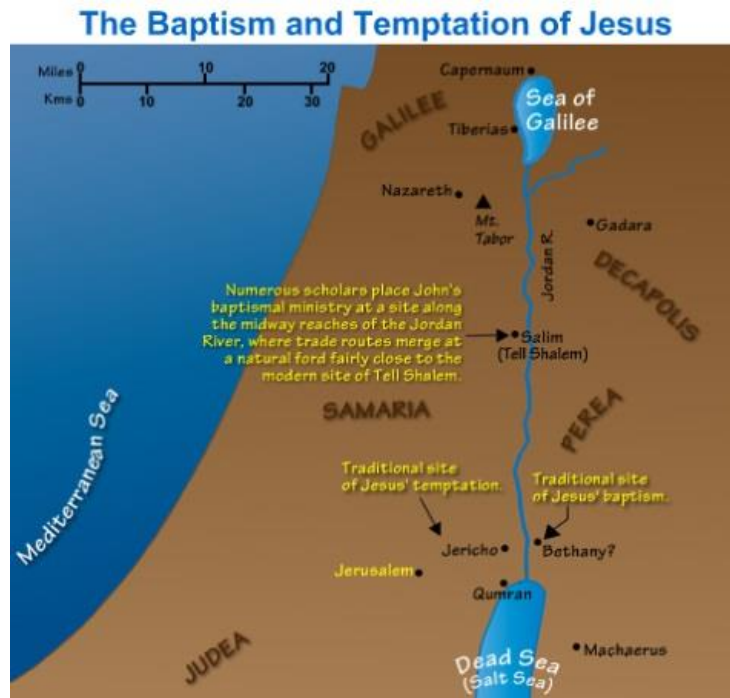
Please explain how Mark's theme is illustrated at three key points in Mark.

Note: Throughout this gospel Mark reveals the true level of understanding to Jesus' teaching and actions by the response of someone. It can be the multitude, the Jewish leaders, often the disciples, or even an individual. These responses are keys to understanding Mark's teaching on each topic.

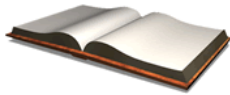
Key Points:

- Mark emphasized an eyewitness account and introduced Jesus as the mature Son of God, ignoring His genealogy and childhood.
- Mark's theme is that God has torn open heaven to come down and reveal Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. This theme is illustrated at three key points in his book: at His baptism, His transfiguration, and His death.

Topic 2: John's Introduction (Mk 1:2-8)



John the Baptist is the predicted forerunner who prepares the way for the Messiah. He was a unique man prepared by God to fill a unique role. Jesus testified that he was the prophesied Elijah who was to come (Mk 9:11-13).



Judge Daniel completed his investigation of Jesus' background; what he found concerned him. Initially, Daniel thought this assignment would be easy and he could quickly reject this new rabbi as a hoax like so many others. Now he knows that he cannot easily dismiss Jesus. After all, Jesus had the correct genealogy to be the true Messiah! The judge was alarmed at the possible implications of his findings, but also was very curious to discover who Jesus is.

The next step the judge took was to call in witnesses of what Jesus has said and done in Galilee. His peers considered him to be a good judge and the people trust his verdicts to be accurate and just. He would confirm his facts with two or three witnesses, as God's Law directs.

His first witness is a man named John. Judge Daniel believed John's testimony would be extremely valuable and questioned him on many important points. The findings intrigued the judge:

- John himself was not the Messiah. He claimed that he was only the forerunner and not the Messiah himself.
- John claimed that the Scriptures predicted his ministry as a forerunner or messenger and gave evidence from the writings of Moses, Isaiah and Malachi, among others, that this is so.
- John also claimed solidarity with Jesus and said they have the same message and further, he claimed that both receive their authority from the heavenly Father Himself!

QUESTION 7

Observing the Text

Read Mark 1:2-8. Record your observations in your Life Notebook. You may want to include your thoughts about one of the following:

- What are the descriptions of John?
- What do each of these descriptions mean?
- What specifically is John's role? What does he do?

Assignment

- Read the Old Testament Scriptures alluded to in the storybook, which are Deuteronomy 10:16; Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1.
- Read "John's Introduction."

John's Introduction

Mark 1:2-3 contains references to three Old Testament passages: Exodus 23:20, Malachi 3:1, and Isaiah 40:3. God's original message in Exodus was a promise for Israel that He would send His angel before them to guard them and bring them through the desert and into the Promised Land. The reference in Malachi refers to God sending Elijah before Jesus to clear the way through the desert before the Lord. In the Isaiah passage, God announces the ending of the Babylonian captivity and the long journey back from Babylon through the desert to the Promised Land. Mark seems to be drawing a parallel between Israel's wandering through the desert after the Babylonian captivity and the activity of John the Baptist. Mark's original audience would also have in mind God's leading them through the wilderness in the time of Moses.

"The way" or "the road" is a minor theme of Mark. When Jesus touched various people's lives, they often joined Him on the road as disciples. The disciples learned their lessons on the road or on the way to Jerusalem. The road or way for Jesus—and His true disciples—was the road to Jerusalem and the cross. Jesus knew what lay ahead for Him, but His disciples and followers did not and would not. They have, in a very real sense, given up their life for him. John's personal road paralleled what happened to Jesus in that an act of treachery took his life (Mk 6:14-29).

The Jews thought the Messiah would come to overthrow their Roman rulers and establish Israel as the head nation as the Old Testament had predicted (Deut 28:13). But the way John prepared first involved a call to repentance. The Jews understood that they had a covenant relationship with God, but they didn't understand they were out of fellowship with Him. Deuteronomy 28 not only outlined blessings for the nation for obedience, but also curses for their disobedience. This nation needed the call to fellowship to obtain the blessings God had promised to them.

This was why John was located in the wilderness. He ate its food and wore clothing suitable for living there. If he had sought fame or personal comfort instead, he would have lived in Jerusalem. But he was calling Israel out from their corrupt religious system. He called the people out from Jerusalem—out from their cursed state to receive blessing from God in the person of Jesus, the rightful Davidic King.

John fulfills the role of the Elijah who was predicted to come before the day of the Lord (Mal 4:5). He fulfills the role God gave him without seeking personal gain.

John's baptism was a call to God's covenant people who were out of fellowship with Him. This was similar to when Daniel offered his prayer seventy years after Israel was taken captive by the Babylonians (Dan 9:3-19). Daniel knew the Jews had broken God's covenant. He read in Jeremiah's prophecy that the captivity was to last seventy years, and that seventy years was soon to be fulfilled (Dan 9:2). So he prayed confessing the nation's sins and asked God to restore them to their land.

QUESTION 8

Which of the following are true of John? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. His baptism was of repentance.
- B. He pointed his disciples to Jesus.
- C. He made Jerusalem his headquarters.
- D. His destiny anticipated Jesus' destiny.
- E. His ministry increased after Jesus' baptism.

Key Points:

- John was Jesus' forerunner who testified of Jesus and humbly understood his role.
- John called the people to a baptism of repentance and prefigured the fate of Jesus.

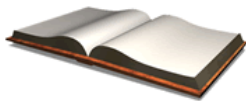
Topic 3: God's Introduction

John testified of the One to come after him, the One greater than he (Mk 1:7). John is privileged to baptize Jesus and at the baptism the Father tears open the heavens testifying to who His Son is! Mark also pictures the Spirit as a further witness descending on Jesus like a dove. The Spirit then drives Him out into the wilderness for His forty-day temptation by Satan.

Now, as quickly as John appeared on the scene, he withdraws and Jesus appears. John fulfilled his role as the forerunner by the time he is arrested. As if in a play, the spotlight now shifts from John to Jesus who is now "front and center." Though John tragically leaves the scene at the time of his arrest, he completed his role as the forerunner. The appropriate time has arrived for Jesus' ministry to begin.

With John removed, Jesus comes to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. Like John's message to the Jews in general, Jesus' is one of repentance and immediacy; in His person the promised Messiah has arrived!

His other call is to individuals He wants to follow Him as His disciples. In another scene from Mark's book, He calls them from their lives as fishermen to training them as "fishers of men" (Mk 1:17). How they respond to Jesus' call will help us understand how to respond to our call.



After receiving John's testimony, the judge slept fitfully. All he could think of were the answers John gave—along with more questions he wanted to ask him. If what John said was true, Jesus had many of the qualifications to be the Messiah. The next day he requested that John return so he could question him further.

John continued with even more incredible evidence—he claimed to have baptized Jesus! He also said he did not want to because he felt unworthy—but Jesus insisted. Seeing a possible vulnerability, the judge pursued this answer by asking, "Was He a sinner in need of baptism and repentance?"

But John said that Jesus only submitted to baptism to fulfill all righteousness. Outrageously, he also claimed that when Jesus was baptized, a voice spoke from heaven saying Jesus was His Son and the Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove!

At the end of his testimony, John reported that Jesus withstood Satan's temptation while alone in the wilderness for forty days, though he had not personally witnessed this. The judge thought about how

much food Jesus must have carried on his back to survive and the image seemed impossible. However, John claimed that Jesus lived those forty days totally depending on God and fasted the entire forty days. This image seemed even more impossible. The judge feared he would sleep fitfully again!

In His Baptism (Mk 1:9-11)

QUESTION 9

Observing the Text

Read Mark 1:9-11 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. You may want to include your thoughts on the following:

- What locations are mentioned in regard to Jesus and why?
- Why would Jesus be baptized?
- What witnesses to whom Jesus is?
- What were the major factors Mark mentions about Jesus' temptation and what do they mean?

Assignment

- Read Isaiah 64 on God's separation from Israel because of their sins.
- Read "In His Baptism."



In His Baptism

Along with the sinners responding to John's offer of baptism, Jesus appears also asking to be baptized by John. Immediately after the baptism of Jesus, the heavens split apart. This revelation fulfills the longing of the prophet Isaiah, who wishes God would "tear apart the sky and come down" (Isa 64:1). Isaiah's longing is present in the heart of humanity and this is the essence of Mark's message to us. This longing is perfectly fulfilled by Jesus coming to earth in the likeness of sinful flesh, in order to reveal the Father to us.

Also, immediately after the baptism of Jesus, he saw the Spirit descend on Jesus like a dove (Mk 1:10). This fulfills Isaiah 42:1, which predicted that God would put His Spirit on His Servant. The immediate effect of the Spirit coming on Jesus is shown in the temptation account that soon follows. He also heard a voice from heaven say, "You are My beloved Son, in You I take great delight" (Mk 1:11). So, on this occasion, both members of the Trinity witnessed to who Jesus was.

QUESTION 10

The fact that Jesus was baptized showed He believed He was tainted by sin. *True or False?*

QUESTION 11

The Old Testament prophesied that God would put His Spirit upon His Servant. *True or False?*

In His Temptation (Mk 1:12-13)

Assignment

- Read Mark 1:12-13.
- Read “In His Temptation.”

In His Temptation

After His baptism, the Spirit led Jesus out in the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for forty days. (The Greek word *ekballo* means to impel or lead. In this case, most theologians agree that “led” is the most accurate translation.) The Spirit led Jesus to initiate the temptation and face it head on instead of waiting for Satan to come to Him whenever he felt like it.

The temptation experience was unpleasant for Him, while He was in the flesh, just as it is for us. However, the ultimate outcome, like the resurrection after the Passion, was never in doubt. His successful endurance of these temptations led to a decisive victory over Satan. This victory had lasting results through the rest of Jesus’ ministry.

Jesus endures these temptations apart from human company. His new companions are the wild beasts of the wilderness. These wild beasts illustrate the presence of spiritual dangers. The wilderness also illustrated the same point as it was traditionally and symbolically a home for evil powers. In the Old Testament, wild beasts were present and dangerous in the Promised Land when Israel disobeyed, but God promised to eliminate them for His people when they obeyed Him (Lev 26:6; 26:22).

Mark does not go into the detail, as Matthew and Luke do, of Jesus’ temptation story. He may have been showing the ongoing cosmic conflict with Satan and his forces, implying that Jesus’ later victories were based on this initial binding of Satan (Mk 3:27). Because He bound the strong man, He was also able to continue plundering Satan’s kingdom by casting out his demon servants.

The beginning of Jesus’ ministry starts when John the Baptist is imprisoned (Mk 1:14). The passive voice here emphasizes that God in His sovereignty allowed these events to happen (Mk 9:31; 14:10). This fulfills John 3:30, when John the Baptist says that Jesus must increase while he must decrease.

His temptation for forty days brings a question to mind: What does forty days signify in Scripture?

Most uses of forty have to do with judgment, either positive or negative. It also has the idea of fulfillment or completeness. A couple of the times, those with Elijah and with the supply of manna for Israel, it shows the ability of God to supply our sustenance (Ex 16:35; 1 Kgs 19:8). Primarily, the forty days of temptation brings to mind the forty years that Israel wandered in the wilderness and again identified Him as the Savior of the nation.

QUESTION 12

Which Old Testament person depended on God for forty days and nights on his journey to Horeb?

- A. Elijah
- B. Elisha
- C. Gideon
- D. Moses

Key Points:

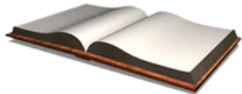
- Though pure Himself, Jesus submitted to baptism to identify with sinful man.

- The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that God would put His Spirit on His Servant (Isa 42:1).
- The fact that Mark says the Spirit drove Jesus out to face temptation likely shows His reluctance to face Satan's temptations.
- In a parallel with Jesus' forty day temptation in the wilderness, Elijah also depended on God in the wilderness for his forty day journey to Horeb (1 Kgs 19:7-8).

Topic 4: Jesus' Message

Jesus is now ready to reveal Himself to the Jews. He was predicted by the Old Testament, identified by the forerunner, and has suffered temptation. For forty days Jesus fasted and depended fully on God.

This topic will cover Jesus giving His message and calling His followers. As a natural part of their following, He begins discipling them, which entails completely breaking down their previous understandings of how to live a life pleasing to God. You will see their struggle with this as they now accompany Him wherever He goes.



Judge Daniel received sad news the next morning from one of the guards; John was in prison. He had come to respect the man that gave such a vivid witness of Jesus. He wondered if this news—this persecution—would keep Jesus from preaching. The judge was astonished when a new witness told him of Jesus' next teaching; John's imprisonment had not stopped Jesus. Witnesses reported that Jesus had said, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel!" The judge wondered how this could be possible. Jesus should fear Herod's wrath. Judge Daniel wished that Jesus had waited for a few days before He preached again.

The judge knew many in Israel were expecting the imminent arrival of the long promised Kingdom of David, to be ruled by one of David's ancestors. Was this the same kingdom Jesus spoke of?

The next witnesses Daniel called were a couple of families of fishermen from Galilee. One man was named Zebedee and another was a woman, the mother of Simon and Andrew—followers of Jesus. Zebedee had come in his fisherman's clothes. "He must have had a successful night of fishing" Judge Daniel thought as the scent of fish filled the room upon Zebedee's entrance. As they approached, the judge considered the questions he wanted to ask them. He needed to make sure their sons had left to follow Jesus. He couldn't imagine the young men deserting their families and giving up their lucrative careers just to follow this rabbi's call. The witnesses readily testified to its truth. Zebedee said he still hoped his sons would someday, as Jewish sons traditionally did, accept the family business. After all, he had spent a lot of time building up the business and it was now very lucrative. Simon and Andrew's mother wasn't feeling well, so he kept her time of questioning short. She testified that her sons were considered two of the best fisherman and sea men around Galilee! She had discouraged them from leaving. Simon even had a wife to support.

The judge wondered how many others followed. Personally, he wished he could find someone worth following like that. He thought to himself, "Are these men fools or am I missing something?"

The Gospel of the Kingdom (Mk 1:14-15)

QUESTION 13

Observing the Text

Read Mark 1:14-20. Record your observations in your Life Notebook. You may want to include your thoughts about the following:

- What was Jesus' message when He began to preach? Was it the same as John's? Is it the same as ours today?
- How long did it take for the disciples to decide to follow Jesus' call? Did they leave their father's business at a disadvantage?
- Did they bring any supplies with them?

Assignment

- Read the Old Testament passages alluded to in the previous storybook: 2 Samuel 7:14-16 and Isaiah 9:7.
- Read "The Gospel of the Kingdom."

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Jesus now heads north from the area of His baptism and temptation and stops along the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus' message announced that the kingdom of God was near and all people should repent and believe (Mk 1:15).

What did Jesus' message mean to the Jews? The gospel at this time for the Jews was the announcement of the promised appearing of the Davidic, earthly, kingdom in fulfillment of God's promises to them. This was a time for a national decision! As a covenant nation, they were to repent of their sin and believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Savior (Isa 64).

QUESTION 14

When Jesus began preaching, He preached the same message as John the Baptist. *True or False?*

The Call of the Disciples (Mk 1:16-20)

Assignment

- Read Mark 1:16-20.
- Read "The Call of the Disciples."

The Call of the Disciples

The Sea of Galilee is really a fresh water lake about seven miles wide and thirteen miles long lying almost one quarter kilometer below sea level. In Jesus' time it had a thriving fishing community on its shores.

As Jesus walks along the Sea of Galilee, He is not just happening to come upon random men and calling them as His disciples. Jesus purposely seeks these men at this time. Three of them, Peter, James and John, became the inner circle of three disciples who accompanied Jesus at special times. They were also called to be with Him as witnesses at Jairus' daughter's resurrection, at the

transfiguration, and during His time in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33).

Simon and Andrew are first called to leave their fishing nets to become fishers of men. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, are in the same boat and are also called to leave their father and follow Jesus (Mk 1:16-20). The call to follow Him was understood as a call to discipleship. They were called from their work and family to fully follow Jesus wherever He led.

How did these men make such a quick decision to be Jesus' disciple? They did not pray about it and did not even ask advice from others. They did not even think about it; they just followed! These are all things we usually—and wisely—do before making major decisions in our life. But, with the person of Jesus there with them, there was no need for the usual seeking of God's will. He was personally directing them to follow Him.

Discipleship is an important topic in Mark's gospel. This first mention sets a precedent for the teaching that follows on this subject. We need to personally evaluate Jesus' call for our own lives. Can we answer this call and trust Him with our lives? If not, who and what can we trust our lives to? Are the pursuits that keep us from Him ultimately worth it? Remember, this is not a call of salvation from the penalty for sin, for there is no cost associated with that. But this call is to how we will live our lives and what our reward will be in eternity (Mk 8:34-38). If we cling to earthly things now, we lose them in eternity. If we give them up for Him, we build up treasure in heaven to enjoy eternally.

QUESTION 15

When Jesus called Andrew, Peter, James, and John they properly asked leave of their families to go with Jesus. *True or False?*

Key Points:

- When Jesus began preaching He preached the same message as John the Baptist.
- Jesus called the first disciples who responded and followed Him, though they did not yet fully understand who He was or what His mission was.

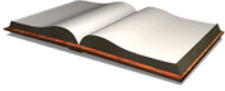
Topic 5: Divine Authority

Jesus now first enters a synagogue to teach. Paul would later follow this same pattern when he entered a new city on his missionary journeys (Acts 13:14; 14:1).

The people in this synagogue noticed how Jesus taught differently than the teachers of the Law. Unexpectedly, within the Jewish synagogue, the cosmic battle resumes when Jesus encounters an unclean spirit. Symbolically, his presence speaks poorly of the spiritual state of the Jewish nation during Jesus' time. How will this spirit respond to Jesus' authority?

After Jesus cures Peter's mother-in-law, Mark tells how the people of the area gathered at the door of her house while Jesus ministered to them. There was such a crowd that He arose before sunrise to seek solitude. This is one of only three times in Mark that Jesus seeks solitude to pray.

Jesus continues showing His authority over what were difficult diseases to cure. Leprosy was a uniquely horrible disease because of its physical, spiritual, and social consequences. Spiritually, the person was considered unclean and must avoid any contact with others. That led to social isolation, making it even more unpleasant for those suffering the physical and spiritual ravages of this hopeless disease.



In order to prove or accept what the witnesses had said about Jesus, Judge Daniel needed to know if Jesus could perform miraculous acts. The prophecy of the true Messiah included miracles. None of the witnesses had said anything about a miracle. However, he soon heard witnesses testify that they witnessed an exorcism—in a synagogue. Judge Daniel wondered how a demon could have been in the synagogue and had a hard time believing this testimony could be true.

The judge leaned forward in his seat anxiously awaiting their testimony. He called in his witnesses, who were actually a small crowd of people from Capernaum. Every one of them insisted the story of the demon in the synagogue was true, but the details they offered were shocking. They insisted the unclean spirit spoke words saying that Jesus was “the Holy One of God!” The judge was confused. He asked if the crowd thought Jesus’ power came from evil or if the unclean spirit spoke the truth. However, their answers showed that none of them was sure. One man testified saying, “I know it sounds incredible, but the demon obeyed Jesus’ command and departed.” The rest of the crowd agreed with him.

Though intriguing, the judge felt that the evidence of the exorcism of the demon raised as many issues as it answered. So he was particularly interested in hearing new evidence. The witnesses were coming to testify about Jesus’ healing a fever. Judge Daniel thought it was as unlikely as the story of the demon in the synagogue. Fevers came from God because they afflict only those who disobey the covenant. Would God work against Himself and cure what He Himself cursed in the first place? That did not make sense to Judge Daniel, but what were the other possibilities? Jesus empowered by evil? But he knew that Satan always tried to afflict God’s people—the Jews. He thought it was unlikely that he would relieve their ills now.

The witnesses the judge called insisted that Jesus healed a woman’s fever. Moreover they said she instantly arose and started serving the multitude at her house. How strange for her to recover instantly! The woman healed was the same woman whose sons, Simon and Andrew, had left to follow Jesus. The good judge had already heard her testimony and she had returned to her home. How he wished he had known earlier that day so he could have asked her about this, for Daniel knew only God could heal a fever, so this was worth investigating.

The next morning when Judge Daniel woke up, he felt apprehensive as he hurried through his routine morning chores. He could not concentrate on the chores because he was thinking about the news he heard. A man yesterday had told him a known leper was reportedly cleansed! He knew the Law and knew how unusual this would be if this report was true.

In all of the Scriptures Judge Daniel could remember only two lepers who had been healed: Miriam and Naaman. In both of those cases God alone had done the healing. Judge Daniel decided he would have to see it for himself in order to believe it.

The first witness arrived to give his testimony. The witness was the priest to whom the healed leper should have reported. Judge Daniel asked, “What is your verdict about this healing?” The judge was surprised by the priest’s response, “The leper was supposed to come to me, but he did not come. Many people told me there was a healed leper coming to me to verify a healing, but I have yet to see him.” He continued, “I doubt the healing took place as detailed. If it had, the leper would surely have come to me, as that is the procedure commanded by Moses.” “What is your opinion then of the supposed healer, Jesus?” the judge asked. The priest answered, “I doubt he is a true prophet of God. After all, a true prophet would not heal someone disobedient to the Law, would he? Everyone knows only God can heal a leper.”

As the priest was leaving, the supposed leper arrived. When they passed each other, the judge noticed they exchanged glances and the priest seemed to suddenly pick up his pace. This new witness wasted no time testifying saying, “I’m cured. Examine me yourself!” The judge had to agree that this man before him showed no signs of leprosy. He had already heard testimony from the man’s hometown that he was a leper. The judge skeptically asked, “If you were healed as you say, why did you not go directly to the priest as required by law?” The leper explained that he was so excited about his cure that he had to tell everybody that Jesus cured him. Judge Daniel asked the man if it seemed Jesus was trying to attract followers by healing people. The man slowly admitted that Jesus asked him not tell anyone about his healing and to show only the priest. He did not think that Jesus was very pleased by his sharing about this miracle. Why would Jesus heal in secret? The judge wished he could find an answer to that question. What confused him was that previous messianic imposters had never been secretive.



Authority over Demons (Mk 1:21-28)

QUESTION 16

Observing the Text

Read Mark 1:20-45 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. You may want to include your thoughts about the following:

- Why was there a demon in a synagogue in Israel?
- What were the interactions between Jesus and the demon?
- What words did Jesus use in casting out the demon?
- Who was the person Jesus healed of a fever?
- What is surprising about this person’s recovery?
- What is the reaction of the people in the town to Jesus’ healing?
- What is Jesus’ reaction to the people?
- Why did Jesus react this way?
- What instructions did Jesus give the leper and why?

Assignment

- Read the Old Testament passages alluded to in the previous storybook: Deuteronomy 28:22 and Leviticus 14:1-7.
- Read “Authority over Demons.”

Authority over Demons

Jesus’ new location is Capernaum. On the Sabbath, He went to the synagogue to teach the people. Paul did the same, following Jesus’ established example, teaching the Jews in the synagogue first when entering a new city. It was only after the Jews rejected Paul’s message that he went elsewhere within that city to teach the Gentiles.

The Jews in the synagogues are amazed by Jesus’ teaching. “Amazed” is the same Greek word used in Mark 6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18 that means astonished, with actual fear and alarm present. They

were alarmed because they realized Jesus' supernatural quality. Their reaction witnesses to the person of Jesus Christ. This subconscious reaction is an important witness to Jesus' person throughout Mark's book.

The experts in the law were legal specialists who had taken upon themselves the job of officially interpreting the Law. Notice that Jesus taught with authority while the scribes looked to the writings of past teachers as the basis for their interpretation.

Jesus' teaching with His own authority causes problems with the Jewish leaders. They had no authority of their own and misused the authority of the Scriptures to enslave the Jewish people to their interpretations. The Jewish leaders at that time had their own recognized way of training rabbis and Jesus had not gone through their training.

What they detected from His teaching, though they did not know it, was the presence of deity. As Jesus taught, an unclean spirit interrupted His teaching. The spirit recognized Jesus and was troubled by His presence. His main concern was with how Jesus' purpose affected him personally.

To call a demon an unclean spirit was common to Jews. The religious Jews were very concerned about ceremonial cleanness and to them their ability to stay clean established their righteousness. They recognized how sin affected a person; it made them unclean. Since a demon is a very personal presence of sin, the Jews called these spirits unclean.

What do the spirit's statements mean?

- "Leave us alone" shows that Jesus threatened them and their purposes. Unlike the Jews Jesus taught, this demon knew the source of Jesus' authority.
- They called Him "the Holy One of God!" (Mk 1:24). Jesus' identity as the Messiah is hidden from the Jews through most of Mark. Some Christians call this hidden identity the "messianic secret." This theme continues here with the demon being the second to recognize Jesus as the Son of God and testify to that truth; John the Baptist was the first to do this.

Some students of Mark believe that there was another type of spiritual battle going on here between Jesus and the demon. They suggest that the spirit was trying to gain control over Jesus by stating His secret name. But instead, Jesus gained the upper hand in this conflict by commanding them to silence. This forces the demons to submit to His command.

People also recognized Jesus' unique authority over the unclean spirits and spread the news about Him. Again they—though subconsciously—detected the presence of deity, but were not aware of what that presence was. Mark gives two reasons for their amazement: (1) They recognized that He taught with authority and (2) that the unclean spirits obeyed Him (Mk 1:27). Remember, the Jews seek and are impressed by signs. What He taught and what He did were unique, but both were just what came naturally for One whose existence was from everlasting (Ps 90:2).

What He did before those people in the synagogue deserved their investigation to find out who this One truly was. What He did before them also deserves our investigation and proper personal response. It should change our lives!

QUESTION 17

Jesus taught in such a way that demonstrated His true self to the Jews. *True or False?*

QUESTION 18

According to the lesson, what are the signs of the deficient spiritual state of the Jews? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The presence of demons in the synagogue
- B. Allowing visitors to teach in the synagogue
- C. No reading of Scripture in the synagogue
- D. Insufficient personal response to the Messiah



Authority over Fever (Mk 1:29-34)

Assignment

- Read Mark 1:29-34.
- Read “Authority over a Fever.”

Authority over a Fever

Jesus left the synagogue and went to the house of Simon and Andrew along with the other two members of the inner circle, James and John (Mk 1:29). Simon’s mother-in-law was there laying sick with a fever. Spiritually, a fever had significance for the Jews because, according to Leviticus 26:16 and Deuteronomy 28:22, a fever was a curse sent by God to violators of the covenant. Rabbis therefore thought fevers could be cured only by Him.

Jesus simply took her by the hand and raised her up. After this, she immediately began waiting on them. In this usage “waiting on them” means she kept on waiting on people. This showed her complete recovery from her illness. Jesus did not cure her as a human doctor might where a period of recovery and a regaining of strength are needed. The cure was supernatural.

QUESTION 19

Who best understands Jesus’ mission at this time?

- A. The Jewish leaders
- B. Those who were healed
- C. The disciples
- D. The demons

Interrupted Prayer (Mk 1:35-39)

Assignment

- Read Mark 1:35-39.
- Read “Jesus’ Prayer Interrupted.”

Jesus’ Prayer Interrupted

The few times that Mark tells us about Jesus praying, He always goes out into the wilderness. Mark depicts Jesus praying only three times: here; after feeding the five thousand; and in Gethsemane (Mk 6:46; 14:32-42). These were critical times in His ministry.

Again Jesus’ disciples, through Peter, misunderstand His mission. They see the feeding of the five thousand as an opportunity for Him to increase His popularity and they encourage Him to do so.

Peter seeks him out in Mark 1:36-37 to bring Jesus back from his isolation to tell Him He's missing out on opportunities to expand His influence. But His mission was to go to other towns throughout Galilee preaching and casting out demons (Mk 1:38-39). He followed the Father's will and Jesus knew that would end with Him hanging on a cross.

The word about Jesus spread quickly. Once the Sabbath was over, after sundown, they kept on bringing Him all the ill and demon possessed. Eventually it seemed like the whole city gathered outside their door. Jesus showed authority over all illnesses and all demon possession, not just isolated cases. He brought the predicted kingdom conditions, adding another witness to those already given as to who He is (Isa 35:5).

Jesus' popularity with the multitudes peaks early in Mark. However, His popularity does not mean that the masses understand Him or His mission. But, as long as He heals their diseases, meets their physical needs, and teaches them, He is popular. They also look for Him as an earthly king bringing deliverance from Rome. They accept Him when He benefits them physically and when He fits their idea of the Messiah.

We can make the same mistake. Do we learn what God's program is or do we try to advance our own interests? Do we relate to Him in the good times but desert Him when times get difficult? Do we receive Him and His finished work or do we try to add to it with fleshly works of our own? Job is an example for us of a man who stayed true to God even though he lost all his health and earthly possessions.

QUESTION 20

Which of the following is true of Jesus in Mark 1:35-39?

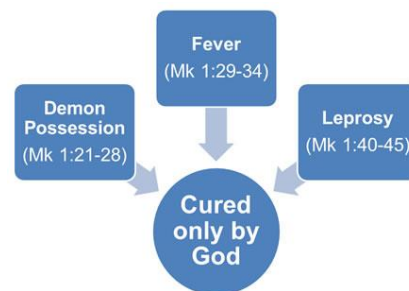
- A. He has trouble finding enough people to follow Him.
- B. His disciples harm His mission.
- C. He is chased out of town by an angry mob.
- D. He seeks solitude and prayer.

Note: Peter's response is the first response that shows a misunderstanding of Jesus' actions. But throughout this gospel, Mark shows that Jesus is misunderstood more than He is understood. These lessons of misunderstanding are important for us because they often show how modern day believers misunderstand the church's mission.

Authority Over Leprosy (Mk 1:40-45)

Assignment

- Read Mark 1:40-45.
- Read Numbers 12 on Miriam's leprosy and 2 Kings 5 on Naaman's leprosy.
- Read "Authority over Leprosy."



Authority over Leprosy

Jesus now shows His authority over the uniquely feared disease of leprosy. According to Mark, a key feature of this cure was in what motivated Jesus to cure the leper. Of first importance was His willingness to cure the man and the second was His compassionate response. This same compassion caused Jesus to leave His eternal glory and come to earth, in a body of flesh, to save us by dying on a cross. Mark presents this compassion as even overshadowing the actual unprecedented miracle of

healing the leper!

It was unusual and quite daring for a leper to approach someone as this man did. Besides suffering from the physical disease, a leper was considered unclean and was a social outcast. All three of these conditions help leprosy vividly illustrate and typify our state of sin.

Leviticus 13–14 contains the commands for the religious cleansing of lepers. There are only two times in the Old Testament where leprosy was cured. The first time was Miriam, as recorded in Numbers 12, and the second was Naaman in 2 Kings 5. The priests and the Bible record both showed leprosy was humanly incurable. Since people believed the disease and the religious uncleanness would spread by touch, they were terrified of contact with a leper.

But Jesus willingly touched and cured this leper. He said He was willing and reached out His hand and the leper was healed. Also, Jesus neither caught the disease nor became unclean. This testifies to the unsurpassed purity that He possesses as the Son of God.

Jesus sent the former leper away with a stern warning. He told him to say nothing to anyone, but to go directly to the priest and fulfill the Law (Lev 13–14). This action was meant to validate the cure. They would understand how unusual this cure was and that this is another witness to Jesus. If their heart response was right, they would investigate this evidence further and hopefully turn to Him. Jesus, before going to the cross, was also concerned about keeping and fulfilling the Law. But the Law had no power to cure anyone or bring spiritual life.

So, why was the man sternly warned against witnessing to others? Jesus would reveal His messiahship in His own time and way. He also wanted to teach the people not to come to Him for the wrong reasons.

So, how did the man's disobedience affect Jesus? He spread the news and Jesus could not enter a city but remained in unpopulated areas (Mk 1:45). So Jesus' ministry was again hindered by a well-intentioned but disobedient ally. Peter took the same attitude earlier when he wanted Jesus to seek popularity. It is critical in truly serving Jesus to understand His mission and obey Him. Good intentions alone can lead us astray and hinder His mission.

QUESTION 21

Jesus was motivated by _____ to heal the leper.

QUESTION 22

Match the names of the lepers on the left with the description of them on the right.

<i>Lepers</i>	<i>Description</i>
Naaman	Punished with leprosy for disobeying God
Miriam	Healed in the Jordan River
Every Leper	Required to visit the priest
Cured Leper	Unclean
Ceremonial Leper	Social outcast

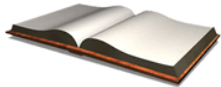
QUESTION 23

From the story of the leper in Mark 1:40-45, how was the leper used to show the level of understanding the people had about Jesus?

Key Points:

- Jesus' teaching was recognized as supernatural even at a spiritual or subconscious level and this is an important witness to who He is.
- Demons are present—ominously for Israel even within their synagogues—to oppose Jesus' ministry.
- Jesus' power is greater than demons' and they are reluctant witnesses of and reluctantly subject to Him.
- Jesus cured people of diseases that in His time were universally recognized as cured only by God, in this case fever and leprosy.
- Jesus' greatest temptation in His earthly ministry is to receive the kingdom and glory apart from the cross.
- Jesus' motivation for healing is His compassion—revealing the heart of God—to the extent that the miracle of healing itself is overshadowed by it.
- The leper's disobedience to Jesus' warning to not say anything to anyone hindered Jesus' mission by drawing crowds to Him for the wrong reason: physical healing alone.

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing



Judge Daniel sent his evidence to the Sanhedrin. The judge reviewed the reports from each witness to compare them. He sighed heavily, knowing the amount of questioning and ridicule he would be subject to within the chambers of the Sanhedrin. The members of the Sanhedrin would be displeased that he did not dismiss Jesus as the possible Messiah.

Though he had heard extraordinary things about Jesus, Judge Daniel knew he had to uphold the law. Personally, he was not ready to commit his life to Jesus as His followers had. He, like all good Jews, longed for the Messiah. But this man showed no inclination to deliver his fellow Jews from Roman domination. That is what most Jewish leaders thought was the first and primary roles of the Messiah. Besides that, he was among the socially elite and wiser than eye witnesses, who were mostly peasants. He thought, "If Jesus were truly the Messiah, He would have come to the Jewish leaders first and not to these lost sheep." Jesus would not expect a judge to lower himself to peasant level in order to follow Him, would He? After all, that is why he had personally not responded to John's call to baptism in the wilderness, away from the spiritual leaders in Jerusalem. Well, besides the fact it would have ruined his spiritual leadership career, for the other leaders would have disowned him. In his spirit, he felt that the sooner he could rid himself of Jesus and pass His case on to someone else, the better. Though his conscience troubled him, he had determined his course of action.

Review: Witnesses to Jesus as God's Son in Mark 1

- The statement of the author (Mk 1:1).
- The witness of the forerunner as predicted (Mk 1:2-8).
- The witness at Jesus' baptism: of John, the Father from heaven, and the Holy Spirit (Mk 1:9-11). His baptism also fulfilled a longing of Isaiah (Isa 64:1).
- The witness of Jesus' temptation for forty days (Mk 1:12-13).

- The witness of His message of the kingdom (Mk 1:14-15).
- The witness of His call of discipleship (Mk 1:16-20).
- The witness of the unclean spirits through their testimony, witness that could be read many ways (Mk 1:23-26, 34).
- The witness of His teaching with authority (Mk 1:22, 27).
- The witness of His curing a fever and leprosy, though those healed sometimes disobeyed the law (Mk 1:30-31, 40-44).
- The witness of a multitude cured of various diseases and demon possession (Mk 1:34).
- The subconscious witness of amazement at the teaching, spiritual power, and the compassionate healing ministry of Jesus.

QUESTION 24

When Jesus healed people or cast out demons the people usually reacted in amazement. The word “amazement” is used when the people recognized the supernatural nature of Jesus’ works. Often this recognition was on a subconscious level. This reaction is an important witness to whom Jesus is. Write down a time in your life when you have responded to something on a subconscious level and explain how that has affected you. Then give your opinion about how important this type of witness is.

As you study through this course, you will be asked to respond to questions similar to the following at the end of each lesson. These two questions are designed to deepen your understanding of the nature and character of Jesus, to build your understanding of how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers, and to challenge you to consider specific applications for your own ministry.

You may want to create two separate sections in your Life Notebook for your responses to these questions. Under each section write your responses from each lesson. This will allow you to easily reflect on these important truths from the life of Jesus and your personal response to them.

QUESTION 25

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Record one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 26

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Record one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 1 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following is one of the three major events that Mark uses to illustrate God breaking through the barriers to reveal Himself to mankind?

- A. His baptism
- B. His exorcisms
- C. His healings
- D. His resurrection

QUESTION 2

John the Baptist made Jerusalem his headquarters. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

In His baptism, Jesus identified with sinful man. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

Mark pictures Jesus as ready and willing to face Satan's temptations in the wilderness. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

When Jesus started preaching in Mark 1:14-15, His message was different than that of John the Baptist. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

The Jews in the synagogue recognized Jesus' teaching as supernatural. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

Which of the following is **not** true about a fever?

- A. A fever was seen as a curse from God.
- B. A fever victim recovered quickly.
- C. A fever victim could be cured only by God.
- D. A fever was curse upon covenant breakers.

QUESTION 8

Who best understood Jesus' mission in Mark 1?

- A. The demons
- B. The disciples
- C. The Jewish leaders
- D. Those who were healed

QUESTION 9

The most difficult temptation Jesus faced was to receive His kingdom apart from the cross. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

According to Mark 1:40-45, what motivated Jesus to heal the leper?

- A. Compassion
- B. Grace
- C. Holiness
- D. Love

Lesson 1 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Section Titles</i>
Mark 1:1	Beginning of the Gospel
Mark 1:2-8	Witness of the Forerunner
Mark 1:9-13	Witness of Baptism and Temptation
Mark 1:14-20	Jesus' Message and Call

QUESTION 3

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Section Titles</i>
Mark 1:21-28	Jesus' Exorcism
Mark 1:29-31	A Fever Cured
Mark 1:32-39	Summary of Jesus' Authority
Mark 1:40-45	A Leper Cured

QUESTION 4

C. An eyewitness account

QUESTION 5

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Who Testifies that He is the Son of God</i>
Mark 3:11	Demon
Mark 9:7	Father
Mark 13:32	Jesus
Mark 14:61	Jesus before the High Priest
Mark 15:39	Roman centurion

QUESTION 6: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Mark pictures God tearing open the fabric of the heavens at the beginning, middle and end of his gospel to reveal Jesus as the Son of God. He does this at His baptism, the transfiguration, and at His death when the temple curtain is torn.

QUESTION 7: *Your answer*

QUESTION 8

- A. His baptism was of repentance.
- B. He pointed his disciples to Jesus.
- D. His destiny anticipated Jesus' destiny.

[Humble and aware of his role, he knew he must decrease while Jesus' role increased. He had no personal ambition beyond the role God had for him. This provides an excellent model for us to follow.]

QUESTION 9: *Your answer*

QUESTION 10: False [Though Jesus was pure Himself, He fully identified with sinful man in His baptism. He identified in other ways with sinful humanity also, such as submitting to the rite of circumcision. But He was truly innocent and pure and submitted only to identify fully with the ones He would save by His substitutionary death.]

QUESTION 11: True [The Spirit fulfills Isaiah 42:1 that predicted that God would put His Spirit on His Servant.]

QUESTION 12

- A. Elijah [The conclusion is that Elijah was sustained on his journey through the desert by dependence on God in the same way that Jesus was.]

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

QUESTION 14: True [Jesus' message was that "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel" (Mk 1:15). John the Baptist had appeared as the forerunner announcing Jesus as the Messiah to the nation. With Jesus baptized and His temptation challenges now overcome, the kingdom is now at hand for Israel.]

QUESTION 15: False [They did not pray about it or even ask advice from others. They did not even think about it! They just followed. These are all things we usually—and wisely—do before making major decisions in our life. But, with the person of Jesus there with them, there was no need for the usual seeking of God’s will. He was personally directing them to follow Him.]

QUESTION 16: *Your answer*

QUESTION 17: True [The people He taught reacted almost subconsciously to His teaching, understanding its supernatural nature. This man spoke with the same authority as the God of the Old Testament!]

QUESTION 18

- A. The presence of demons in the synagogue
- D. Insufficient personal response to the Messiah

[Jesus was not coming to a people ready to receive His kingdom. Demonic oppression and spiritual sluggishness were the rule.]

QUESTION 19

- D. The demons [Mark often writes with irony and at this time, the demons best understood who Jesus was and His mission. The demons always announced loudly that Jesus was the Son of God on a mission to destroy them.]

QUESTION 20

- D. He seeks solitude and prayer. [This fact witnesses to His true humanity. He was flesh and blood as we are and tempted in the same ways.]

QUESTION 21: Compassion [This shows God’s heart for us and how He feels about our spiritual need. This same compassion caused Jesus to leave His eternal glory and come to earth, in a body of flesh, to save us by dying on a cross.]

QUESTION 22

<i>Lepers</i>	<i>Description</i>
Naaman	Healed in the Jordan River
Miriam	Punished with leprosy for disobeying God
Every Leper	Social outcast
Cured Leper	Required to visit the priest
Ceremonial Leper	Unclean

QUESTION 23: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Mark used the leper to show how his disobedience hindered Jesus’ true mission, which was neither one of purely physical comfort and relief nor one of popularity for Himself.

QUESTION 24: *Your answer*

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

QUESTION 26: *Your answer*

Lesson 1 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

A. His baptism

QUESTION 2: False

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7

B. A fever victim recovered quickly.

QUESTION 8

A. The demons

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10

A. Compassion

Lesson 2: Rejected by the Jewish Leaders (Mk 2:1–3:35)

Lesson Introduction

In Mark 2, Jesus continues ministering to others, functioning as the Great Physician. People anxiously approach Him, even tearing open the roof of a house to lower a patient before Him (Mk 2:4). Dramatically, Mark reverses the figure he's already established in his book: at Jesus' baptism God split open the sky to come down to reveal Himself to man (Mk 1:10). But now, in response to the revelation of God in Jesus, these men split open the roof of a house to get to God.

Jesus heals in the physical dimension but also in the unseen spiritual dimension by forgiving men's sins (Mk 2:5). He gives proof of this forgiveness when this formerly paralyzed man stands, takes up his stretcher, and walks out before all the witnesses (Mk 2:12). After providing this healing for a sinner, He calls the people there to a meal of celebration (Mk 2:15; 2:19).

Mark also pictures Jesus as the new David (Mk 2:23). Like David, Jesus provides culturally forbidden sustenance for His followers who serve Him on His mission (1 Sam 21:1-8; Mk 2:26). In Jesus' case, the forbiddance comes from providing good things on the Sabbath day. As Sabbath controversies continue, Jesus tells His accusers He's aware they are plotting His death, shockingly on the Sabbath (Mk 3:4, 6). Just as David's reign left Solomon to rule over the largest geographical area of any of Israel's kings, Mark describes Jesus' influence over the same expansive areas (1 Kgs 4:21; Mk 3:7-8).

Mark compares Jesus to Moses (Mk 3:13) as He climbed up a mountain and called His followers to Him as Moses did while getting the Law at Sinai and receiving the old covenant (Ex 18:25-26; 24).

But opposition grows from those outside His spiritual family. Jesus' earthly family comes to take Him while the religious leaders say He gets His authority from Beelzebul, the prince of demons (Mk 3:20-35). But Jesus warns them about their conclusion: He tells them their logic is faulty and their conclusion is an unforgivable sin.



Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Authority to Forgive Sins

Forgiveness Announced (Mk 2:1-5)

Forgiveness Proven (Mk 2:6-12)

Time Spent with Sinners (Mk 2:13-17)

Topic 2: Authority as the Bridegroom (Mk 2:18-22)

Topic 3: Lord of the Sabbath

The Question: Is It Lawful to Heal? ((Mk 2:23-28)

The Answer: It Is Lawful to Heal (Mk 3:1-6)

Topic 4: Who is Jesus Like?

He is like David (Mk 3:7-12)

He is like Moses (Mk 3:13-19)

Topic 5: Who is Jesus?

He is Satan's Servant (Mk 3:22-30)

He is Crazy (Mk 3:20-21; 31-35)

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing



Topic 1 shows why the Jewish leadership began opposing Jesus. He not only healed a paralytic, but healed the root cause of the man's problem by pronouncing his sins forgiven. The Jewish leadership correctly recognized this as a privilege reserved for God. To their dismay, He now begins to spend time with sinners.

Topic 2 discusses Jesus' authority as the Bridegroom and how it applies to His followers. Because Jesus is present with them, the disciples live differently than those under the Law, which was given to point them to Jesus. Jesus shows He fulfills the Law fully and is not a slave to it, but Lord over it.

Topic 3 continues showing Jesus' authority over the Sabbath. The main purpose in observing the Sabbath is to do good and not evil. But because Jesus does not follow the leader's rules on the Sabbath, their opposition to Him grows. In fact, they are plotting Jesus' murder.

Topic 4 summarizes Jesus' authority so far: He has power over Satan and his realm of disease and demon possession. As the new David and Moses, Jesus rules His realm and chooses His disciples, sending them out with authority.

Topic 5 shows that opposition to Jesus has reached a critical peak and it is filled with irony. Two negative opinions about Jesus are presented.

- Opinion 1: The scribes accuse Him of getting His authority from Satan.
- Opinion 2: Even Jesus' own family thinks He is crazy and they come to seize Him by force, if necessary.

Summary: Mark shows that the authority of Jesus is the same as God's, but the main opposition changes from the spiritual realm of demons to the human realm of the Jewish religious leaders. The opposition to Him centers on His claim to forgive sins, His interpretation of the Law, and on how to observe the Sabbath. That opposition climaxes as Jesus is accused of having Satan's authority while Jesus warns them of an unforgivable sin.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Discuss the problem the religious leaders had with Jesus forgiving people's sins

- Use Jesus' responses to opposition as an example to follow when you face opposition
- Explain why Jesus and His followers were not subject to the same rules as other Jewish groups at the time

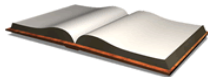
Topic 1: Authority to Forgive Sins

Obstacles to Jesus' Ministry		
Demonic forces (Mk 1:23-24)	Popularity (Mk 1:37-38)	Jewish leaders (Mk 2:6-7)

The tone of Jesus' public ministry has changed. The initial reaction of the multitudes to His ministry, whether it was teaching or miracles, was amazement. They recognized that He taught with authority, but they did not understand where it came from.

So far in Mark opposition to Jesus' ministry has come from the demonic realm; His fellow Jews have not opposed Him. While both demonic obstacles continue, the Jewish leaders notice His ministry and see that it challenges theirs. They control religious thought and duty in Israel and this man comes with a new, unknown authority. If He is allowed to continue with His life-changing ministry, what will happen to their precious system?

Forgiveness Announced (Mk 2:1-5)



The Jewish leaders in the Sanhedrin had anxiously awaited their fellow judge's report about this new religious teacher, Jesus. The reports about His activities had become legendary and the crowds following Him were growing exponentially. As the crowds grew, so did the leaders' distress and they received the judge's report with mixed emotions. Most had thought this report would be a formality. After all, new religious leaders and false Messiahs often appeared in Israel. Most of them were obvious frauds whose ministries ended as soon as it began. They had hoped the judge would dismiss Jesus as an impostor—but Jesus' actions spoke too loudly.

They were concerned: with difficulty they had dismissed John the Baptist's ministry—his call to repentance and baptism—and he neither claimed messiahship nor gave evidence of it. But Jesus gave evidence of His messiahship, even though only the demons verbally proclaimed His deity. As they discussed the report and their reaction to it, many thought, "Maybe that is a weakness?" One even dared to say, "If the demons testify of Him, maybe it's because He is one of them?"

The leadership decided to personally investigate Jesus. They wanted to see Him with their own eyes. Then they could find His weaknesses. After all, Jesus had no formal claim to authority—for what rabbi had trained Him? They sat in Moses' seat and this was an outside presence. He must be refuted. Unlike Him, they were trained religious leaders. He cannot be genuine, otherwise what would that say about them?

Immediately the leadership commissioned several loyal members and sent them out to Capernaum. However, it was determined that anyone open to following Jesus would be excluded. So both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, though they volunteered for duty, were denied these roles as investigators.

When this commissioned group arrived—what a crowd was gathered around the house Jesus was in. Immediately they saw four men carrying a bed with a paralytic—a sinner, no doubt. Though they tried to make their way inside, they were unable to approach Jesus for the crowd. Stunned, they watched the men laboriously climb the stairs to the roof. Once there the men proceeded to tear it open. Then the men began lowering the paralytic to Jesus.

Scrambling to get a good view, the leaders entered onto the roof themselves and looked in this newly created skylight. Staggered again by what they saw and falling back as if from a mighty blow to the midsection, they heard Jesus say, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” “Outrageous,” they thought in unison. “Did He really just claim to forgive this man’s sins? They could no longer be still: “He is blaspheming,” they murmured. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

How will Jesus respond to their thoughts?

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 2 and Mark 3 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- What did Jesus say in Mark 2:5 that the experts in the Law didn’t like?
- Why did Jesus say what He did in Mark 2:9?
- What is the issue in Mark 2:13-17? In Mark 2:18-22? In Mark 2:23-28? In Mark 3:1-6?
- What is the main point in Mark 3:7-12? In Mark 3:13-19? In Mark 3:20-35?
- What is the eternal sin in Mark 3:29?

Assignment

- Read Mark 2:1-5 again.
- Read “Forgiveness Announced.”

Forgiveness Announced

This announcement of healing happens several days after the leper’s healing when Jesus returned to Capernaum. So far, Mark has shown two obstacles to Jesus’ ministry: the demons and His popularity, which is evident in this story. Once the people heard that Jesus had returned to Capernaum, they thronged around the house and blocked all the doors. These same people were privileged to witness His next miracle.

This thronging around Jesus is a continuing theme throughout the book. The first occurrence was in Mark 1:33 and another is mentioned in Mark 1:45. It will be a factor in many of Mark’s stories.

Jesus’ patient is a paralytic carried on a pallet by four men who lowered him to Jesus by removing a section of the roof of the house. The pallet he laid on was sometimes used as a poor man’s bed. This roof likely had several layers of grass and clay tiles with strips of wood for support. These types of roofs were flat and had a stairway outside, as well as inside, that led up to it.

In these men Jesus found the faith He liked to respond to. They believed that if they somehow got this man to Jesus that He would cure him. Jesus responded to their faith by announcing that his sins were forgiven. This time Jesus not only healed his symptoms but also the root cause of his disease. The root cause of all disease is sin; though all disease isn’t caused by that individual’s personal sin.

So far Jesus’ great compassion had led Him to relieve people’s symptoms. Now His healing probed deeper. He now heals the source of their problems by forgiving their sins. This was new and appropriate for One who was the Savior of the world, but His new approach leads to a new source of opposition to His ministry: Jewish leadership, in this case the scribes, now begin their malicious

attacks.

By telling this story, Mark makes an interesting twist to his overall theme. Previously, he showed God breaking through all barriers, pictured as tearing apart the sky, to reveal Himself to humanity through Jesus. Here he turns the figure upside down. He pictures humanity tearing open the roof (sky) of a house to remove the barrier to get to God.

QUESTION 2

Read through Mark 2:1-3:35 at least once before matching the section titles found to the appropriate Scripture.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
Jesus Forgives Sins	Mark 3:7-12
The Bridegroom	Mark 3:13-19
The Lord of the Sabbath	Mark 2:1-17
He Is like David	Mark 2:18-22
He Is like Moses	Mark 2:23-3:6
He Is like Satan	Mark 3:20-35

QUESTION 3

What was Jesus doing that was a privilege reserved solely for God?

- A. Healing a paralyzed man
- B. Forgiving a person's sins
- C. Casting out demons
- D. Performing miracles

QUESTION 4

Which of the following is the new element of opposition to Jesus' authority in Mark?

- A. Demons
- B. His disciples
- C. Gentile rulers
- D. Jewish leaders

Forgiveness Proven (Mk 2:6-12)

Assignment

- Read Mark 2:6-12.
- Read "Forgiveness Proven."

Forgiveness Proven

Now that the scribes are opposing Jesus, their challenges will increase. Jesus now claims the authority to forgive sins. The scribes thought that He must be blaspheming, because they knew that only God can forgive sins (Mk 2:6-7). After all, even the Old Testament priests, and even John the Baptist, could only offer ritual cleansing. They could not achieve the inner spiritual cleansing that Jesus offered. Being a man, He could not possibly be claiming to be God, could He?

Jesus challenged them, “Which is easier, to say ‘your sins are forgiven’ or ‘Arise, and take up your pallet and walk?’” (Mk 2:8-9). Why does He ask them this puzzling question? He knows it is humanly impossible to verify that someone’s sins are forgiven. It is something spiritual that happens. However, it is possible to humanly verify someone’s healing. But, to make this connection easier for them, Jesus connects His forgiveness with His healing. It will be verified that Jesus had the authority to forgive His sins when the paralytic gets up and walks on His own.

Why are we more impressed with a paralytic walking, a temporal and earthly effect, than by His forgiveness, an eternal and heavenly effect? It should not be so. The Jews of Jesus’ day had the same tendency. They were most attracted to Jesus for meeting their temporal needs. Our vision and goals must be focused on eternal, lasting values and not the shallowness of earthly comforts.

This is the only time any of the gospels mention that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins while He walks the earth. His self-designation “Son of Man” refers to Daniel 7:13 and He uses this title at other times in Mark (e.g., Mk 2:28; 8:31). Daniel’s reference is about the Father giving the eternal kingdom to the Messiah. Jesus applies this title to Himself.

So what was the result of Jesus’ command to the paralytic? To everyone’s amazement, the paralytic arose in the sight of all as they all glorified God (Mk 2:12). “Amazed” here means surpassing astonishment. Here was a man performing, with evidence, the very acts of God! He has truly revealed Himself to these Jews at a much higher level. But they did not act on this evidence.

QUESTION 5

Why did Jesus refer to Himself as the Son of Man?

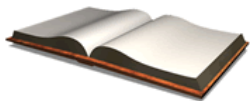
QUESTION 6

There was enough evidence from this healing that the witnesses should have acknowledged Jesus and put their faith in Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

What figure does Mark reverse in Mark 2:1-12 that helps illustrate his theme?

Time Spent with Sinners (Mk 2:13-17)



Quietly—as if muzzled [another possible translation of the word Jesus used in Mark 1:25 to silence the demons in the synagogue]—and still in shock from Jesus’ healing of the paralytic, the commissioned group of leaders from Jerusalem continued following Jesus. But now their discussion resumed as Jesus approached the sea and Levi’s tax booth. All good Jews avoided sinners and tax

collectors, well known as the chief of sinners. They all agreed that if Jesus truly was a prophet, He would avoid this sinner like all good Jews. But Jesus went right to Levi's booth and called him to follow and Levi immediately did. Jesus even called him and other sinners to dine with Him. No good Jew dined with sinners.

This was unheard of. Everyone knew not to talk to sinners and no rabbi called a tax collector as his disciple. They were social outcasts, traitors to Jews in sympathy with the Romans and motivated by personal greed. The leaders approached Jesus. "Why are you fellowshiping with sinners?" they asked His disciples. Jesus, having overheard their question, defended His actions saying, "Those who are healthy don't need a physician, but those who are sick do. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

What an obvious fraud you are," one of them said. "Spirituality—personal righteousness—depends on separation from uncleanness. Not fellowship with sinners."

Assignment

- Read Mark 2:13-17.
- Read "Time with Sinners."

Time with Sinners

For the first time, Jesus goes to the Sea of Galilee and teaches the multitudes that follow. He seems attracted to the sea, its fishermen, and the life that revolves around it. Both as a human and as Creator, He must have appreciated its beauty. Out in the wilderness and by the sea, He avoided most of the controversies the Jewish leaders tried to trap Him in.

While there, He calls Levi (Matthew) the tax collector as His disciple. Tax collectors were notoriously dishonest and greedy. To the Jews, they were traitors because they were Jews who collected taxes for the Roman conquerors of Israel. They brought shame on their family and friends and were excluded from the synagogue. How could a man with Levi's lifestyle suddenly forsake it all to follow Jesus? And why would Jesus want to be associated with him?

Jesus and His disciples join Levi at his house and he invites other tax-collectors and sinners (a pejorative term used by the Jewish leaders of those who did not follow their religious rules) to join them. Reclining together at the table depicts their comfortable fellowship. Jesus easily handled what most find difficult: He worked with both spiritual and worldly people effectively. Most of us feel comfortable with one group or the other, but to truly accomplish His mission, we must also spend time with sinners.

Their banquet was held openly and the scribes of the Pharisees challenged Jesus' disciples asking why Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. They feared becoming unclean by associating with them.

Jesus' unexpectedly responds that the healthy do not need a doctor but the sick do; this is why He calls the sinners not the righteous. All humanity is sinful and needs cleansing, but Jesus ministers to those who recognize their need. The self-righteous see no need for Jesus (Mk 10:17-27).

QUESTION 8

Jesus insisted that sinners clean up their lives before He fellowshiped with them. *True or False?*

Key Points:

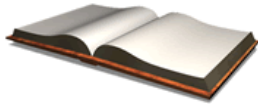
- Only God has the authority to forgive sins and Jesus forgave sins.
- The Jewish leaders join in opposing Jesus' ministry.

- Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man, who in Daniel is given the kingdom by the Father.
- This healing gives enough evidence for who Jesus is so that people can respond and put their faith in Him.
- Levi the tax collector responded and followed Jesus' call.

Topic 2: Authority as the Bridegroom (Mk 2:18-22)

In the next two topics, two more incidents reveal more of Jesus' mission. Both were associated with religious duties important to the Jews.

Scripturally, the Day of Atonement was the only day of the year that specifically called for the Jews to fast. But other days of fasting were observed by religious Jews, though this was apart from scriptural authority. The Pharisees had their own rules on fasting and supposedly most of them fasted every Monday and Thursday. They saw this as performing their religious duty before God and were offended when Jesus and His disciples did not follow their rules. They insisted on knowing why.



Surprised to find support from an unexpected quarter, the leaders realized Jesus and His disciples were the only ones not fasting. Even some of John the Baptist's disciples wondered why Jesus' disciples did not fast.

What an unexpected source of support for their cause, for John had always claimed and practiced solidarity with Jesus. Everyone knew devout Jews fasted. But Jesus answered their inquiry by drawing a parallel to a wedding banquet. The leaders thought this was strange. One of them said to the others, "He seems to claim some unknown type of authority to act contrary to our established rules. Where does He think He's going? Maybe He knows we're on to Him."

Assignment

- Read Mark 2:18-22.
- Read "The Bridegroom."

The Bridegroom

What about fasting? Both John's disciples and the Pharisees fasted, so why don't Jesus' disciples fast (Mk 2:18)? The Pharisees' fasts were purely outward traditions and any fasts were an unnecessary burden for His followers. So Jesus asked if friends of the bridegroom fast when he is still with them; they do not fast because their friend is with them. Similarly, during Jesus' time with them on earth His disciples cannot fast because they share His joy, but when He is violently taken from them, then they will fast because of their sorrow.

Note: This is the first reference to Jesus' death in Mark.

QUESTION 9

Why does Jesus say that His disciples do not fast?

- A. Because the bridegroom is with them
- B. Because they are not Pharisees
- C. Because the Bible does not tell them to
- D. Because they are under the new covenant

QUESTION 10

What figures are used in Mark 2:21-22 to show that Jesus' new teaching does not fit with the old teaching of the Jewish leaders? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. New wine and old wineskins
- B. Putting a lamp under a basket
- C. Unshrunk cloth on an old garment
- D. Removing a log in your eye before a speck in someone else's

Key Point:

- Jesus' teachings do not fit within the limits of the Law, especially with the way the Jewish leaders were practicing it.

Topic 3: Lord of the Sabbath

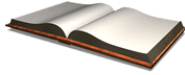
In addition to fasting, the second duty that brought opposition was observing the Sabbath. God prescribed the Sabbath as a day of rest, but the Jewish leaders had turned it into a day of legalism. They were hypocritical in observing it and did not understand what God expected of them. Their rules unnecessarily burdened the people and did not draw them closer to God. In contrast, they often used them to avoid their God-given responsibilities (Mk 7:13). Again Jesus and His disciples offended them by neglecting their rules of observance. In their mind, everyone knew how important following their rules was on both of these issues. Jesus explained that His disciples did not need to keep it that way and then went on to explain the true purpose of the Sabbath day.



Here is a practical test of that teaching. On the Sabbath, in a synagogue was a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees were present when Jesus claimed Lordship of the Sabbath and they looked for a chance to put Him on the spot. This man with the withered hand was the ideal situation; they knew Jesus could heal him and they knew of Jesus' compassion. If He healed the man, they could accuse Jesus of working on the Sabbath and breaking that commandment.

So, the question is: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

The Question: Is It Lawful to Heal? (Mk 2:23-28)



As this group of leaders continued following Jesus, His disciples plucked grain and ate it on the Sabbath. Again, this was something everyone knew was wrong. The observance of the Sabbath was another tradition that was well established. Like every Rabbi, He was responsible for His disciple's actions and they were doing a work on the Sabbath. Again conferring together, the group agreed when one among them said, "Brothers, we have seen enough; it is time now for action."

But when they approached Jesus to confront Him, one of the Pharisees present (not of their group) got there first and asked Jesus, "Look, why are they doing what is against the Law on the Sabbath?" Jesus responded comparing His actions to those of King David, saying that David did something technically against the Law, so He could too.

His insolence astounded them. How dare He compare Himself with David or to accuse him of wrongdoing. He even called Himself "Lord of the Sabbath." Each member of the group was obviously becoming angry.

The commissioned group of leaders met that night to strategize. They all agreed it was time to stop Jesus' disobedience and blasphemy. They knew of a man with a withered hand and next week, on the Sabbath, they would make sure he was in the synagogue where Jesus was scheduled to speak. Since they all agreed that healing was surely a forbidden work, they would watch and see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath. Then His disobedience to God's Law would be obvious to all.

Assignment

- Read Mark 2:23-28.
- Read 1 Samuel 21:1-6, when David and his companions ate the sacred bread.
- Read "Is It Lawful to Heal?"

Is it Lawful to Heal?

The Master teacher uses a couple of illustrations to teach that He brings new ways and teachings. He characteristically uses familiar illustrations from their everyday life: The first is of a new, unwashed cloth placed to patch an old, washed garment that tears the fabric away and makes it worse. The second is a similar illustration of new wine bursting old wineskins but new wine in new wineskins holding the wine well. Jesus brings new rules for the new age announced in Mark 1:1. The Law was given to lead them to Christ. The leaders' traditions have even removed much of the Law's original effectiveness.

This time the Pharisees challenge Jesus' disciples. They charge them with breaking the Law of the Sabbath. The disciples picked heads of grain on the Sabbath and reaping was unlawful on that day, but the disciples were following the biblical guidelines for the poor and weak found in Deuteronomy 23:25. God made this provision for the hunger of the poor, because of their brotherhood with their fellow Jews, the covenant people of God. The passage grants permission for the poor to pick kernels of grain with their hands, but not to use a sickle to harvest the grain.

Note: The disciples ate this grain by simply plucking the heads of grain and rubbing them in their hands to remove the husks before they ate them.

These Pharisees challenged Jesus on regulations about bread and wheat. Jesus responds by comparing this incident with the time David and his companions were hungry and ate the consecrated bread (1 Sam 21:1-6). Usually, the consecrated bread was restricted by Law to the priests. Besides using David's example, Jesus' solution to this challenge is twofold:

1. The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath
2. The Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath

God intended the Sabbath as a time of rest and refreshment for man. The Pharisees added additional burdens in the technicalities of the Law. Also, Jesus is Sovereign over the Sabbath and He interprets its true meaning.

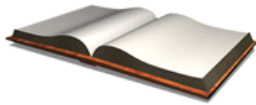
Note: Already in Mark the theme of social status is addressed. Jesus' call is to those with fever, to lepers, to sinners, to tax-collectors, to the demonized, and only with difficulty or intervention does He minister to the privileged. Of course the difficulty is not in Jesus' ability, but rather in their perceived need to be helped.

QUESTION 11

According to Mark 2:23-28, why was it acceptable for David to eat the consecrated bread? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Like Jesus, he wasn't only the king but God's priest.
- B. The priest who represented God told him he could.
- C. The Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath.
- D. The Sabbath was made for man.

The Answer: It Is Lawful to Heal (Mk 3:1-6)



The Jewish leaders' trap was set and when the Sabbath arrived Jesus spotted the man immediately and said, "Stand up among all these people." The moment of truth had arrived. Legally they had Him cornered; there was no way out. They had seen His compassion for those with healing needs and knew Jesus wouldn't turn him away. But now, instead of approaching this legally as everyone expected, Jesus saw this as a different issue. Knowing their evil plot He said to the group of leaders, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or evil, to save a life or destroy it?" This was uncomfortable but the Jewish leaders remained silent. They had been angry at Him but now they could see by His look, a look that penetrated to their soul, that He was also angry with them. Next Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand" and immediately he regained the use of his hand.

Slinking out, one among the leaders said, "Our trap worked perfectly and He fell right in."

Assignment

- Read Mark 3:1-6.
- Read "Lawful to Heal."

Lawful to Heal

Jesus again enters a synagogue, probably in Capernaum. Within it is a man with a withered hand along with some Pharisees. Knowing this needy man was there and knowing Jesus' compassion,

these Pharisees set their trap (the Greek implies that they spied on Him while formulating their plan). It was the Sabbath and according to their interpretation, no work could be done; according to their oral tradition a healing on the Sabbath could only be done if a life was in danger.

Notice again that this evil challenge occurs in a synagogue. The first confrontation Jesus had with an unclean spirit was also in a synagogue. These incidents illustrate the spiritual condition of the nation at this time. In Mark, the Jews' anticipation of a Messiah is one of the few good spiritual signs of established Judaism.

Jesus called the man with the withered hand and asked him to stand in the middle of the group. He asked them if it was illegal to do good on the Sabbath, or to do evil (Mk 3:4).

Their opposition did not keep Him from doing what was right. In similar situations, we must not allow ungodly opposition to keep us from doing right. Also, Jesus felt two emotions:

1. His anger at the leader's plot passed quickly.
2. His compassion for the needy endured.

Our compassion toward opponents must also endure—even if we briefly feel righteous anger, which is not sin. We must not act out of anger, but out of the enduring compassion in our hearts.

Adding to their guilt and in keeping with their trap, they kept silent. In their hardened hearts they had him either way: if He chose not to heal, He did wrong and if He chose to heal, He broke their interpretation of the Law. The penalty for breaking the Sabbath was death. They controlled religious thought in Israel at this time and would not allow anyone to destroy their authority.

Rarely was Jesus angry, but He was now. Righteous anger towards sin is proper; especially sin within the fellowship of believers. When dealing with sin in brothers, it must be handled with humility and fear, knowing that we all sin. Anger, if not handled correctly, leads to sin, but Jesus reacted properly to them. He was a minister of salvation and these Pharisees not only worked against their own salvation, but they made it difficult for Him to save others. Jesus took the initiative and healed the man, though He was grieved by the hard hearts of the Pharisees (Mk 3:5).

Mark does not emphasize Jesus' miraculous cure, but rather His conflict with the Pharisees. Jesus acts and the Pharisees react. Or, in this case, the Pharisees set up the situation, knowing how Jesus would react so they could justify their attitude and actions.

Besides anger, Jesus also felt grief. He grieved their hard hearts. Unfortunately, this was not only true of Jesus' enemies, but this description was used several times to describe Jesus' own disciples (see chart below). Of all the gospel writers, only Mark says the disciples have hard hearts. Let this warn us away from this attitude!

The Disciples' Hard Hearts

Reference	Teaching
Mark 6:52	After the story of Jesus walking on the water, the disciples are astonished at His mastery of nature. Jesus said their hearts were hard because they did not learn their lesson from when He fed the multitude with the loaves.
Mark 8:17	When Jesus taught about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod, the disciples misunderstood what Jesus was teaching and thought He meant that they had brought no bread with them. Jesus once more says they did not learn the lesson they should have from when He fed the multitude with the loaves.
Mark 16:14	After Jesus has been resurrected, He appeared to the remaining disciples while they were eating and rebuked them for their unbelief and hard hearts.

This chart shows how much the disciples were supposed to learn when Jesus fed the multitude with a few loaves. We will study this incident closely once we get to it. Even Jesus' disciples can be hindered in their fellowship with Jesus by having hard hearts. We must examine ourselves on this very issue.

QUESTION 12

The events that happen in the synagogues showed the poor spiritual state of the Jews at this time. *True or False?*

QUESTION 13

Match the incident with the corresponding response.

<i>Incident</i>	<i>Response</i>
Healing a paralytic (Mk 2:1-12)	By being a doctor for the sick
Eating with sinners (Mk 2:13-17)	By forgiving his sins
Disciples not fasting (Mk 2:18-22)	By being the Lord
Breaking the Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28)	By having the Bridegroom present
Healing breaks the Sabbath (Mk 3:1-6)	By doing what is good

QUESTION 14

While Jesus felt both compassion (grief) and anger toward those who oppose Him, His anger was brief while His compassion (grief) remained. *True or False?*

QUESTION 15

In Mark 3:1-6, Jesus' enemies had already decided the following about Him: *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. To kill Him
- B. That He had the power to heal
- C. That He was God
- D. That He kept the Sabbath

Other leaders of God's people were also set up in a way similar to the situation that Jesus experienced:

- Joseph (Gen 39)
- Daniel's friends (Dan 3)
- Daniel (Dan 6)

Key Points:

- Jesus says the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, and that the Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath.
- The events that happen in the synagogues showed the poor spiritual state of the Jews at this time.
- While Jesus felt both compassion (grief) and anger toward those who oppose Him, His anger was brief while His compassion (grief) remained.
- Jesus' enemies are often ruthless and irrational in defending their territory.

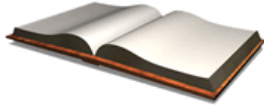
Topic 4: Who Is Jesus Like?

In Mark 3:7-12, Mark summarizes Jesus' ministry. This is Mark's second summary statement. The first was in Mark 1:14-15. Notice the parallels of these summaries, though the order does vary:

Mark's Two Summaries	
First Summary	Second Summary
Mark 1:14-2:11	Mark 3:7-12
• Summary Statement (Mk 1:14-15)	• Summary Statement (Mk 3:7-8)
• Jesus calls His disciples for the first time (Mk 1:16-20)	• Jesus performs miracles (Mk 3:10)
• Jesus encounters an unclean spirit who calls Him the Son of God (Mk 1:24)	• Jesus encounters unclean spirits who call Him the Son of God (Mk 3:11)
• Jesus silences the unclean spirit (Mk 1:25)	• Jesus silences the unclean spirits (Mk 3:12)
• Jesus performs miracles and meets opposition (Mk 1:29-2:11)	• Jesus calls His disciples to Himself (Mk 3:13)

These summaries compare Him to two major historic Jewish leaders. After this call of His disciples, He runs into the most severe human opposition and insult recorded, as we will discuss later in this lesson.

He Is like David (Mk 3:7-12)



While the Jewish leaders leave to plot how to kill Jesus with their new friends the Herodians, Jesus in turn retires with His disciples to the sea. Now the Herodians were a sect no loyal Jew would normally be seen with—especially a member of the Sanhedrin. After all, the Herodians supported the Roman occupation of Israel and that was anathema to loyal Jews, like these members of the Sanhedrin. But the Herodians were equally concerned about Jesus disrupting the status quo—their comfortable relationship with Rome.

From a distance, the leaders saw Jesus leave the city and were astonished at the crowds that followed Him. They had hoped Jesus would stay in town and had planned together to arrest Him quietly. Distressed, one of the group commented, “But how can we arrest Him quietly with thousands of followers around Him?” And these multitudes came from every part of Israel; even parts that had not been Israel since their most glorious past under David and Solomon.

“No wonder they follow Him,” the leaders thought. “He taught them, He healed many and casts demons out of others.” They murmured amongst themselves, “Does He not know that the multitude is accursed? He actually seems to care for them.” Their conclusion from all of this was expressed and agreed on: “It is just more proof of His spiritual dullness.”

To be less conspicuous, a smaller group was chosen from among them to continue following Him. This group followed at a distance. Soon He left the crowds and went up a mountain. But only those called by Him could follow Him closely and since they were obviously not part of that number they were excluded. As they watched Him ascend the mountain, He reminded them of a former leader in Israel.

Assignment

- Read Mark 3:7-12.
- Read “David.”

David

When Jesus faces determined and unreasonable opposition, He does not stay and fight. Just as He does not seek sensationalism; He does not seek conflict. So He and the disciples went to the sea, with many following them (Mk 3:7). This crowd tagged along hoping for food, His fascinating teaching, or to see something sensational. This multitude came from everywhere within Israel and even from some outlying Gentile areas, like Syria and Edom. Mark compares Jesus’ influence to that of King David who controlled and collected tribute from all these areas. To a certain extent, the multitudes heard His words (Mk 3:8). Jesus will soon illustrate their responses in the parable of the Sower (Mk 4:1-9).

Mark contrasts Jesus’ popularity with this multitude with the opposition of the Jewish leaders toward Him, but it was His popularity that hindered His mission. So He asked His disciples to have a boat ready to give Him some separation from them. The crowd is even a physical danger to Jesus. The crowd makes it difficult for Him to even meet their basic needs—like providing enough food to feed them as in the story of the feeding of the five thousand in Mark 6:30-44 (Mk 3:20).

Though Jesus temporarily avoids His human opponents, He could not avoid the unclean spirits. They opposed Jesus’ ministry by causing chaos and disruption while testifying that Jesus is the Son of God, though He warned (a closer interpretation is “muzzled”) them not to make Him known. They notice that Jesus did not want His identity revealed so of course they immediately oppose Him in this way. Still Jesus conquers each spirit and defeats their plan to make Him known and avoid His control.

QUESTION 16

In what ways does Mark say the demons opposed Jesus? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. By tempting His disciples
- B. By ignoring His commands
- C. By naming Him as the Son of God
- D. By causing disruptions

He Is Like Moses (Mk 3:13-19)

Assignment

- Read Mark 3:13-19.
- Read “Moses.”

Moses

Mark illustrates two ways people follow Jesus: In contrast to the multitudes that follow Him, Jesus calls His disciples out from them and leads them up the mountain. (“The mountain” in this context probably is not used so much to designate **the** mountain Jesus went up but to draw the comparison to the mountain (Sinai) of Moses’ time.) These disciples also follow Him as disciples do, to serve their leader wherever He goes. They followed Him in good times and in sharing His sufferings. They were joining Him on the road. As His disciples, we also join Him on the road. When we abide with Him we share His intimate fellowship.

Mark pictures Jesus as the new Moses, going up the mountain and appointing leaders to help and represent Him. In Exodus 18, Moses wears himself down trying to meet the needs of the people of Israel. His father-in-law Jethro suggests that Moses should appoint other men to help him. Jesus, being fully man, enlists help like Moses did. Then, in Exodus 19, Moses goes up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments, the Law of God. Jesus, like Moses, also goes up the mountain and brings new teaching from God. God accomplishes His mission through chosen witnesses like us, and those witnesses continue increasing until Jesus’ second advent.

Having called them, what was their mission? Besides following, they were also sent out to preach what they witnessed about Jesus. They cast out demons just as He had with His authority! In essence, He made twelve copies of Himself and sent them out.

Discipleship today should follow the same pattern: We should make copies of our faithful selves so the next generation carries on as God’s witnesses. Jesus trained His disciples and they trained others after His ascension.

QUESTION 17

According to Mark, why did Jesus choose disciples? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. To follow Him wherever He went
- B. To preach or witness about His message
- C. Because they first agreed to follow Him
- D. Because they were spiritual men when He called them

Key Points:

- Demons oppose Jesus by disrupting His ministry and testifying to who He is.
- The multitudes that followed Jesus came from areas controlled by King David.
- Picturing Moses, Jesus sent out the disciples as His representatives and gave them His authority.

Topic 5: Who Is Jesus?

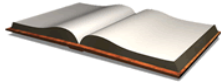
Obstacles to Jesus' Ministry			
Demonic forces (Mk 1:23-24)	Popularity (Mk 1:37-38)	Jewish leaders (Mk 2:6-7)	Jesus' family (Mk 3:21)

Jesus now returns home (Mk 3:20). He went to the sea to avoid the conflict with the religious leaders that started when He healed the man with the withered hand. He continued responding to that conflict by climbing up the mountain and naming His disciples.

With the two stories in this topic, Mark shows two conflicts that Jesus encounters. The story of the conflict with the religious authorities is told within the story of the interference of Jesus' family. This type of structure is called a "sandwich" structure. Mark uses this style often and when he uses it the central story is emphasized through a common point in both stories. In this case, the emphasis is on the opposition Jesus faces.

So far in Mark, the opposition Jesus faces comes from many sources. These include Satan and the demons, the crowds, the religious leaders, and now—shockingly—His family. The two sources He now faces opposition from are His family and the religious leaders. Mark contrasts this opposition with the continuing popularity Jesus has with the multitudes.

He Is Satan's Servant (Mk 3:22-30)



The Jewish leaders are convinced that God is on their side against this imposter Jesus. They discuss amongst themselves how support for their position keeps coming from the most unexpected sources. They pointed to how John's disciples took their side against Jesus' disciples on the issue of fasting and the Herodians, that traitorous party that supports the Romans, whom they had previously never agreed with on anything, are joining with their cause to plan Jesus' death. Now—oh glorious day—Jesus' family has heard about His ministry and concluded that He is mad. It looks like they mean to take Him by force if necessary to stop His ministry.

These leaders concluded by agreeing with the one who said, "If ever it was time to strike a fatal blow to His ministry, it is now." Until now, many leaders struggled with how to explain Jesus' healings and exorcisms. Some among them, urging caution and restraint, had said, "After all, who besides God is more powerful than demons? Only Satan, their leader." That must be it. He is in league with Satan, the prince of demons. After all, His family grew up with Him and knows Him all too well and if they think He is mad, maybe our conclusion is right.

Assignment

- Read Mark 3:22-30.
- Read "Satan's Servant."

Satan's Servant

Jesus now returns home—and again a crowd presses in on Him. Along with Jesus came the multitudes that continue following Him. This topic contains another of Mark's 'sandwich' stories. The story of His family's scary conclusion about him sandwiches the story of the hideously evil theory the scribes suggest about the source of Jesus' power. This group of scribes comes down from Jerusalem, as an official delegation, with their evaluation of Him, "He is possessed by Beelzebul,"

and, “By the ruler of demons He casts out demons” (Mk 3:22). This story foreshadows the question Jesus asks the disciples about who people say He is (Mk 8:27-29).

Jesus shows how absurd their conclusion is by asking them five questions:

1. How can Satan cast out Satan (Mk 3:23)?
2. How can a kingdom divided against itself stand (Mk 3:24)?
3. How can a house divided against itself stand (Mk 3:25)?
4. How can Satan be divided against himself and yet stand (Mk 3:26)?
5. How can someone enter the strong man’s house and plunder it unless he first binds him (Mk 3:27)?

The answer expected to each of these questions is the same: He (or it) cannot!

What is the main point? Satan is still strong, so he cannot be divided against himself. Jesus’ deliverance provides relief from Satan’s kingdom. Satan is the lead sinner and sin leads to sickness and to the ultimate penalty for that sin, which is death. Demon possession is another way Satan’s presence is visible to God’s people. When Jesus relieves God’s people of these effects of sin, He is basically robbing and plundering Satan.

Instances of Satan being bound in the Bible:

- The binding of Satan out of God's immediate presence after his original sin, though he can still visit there (Job 1-2; Isa 14; Ezk 28)
- The binding of Satan’s forces at the time of Noah, during the flood (1 Pet 3:19; Jude 6)
- This binding of Satan at Jesus' first advent
- The binding of Satan at the second advent (Rev 20:1-3)
- The final binding of Satan in the lake of fire (Rev 20:10)

Having addressed their accusation, He warns them against blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which is a sin that can never be forgiven (Mk 3:28-30).

What exactly is this eternal sin? Jesus shows that their issue is with the One who gives Him His authority. Verse 30 explains Jesus’ statements in Mark 4:28-29. Their conclusion called the Holy Spirit—the One who gave Him His authority and the One who empowered His miracles—Satan!

Already, this early in Mark, the opposition reaches a peak. What could be a worse or more unfair comment about Jesus? Has anyone treated you unfairly or made unfair statements about you? If so, compare them with this. They happened to Him and they will also happen to His followers. This prediction can help us handle the insults that come our way as His followers.

QUESTION 18

The main point of Jesus’ questions in response to the scribes is that Satan is already weak and defeated.
True or False?

Jesus showed that their argument made no sense. He said Satan is still strong and not divided against himself. These religious leaders of Israel were irrational in their opposition to God’s Servant.

QUESTION 19

What is the eternal or unforgivable sin?

- A. Blasphemy against the Son of Man
- B. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
- C. Blasphemy against the Father
- D. An isolated act of defiant hostility toward God

He Is Crazy (Mk 3:20-21, 31-35)

Reading Assignment

- Read Mark 3:20-21, 31-35.
- Read “Crazy.”

Crazy

His own family cannot understand Jesus. They decide He has lost His senses and they come to take possession of Him. This same phrase is translated “arrest” in other places in Mark. So they came to stop His ministry, by force if necessary, because the multitude followed Him so fanatically.

Why is Jesus seen as crazy and different? Jesus’ ministry was a radical commitment to the Father’s will. We are called to this same commitment. Others, and even our families, may think us insane to dedicate our lives to serving Jesus. People concluded the same about the apostle Paul. Addressing the same issue Paul, talking about his life as an apostle, says, “For if we are out of our minds, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you” (2 Cor 5:13).

Many reading this have suffered much from their own family because they decided to follow Jesus. They may reject you and think that you are crazy to follow Him. They see you as a traitor to your family and its traditions. But Jesus promises a rich reward for following and truer family members here and now than what we have lost—and even more in eternity because we belong to Jesus’ family by faith.

Note: The story of Jesus’ family is now interrupted by Jesus’ conflict with the scribes.

Jesus’ earthly family now arrives and calls to Him attempting to get Him away from the multitude (Mk 3:31-35). Jesus asks, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” He defines, and this is an important group for the rest of Mark, His spiritual family as those doing the will of God. The true eternal family relationship that comes with faith in Jesus is not based on a physical relationship but on an eternal promise.

QUESTION 20

Which of the following are expected of Jesus’ disciples in this passage? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Priority is given to meeting the needs of others.
- B. Priority is given to meeting one’s own physical needs.
- C. Priority is given to one’s spiritual family over that of one’s natural family.
- D. Priority is given to emotion and feelings.

QUESTION 21

The initial work God wants of us is to believe on the One whom He has sent. *True or False?*

QUESTION 22

According to the sandwich story of the Jewish leaders and Jesus' family in Mark 3:20-35, what do people understand about who Jesus is? What can we learn from this?

Summary: Jesus manages to give proper place to His family and even claims the priority of His spiritual family over His fleshly one. He also deftly argues that Satan would not cast out his own demons; otherwise he would be fighting against himself. Then, He adds that He could not cast out demons unless He had bound Satan first (claiming power over Satan, too). He now takes direct aim at the leaders who made this accusation—they were speaking against the Holy Spirit and were close to committing an unforgivable sin. How surprised the leadership must have been when the man they called “blasphemer” accused them of blasphemy. As for the opposition of His family, He now officially recognizes those that do God's will as His new family.

Key Points:

- Jesus teaches that Satan is still strong and not divided against himself as he would be if Jesus cast out demons by Satan's power.
- Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a specific sin of attributing the Holy Spirit's power through Jesus to Satan.
- Priority in ministry is given to meeting the needs of others, especially of our spiritual family.
- The first step in doing God's will is believing on the One He has sent.

The Jewish leaders had staked out their position against Jesus and there seemed no turning back. We will see Jesus' response in the next lesson.

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 23

One of Jesus' responses to opposition was to teach about the unforgivable sin: blaspheming the Holy Spirit. This unforgivable sin troubles many people. Even some believers think they may have committed this sin. Write out how you would counsel someone who came to you troubled and believing they may have committed this sin. You may want to start by writing down verses that promise security and forgiveness in Christ.

QUESTION 24

The opposition to Jesus from the Jewish leaders has reached a climax. Why do you think their opposition is so strong? Review Mark 2 and Mark 3 and write out the many ways the Jewish leaders opposed Jesus. Write a summary of the issue, how Jesus responded to it and what you think motivates their challenge. Then summarize the last time you faced opposition and how you responded to it. Reflect on your response and what you would do differently next time based on Jesus' responses in these two chapters

QUESTION 25

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Write one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 26

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Write one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 2 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Why did the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy when He healed the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12?

- A. He claimed the ability to cast out demons.
- B. He claimed to be God.
- C. He claimed to forgive sins.
- D. Only God could heal a paralyzed man.

QUESTION 2

Which of the following events reverses the figure that Mark has used so far in God revealing Himself to man in the person of Jesus?

- A. Jesus' Baptism
- B. People tearing open a roof to get to Jesus
- C. The transfiguration
- D. The veil in the temple torn from top to bottom

QUESTION 3

Jesus insisted that sinners clean up their lives before He spent time with them. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

Why does Jesus say that His followers don't fast?

- A. He is the Lord.
- B. The Bridegroom is with them.
- C. They are not Pharisees.
- D. They follow the rules of the new covenant.

QUESTION 5

The Law specifically forbade the Jews from reaping grain like the disciples did while walking through a field of grain. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Of the two emotions Jesus felt when He healed the man with the withered hand, the emotion that endured was compassion. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

According to Mark, the demons help Jesus by testifying to who He is. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Mark teaches that Jesus chose His disciples because they first agreed to follow Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

What is the first step of obedience in the Christian life?

- A. Cleanse self from all known sin (1 Jn 1:9).
- B. Dedicate life to serving God (Rom 12:1).
- C. Believe on the One He has sent (Jn 6:29).
- D. Agree to become His disciple or follower (Mk 3:13).

QUESTION 10

The scribes and Pharisees present a rational argument when they accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Satan's power. *True or False?*

Lesson 2 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Title</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
Jesus Forgives Sins	Mark 2:1-17
The Bridegroom	Mark 2:18-22
The Lord of the Sabbath	Mark 2:23-3:6
He Is like David	Mark 3:7-12
He Is like Moses	Mark 3:13-19
He Is like Satan	Mark 3:20-35

QUESTION 3

B. Forgiving a person's sins

QUESTION 4

D. Jewish leaders [Jewish leaders are starting to be concerned about Jesus' ministry and the source of His authority. This theme comes up often throughout the rest of Mark.]

QUESTION 5: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

This is the only time any of the gospels mention that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins while He walks the earth. His self-designation Son of Man refers to Daniel 7:13 and He uses this title several other times in Mark (e.g., Mk 2:28; 8:31). Daniel's reference is about the Father giving the eternal kingdom to the Messiah.

QUESTION 6: True [They responded in glorifying God for His works, but they did not act on this evidence and acknowledge who Jesus is or put their faith in Him.]

QUESTION 7: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

As we previously saw, at three key points in Mark God tears open heaven to reveal Himself to man. Here, instead of God tearing open the sky to reveal Himself to man, man symbolically tears open the sky to get to God by opening the roof to get to Jesus.

QUESTION 8: False [Jesus ate with sinners without making them cleanse their lives first.]

QUESTION 9

A. Because the bridegroom is with them

QUESTION 10

A. New wine and old wineskins

C. Unshrunk cloth on an old garment

[New wine in old, already stretched, wineskins will burst them and an unshrunk patch on an old garment will pull away from the garment. The Law was given to lead them to Christ, once He is there it has finished its course (Gal 3:24-25). And the leader's traditions have even removed much of the Law's original effectiveness. Jesus' teachings are new rules for the new age.]

QUESTION 11

C. The Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath.

D. The Sabbath was made for man.

[Besides using David's example, Jesus' solution to this challenge is twofold: He says the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath and that the Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath.]

QUESTION 12: True [This helps show the need for the call to repentance and how Jesus did not want to build on their systems but start with something completely new, the new covenant foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34.]

QUESTION 13

<i>Incident</i>	<i>Response</i>
Healing a paralytic (Mk 2:1-12)	By forgiving his sins
Eating with sinners (Mk 2:13-17)	By being a doctor for the sick
Disciples not fasting (Mk 2:18-22)	By having the Bridegroom present
Breaking the Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28)	By being the Lord

QUESTION 14: True [His anger at the leader's plot passed quickly, but His compassion for the needy endured. This is a good example for us in reacting to opposition.]

QUESTION 15

A. To kill Him

B. That He had the power to heal

[They indirectly admitted His power to heal by setting up this confrontation. They knew if He saw the man's need that He would heal him and in their view break the Sabbath.]

QUESTION 16

C. By naming Him as the Son of God

D. By causing disruptions

[They knew that Jesus was not revealing His identity as God yet because He wanted to reveal it in His own time and way. So they tried to upset His plan.]

QUESTION 17

A. To follow Him wherever He went

B. To preach or witness about His message

[Their witness was based on their fellowship with Him. He chose them just as He chooses us as His witnesses today. We simply agree to be sent.]

QUESTION 18: False

QUESTION 19

B. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit [This is a very specific sin of attributing the power of the Holy Spirit through Jesus to Satan. These religious leaders were capable of the worst insults to God.]

QUESTION 20

A. Priority is given to meeting the needs of others.

C. Priority is given to one's spiritual family over that of one's natural family.

QUESTION 21: True [The first step in doing God's will is to believe in the One He has sent (Jn 6:28-29).]

QUESTION 22: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Both Jesus' family and the Jewish leaders come to eerily similar conclusions about Jesus, His state of mind, and the power behind His ministry. We learn that Jesus' spiritual family is those who do God's will by believing on Jesus.

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

QUESTION 24: *Your answer*

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

QUESTION 26: *Your answer*

Lesson 2 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

C. He claimed to forgive sins.

QUESTION 2

B. People tearing open a roof to get to Jesus

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4

B. The Bridegroom is with them.

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9

C. Believe on the One He has sent (Jn 6:29).

QUESTION 10: False

Lesson 3: Reaction to the Leaders' Rejection (Mk 4:1–5:43)

Lesson Introduction

Jesus responds to the wicked opposition and insults from the Jewish leaders by teaching in parables—stories used to illustrate a spiritual lesson (Mk 4:2, 10-12). Teaching in parables fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of Israel listening but not understanding (see Isa 6:9-10; Mk 4:12). Israel is a nation that does not know how to use their ears. Again the crowd gathers around Jesus to the point that He gets into a boat in order to minister (Mk 4:1).



The illustrations for His parables came from the rural scenes likely happening right before their eyes. Sowers were out planting their fields by casting their seeds. The parables of the lamp, plant, and mustard seed also drew from the familiar pictures of rural life of Israel. (Mark's accounts of the storm at sea and the demoniac are also rich with his symbolism and the storybook teaching on them is covered in detail in the topics associated with those passages.)

The final stories in this lesson are again told in a sandwich structure with Jesus redeeming a dying woman and a dead girl (Mk 5:21-43). Symbolically, this woman has been dying for twelve years, as indicated by her continual bleeding. This bleeding made her, and anyone she touched, continually unclean, yet she did not pass her uncleanness on to Jesus. When she touched Jesus' garment it was not out of superstition, but rather it was her way of symbolically trusting herself to His care and He honored her faith (Zech 8:23). Then, in a crowning revelation of His authority, in imagery of waking someone from sleep, Jesus resurrects a twelve-year-old girl from the dead (Mk 5:41).

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: The Parable of the Sower (Mk 4:1-9)
- Topic 2: The Interpretation of the Sower (Mk 4:10-20)
- Topic 3: The Parables of the Lamp and Seeds (Mk 4:21-34)
- Topic 4: Breaching the Outer Defenses (Mk 4:35-41)
- Topic 5: Saving the Demoniac (Mk 5:1-20)
- Topic 6: Authority over Death (Mk 5:21-43)
- Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Topic 1 shows Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God in parables. He tells of a man that sows and the fate of the seed that falls on different kinds of ground. These responses illustrate the responses of people to Jesus' kingdom message.

Topic 2 tells how Jesus took the time to privately, for His disciples, explain the meaning of this parable. And understanding this parable is a key to understanding other parables.

Topic 3 continues with Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God, this time with three different parables. They are on the lamp, plant, and mustard seed. After these parables, Mark summarizes how and why Jesus taught this way.

Topic 4 shows Jesus' power over nature. In this incident, a storm on the sea pictures a spiritual battle—a battle that has the disciples fearing for their lives. However, Jesus calms the storm with a simple rebuke. The disciples are left in fear and awe wondering who Jesus really is.

Topic 5 tells of an unclean man possessed by a legion of evil spirits. They have ruined his life and make him dangerous to himself and those around him. However, at Jesus' command, the spirits rush to their destruction and the man is left fully healed and asking to follow Jesus.

Topic 6 shows Jesus' power over our ultimate enemy, death. He first heals a dying woman who touches His clothing and then calls a young girl back to life as simply as waking her from sleep.

Summary: In this lesson Mark explores Jesus' reaction to the Jewish leaders' rejection of Him. His reaction is shown in His teaching and His power over nature, over unclean spirits, and over death. Is there anything He cannot save us from?

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain how the parable of the sower prepares readers for all the parables that follow in Mark's gospel
- Discuss Jesus' encounters with demons, drawing out parallels and contrasts between them
- Follow Jesus' example of cultivating discipleship in how you disciple others

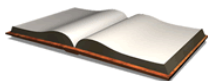
Topic 1: The Parable of the Sower (Mk 4:1-9)

In Mark 2 and 3, Jesus received strong opposition to His ministry, mostly from the religious leaders of the Jews. Here Mark shows Him responding to that opposition in several ways:

- He moves His area of ministry away from the cities to the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Mk 3:7).
- He brought His disciples with Him, taught them, and sent them out with His authority (Mk 3:14-15).
- He then expanded His authority according to a biblical principle by training His disciples (Eccl 4:12).

Jesus separates those who follow Him closely from the rest of the multitude. Obviously, the kingdom Jesus announced was near will not be received willingly by those representing the Jewish nation. Jesus now communicates this change in plan to His followers, doing so through parables.

The parable of the sower is the first of the kingdom parables and it explains why His message is received differently by different people. It also helps His followers understand why His message is rejected by the nation.



After outrageously accusing Jesus of receiving His authority from Beelzebub, the group of Jewish leaders suddenly find themselves cut off from much of Jesus' teaching. Until now He taught plainly and openly to all—but that has changed. He now speaks solely in parables that have spiritual meaning and only explains them privately to His close followers. Therefore, the group from the Sanhedrin decided to return to Jerusalem and turn in their report.

Meanwhile, Peter noticed the same change in Jesus' teaching and he found he cannot understand Jesus' parables either. He only understands after Jesus explains the parables privately. In the person of Jesus, Peter, as well as the rest of the disciples, expected the earthly Davidic Kingdom to appear. This conquering and ruling kingdom that God brings in with power was promised throughout their Scriptures. Thus Peter wondered, "How can the coming of God's kingdom be successfully opposed by men?"

Most Jews expected God's kingdom to deliver Israel from Roman rule. But Jesus is neither delivering Israel from Rome's power nor seeking His personal glory. Also, the Jewish leaders oppose Him and most Jews only follow Him to meet their fleshly needs.

Peter wonders several things, such as "Have I misunderstood the promised kingdom? Why the poor response especially from the Jewish leaders? Why do some people respond, but not others?"



QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 4 and Mark 5 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- Why did Jesus start teaching in parables?
- What was the purpose of parables?
- Who understood the parables?
- How are the four stories in Mark 4:35–5:43 related?

Assignment

- Read Mark 4:1-9 again.
- Read "The Parable of the Sower Taught."

The Parable of the Sower Taught

Jesus returns to the Sea of Galilee and begins teaching the large crowd from a boat while they listen from shore. He teaches them in parables. These parables in Mark 4 are stories that teach hidden spiritual truth, though some people may not understand them (e.g., the Jewish leaders who have already hardened their hearts).

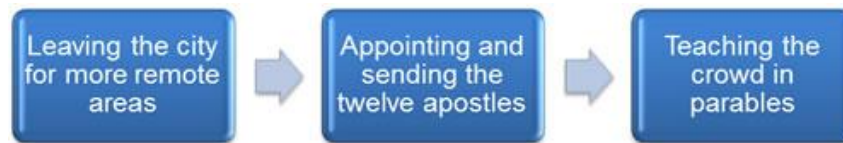
These parables continue Jesus' response to the opposition He received in the last lesson, especially in Mark 3. His responses there were:

- To leave the city and go into more remote areas
- To appoint twelve apostles and send them out with His authority

In this case, the crowd again presses in on Jesus. So He gets into a boat in order to teach more effectively. He teaches them that the kingdom is neither coming as they expected, nor when they expected, and He chose these parables to illustrate that message. The form of the kingdom is different now that Jesus sees the Jewish nation as a whole will reject it.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus used a common scene from rural Palestine (Mk 4:1-9). Jesus teaches that there are different responses to kingdom messages. One of those responses is opposition. Jesus ended the parable with a command to listen carefully and respond appropriately.

Jesus' Response to Rejection



QUESTION 2

Read through Mark 3–4 at least once and then match the section titles to the appropriate Scripture reference.

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 4:1-20	Saving the Demoniac
Mark 4:21-34	Power over Death and Dying
Mark 4:35-41	The Parable of the Sower
Mark 5:1-20	The Parables of the Plant and Seeds
Mark 5:21-43	The Storm on the Sea

QUESTION 3

What was the main reason that Jesus began to teach in parables?

- He had an influx of new funds.
- It drew an incredible popular response.
- He had received strong opposition.
- He had a new speech writer.

QUESTION 4

What else has changed that Jesus wants to illustrate in these parables?

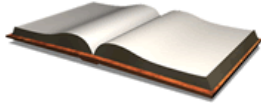
- The opposition of the demons to His ministry
- The form of the kingdom He is offering
- The cross the disciples must now bear as they follow Him
- The outcome of following Him on the road to Jerusalem

Key Points:

- Jesus began teaching in parables as a response to the strong opposition He received.

- The main point of the parable of the sower is to illustrate the different responses people have to Jesus' message.

Topic 2: The Interpretation of the Sower (Mk 4:10-20)



Peter and the other disciples noticed a change in Jesus' approach to ministry. His teaching was no longer straightforward, instead He used parables. He and the other disciples often commented to each other that they couldn't understand His teaching. So, when He was alone, Jesus' close followers asked Him about the parables. He told them they were privileged by God to learn the secret of the kingdom. But those who are not close followers will not understand His teaching.

Peter couldn't decide whether to feel more privileged to be chosen to be close to Jesus, or ashamed for not understanding Jesus' teaching. Despite the brave front he put on, in his heart of hearts he felt so dull sometimes. Yet the other disciples looked to him as a leader of their group. He also felt he was that, yet there were many times he felt so inadequate. Now, due to their dullness, Jesus was explaining the parable to them line by line. He felt like Isaiah's words were coming true in him: "Who is the Lord trying to teach? To whom is he explaining a message? Those just weaned from milk! Those just taken from their mother's breast!"

As Jesus explained Peter thought to himself, "This parable helps answer the questions I and the other disciples have most had on our heart. That is, 'Why are there so many different responses to the kingdom message?' Since it's supposedly what every loyal Jew has been longing for, why isn't it universally accepted?" Here Jesus says it isn't the message, but rather the state of the hearer's heart that determines the response.

Assignment

- Read Mark 4:10-20.
- Read Isaiah 28:9.
- Read "The Parable of the Sower Interpreted."

The Parable of the Sower Interpreted

Mark notes that this group following Jesus was not limited to the Twelve. They also include those around Him, possibly a reference back to Mark 3:34 when Jesus identifies His spiritual family. These insiders all noticed the change in Jesus' teaching. So they asked Him privately why He taught this way. He explained:

- The disciples were given understanding into the mystery of the kingdom of God while those outside of their intimate circle were not.
- This method of teaching fulfilled prophecy; Isaiah 6:9-10 indirectly predicted this method of teaching.

Why would He want to hide spiritual teaching from outsiders? It was only hidden from those already rejecting the kingdom He offered—probably those violently opposing Him, like the Jewish leaders who had hardened their hearts. These parables kept them from further hardening their hearts. To His disciples, who also didn't understand His parables, He explained them privately. They were slow to understand, which hindered them, just as the Pharisees were hindered by their hard hearts.

Jesus sees understanding this parable as the key to understanding His other parables. The sower brings the message of the kingdom (Mk 4:10-20). Some examples of sowers are John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples. As the seed of this word is spread, there are three examples of fruitless responses:

- The ones beside the road hear the word but Satan (compared to a bird) immediately comes and takes the word away (Mk 4:15).
- The ones on rocky ground hear the word with joy but have no firm root so they immediately fall away when persecuted (Mk 4:16-17).
- The ones among the thorns hear the word but are distracted by the world and its riches and the word is choked (Mk 4:18-19).

There is only one example of a fruitful response and Jesus issues a call to it: The ones in good soil hear the word, accept it, and bear much fruit (Mk 4:20).

In this parable, does He intend to teach us about who is really saved? No, Jesus' main teaching here is on the different responses to the kingdom message. We must make sure our response and the response of those we are responsible for is correct. Some examples of these groups are our fellow believers, our family unit if we are parents, and our own disciples.

QUESTION 5

According to Jesus, who was the bird in this parable identified as?

QUESTION 6

The parable of the sower teaches the hearer's responsibility to respond appropriately. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

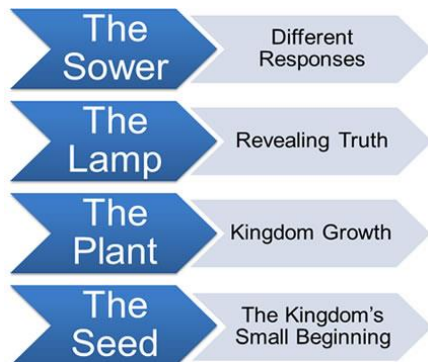
Match the reference with the corresponding response.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Response</i>
Mark 4:15, the ones beside the road	The rich young ruler is the classic example (Mk 10:17-27)
Mark 4:16-17, the ones on rocky ground	Peter actually falls into this category when he denies Jesus three times (Mk 14:66-72)
Mark 4:18-19, the ones among the thorns	The crowd that listens to Jesus and is amazed yet does not believe (Mk 1:27-28)
Mark 4:20, the ones on good ground	Mary of Bethany who anoints Jesus in (Mk 14:1-9)

Key Points:

- Jesus shows Satan's activity in this parable by comparing him to a bird that takes away the seed before it can take root.
- The parable of the sower teaches the hearer's responsibility to respond appropriately to Jesus' message.
- Understanding the parable of the sower is foundational for understanding other parables.

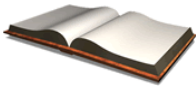
Topic 3: The Parables of the Lamp and Seeds (Mk 4:20-34)



Jesus now teaches the disciples the parable of the lamp. In the parable of the sower, Jesus taught His disciples that parables hide the truth from His enemies. In this parable of the lamp, He now refines His teaching: His main purpose is to teach truth, not to hide it. Eventually, all truth will be revealed to everyone. The hidden part of His message is only temporary. The disciples' mission is to proclaim, not hide, the message they have heard.

The second parable is about the mysterious growth of the kingdom. It is compared to how a plant grows automatically from a seed planted in the ground. The growth of the seed (the Word) is sure and God brings the growth and harvest.

The third parable is the parable of the mustard seed. This parable answered another question the disciples had on their mind: Why is the kingdom of God so small?



Peter now understands Jesus' parable, but only because Jesus explained it to him privately. He knows that by this parable Jesus illustrates the different responses His word receives from different people and that everyone is responsible for their response. Jesus even hinted that Israel might reject the kingdom! This made him wonder, "How can that be? They are God's people, are they not?" Again he thought, "How can God's Kingdom be successfully opposed by men?"

As Jesus taught more questions came to Peter's mind. He thought, "Jesus teaches in parables to hide truth from His enemies, but we disciples were also told to proclaim everything about Him. How can both be true? And if God is not establishing the kingdom now with power, how will it grow?" Their group seemed small compared to the kingdom they expected. How can they bring in a great kingdom? "After all," he thought, "Part of the reason I started following Him was to be part of a glorious kingdom."

Assignment

- Read Mark 4:20-34.
- Read "The Parables of the Lamp, the Plant, and the Seed."

The Parables of the Lamp, the Plant, and the Seed

The three parables in Mark 4:20-29 have a connection with the parable of the sower and follow it up with further illustrations.

Jesus continues teaching with the parable of the lamp. The lamp or light here is compared to spiritual light. The purpose of light is to reveal, not hide; and a light is placed where it gives the most light.

Jesus had just explained that parables will hide truth from the majority of the Jews. But this parable teaches that God's main purpose is revealing truth. This idea connects with the secrecy motif in Mark. God reveals truth but in His own time and way. The coming kingdom will not be what the Jews expected because it involves Jesus' role as a Servant and a suffering Messiah. So, everything hidden will, eventually, be revealed and everything secret will come to light (Mk 4:22). Jesus concludes with another call to listen carefully and respond appropriately to His words.

Mark 4:24-25 expands on the main point: how people respond to the light. Those who respond will receive more light, while those who do not will receive less and even lose what they have.

Jesus' next parable is about the plant growing from a seed. The comparison here is the mysterious way the seed grows into a mature plant. The plant's growth is automatic, as suggested by the Greek word it is translated from, from the time it is planted. Jesus and the disciples plant the seeds of the kingdom and the kingdom grows as God intends until it reaches maturity. But how that growth happens is not seen or observed by Jesus' followers.

The last of the kingdom parables in Mark is about the mustard seed. Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. Though one of the smallest seeds, it grows into a large bush, two or three meters high; large enough so even the birds of the air can nest in it. This growth all happens in one growing season. The main point is the future great extent of the kingdom contrasted with its insignificant beginning.

In application, this teaches faithfulness within our area of ministry even if we do not see great results. Our faithfulness leads to achieving the goals God has for His kingdom.

Daniel has a parable with some similarities to this one (Dan 4:10-12). The birds represent the people of the nations in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and they find shelter and provision within. Eventually, in the millennial kingdom, the nations of the earth will find provision within Christ's kingdom.

Mark 4:33-34 gives a summary of Jesus' teaching until this point. Jesus spoke to them only in parables but explained these parables privately to His disciples. He taught slowly and progressively, according to their ability to hear it. He is not popular with the crowd or those rejecting Him. Neither party understands His ministry. And the disciples would misunderstand it also, apart from Jesus explaining it to them.

Persecuted, suffering believers like Mark's readers were should take great comfort in this parable for we share Jesus' experience. Jesus' first advent ended in apparent defeat but was in reality a great spiritual victory unrevealed until He returns to reign on earth. Similarly, our life as Christians looks like a defeat, but if lived faithfully it, too, can be a great spiritual victory richly rewarded in eternity.

QUESTION 8

Which of the following is true according to the parable of the lamp? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. All truth will eventually be revealed.
- B. Jesus wants His disciples to proclaim the truth He is temporarily hiding.
- C. Jesus wants His disciples to hide the truth from those who oppose Him.
- D. The light of the lamp symbolizes spiritual illumination.

QUESTION 9

The main point of the parable of the plant is the mystery of its _____.

QUESTION 10

From your study of Mark's gospel so far, what lesson should we apply from the parable of the mustard seed?

- A. The mysterious growth of the kingdom is certain even if it cannot be seen.
- B. Some seed will fall on good soil and produce a great harvest.
- C. The truth of the kingdom, though hidden now, will eventually be revealed through the disciples.
- D. Though God's kingdom was apparently defeated at the cross it will eventually become great.

QUESTION 11

Each of the kingdom of heaven parables has a main point it is teaching. Match the name of the parable to its corresponding main point.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Main Point</i>
The Sower	The disciples revealing Jesus' message
The Lamp	The mysterious growth of the kingdom
The Plant	Big results for Jesus' ministry from a small beginning
The Mustard Seed	Proper response to Jesus' message

QUESTION 12

Jesus taught the kingdom of heaven parables and then gave private instruction to His disciples (Mk 4:10-13; 4:33-34). Put yourself in the place of one of Jesus' disciples and write down the questions you would ask Him about each of the parables.

Key Points:

- Jesus' new tactic of hiding truth from His opposition is temporary; His main intention remains to reveal truth.
- Kingdom growth occurs mystically and surely and is neither always observable nor dependent on human effort.
- Jesus' apparent defeat and rejection now eventuates in salvation and a great kingdom.

Topic 4: Breaching the Outer Defenses (Mk 4:35-43)

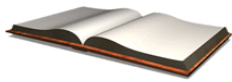


Jesus started teaching about the kingdom of God in parables and He now performs the first in a series of four miracles to authenticate His message.

Four Sequential Miracles			
Muzzling the Storm	Saving the Demoniac	Healing the Bleeder	Raising the Dead

Mark's usual pattern when telling a story on healing is to first describe a person in need. In this case, in the story on calming the storm, the disciples take the place of the person in need. This is the first of two times in Mark that Jesus calms a storm at sea (Mk 6:45-52). When a miracle is performed a second time, it helps us understand its message is vital. The miracles of the feeding of the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand are examples of similar miracles performed twice.

Jesus expects the disciples to learn from the miracles He performs, but so far they have not. In this story, He rebukes them for their cowardice and asks where their faith is. In this case the message for us is to be sure we learn this lesson.



As Jesus used a boat to teach the multitudes, Peter saw His wisdom. This method not only allowed Him to be more easily seen and heard, but it also kept the crowd from getting too close. But after teaching all day in the boat, Jesus turned to Peter and told him to go to the other side of the sea

“But what is the hurry?” Peter asked. “Shouldn't we put in to shore to get supplies first?” “No” Jesus replied briskly, “We're leaving immediately for the other side of the sea!” Peter felt his jaw drop. He wanted to resupply the ship before crossing.

Peter knew disciples go where their rabbi goes. Jesus decided the disciples' missions and this was not a democracy. Besides, they were a captive audience, stuck in the boat. It surprised him how much this bothered him. So they took Jesus without getting supplies.

Peter looked closely at Jesus and noticed He looked exhausted from His long day of teaching. Yes, He was, and He soon lay down on a cushion in the stern. “Maybe” Peter thought, “He simply sought rest, a few peaceful moments away from that jostling crowd would do us all some good. Maybe now we won't actually go to that forbidden shore?”

Suddenly Peter felt a chilly breeze that sent shivers down his spine. Apprehensively, from years of instinct as a fisherman, he looked up and out over the sea. Now his skin started to tingle and wouldn't stop! He saw a developing storm approaching quickly. He looked around at the others and he could see they all were on high alert. What was that terror they all felt? Why were they all shuddering at every gust of wind? His thoughts were coming quickly now. “How unfortunate that the wind is suddenly blowing directly contrary to our destination.” This storm bothers him and normally storms do not easily bother Peter. After all, he had a lot of experience with storms that come upon fishermen on the sea. What was different about this one?

Immediately, the storm was upon them and waves were crashing over the boat, making it take on water. Peter thought, “What is this? This clearly is not just an ordinary storm!” Yet he saw his role as the captain of this band, especially when Jesus was asleep. “I mustn't wake the Master” he thought, “He must be exhausted, but how can He sleep through this?” Yet, Peter's experience told him they were in danger of going down in the storm. As it grew worse he and the other disciples finally addressed Jesus saying, “Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?”

Assignment

- Read Mark 4:35-43.
- Read “The Account of the Storm.”

The Account of the Storm

The story of this storm at sea is the first of four miracles in this lesson that show Jesus' authority to proclaim God's kingdom (Mk 4:35-43).

Needing more room to better teach the crowds, Jesus and His disciples taught from a boat a short distance from the shore (Mk 3:9). But Mark perhaps pictures someone watching their sporadic movements apprehensively—the watcher is the land of the Garasenes in the region of the Decapolis (Mk 5:1-20). Jesus, aware of the scrutiny, prepares a quiet trip to this evil land. As darkness falls, Jesus suggested that they cross the lake (Mk 4:35). So the disciples took Him by boat “just as he was” (Mk 4:36), which likely means they left suddenly in obedience to Him and without stopping to get supplies. This was a key element in their attack and is a key discipleship concept: the disciples did not choose their mission; rather Jesus chose it for them. Are you ready; is your faith ready for your mission for Him?

The disciples, unaware of the underlying cosmic battle, row eastward while Jesus slept (Mk 4:38).

It was as if the demonic, unclean land anticipated their approach and sought to hinder it as the wind blew away from the shore. Suddenly, the wind and waves beat against the boat, nearly capsizing it (Mk 4:37; 5:1-20). The violent winds blew contrary to their destination as the disciples, struggling with the storm, wanted to allow Jesus to rest.

Because of the surrounding hilly terrain, the Sea of Galilee is famous for its sudden storms that develop quickly. But this was no ordinary storm and the disciples knew it. These experienced fishermen faced many storms in their lifetime—but this was different. Finally, overwhelmed and overpowered, they turn and rebuke Jesus asking if He cares that they are going to die (Mk 4:38). This, however, shows that they did not understand who Jesus was. He expected them to learn this from previous lessons. They successfully managed previous storms themselves, but they were terrified by this one, as terrified as they were when witnessing Jesus doing something supernatural.

A key to understanding the disciple's fearful reaction is to understand a Jew's view of clean and unclean. This Gentile land they approached was avoided at all costs by serious Jews. In this story there are multiple sources of uncleanness and the disciples react to each one.

Verse	Event	Disciples' Rebuke
Mark 4:38	Calming the storm	"Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?"
Mark 5:31	Healing the hemorrhage	"You see the crowd pressing against you and you say, 'Who touched me?'"
Mark 6:37	Feeding the five thousand	"Should we go and buy bread for two hundred silver coins and give it to them to eat?"
Mark 8:4	Feeding the four thousand	"Where can someone get enough bread in this desolate place to satisfy these people?"

Jesus rebuked the wind as He would rebuke a demon, telling it to be calm (Mk 4:39). Jesus' words literally mean muzzled, a strong rebuke in the perfect tense. It means to be quiet and remain that way.

Successfully rebuking the storm, Jesus rebukes His disciples for their cowardice and lack of faith (Mk 4:40). He wanted them to understand His person, His presence, and that God's power was at His command. They should not fear but have faith. In application to us, Jesus promises to be with us

also. God’s presence and power are available in the Holy Spirit so we can respond to trials—apart from fear—through faith in Him.

The disciples, who previously feared the storm (and the land they approached), now respond in overwhelming fear of Jesus and ask, “Who then is this? Even the wind and sea obey him!” (Mk 4:41). They knew their own powerlessness in this storm. They knew no mere man had authority in this realm. Through these miracles Jesus teaches that He is the Son of God. But that involves more than what the disciples and other Jews anticipated.

The disciples faced their greatest mortal fears, along with their mortality, in this storm. But their fear expands beyond their previous limits as they glimpse Jesus’ spiritual authority and power. What are our greatest fears? Can we face them alone? What about with Jesus’ help, the One who can swallow up those fears in the awe of His magnificence?

(Some interpretations adapted from Doug Greenwold, *Preserving Bible Times*, <http://preservingbibletimes.org>.)

QUESTION 13

An important discipleship lesson occurs in this account because the disciples were in a boat and could not get out. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

To what was Jesus’ rebuke of the storm similar?

- A. An exorcism
- B. A prayer
- C. A parable
- D. A greeting

QUESTION 15

The disciples started out fearing the storm and ended up fearing _____.

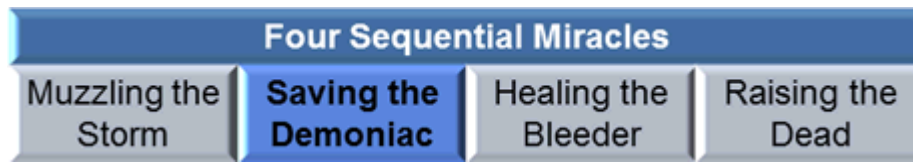
QUESTION 16

Jesus wants His disciples to learn from the incident of the calming of the storm. Again, put yourself in the place of the disciples and record what you would have been feeling during the storm, during His rebuke of you and your fellow disciples and after, when Jesus brought the boat to land. What should you have learned and what would you have wanted to ask Him?

Key Points:

- Disciples do not choose their missions; they are committed to follow Jesus.
- Jesus did not avoid the unclean, or Gentiles, but on the contrary sought them out.
- This account powerfully illustrates the cosmic battle, discipleship lessons, and how Jesus continues revealing His identity.
- The disciples’ greatest fears are faced and swallowed up by their greater fear of Jesus.

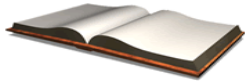
Topic 5: Saving the Demoniac (Mk 5:1-20)



In this second in the series of four miracles, Jesus heals a demoniac. He has cast out demons before, but this situation is different in several ways:

- This being has superhuman strength and cannot be bound.
- He is a danger to himself and the others around him.
- He lives among tombs and reveals his inner torment by gashing himself with stones.
- When Jesus asks his name, we find out he is not tormented by one demon but by thousands.

After his cure, the people of the land still ask Jesus to leave. They fear Him and blame Him for the loss of their herds (Mk 5:13-18). Though amazed at His deliverance, they seem unconcerned about the man Jesus released from his torment.



Peter and the disciples had never been more frightened than from the cosmic battle they had just been through while facing the storm. They now knew that this was no natural storm. He even noticed that Jesus had addressed it in the same way that He cast out demons. Many of the disciples were experienced seamen yet all were lying prostrate on the bottom of the boat. The fear that still gripped them held them hostage, as if they were lashed to the planks. After Jesus stilled the storm at sea, it took all the courage they could muster to just get up off the bottom of the boat and man the oars to continue toward shore. They were in an absolute terror. All were pale as ghosts and had queasy stomachs. Peter still wondered, “Who is Jesus anyway? I thought I knew...”

As they approached land Peter’s fear again turned to horror. He could hear a man screaming, as if totally out of his mind. Then he saw him; unclothed and running among the tombs. “Great, an unclothed madman!” Peter said to himself. This scene would horrify any Jew and it horrified him. He struggled to control his emotions, but the horror brought to mind all kinds of uncleanness from death, unclean spirits, and unclothed demonized madmen. Peter’s stomach churned, his face paled, and he thought he’d be sick. As he lost all strength, he sunk down in the boat.

Suddenly, he felt their boat drag bottom. Immediately Jesus stepped out of the boat and Peter anticipated and feared Jesus’ call to join Him. Strange that He never called—but at the same time it was a relief. He noticed none of his fellow disciples would get out either. Peter summoned all of his inner strength to peek over the side of the boat to witness what happens...

Assignment

- Read Mark 5:1-20.
- Read “The Account of the Legion.”

The Account of the Legion

Jesus now arrives on the other, east, side of the sea in the country of the Gadarenes (possibly Gersa, modern Khera). This is the second in the series of four miracles (Mk 5:1-20).

While approaching this land, remember that the disciples are already extremely fearful. As good Jews they did not want to go to this unclean land. Worse still, they could hear a man screaming long

before they arrived at land. Most likely they also could see a naked man running around, which to Jewish sensibilities would only have added to their discomfort.

When Jesus was getting out of the boat, the man with an unclean spirit met him (Mk 5:2). Mark does not indicate that the disciples got out of the boat, suggesting that they remained aboard (Mk 5:2). Jews were so conscious of defilement from Gentiles that they would even wash their hands when returning from the marketplace. This would help cover for them in case they had happened to touch someone or something Gentile and defiled themselves. Just think how they felt when they arrived here. Similar to healing the leper by touch, Jesus was the only one who did not fear this defilement (Mk 1:40-42).

Mark describes the unusual—and disturbing to the Jewish disciples—characteristics of this man:

- He had an unclean spirit (Mk 5:2).
- He could not be clothed (Mk 5:15).
- He dwelled among the tombs—the epitome of uncleanness in contrast to Jesus’ cleanness (Mk 5:2; 5:5).
- He could not be bound, even with shackles and chains, because he tore them apart—as the storm at sea was supernaturally strong, so is this man (Mk 5:3-4).
- He could not be subdued, because no one was strong enough—as the disciples could not subdue the supernatural storm, no one could subdue this man (Mk 5:4; see also Mk 3:27).
- He could not be silenced; rather he constantly, night and day, cried out and gashed himself with stones (Mk 5:5; Mk 4:39).

All of these characteristics helped illustrate that this man was far beyond human help.

Mark stresses how pitiable the demoniac’s or legion’s life is. Gashing himself reveals his inner anguish. His bleeding also makes him unclean in still another way. Satan enforces the authority of his kingdom over humanity and these are its manifestations. This is the undetected world unbelievers live in but, because it is spiritually discerned, they are usually oblivious to. The gospel of deliverance through Jesus must be brought to them by us.

This demoniac bows to Jesus and witnesses to who He is. All demons are sensitive to Jesus’ presence and concerned about whether their future torment will start immediately. They seemingly accept their future sentence to eternal torment, but do not want it to start yet. They want to make the most of their remaining time on earth.

In Jesus’ spiritual battles with demons both parties often state the other’s name. This spirit states Jesus’ hidden name as “Jesus, Son of the Most High God” (Mk 5:7). This designation is not a Jewish title for God, but a very Gentile designation, showing again the unclean, or Gentile character, of this land. Jesus also asks the demon’s name and it is Legion (Mk 5:9). A legion is a Roman army group usually of about six thousand men, a formidable force and people recognized them as symbolic of Rome’s power and oppression.

Jesus commands Legion to leave the man but before leaving Legion negotiates his surrender. He asks Jesus not to send him out of the region (Mk 5:10). This country was comfortable for him. The influence of evil and paganism is evident everywhere. It had tombs and pigs that may symbolize rebellion against God’s Law, and these demons had established their presence there with authority. They asked to enter the swine and these unclean swine were the perfect hosts for these unclean spirits. Jesus allowed them their suggested course of action and when the spirits entered the swine the pigs rushed headlong into the sea in an attempt to destroy themselves (Mk 5:13).

The herdsman saw the pigs drown in the lake and immediately shared the news with people in town. Some who heard this news went to the lake to see it for themselves (Mk 5:14). The people who

observe become frightened and ask Him to leave their country (Mk 5:17).

The word translated “frightened” is an inner response to the supernatural. A similar word is used to describe the disciples reaction to Jesus calming the storm (Mk 4:41). Fear makes them ask Jesus to leave, continuing the theme of opposition to Jesus’ ministry. Their attitude contrasts greatly with the released man’s devotion to Jesus (Mk 5:18). Also, their concern was not for the man, but for the loss of their herds.

The demon-possessed man was now seated, clothed, and in his right mind (Mk 5:14). As Jesus got into the boat, the delivered man asked to accompany Jesus (Mk 5:18).

Why did Jesus refuse his request? The way he phrased his request showed it was a formal request to follow Him as a disciple (the wording is the same as Jesus calling His disciples in Mk 3:14). Jesus refused because He wanted the man’s testimony to reach the people in his country. Jesus instructed him to report what He had done in his life; the man obeyed and those he told were amazed (Mk 5:19-20). Everyone there knew of this man and his testimony remained before them. Because we were saved from a similar fate, we should respond as he did, in obedience to Jesus.

As with other encounters in Mark, the ideal disciple is not necessarily one of Jesus’ twelve disciples, but an individual Jesus meets and ministers to. Mark shows his Roman readers that anyone—not just the twelve—can please God by faithfully following Him.

People are amazed by this witness but, like others, it does not lead to faith in the hearers yet. To change our lives and please Jesus, we must realize who He is and what He can do, but we also need to be close with Him. This closeness is called abiding and it is the relationship Jesus wants with us.

(Some interpretations adapted from Doug Greenwold, *Preserving Bible Times*, <http://preservingbibletimes.org>.)

QUESTION 17

Which of the following are reasons that only Jesus gets out of the boat? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The crazed man dwelled among the tombs.
- B. The crazed man they saw was naked.
- C. The crazed man’s screaming could be heard as they approached land.
- D. The disciples were already afraid from the storm on the sea.
- E. The land was unclean.

QUESTION 18

No man before Jesus had ever even tried to help this demoniac. *True or False?*

QUESTION 19

In this account of the cure of Legion, Jesus denied the former demoniac’s request to follow Him as one of His disciples. His discipleship mission was to remain in his land and witness to the people who knew his former manner of life. Explain why this was such an important and effective mission for him. How can this lesson help you to be a better witness?

Key Points:

- This entire land was unclean to the uttermost and a source of nightmarish discomfort and fear to conscientious Jews.
- Jesus delivered the demoniac though he was beyond human help.

- The demoniac asked to follow Jesus (as a disciple) but it seems his testimony would be more effective by remaining where he was (see the crowd around Jesus when he returns to the Decapolis compared to his being sent away in Mk 5:17).
- The townspeople reacted in fear just as the disciples did when Jesus calmed the storm at sea.

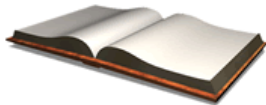
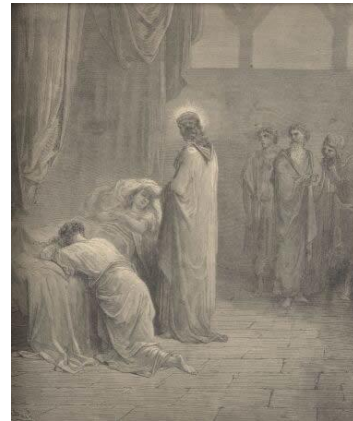
Topic 6: Authority over Death (Mk 5:21-43)



This topic covers the third and fourth miracles in this series which authenticate Jesus' kingdom messages and parables. These miracles are connected and, in these stories, Mark again uses a sandwich structure to tell a story within a story.

These miracles are different from what Jesus has done before. He shows the depth of His authority extends to the dying and the dead. People who witnessed many of His miracles are still astonished when He raises a young girl from the dead.

Significantly, the number twelve is used of both the woman's bleeding and the girl's age. Twelve is most likely a reference to Israel who is often represented by the twelve tribes. Therefore, following the symbolism, the spiritual state of Israel is, like this woman and girl, dead and dying. Yet, through the healing ministry of their Messiah Jesus will eventually heal the nation and restore it to fellowship with God.



As Jesus returns to the boat Peter's nightmare finally ends and they head back to familiar, Jewish territory. He found himself rowing away from this land with a renewed vigor. "What a relief!" he exclaimed to himself. Peter now understood how someone could die from fear and he felt his full recovery may yet take some time—and time was needed to process these events.

He was determined to figure out who Jesus is based on what he experienced. Even if that meant that Jesus was the Prophet, but Peter could not imagine the prophet doing what Jesus had just done. If you took all the works of the greatest leaders and prophets in Jewish history, none could do what Jesus did. All their works together hardly even compare.

Peter thought to himself, "Please stop this journey for a while!" But the time for rest rarely came while traveling with Jesus. Even when He planned their rest, it was interrupted by someone with a need. And again, their rest is interrupted. Before they even came to land people recognized their boat. Already, as soon as they stepped on land, a huge crowd was gathering. "Please send them away, Lord" Peter mumbled, not really intending to be heard.

Peter immediately recognized the synagogue leader as he approached them. Peter overheard him asking Jesus to heal his daughter, who sounded on the verge of death. Peter expected Jesus to hurry to her side, for what could He do once she died? Curious that Jesus stays so relaxed. You would also

think He would grow impatient with this crowd as they could hardly make progress as they pressed in and even bumped against Him.

Suddenly Jesus stopped and asked, “Who touched Me?” Peter was incredulous! With all these people around He suddenly asks about one specific person that touched Him. “How strange He could be,” Peter thought. “Why delay a time-critical mission to seek out one individual who touched Him in a jostling crowd?”

Assignment

- Read Mark 5:21-43.
- Read Deuteronomy 18:15, which was referred to in the storybook.
- Read “The Redemption of the Dying.”

The Redemption of the Dying

Jesus returns again to the other (west) side of the sea. This story is told in Mark’s familiar sandwich style (Mk 5:25-43). Remember, it emphasizes a common feature: for both patients, humanly speaking, their situation is hopeless. The middle story is presented first, then the story that ends the chapter. They are the third and fourth in the series of miracles Mark relates starting with the storm on the sea.

The facts about the woman’s condition are listed:

- She had hemorrhaged for twelve years (Mk 5:25).
- She endured much at the hands of physicians (Mk 5:26).
- She hadn’t been helped at all but became worse (Mk 5:26).

She was also permanently considered unclean because of her bleeding, so she was treated as a leper and isolated. These facts show that, like the case with the Demoniac, all human efforts to help her had failed. Due to her condition she was slowly dying of blood loss, even though she was still living (Lev 17:11).

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she kept telling herself that touching His clothes would be enough to heal her (Mk 5:27-28). Because of her condition, she tried to sneak in, touch His clothes, and sneak away. Had the crowds been aware of her condition, they would have either parted and allowed her through, or more likely, would have forced her to keep her distance. Touching His clothes, the hem of His garment, symbolically put her under His care—it was not likely a superstitious view of the power of His clothing.

At her touch, the cure was immediate; her flow of blood dried up and she felt the cure in her body. Jesus felt the healing power go out of Him (Mk 5:30). He turned around in the crowd to find out who had touched his clothes (Mk 5:30). He asked in order to commend her faith and instruct her to continue in faithfulness.

To the disciples, Jesus’ question is outrageous, for they also have experienced the constant jostling from the crowd. Rebuking Him, they point out that many are pressing in on Him; identifying an individual would be a difficult task (Mk 5:31)? But Jesus distinguished the touch of faith from the random contact with people in the crowd.

Jesus calls out to her and invites her into a personal relationship with Him. She responds in fear, similar to the response of the disciples to the storm, and she fell down before Him and told Him the truth (Mk 5:33). By calling her daughter, Jesus acknowledges her new relationship with Him, based on her trust (Mk 3:34-35; 5:34).

An important spiritual principle is that “the life is in the blood” (Lev 17:11) and this shows Jesus’

redemption of the dying people. The next part of this sandwich story shows Jesus' redemption of the dead. Jesus just healed a dying woman—a foreshadowing of His next miracle!

Even before Jesus meets the bleeding woman, a synagogue leader named Jairus asked Jesus urgently, “My little daughter is near death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be healed and live” (Mk 5:22-23). A synagogue ruler was a lay person in charge of the building and services. Significantly, Jairus is another person from outside Jesus' immediate followers who knows who Jesus is. Laying on of hands demonstrates Jesus conveying vitality from himself to the needy person. Jairus requested this from Jesus before many witnesses as a multitude followed and pressed around Jesus (Mk 5:23-24). Notice that Jesus did not rush immediately to the daughter's side, despite her more serious condition. Death to Jesus is no greater problem than illness.

While dismissing the woman He healed of a hemorrhage, a report came from Jairus' house that his daughter had died (Mk 5:35). The people delivering the news conclude there is no need to bother Jesus anymore. Mark contrasts their lack of faith with Jesus' request for faith. Jesus paid no attention to the report of her death but immediately told Jairus to believe and not be afraid (Mk 5:36). Jairus had just seen the bleeding woman healed by faith, so he is now asked to apply this same lesson to His situation. We can apply this too, based on previous victories Jesus has given us by faith.

No one could refute that the girl was dead, for as they approached the house there was commotion from people loudly weeping and wailing. Their reaction showed they knew she was dead (Mk 5:38). When Jesus arrived and said she was only sleeping, they laughed at Him (Mk 5:39-40). These were professional mourners, already mourning, and they know when someone is dead. Jesus simply dismissed them, took the girl by the hand and asked her to get up; she immediately responded and got up (Mk 5:41-42). This was as easy for Jesus as for us to wake someone from sleep.

Mark connects these two stories with the detail of twelve years. He tells us the woman bled for twelve years and this girl was twelve when she died. The number twelve is often associated with Israel's twelve tribes and suggests the spiritual state of Israel and also their future hope of restoration through the ministry of their Messiah. If this connection is correct, Mark pictures Israel as unclean (bleeding) and dying apart from Jesus.

Only Peter, James, and John were chosen to follow Jesus as witnesses to this restoration (Mk 5:37, 40). The inner circle fills the role as legal witnesses not only here but at other key events—e.g., at the transfiguration, on the Mount of Olives, and in Gethsemane. The only other witnesses allowed were the girl's father and mother. Jesus gave these two commands:

1. Feed her.
2. No one should know about this (Mk 5:43).

Again, Jesus sought to limit the publicity from this miracle. The multitude's demands were great after His previous miracles. The demands on Him once this news spread would multiply greatly and further hinder His mission.

The immediate response of the witnesses was complete astonishment (Mk 5:42). Each in the series of four miracles left the witnesses in fear and astonishment. They knew these were supernatural acts. Jesus shows His authority is beyond all human bounds. This should lead to a great reception for Him in His hometown and for us as we give testimony of Him.

QUESTION 20

What facts in Mark 5:25-26 show that the bleeding woman was beyond human help?

QUESTION 21

Though Jesus healed the bleeding woman, He condemned her superstitious approach to Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 22

Which of the following are common factors in the stories of the healing of the bleeding woman and the raising of the dead girl? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. There is a twelve year connection.
- B. They were both beyond human help.
- C. Jesus was looking to respond to faith.
- D. The fathers of each played an important role.

QUESTION 23

In Mark 5:36, Jairus observed the faith and consequent healing of the bleeding woman when she was healed. He is then asked to apply that lesson to his own situation with his daughter. Explain in your Life Notebook what lesson of faith you can use from these two incidents to apply to your own situation.

QUESTION 24

What lesson about Jesus can believers glean from the stories of the bleeding woman and dead girl in Mark 5:21-43?

Key Points:

- Jesus was the only one who could heal and restore both the woman and Jairus' daughter.
- In both cases Jesus looked to respond to faith and in Jairus' case He sought to strengthen it.
- By using the twelve year connection, these stories are probably meant to suggest that the Jewish nation's spiritual state is one of death and dying.

Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 25

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 26

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 3 Self Check

QUESTION 1

The form of the kingdom offered in Mark 1 is the same as the form offered in Mark 4. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

In the parable of the sower, what takes away the seed before it can be accepted and bear fruit?

- A. Love of the world
- B. Persecution
- C. Satan
- D. Wealth

QUESTION 3

What is the main point of the parable of the plant?

- A. God's kingdom starts out small but becomes great.
- B. The disciples are to reveal the message Jesus is bringing.
- C. The growth of the kingdom is mysterious but certain.
- D. The response of the hearer determines the fruitfulness of the kingdom message.

QUESTION 4

What is the main point of the parable of the mustard seed?

- A. Big results for Jesus' ministry from a small beginning
- B. Proper response to Jesus' message
- C. The disciples revealing Jesus' message
- D. The mysterious growth of the kingdom

QUESTION 5

One discipleship lesson in the storm on the sea is that Jesus determines our mission and not us. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

The way Jesus rebuked the storm on the lake is the same way He rebuked which of the following?

- A. The demons
- B. The disciples
- C. Leprosy
- D. Fevers

QUESTION 7

The former demoniac asked to follow Jesus as one of His disciples but Jesus refused his request. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Which of the following is **not** a key factor in the disciples discomfort in the story of the demoniac?

- A. The fierce character of the residents
- B. The Gentile character of the land
- C. The nakedness of the man
- D. The tombs the man inhabited

QUESTION 9

According to Jesus, why was the woman with the hemorrhage cured?

- A. Because of His compassion on her
- B. Because of her faith
- C. Because she touched His garment
- D. Because she was His daughter

QUESTION 10

Mark used the presence of mourners to confirm the fact that Jairus' daughter was really dead. *True or False?*

Unit 1 Exam

QUESTION 1

Which of the following is **not** one of the three major events that Mark uses to illustrate God breaking through barriers to reveal Himself to mankind?

- A. Jesus' baptism
- B. Jesus' death
- C. Jesus' temptation
- D. Jesus' transfiguration

QUESTION 2

In Mark, Jesus calls Himself the Son of God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Which of the following is true of John the Baptist?

- A. He baptized with the Holy Spirit.
- B. He made Jerusalem his headquarters.
- C. He pointed his disciples to Jesus.
- D. His ministry increased after he baptized Jesus.

QUESTION 4

Jesus submitted to baptism, which showed He believed He was tainted by sin. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

One way to understand the Spirit's driving Jesus out into the wilderness is that Jesus was reluctant to face Satan's temptations. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

When Jesus called Andrew, Peter, James, and John they properly asked leave of their families to go with Jesus. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

In Mark 1:21-28, what shows the deficient spiritual state of the Jews?

- A. Allowing visitors to teach in the synagogue
- B. No reading of Scripture in the synagogue
- C. The few people present in the synagogue
- D. The presence of demons in the synagogue

QUESTION 8

In Jesus' time both fevers and leprosy were seen as being a curse for sin. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

What was Jesus doing in Mark 2:1-12 that only God Himself has the authority to do?

- A. Casting out demons
- B. Forgiving a person's sins
- C. Healing a paralyzed man
- D. Performing miracles

QUESTION 10

Which of the following in Mark 2 is the reverse of how Mark shows God revealing Himself to man?

- A. By showing the men breaking open the roof of the house
- B. When Jesus says He has the authority to forgive sins
- C. When Jesus fellowships with sinners
- D. When the disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath

QUESTION 11

Jesus insisted that sinners clean up their lives before He fellowshipped with them. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

Which of the following is **not** a figure Jesus used to illustrate His teaching in Mark 2:18-22?

- A. A guardian for a young child
- B. A patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment
- C. His role as a bridegroom
- D. New wine in old wineskins

QUESTION 13

In the first three chapters of Mark the events that happen in the synagogues help to show that true spiritual worship occurred in the synagogues in Jesus' time. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

In Mark 3:1-6, what had the Jewish leaders already decided about Him?

- A. That He could be ignored
- B. That He kept the Sabbath
- C. That He was God
- D. That He should be killed

QUESTION 15

According to Mark, why did Jesus choose the disciples?

- A. Because they first agreed to follow Him
- B. Because they were spiritual men when He called them
- C. To follow Him wherever He went
- D. To give Him emotional support

QUESTION 16

What is the eternal or unforgivable sin?

- A. Blasphemy against the Son of Man
- B. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
- C. Blasphemy against the Father
- D. An isolated act of defiant hostility toward God

QUESTION 17

Why did Jesus begin to teach in parables?

- A. He was using a new speech writer.
- B. He received an influx of new funds.
- C. His ministry drew an incredible popular response.
- D. His ministry received strong opposition.

QUESTION 18

What happened to the seed that fell on rocky ground in the parable of the sower?

- A. Satan immediately comes and takes the word away.
- B. The hearers receive the word with joy but have no firm root so they immediately fall away when persecuted.
- C. The hearers receive the word but are distracted by the world and riches and the word is choked.
- D. The hearers receive the word, accept it and bear much fruit.

QUESTION 19

Which parable in Mark four teaches about the mysterious nature of the kingdom's growth?

- A. The sower
- B. The lamp
- C. The plant
- D. The seed

QUESTION 20

Jesus' new tactic of hiding truth from His opposition is only a temporary strategy. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

What was the main source of the disciple's **initial** fear in the story of the muzzling of the storm?

- A. The sea
- B. The storm
- C. Jesus
- D. Uncleaness

QUESTION 22

Which form was Jesus' rebuke of the storm similar to?

- A. Exorcism
- B. Greeting
- C. Parable
- D. Prayer

QUESTION 23

When Jesus and the disciples reach land, there is no evidence the disciples get out of the boat. *True or False?*

QUESTION 24

Though Jesus healed the bleeding woman, He condemned her superstitious approach to Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 25

Which of the following is **not** a common factor in the stories of the healing of the bleeding woman and the raising of the dead girl?

- A. Jesus was looking to respond to faith.
- B. The fathers of each played an important role.
- C. There is a twelve year connection.
- D. They were both beyond human help.

Lesson 3 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 4:1-20	The Parable of the Sower
Mark 4:21-34	The Parables of the Plant and Seeds
Mark 4:35-41	The Storm on the Sea
Mark 5:1-20	Saving the Demoniac
Mark 5:21-43	Power over Death and Dying

QUESTION 3

C. He had received strong opposition. [This is one of several counter-measures He took after beginning to receive strong opposition to His ministry.]

QUESTION 4

B. The form of the kingdom He is offering [The form of the kingdom changed when it became obvious that the kingdom Jesus offered would not be accepted willingly by the Jews.]

QUESTION 5: Satan [He tries to take the seed, the Word of God, away before it can be accepted and bear fruit. We must be aware of his activity as we present the gospel to people.]

QUESTION 6: True [There is only one fruitful response, accepting the Word in a way that brings forth fruit. We do not want to be like many who were amazed at Jesus' teaching, but stop short of a proper response to that truth.]

QUESTION 7

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Response</i>
Mark 4:15, the ones beside the road	The crowd that listens to Jesus and is amazed yet does not believe (Mk 1:27-28)
Mark 4:16-17, the ones on rocky ground	Peter actually falls into this category when he denies Jesus three times (Mk 14:66-72)
Mark 4:18-19, the ones among the thorns	The rich young ruler is the classic example (Mk 10:17-27)
Mark 4:20, the ones on good ground	Mary of Bethany who anoints Jesus in (Mk 14:1-9)

QUESTION 8

- A. All truth will eventually be revealed.
- B. Jesus wants His disciples to proclaim the truth He is temporarily hiding.
- D. The light of the lamp symbolizes spiritual illumination.

[In this parable, Jesus says nothing is hidden except to be revealed.]

QUESTION 9: Growth [As with the farmer planting a seed and then returning later has not observed the plants actual growth, the comparison is to the mysterious and unseen growth of the kingdom.]

QUESTION 10

D. Though God's kingdom was apparently defeated at the cross it will eventually become great.

QUESTION 11

<i>Name</i>	<i>Main Point</i>
The Sower	Proper response to Jesus' message
The Lamp	The disciples revealing Jesus' message
The Plant	The mysterious growth of the kingdom
The Mustard Seed	Big results for Jesus' ministry from a small beginning

QUESTION 12: *Your answer*

QUESTION 13: True [Jesus did not ask who was willing to take on this mission or a show of hands to see who would go and leave the others behind. That question was already settled: as disciples we go where Jesus leads.]

QUESTION 14

- A. An exorcism

QUESTION 15: Jesus [They fear Jesus because they had not realized before that He could control nature. Now they realize He can but also that He operates at a higher level and controls the forces that can control nature. They still do not realize He is God in the flesh.]

QUESTION 16: *Your answer*

QUESTION 17

- A. The crazed man dwelled among the tombs.
- B. The crazed man they saw was naked.
- C. The crazed man's screaming could be heard as they approached land.
- D. The disciples were already afraid from the storm on the sea.
- E. The land was unclean.

QUESTION 18: False [They had tried binding him, subduing him, and silencing him probably among others and were unsuccessful. Mark wants to show he was beyond human help.]

QUESTION 19: *Your answer*

QUESTION 20: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

She had hemorrhaged for twelve years (Mk 5:25); she endured much at the hands of physicians; she had not been helped at all but became worse (Mk 5:26).

QUESTION 21: False [Most likely her approach was not superstitious because she was symbolically trusting herself to Him. He did not condemn her but pointed out it was to her faith He responded and healed her.]

QUESTION 22

- A. There is a twelve year connection.
- B. They were both beyond human help.
- C. Jesus was looking to respond to faith.

[The twelve year connection was probably meant to suggest to the Jews that their nation's spiritual state was one of spiritual death. The immediate response of the witnesses to the raising of the girl was complete astonishment (Mk 5:42).]

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

QUESTION 24: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

That Jesus brought, in His person, divine power to heal patients that were beyond human help.

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

QUESTION 26: *Your answer*

Lesson 3 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1: False

QUESTION 2

C. Satan

QUESTION 3

C. The growth of the kingdom is mysterious but certain.

QUESTION 4

A. Big results for Jesus' ministry from a small beginning

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6

A. The demons

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8

A. The fierce character of the residents

QUESTION 9

B. Because of her faith

QUESTION 10: True

Unit 1 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1

C. Jesus' temptation

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3

C. He pointed his disciples to Jesus.

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6: False

QUESTION 7

D. The presence of demons in the synagogue

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9

B. Forgiving a person's sins

QUESTION 10

A. By showing the men breaking open the roof of the house

QUESTION 11: False

QUESTION 12

A. A guardian for a young child

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14

D. That He should be killed

QUESTION 15

C. To follow Him wherever He went

QUESTION 16

B. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

QUESTION 17

D. His ministry received strong opposition.

QUESTION 18

B. The hearers receive the word with joy but have no firm root so they immediately fall away when persecuted.

QUESTION 19

C. The plant

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21

B. The storm

QUESTION 22

A. Exorcism

QUESTION 23: True

QUESTION 24: False

QUESTION 25

B. The fathers of each played an important role.

Unit 2: Responses to Jesus

Unit Introduction

In Unit 1 Jesus' ministry began solely to His people, Israel. Unit 2 shows His ministry overflowing to reach even to the Gentiles. The pivotal point in Mark centers around Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ (Mk 8:29). Until now, the focus of Jesus' teaching for the disciples was on discovering who He is. However, after Peter's confession, Jesus' teaching for them will focus on what His mission is.

Most of the stories through the rest of Mark illustrate one of the points Jesus teaches immediately after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ (Mk 8:27-30):

1. The Son of Man will suffer, be rejected by religious leaders, die, and rise on the third day (Mk 8:31).
2. Focusing your mind on God's interests instead of your own (Mk 8:33).
3. True followers of Christ must put the needs of others above their own (Mk 8:34-36).
4. The Son of Man will be ashamed of those who were ashamed of Him (Mk 8:38).

Lesson 4 continues showing how the Jews respond to Jesus' ministry, along with how He responds to them. We get to see His hometown's response, the disciples sent on their mission, the death of John the Baptist, and Jesus feeding the five thousand and walking on water.

Lesson 5 shows how Jesus expands His ministry. It is no longer just to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. As Jesus teaches that all foods are clean He is really pronouncing the Gentiles clean and including them in the kingdom offer. Mark shows Him ministering to Gentiles in the same ways He did to Jews.

Lesson 6 focuses on the disciples understanding of who Jesus is. They struggle with this but eventually understand enough to confess Him as the Christ (Mk 8:27-30). It also introduces them to their new struggle: to learn what His—and their—mission will be.

Unit Outline

Lesson 4: Jewish Rejection (Mk 6:1-56)

Lesson 5: Gentile Acceptance (Mk 7:1-8:13)

Lesson 6: The Disciples' Understanding (Mk 8:14-9:29)

Lesson 4: Jewish Rejection (Mk 6:1-56)

Lesson Introduction

Jesus' humanity prevented the people in His hometown (Nazareth) from knowing His true origin and ministering to people there (Mk 6:1-3). As a result Jesus sends the disciples out to spread His message (Mk 6:7-13). Meanwhile, the intrigue surrounding John the Baptist's death foreshadows Jesus' death (Mk 6:14). John's disciples ask for and bury his body, as followers of Jesus would later do the same for Him (Mk 6:29; Mk 15:42).



In this lesson, Jesus begins His teachings on bread when Jesus feeds the five thousand and those teachings continue until the disciples' confession of Christ (Mk 6:33-44; Mk 8:27-30). In feeding the five thousand Jesus is the new Moses who provides manna, bread from heaven, for His covenant people (Mk 6:41-44). His initial supplies of bread are scant but He supplies their needs with bountiful leftovers (Mk 6:42-43). With Jesus, the kingdom conditions of Messiah's reign are now present (Isa 61:11). As the disciples continue to struggle, Jesus overcomes the barriers of nature by walking on water to come and deliver them (Mk 6:48-49).

At this point Mark includes another summary of Jesus ministry so far by picturing Him as the Great Physician with patients flocking to Him for salvation (Mk 6:53-56).

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Shown in His Hometown's Opinion (Mk 6:1-6)

Topic 2: Sending the Disciples

 Their Mission (Mk 6:7-13)

 Their Success (Mk 6:30-32)

Topic 3: Shown in John's Fate

 Background Story (Mk 6:14-20)

 Banquet Story (Mk 6:21-29)

Topic 4: Shown in His Deeds

 Feeding the Five Thousand (Mk 6:33-44)

 Walking on Water (Mk 6:45-52)

 Healing the Sick (Mk 6:53-56)

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Topic 1 shows us the unbelief of the people of Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. Their unbelief prevents Him from doing many miracles there.

In topic 2 Jesus commissions the Twelve and sends them out with His authority. They go out with minimal supplies, depending on Jesus and getting their support from the people they minister to.

Topic 3 shows Herod's arrest and murder of John the Baptist. John is the forerunner of Jesus in many ways as the intrigue surrounding John's murder anticipates and illustrates Jesus' fate.

Topic 4 gives famous signs and evidences of Jesus' deity. Mark first tells us how He fed the five thousand after starting with minimal supplies. He then walks on water to assist the disciples in their struggle against the wind. After these two signs, Mark summarizes the healing ministry of Jesus to meet the needs of the multitudes.

Summary: Mark explores Jesus' ministry to Jews and how they usually either reject it or misunderstand it. This is true even though He has recognized authority in teaching, commissioning His apostles, and providing for His people. He also shows His mastery over the realm of nature. As the evidence for who He really is mounts, will His people respond correctly? And if they do not, what is next?

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

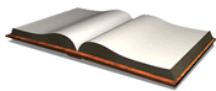
- Discuss the instances in which Mark reveals who Jesus is as the stories unfold
- Understand how John the Baptist's death foreshadows Christ's coming death
- Identify ways you can minister to others and take steps to do so

Topic 1: Shown in His Hometown's Opinion (Mk 6:1-6)

It is always interesting to return to your hometown several years after moving away. In a similar way, Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth to speak in the synagogue. The people there saw Him grow up and knew His family from daily interactions. They knew Jesus only as one of them, a man who made His living as a carpenter.

When they heard Jesus teach with supernatural wisdom, they were blinded by familiarity and therefore could not accept the obvious—at the least He was specially gifted by God. So they rejected and insulted Him, not to mention Mary. Because when they call Him her son they are not so subtly implying that His birth was illegitimate.

Jesus responded by quoting a saying and limiting His ministry among them. These neighbors in Nazareth did not display the faith He looked for.



In the last day or two Peter had witnessed four incredible miracles that left him dazed. “Who is Jesus?” he asked himself. It seemed like the unexpected—and the uncomfortable—always happened with Him. “After all,” Peter thought, “Who would go to the lands and people that He did? He always went to those lowest in status, to the most unclean or unhealthy, and He even took a relaxed approach toward death. I wouldn’t be going to these places or meeting these people if Jesus wasn’t leading.”

But Peter also had a renewed enthusiasm—a new hope—for Jesus’ ministry. It had new momentum and acclaim. “Now,” he thought, “Returning to Nazareth, they should welcome their hometown hero with open arms.” But again Peter is taken unaware as Nazareth gives Jesus an unexpected response. Though the people are astonished by His teaching and miracles, instead of being hailed as a hometown hero, He is both rejected and insulted.

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 6 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- What kind of reception did Jesus receive in His hometown and why?
- Why didn't the disciples bring anything with them on their mission?
- Why did Mark tell the story of John's death?
- What were the disciples supposed to learn from Jesus feeding the five thousand?
- What were the disciples supposed to learn from Jesus walking on water?

Assignment

- Read Mark 6:1-6 again.
- Read "Shown in His Hometown's Opinion."

Shown in His Hometown's Opinion (Mk 6:1-6)

Jesus and His disciples return to His hometown of Nazareth. The disciples are like apprentices, learning on the job, and soon Jesus will send them out on their own. According to Jesus' custom, He enters the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath and begins teaching. Many of the listeners responded with astonishment.

Along with His authoritative teaching, He performed miracles by His own hands and had an unknown source of wisdom. But they were baffled because they saw Him as only human; a person with whom they had grown up. The evidence did not line up with their conclusion.

His hometown people only knew Him:

- By His profession, He was the carpenter who worked for a living, so how could He be special?
- As the son of Mary and in Jewish society, if you were listed as only the son of your mother, it was intended as an insult.
- As one of a number of brothers and sisters they all knew and saw grow up in their midst.

Therefore, how could He be anyone special? Because they thought this way, they rejected Him and what He had to say (Mk 6:3). Jesus responds to their rejection in three ways:

- By saying, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and household" (Mk 6:4).
- He did no miracles there except laying His hand on a few sick people and healing them (Mk 6:4-5).
- He leaves Galilee and goes to other villages to teach.

Jesus' miracles were limited because He did miracles in response to faith. The authenticating signs He did were meant to promote people's faith and not to further harden their hearts in unbelief. He still healed a few people out of His compassion, but mainly He wondered at their unbelief (Mk 6:6). Mark shows His wonder in the same way and to the same degree that others wondered at His mighty works (e.g., Mk 1:27; 4:41).

Being fully human, this rejection from His hometown must have hurt Him deeply. Possibly Mark wrote this to help us deal with rejection we receive from those humanly close to us.

QUESTION 2

Match the section titles to the appropriate Scripture references.

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 6:1-6	The Death of John the Baptist
Mark 6:7-13	Jesus Heals the Sick
Mark 6:14-29	Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
Mark 6:33-44	The Apostles are sent on a Mission
Mark 6:45-52	Jesus Visits His Hometown
Mark 6:53-56	Jesus Walks on Water

QUESTION 3

Which of the following about Jesus impressed the people of Nazareth? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. His family
- B. His heritage
- C. His miracles
- D. His profession
- E. His teaching
- F. His wisdom

QUESTION 4

Jesus' ministry was limited in Nazareth because of their lack of _____

QUESTION 5

Jesus returned to His home town of Nazareth (Mk 6:1-6). What objections have your hometown people had to your ministry as a Christian? What part of your life does not make sense to them?

Key Points:

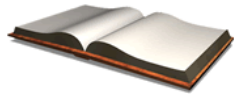
- The people of Nazareth saw Jesus grow up as fully human and this prevented them from seeing who He is.
- Jesus responds to faith while a lack of faith limits His ministry.

Topic 2: Sending the Disciples

Anticipating a time that He would not be around to bring His message in person, Jesus summoned the twelve disciples and sent them out with His personal power and authority, but their mission is not a usual first training mission. Rather, it is urgent and important. Therefore, those who reject it will receive a sign showing them how serious their rejection is (Mk 6:11)!

The story of the disciples' commissioning for their own mission is interrupted here with the account of the arrest and murder of John the Baptist. The earthly leaders fear the loss of their reign. But the murderous defeat of God's messenger is in appearance only. For the message goes on and is no longer heard through just one man, but through twelve newly commissioned messengers.

Their Mission (Mk 6:7-13)



Peter is both excited and fearful as Jesus sends the disciples out on a mission—as if they were Him. Each of them now has authority over unclean spirits, power to heal, and a message of judgment and repentance to proclaim.

So they have His authority and even share some of His success, as Jesus brings them to a place of rest and refreshment. “Finally,” Peter thought, “Our mission has taken a turn for the better. This is more of what I expected when I decided to become Jesus’ disciple.”

Assignment

- Read Mark 6:7-13.
- Read “Their Mission.”

Their Mission (Mk 6:7-13)

Jesus commissions the Twelve, pairs them up, and sends them out. This commission story connects with the disciples report back on their mission, but it is interrupted with the story about Herod and John the Baptist that begins in verse 14 and continues through verse 29 (Mk 6:30). This is another story told in sandwich structure that Mark uses often in his gospel. Usually this structure emphasizes a common point between the stories. In this case, the common point is who Jesus is and His followers’ identification with Him—for better or worse.

Jesus sends them with His authority:

- Over unclean spirits (Mk 6:7, 13).
- To pronounce judgment on those who reject them (Mk 6:11).
- To preach repentance just as He had (Mk 6:12).
- To anoint sick people with oil to heal them (Mk 6:13).

Jesus impresses on them that He does not need to be personally present for them to have His power and authority. He also sends them out with the following instructions:

- They should take nothing for their journey except a staff and sandals (Mk 6:8-10).
- They should take no bread, bag, money, or extra tunic.
- They should stay at the first house they entered as long as they stayed in that town.
- If any place did not receive them, they should shake off the dust from the soles of their feet as a testimony against that town.

They took nothing to be sure they trusted in God to meet their needs. In the same way, God will supply our needs when we are on a mission for Him and we can be satisfied with that provision. In Mark, Jesus tells them to stay at the first house they entered in an area. We can apply this lesson by being faithful in where God has placed us.

The message they preached was that men should repent (Mk 6:12). This had not yet changed from the message that John and Jesus preached in Mark 1. Though the form of the kingdom had changed, according to the parables in Mark 4:1-34, the message to the Jews was still to repent.

They did many of the same works of compassion that Jesus did: They cast out many demons and anointed the sick with oil and healed them (Mk 6:13). The Jews commonly used oil with their healings, but it is only mentioned here and in James in the New Testament (Jas 5:14). Oil was used medicinally in their time, but the biblical uses do not seem purely medicinal.

If their message was rejected, they shook the dust off their feet as a symbol of judgment against this town. The rejection of Jesus' message was a serious matter and this sign of judgment was well known to the Jews (see also Acts 13:51).

Though this mission went well, Mark showed that the response they received would foreshadow the response to Jesus, and to John. They, like Jesus, would not receive the kingdom immediately in glory. Rather, it would send them scurrying from the danger to their lives (Mk 14:27, 50-52).

QUESTION 6

Why is the story of John the Baptist inserted into the story of Jesus sending out His disciples?

- Because Mark tells the stories in chronological order
- To emphasize the issue of who Jesus is
- To emphasize the issue of who John the Baptist is
- To emphasize the need to keep the Law, especially regarding marriage

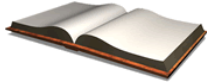
QUESTION 7

In this lesson, the disciples shake the dust off their feet to indicate the town will receive God's judgment. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Jesus waited to send the disciples out on their mission until they understood better who He really is. *True or False?*

Their Success (Mk 6:30-32)



The disciples have just returned from their mission and Jesus asks for their report. It went well; they preached repentance, healed the sick, cast out demons, and even shook the dust off their feet as they left some towns. Still, they anxiously awaited Jesus' evaluation; what would He say?

But after hearing their report He invited them to go to an isolated place for rest. Though surprised at first, they were soon pleased; because going to an isolated place to rest is how Jesus responded after His own successful mission.

Instead of receiving rest in their remote destination, the crowd immediately followed or even anticipated their destination and arrived ahead of them. Again, the mission took precedence over their needs. As Jesus taught, Peter became aware of his weariness and as evening approached he hoped Jesus would send the crowd home, for the crowd had brought no provisions. Instead, Jesus told him to feed the crowd.

Assignment

- Read Mark 6:30-32.
- Read "Their Success."

Their Success (Mk 6:30-32)

Mark's story now continues from where Jesus sent the apostles out. The word apostle here is not used in the sense it is after Jesus' resurrection and the beginning of the church age. It now has the more informal meaning of those sent out on a mission (by Jesus). After completing it, the apostles reported back to Him on all they did and taught (Mk 6:30).

Jesus responds to them with an invitation to rest. He wanted them to recuperate, because there were many people coming and going and they did not even have time to eat (Mk 6:31). Mark has often pointed out He was so busy ministering that He could not even rest or eat (e.g., Mk 3:20). Because this same statement is made about the disciples' ministry, it indicates that their mission also was successful.

From this success, Jesus brings them to a time of testing signified in Mark by bringing them to an isolated place. Jesus and His disciples are in a boat on the Sea of Galilee (Mk 6:32). These tests are watersheds for the disciples' faith: They are the miracles of the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus' walking on water (Mk 6:30-52).

QUESTION 9

What did Jesus say after their mission that indicated that the disciples had a successful mission as assigned in Mark 6:7-13?

- Well done good and faithful servants.
- This kind cannot come out except by prayer.
- Come with me privately to an isolated place and rest a while.
- You give them something to eat.

Key Points:

- Mark tells the story of John's death in sandwich style to emphasize who Jesus is by illustrating Jesus' death and His follower's identity with Him.

- In this lesson, the disciples shake the dust off their feet to picture that the town will receive God’s judgment for rejecting their message.
- Jesus did not wait to send the disciples out on their mission until they perfectly understood who He really is.

Topic 3: Shown in John’s Fate

Parallel Fates				
	John the Baptist	Jesus	Disciples	Believers Today
Ministry	Preaching	Preaching	Preaching	—
Outcome	Received by some and rejected by others	Received by some and rejected by others	Received by some and rejected by others	—
Fate	Martyred	Martyred	Many martyred	—

The report of John’s death continues as a main theme in the first half of Mark: Who is Jesus of Nazareth? In this case Mark shows who Jesus is by the way John died. Remember, the sandwich structure of these stories emphasizes their relationship: the story of John’s death parallels what happens to Jesus, and to His followers. In this case, their mission will have the same successes and failures as their Leader.

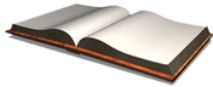
The graphic¹ above shows how John’s fate prefigures Jesus’—whose fate prefigures the disciples’—whose fate prefigures later followers. As in other places in Mark, he shows a pattern of what will happen. Then it pointedly asks not only if we see it, but if we’ll allow fear to remove us from our place in Jesus’ mission.

After the disciple’s mission, Jesus and His disciples try again to get some needed rest. But, the multitude and their needs quickly find them. Jesus feels compassion for them and does not want to send them away, so He teaches them. He also feeds them though the disciples—in their hardness of heart—ask Jesus to just send them away. Mark often mentions that Jesus and the disciples minister to others to the neglect of their needs. That is a lesson for both his original readers and us to learn.

When they inventory their supplies, they find few provisions; however, Jesus provides for all with much left over. The disciples fail to learn who He is (Mk 6:51-52), but many in the multitude do learn and that leads to new problems for Jesus (Mk 6:45-46).

¹ The graphic is based on the author’s research of Mark 6:14-29 and an idea he came across. The idea of the relationship between Jesus’ and John’s fates is not original, though the manner it is presented is unique to this course.

Background Story (Mk 6:14-20)



“What has happened to Jesus?” Peter asked. John (the disciple), now standing next to him, responded saying, “One of John the Baptist’s disciples has arrived and has requested a private meeting with Jesus.” Now returning, Peter thought Jesus looked like He lost His best friend. Suddenly He called all His disciples together and gave them the devastating news: “John the Baptist has just been executed by Herod.”

“But how can that happen to God’s messenger?” Peter boldly asked his Lord. Then Jesus related the whole story to them all. It turns out his death was a horrible death; the result of the intrigue between Herod and his women.

Peter was stunned by this news. Stepping out from the group of disciples, he tried unsuccessfully to still the dissonant thoughts that unsettled him. He didn’t know it but it would take him a while to find peace in his concluding thought: Apparently, God’s servants are not always spared from the threats of their enemies.

Assignment

- Read Mark 6:14-20.
- Read “Background Story.”

Background Story (Mk 6:14-20)

In Mark’s gospel, the question of who Jesus is is now being debated. Herod hears of Jesus’ works and mistakenly thinks that He must be John the Baptist. Since Herod had murdered John, if it was him, it was John risen from the dead (Mk 6:14; 6:16). Others think that Jesus is Elijah or one of the prophets of old (Mk 6:14-15). Mark tells this story as a parallel and foretaste of Jesus’ future rejection and death to reveal more about Jesus.

This Herod is King Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea from 4 BC– AD 39. This is the first reference in Mark to the family of Herod the Great. His father was Herod the Great, who ruled Israel from 39 BC until his death in 4 BC. He was a man renowned for his building projects and for many events of political intrigue, among other things. Herod Antipas was known for his corruption and desire to become king. He was apparently under personal conviction for murdering John the Baptist. Herod’s family appears often in the background of many stories in Mark, representing worldliness, worldly status, power, and intrigue. Seeing the connection with Herod and his family helps us understand and interpret many events the way the original readers understood them.

Herod had John arrested and bound in prison on account of his wife Herodias, who was previously the wife of his brother, Philip (Mk 6:17). John had told Herod it was not lawful for him to marry his brother's wife (Mk 6:18). This caused Herodias to have a grudge against John and she wanted him dead, but she could not arrange his murder (Mk 6:19). Herod was afraid of John and kept him safe, because he knew he was a righteous and holy man (Mk 6:20). Herod liked listening to John, even though the things he said perplexed him (Mk 6:20).

John treated Herod as if he were a member of the covenant people, the Jews. He held Herod responsible for keeping the Law of Moses. At least one of those laws forbade Herod’s marriage to Herodias (Lev 20:21).

In application, we are also a covenant people: We are not under the Law of Moses but under the new covenant in Jesus’ blood. The normal response of our sinful nature when convicted of sin is to ease our conviction. Like Herodias, we can be tempted to attack the messenger. Instead we should respond correctly and seek forgiveness for the sin that is brought to our minds.

QUESTION 10

Which of the following questions identifies Mark's focus in this story?

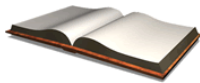
- A. Who is Jesus?
- B. What happened to John the Baptist?
- C. What happened next chronologically?
- D. What intrigues was Herod involved with?

QUESTION 11

Match the reference with the corresponding content.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Content</i>
Mark 6:17	Herod kept John safe, knowing he was a holy and righteous man.
Mark 6:18	John had told Herod it wasn't lawful for him to marry his brother's wife.
Mark 6:19	This caused Herodias to have a grudge against John.
Mark 6:20	Herod had John bound in prison on account of his wife Herodias.

Banquet Story (Mk 6:21-29)



If Peter correctly understood Jesus, He wanted them to know this story and to apply its lesson. Peter was frustrated (though if he was honest it was more with his own lack of understanding than with the approach Jesus was taking). "I wish Jesus would just explain these lessons to us, instead of expecting us to figure it out," he thought.

"What does John's death foreshadow? And for whom?" he wondered.

Assignment

- Read Mark 6:21-29.
- Read "Banquet Story."

The Banquet (Mk 6:21-29)

The execution of John the Baptist happened on a strategic day. That day was Herod's birthday and he gave a banquet for his lords, military commanders, and the leading men of Galilee (Mk 6:21). The entertainment was provided by the daughter of Herodias, who danced and pleased Herod and the guests (Mk 6:22). Herod was so pleased that he swore to give her whatever she requested, up to half the kingdom (Mk 6:23).

His offer of up to half the kingdom is similar to the offer made by Belshazzar in 556 BC (Dan 5:1-7). What the king is saying is—for the service provided, he offers any payment up to but not including giving up his reign as king. For if she had more than half, she would be queen and he would no longer be king.

Compare Herod's lifestyle and banquet in Mark 6:21-22 with Jesus' simple life and the spiritual meals He provides and partakes in (Mk 6:38; 14:12-26). Also notice the results of each: Herod's banquet ends in tragedy while Jesus' banquet leads to eternal salvation for many!

In his self-promotion and ostentation, Herod typifies many of the rulers of the Jews. With these

leaders it's no wonder Jesus sees the multitudes as sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9:36). All through Mark, the leaders are shown in this light and the leaders of this world tend to be this way. In contrast, Christian leaders under the Chief Shepherd must truly care for all of God's people in the manner of a servant.

At her mother's suggestion, the daughter of Herodias asked for the head of John the Baptist (Mk 6:24-25). She demanded that this travesty take place immediately so Herod could find no way around it. Herod was sorry, yet because of his oaths and dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her (Mk 6:26). So immediately Herod commanded an executioner to go to the prison and bring back John's head (Mk 6:27). So Herod brought it on a platter and gave it to the girl, who in turn gave it to her mother (Mk 6:28).

One reason Herod's trouble came to him was because of a rash oath. James warns Christians not to swear a rash oath, but to let a simple yes or no be sufficient for an answer (Jas 5:12). If we are always true to our word, we will not have to be dramatic and authenticate our word with an oath. By avoiding this situation, we avoid much trouble.

In another parallel with Jesus' fate, John's disciples take his body and lay it in a tomb (Mk 6:29). But the death of John cannot stop his message, just as Jesus' death only increased His witnesses.

QUESTION 12

What are the parallels between the death of Jesus and the death of John the Baptist in Mark 6:14-29?

QUESTION 13

The death of John the Baptist effectively stopped the message of the kingdom. *True or False?*

Key Points:

- Mark further explores who Jesus is when he tells the story of John's death.
- John was murdered by intrigue when Herodias tricked Herod into murdering John.
- As John's death prefigured Jesus', Jesus' death may prefigure the death of His faithful followers.
- As the death of John did not stop the kingdom message, neither will the death of Jesus or Jesus' future followers stop it.

Topic 4: Shown in His Deeds

When Jesus feeds the five thousand, His disciples' hard hearts prevent them from learning who He is. But many of the multitude do realize that He is the Prophet that Moses had predicted (Deut 18:15). Once they understand, they try to take Jesus by force and make Him king.

This leads Jesus to take immediate steps: He quickly gets the disciples into the boat and sends them off across the sea to Bethsaida. However, they are blown off course and

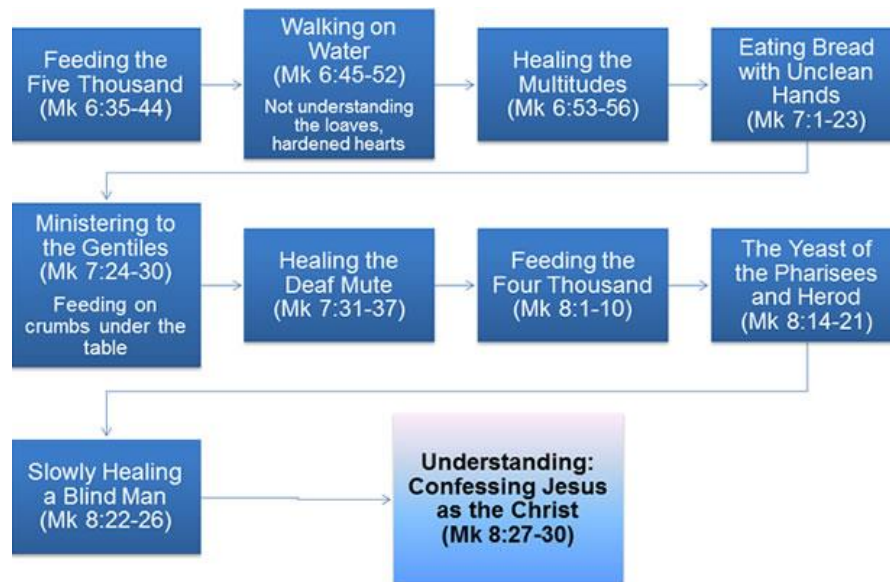


land at Gennesaret because of the storm. He dismisses the multitude and goes up into the mountain to pray, depending on God for help with this temptation to avoid the cross. He watches over the disciples as they cross the sea and, when nature is contrary to them, He walks on the water to come to their aid (though another possible understanding is that Jesus was walking to pass them). The disciples are astonished. They still do not recognize Him but rather see Him as a spirit. This shows how little they have learned from Jesus' previous miracles.

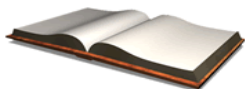
In contrast to the disciples, the excited crowds have learned of Jesus' power and seek Him out for their healing.

Feeding the Five Thousand (Mk 6:33-44)

Peter was taught a great discipleship lesson when Jesus fed the five thousand, but he again failed to learn all he could from it. Jesus meant to show them that He must provide sustenance to meet people's needs. In fact, He is the only one that can meet their true need. The disciples were there to distribute what He provided. They did not learn because they did not realize yet who Jesus is. But the crowd Jesus fed understood at least part of Jesus' lesson.



This story about feeding the five thousand begins the series of stories that involve Jesus teaching about bread and loaves, as the chart above shows. This teaching continues on until Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ (Mk 8:27-30).



Though John's death left Peter with a sense of foreboding, he was pleased with the success of the disciples' first mission. For now the crowds not only followed Jesus, but they even started to notice the disciples. "Wow," Peter thought, "Just like lost sheep, they follow us everywhere we go."

As the day ended, the disciples counseled together and then approached Jesus. Peter approached Jesus, "We're out in the middle of nowhere. Please ask the crowd to go into the towns and their markets to get themselves something to eat." But He answered, "You give them something to eat."

Again Peter was beside himself with wonder at Jesus' words. All of the disciples were saying, "Should we take a full year's salary and buy them enough to eat?" After all, the supplies were so meager—five loaves and two fish—they'd hardly feed five much less five thousand.

Jesus seated the crowd in organized groups of hundreds and fifties, as if they were really going to pass out food to all. "And that's just what He's doing," Peter thought. Jesus broke the bread, looked to heaven, gave portions of the meager food to the disciples and assigned each to several hundred people. Peter thought, "Okay, I'll go along with this until the supplies run out because Jesus says to—even though I'll feel like a fool when I reach the fifth person with nothing left to give out." But he was amazed for he never ran out, though he passed out supplies to hundreds of people.

Peter thought the crowd looked for the daily manna, like what Moses provided, from the Prophet Moses predicted would come. They now seemed to recognize that Jesus was that Prophet. Now they were coming to take Him and make Him king—by force if necessary.



Assignment

- Read Mark 6:33-44.
- Read "Feeding the Five Thousand."

Feeding the Five Thousand (Mk 6:33-44)

As usual, the multitudes pursue Jesus as they strive to arrive before He does, and Jesus was compassionate and He taught them (Mk 6:33-34).

Two of the seemingly inexhaustible themes from this story of feeding the five thousand show Jesus as:

- Moses, as Jesus safely leads and feeds God's people in the wilderness, and because this miracle is at the time of the Passover Feast (Ex 34:10-11; Jn 6:4).
- The Good Shepherd who cares for His distressed flock by providing them with food and rest.

Again Jesus and His disciples do not get the rest Jesus planned because they meet people in need. This multitude represents the covenant nation of Israel: God's people. Mark wants us to see that we must minister to others even at the expense of our own needs. The spiritual needs of others and our mission take priority.

The disciples see the seemingly unquenchable need of the people and want to send them away. They are a negative example and illustrate us; those who want to teach and lead other people to Jesus. But Jesus tells them (us) to give them something to eat (Mk 6:37). Jesus has them inventory their current food supplies. The disciples' response shows that—humanly speaking—the provisions available are hopelessly inadequate; for they have five loaves and two fish (Mk 6:38). (Those who have learned Jesus' lesson know that one loaf is enough [Mk 8:14].) The importance of learning this lesson is shown because it is the only miracle that appears in all four gospel accounts.

But the disciples show their hardness of heart (Mk 6:52). They see the multitudes as a bother and someone else's problem. But we have all we need to meet people's needs because we have Christ in us. We simply need the faith to distribute what He provides and a willingness to meet people's needs (a soft heart).

This miracle uses a principle from the parable of the mustard seed: From an insignificant beginning comes a great result. What we are inadequate for, Jesus provides in abundance.

There were five thousand men, so thousands more than that were likely there since women and

children were also present. He commanded them to recline by groups and they did in groups of hundreds and fifties on the green grass (Mk 6:39-40). Mark describes them as being arranged like a nicely planted garden. The picture here is of the promised Messianic banquet in that future time when God gives Israel peace with their enemies (Isa 25:6).

He took the five loaves and two fish and looked toward heaven. He then blessed God and broke the loaves. Once He did, “He kept giving them to the disciples to give to the people, and He divided up the two fish among them also” (Mk 6:41).

The result of Jesus' provision is that all were able to eat enough to be satisfied with baskets full of extra pieces (Mk 6:43-45). The twelve baskets probably mean that each of the twelve disciples went around and picked up the leftovers and each filled his own basket.

The mental picture of this miracle suggests a vision of the future and a hint of Israel's past. It suggests millennial blessings and the promises to Israel of conditions in the Promised Land (Num 13:27; Joel 3:18). He brings evidence that through Him, every promise God gave to Israel will be fulfilled, if they only had the spiritual vision to see it.

But because of the hardness of the disciples' hearts, they do not learn this lesson of the loaves (Mk 8:14-21). The lesson must be taught again; and until they do, they will not respond correctly when other tests come. When we read these accounts, we, too, are expected to learn from them to get help with our trials. If we don't learn, we will face the same lesson again. Did you learn the lesson of the loaves?

QUESTION 14

Jesus made sure the disciples were fully rested and fed so they could better meet the needs of the multitude. *True or False?*

QUESTION 15

Jesus asked the disciples to feed the people to help them realize they could provide for their needs. *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

What prevented the disciples from learning the lesson they should have?

- A. Their self-reliance
- B. Their hardness of heart
- C. They were tired and distracted
- D. Their love of money

QUESTION 17

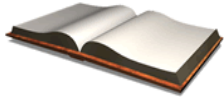
Which of the following suggests that the crowd who witnessed the feeding of the five thousand understand who Jesus is?

- A. They wanted Him to heal them.
- B. They wanted Him to feed them again.
- C. They called Him the Messiah.
- D. They wanted to make Him king.

QUESTION 18

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus faced the temptation to avoid the _____.

Walking on Water (Mk 6:45-52)



Jesus anticipated the crowd's move and hurried to get the disciples away from this potentially dangerous scene. He sent them off to the other side of the sea. Since Peter was the navigator, Jesus told him, "Set your course for Bethsaida and I'll meet you there later." Then, after the disciples left, He dispersed the crowd and went up into the mountain to pray.

Finding themselves apart from Jesus and not understanding who He is, or what His mission is, Peter is blown off course by a strange wind on the sea. Though the disciples strained at the oars and attempted to right their ship, they could not make headway. These recent storms were unlike any he had previously experienced on Galilee. This one seemed determined to blow them off course for Bethsaida as the other tried to prevent their arrival at Gadara. No matter how many times he plotted a new course, they veered off their mark.

Peter had struggled so hard against the storm that he forgot all about Jesus. But Jesus, still on land and close to where He had fed the five thousand, had never let His disciples out of His sight. From the shore He saw them in trouble, so He started out walking across the water, planning to come alongside them.

However, because Peter had not learned the lesson of the loaves, he saw Jesus but exclaimed to the others, "It is a phantasm!" and seeing the figure for themselves, they were terrified. However, as soon as He joined them in the boat they recognized Him as the wind ceased.

Peter was astonished, but he realized this feeling of astonishment was familiar because he sensed it before when Jesus stilled the previous storm on the sea.



Assignment

- Read Mark 6:45-52.
- Read "Walking on Water."

Walking on Water (Mk 6:45-52)

Jesus remains with the multitude to send them away while He made His disciples get into the boat and go across the Sea to Bethsaida (house of fishing). However, because of the storm that comes up, they are blown off course and end up at Gennesaret (Mk 6:53).

Failing their test of learning who He is through the lesson of the loaves, Mark's narrative shows the disciples being spiritually—and literally—blown off course by the wind they encounter on the sea. Jesus reveals Himself again by walking to them on the water. We see they have not yet learned their lesson by their reaction to Him (Mk 6:49-50).

Jesus made His disciples get into the boat, because the multitude responded to the miracle of the loaves and understood that He was in truth the Prophet that was to come into the world (Deut 18:15;

Jn 6:14). They intended to take Him by force and make Him King (Jn 6:15). That's why He went up to the mountain to pray (Mk 6:46).

The disciples were not the only ones facing a test during the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus faces the temptation to receive the kingdom without going to the cross (Mark saw this as the strongest temptation for Jesus). This trial shows Jesus' true humanity, and therefore His own need for dependence on God in prayer (Mk 6:46).

He stood alone on the shore watching them out in the midst of the sea (Mk 6:47). It is comforting to know that Jesus watches His followers when not physically present. They were challenged by the wind blowing the opposite direction they wanted to go (Mk 6:48). He responds by walking on the sea to come alongside them, probably to give assistance or at least to let them know He was there (Mk 6:48). Though it is possible to understand this as Jesus actually wanting to pass by them, this doesn't seem to fit the meaning of the passage.

They thought he was a ghost (Mk 6:49-50). They cried out because they were frightened to see a ghost and they were greatly astonished. Jesus calms their fears by announcing He was the one walking toward them (Mk 6:50). The words translated "it is I" can either be a normal way someone identifies themselves or possibly here Jesus gives God's name of self-identification—"I Am"—the same name given to Moses at the burning bush and how Jesus identified Himself when arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane (Ex 3:2-4; Jn 18:6). Jesus here identifies Himself as Israel's God—Yahweh—who led them out from Egypt.

When the wind ceases, the disciples react again to the supernatural and are greatly astonished (Mk 6:52).

Note: when we are told the disciples or the crowd react to Jesus in astonishment or amazement, they are reacting subconsciously—that is, not willfully. The conscious mind is often too busy to respond correctly but the subconscious responds to Jesus and understands to some extent He is supernatural. It told them their conscious conclusion of who Jesus is did not line up with their subconscious conclusion. This response continues through the rest of Mark and is an important witness to who Jesus is. People are held responsible for responses to their subconscious witness.

Their reaction showed they had not gained any insight into who Jesus was from the incident of the loaves but, instead, their hearts were hardened (Mk 6:52). They would not have been so amazed when He walked on water if they had learned the lesson of the loaves.

The way their hearts are described is only used two other times by Mark and in those cases he refers to unbelieving Pharisees (Mk 3:5; 10:5). This is a critical indictment against the disciples—a warning to us against the same condition of heart.

Have we learned who Jesus is and His complete sufficiency for us? Not only is He sufficient to meet our daily needs but He also meets our need in times of trials. Do we rest in Him, depend on Him, and go to Him in prayer when trials come? We have a personal relationship with the Savior and sustainer of the universe when we trust in Him. When it's most difficult to come to Him, in the midst of temptation or sin, is when He calls us to come before His throne for help. Instead of shrinking away, we must approach the throne. He is sufficient!

Another lesson the disciples learned was to not be afraid or timid. This lesson must also be learned by other servants of God. Joshua received the same command immediately after Moses died and just before he led Israel into the Promised Land (Josh 1:5-9). We can apply this lesson to ourselves as we fulfill our ministry with courage, knowing that we have Christ present to help us.

Times Jesus told the Disciples Not to Be Afraid

Mark 4:40	Mark 5:36
Jesus calming the storm	Jairus' daughter who died
Jesus asks the disciples, "Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?"	Jesus says, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe."
Mark 6:50	Jesus walking on water
"Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."	

QUESTION 19

Jesus identifies Himself to the disciples in the boat in the same way God in the Old Testament identified Himself to whom?

- A. Abraham
- B. Moses
- C. Jacob
- D. David

QUESTION 20

Mark describes the hardness of the disciples' hearts in the same way that he uniquely describes the hearts of the Pharisees. *True or False?*

Healing the Sick (Mk 6:53-56)

Assignment

- Read Mark 6:53-56.
- Read "Healing the Sick."

Healing the Sick (Mk 6:53-56)

Because the disciples are blown off course (literally and figuratively/spiritually), they end up crossing "to land at Gennesaret, moored to shore and got out of the boat" (Mk 6:53-54). The response was immediate as the people recognized Jesus. They ran about that whole country and carried the sick to Him on pallets; wherever He went, they were laying the sick out for Him (Mk 6:55-56).

The people are excited and rush to see Him, which is a stark contrast to the disciple's response to Him. They ask to touch His cloak and as many as touched it were cured (Mk 6:56). Touching His cloak showed their faith and Jesus honored it, just as He healed the woman with the hemorrhage (Mk 5:25-34). The part of the cloak they touch is the fringe. This cloak had the border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (Num 15:37-41; Deut 22:12). The healing they expected was for their temporal needs, not their eternal spiritual need.

As Jesus moved through the land of Israel, paths of healing were present. All those He meets are cured (or saved). This is the way we should present Him to people in our lives. Since we represent Him, we can bring His healing and saving presence to all we meet. But the healing we bring in His power has an eternal emphasis, not temporal.

QUESTION 21

The people in this passage that come to Jesus ask Him for salvation. *True or False?*

Key Points:

- As Jesus' followers we must minister to others even at the expense of our own needs. The spiritual needs of others and our mission take priority.
- Jesus asked the disciples to feed the people to help them realize that they could not provide for their needs.
- The crowd who witnessed the feeding of the five thousand understood something about who Jesus is because they took Him and wanted to make Him king.
- Jesus identifies Himself to the disciples in the boat in the same way God in the Old Testament identified Himself to Moses.
- Mark describes the hardness of the disciples' hearts in the same way that he uniquely describes the hearts of the Pharisees.
- The people in this passage who come to Jesus ask Him for salvation.

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 22

In this lesson we saw that John's fate prefigured Jesus' and that Jesus' prefigured that of His followers. What does it mean to you that Jesus' followers receive the same rewards and the same mistreatment that he did? In what way will that affect how you follow Him? Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 23

As we've seen in this lesson, it was difficult for Jesus' disciples to learn the lesson of the loaves. Please state in your Life Notebook how your ministry will change because you have learned that lesson.

QUESTION 24

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 25

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 4 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following about Jesus impressed the people of Nazareth?

- A. His family
- B. His heritage
- C. His profession (as a carpenter)
- D. His teaching

QUESTION 2

When the disciples go to various towns on their mission, how do they communicate that judgment is coming for rejecting their message?

- A. They cast out demons.
- B. They heal the sick and anoint them with oil.
- C. They shake the dust off their feet.
- D. They say judgment will be worse for this town than for Sodom and Gomorrah.

QUESTION 3

Why is the story of the death of John inserted into the story of Jesus sending out the disciples?

- A. To help reveal who Jesus is
- B. To emphasize the need to keep the Law
- C. To emphasize the need for caution
- D. Because Mark tells these stories in chronological order

QUESTION 4

Which of the following is **not** a parallel between John's death and Jesus'?

- A. They were both laid in a tomb
- B. Women played an important role in their death
- C. Both Herod and Pilate were unwilling executioners
- D. Spectacle played a role in the death of both

QUESTION 5

One indication the disciples' mission was successful is that Jesus asked them to come away with Him to rest. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Jesus made sure the disciples were fully rested and fed so they could better meet the needs of the multitude. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

Why did the disciples **not** learn what they were supposed to from this lesson?

- A. Because of their self-reliance
- B. Because of their hardness of heart
- C. Because the lesson was difficult
- D. Because of their love of money

QUESTION 8

How do we know that the crowd who witnessed the feeding of the five thousand understood who Jesus is?

- A. They called Him the Messiah.
- B. They wanted Him to feed them again.
- C. They wanted Him to heal them.
- D. They wanted to make Him king.

QUESTION 9

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus sent the disciples ahead of Him in a boat while He stayed behind; what are the reasons He stayed behind? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. To dismiss the crowd
- B. To face temptation
- C. To pray
- D. To get some rest

QUESTION 10

According to the view presented in this lesson, when Jesus walks on the water to come to the disciples He identifies Himself in the same way that Yahweh did in the Old Testament. *True or False?*

Lesson 4 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 6:1-6	Jesus Visits His Hometown
Mark 6:7-13	The Apostles are sent on a Mission
Mark 6:14-29	The Death of John the Baptist
Mark 6:33-44	Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
Mark 6:45-52	Jesus Walks on Water
Mark 6:53-56	Jesus Heals the Sick

QUESTION 3

- C. His miracles
- E. His teaching
- F. His wisdom

[They tried to evaluate all of His claims from a purely human level and the equation did not make sense for them. It did not explain His miracles, teaching, or wisdom.]

QUESTION 4: Faith [A limiting factor on our ministries will also be a lack of faith.]

QUESTION 5: *Your answer*

QUESTION 6

- B. To emphasize the issue of who Jesus is [These stories are told in a sandwich structure to emphasize a common point in each story, in this case the question of who Jesus is. This extends to Jesus' followers having successful missions as Jesus did and even to their having the same fate.]

QUESTION 7: True [Part of the message we bring as a disciple of Jesus is the message of judgment for those disobedient to the gospel.]

QUESTION 8: False [He sent them out even though they did not understand perfectly who He is. New Christians should be encouraged to testify about Jesus even though they do not understand every doctrine of the faith.]

QUESTION 9

- C. Come with me privately to an isolated place and rest a while. [This was said after Jesus' successful ministry to the multitudes.]

QUESTION 10

- A. Who is Jesus?

QUESTION 11

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Content</i>
Mark 6:17	Herod had John bound in prison on account of his wife Herodias.
Mark 6:18	John had told Herod it wasn't lawful for him to marry his brother's wife.
Mark 6:19	This caused Herodias to have a grudge against John.
Mark 6:20	Herod kept John safe, knowing he was a holy and righteous man.

QUESTION 12: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The execution of John the Baptist happened on a strategic day as did the execution of Jesus. Both were innocents killed, betrayed by a dinner guest, condemned by an unwilling executioner, and by people under conviction of sin. You may find others that are not listed here.

QUESTION 13: False [Jesus takes immediate steps sending out twelve more witnesses, partially to replace the witness of John. Often in the Bible, persecution leads Jesus' followers to increase their witness for Him.]

QUESTION 14: False [Again Jesus and His disciples don't get the rest Jesus planned because they meet people in need. This multitude represents the covenant nation of Israel: God's people. Mark wants us to see that we must minister to others even at the expense of our own needs. The spiritual needs of others and our mission take priority.]

QUESTION 15: False [He wanted them to learn that He is the one who meets their needs and they are the ones who distribute.]

QUESTION 16

B. Their hardness of heart [They were supposed to learn that Jesus was sufficient to meet their spiritual needs and the needs of the people. He is sufficient. In their ministry they are simply ones who distribute His provision to needy people.]

QUESTION 17

D. They wanted to make Him king. [The crowd understood Jesus performed the signs of Messiah. This does not mean they put their trust in Him; they sought Him because He met their physical needs. Meanwhile, the disciples have not yet learned who Jesus is.]

QUESTION 18: Cross

QUESTION 19

B. Moses [Jesus identified Himself saying “it is I” or “I am.” The same way God identified Himself to Moses when Moses asked God for His name in the incident with the burning bush (Ex 3:13-14).]

QUESTION 20: True [The way their hearts are described is only used two other times by Mark and in those cases he refers to unbelieving Pharisees (Mk 3:5; 10:5). This is a critical indictment against the disciples—a warning to us against the same condition of heart.]

QUESTION 21: True [The word used is translated “cured,” but the people really asked for salvation, though the salvation they asked for was temporal, not eternal.]

QUESTION 22: *Your answer*

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

QUESTION 24: *Your answer*

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

Lesson 4 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

D. His teaching

QUESTION 2

C. They shake the dust off their feet.

QUESTION 3

A. To help reveal who Jesus is

QUESTION 4

B. Women played an important role in their death

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6: False

QUESTION 7

B. Because of their hardness of heart

QUESTION 8

D. They wanted to make Him king.

QUESTION 9

A. To dismiss the crowd

B. To face temptation

C. To pray

QUESTION 10: True

Lesson 5: Gentile Acceptance (Mk 7:1–8:13)

Lesson Introduction

Gentiles had been exposed to Jesus' teaching from the beginning (Mk 7:1-23), but as Jewish rejection continued to increase, Jesus directed His attention to the Gentiles as well.

Jesus' ministry to Israel is like a dinner He provides solely for them but, now in Gentile territory, the Gentiles ask for His ministry also (Mk 7:27-28). The woman with the demon possessed daughter only asks for the scraps falling off Israel's table; for she has noticed their rejection of Him. Because of her faith and understanding, Jesus extends His ministry to them and her demon is cast out (Mk 7:29-30)!

In healing the deaf and dumb man, Jesus the Messiah now brings kingdom conditions to the Gentiles (Isa 35:1-7). Then He dramatically illustrates the transfer of His vitality by placing His hands on the man, touching his tongue and ears, using His saliva to heal him (Mk 7:33-34). This cure was not instantaneous, but rather took time. This was not because of any difficulty for Jesus, but was a loving accommodation of this man's special needs.

Next, as Jesus provided sustenance for His children, so He does for His new children. He repeats the feeding of the five thousand Jews by feeding a crowd of four thousand (Mk 8:9). Mark pictures Him as the Bread of Life and this time the crowd contains many Gentiles. The disciples are slow to learn that Jesus illustrates His spiritual provision with the physical bread (Mk 8:1-4; Mk 8:17-21). Instead, their mind focuses on their temporal needs (Mk 8:14-16).

However, showing their complete spiritual dullness and unbelief, the Jewish leaders again track Jesus down (Mk 8:11-13). When they find Him they ask for a sign—as if He has not shown them any. Consequently Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to this generation” (Mk 8:12).



Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Traditional Cleanliness (Mk 7:1-13)

Topic 2: True Cleanliness (Mk 7:14-23)

Topic 3: An Overflowing Ministry

 Crumbs off the Table (Mk 7:24-30)

 The Deaf Hear (Mk 7:31-37)

 Feeding the Four Thousand (Mk 8:1-10)

Topic 4: No Signs for the Leaders (Mk 8:11-13)

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

In Topic 1, the Jewish leaders confront Jesus because they see His disciples eating bread with unclean hands. However, Jesus uses this as an opportunity to show them that they rejected God’s commandments when they set up their traditions.

Topic 2 continues with Jesus privately teaching His followers and disciples that true cleanliness is an internal, not external, issue. Mark uses this teaching to clear the way for Jesus’ ministry to the Gentiles.

Topic 3 shows Jesus taking His disciples and leaving the borders of Israel. The knowledge of Him has overflowed the borders of Israel and many Gentiles now seek His ministry. The same signs of the Messiah’s ministry that came to the Jews now come to the Gentiles.

Topic 4 shows us the jealousy and unbelief of the Pharisees who ask Jesus for a sign. This request shows they reject Jesus’ authority—they want a direct sign from God in heaven.

Summary: In this lesson, Jesus’ ministry—previously directed to Israel—now is extended to the Gentiles also. The multitudes following Him conclude He does all things well. The Jewish leadership continues their opposition, but Jesus’ main burden is for His disciples to learn who He is and trust in Him.

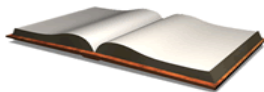
Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain how the Jewish leaders used their interpretations to not follow the intent of the law
- Compare the faith of the Syrophenecian woman and Bartimaeus with the faith of the deaf and dumb man
- Reflect on spiritual lessons God has taught you or is teaching you and seek to learn those lessons better

Topic 1: Traditional Cleanliness (Mk 7:1-13)

Jesus now faces another challenge as a group of Pharisees come from Jerusalem and ask why His disciples do not wash their hands according to the traditions of the elders (Mk 7:5). Jesus uses this opportunity to teach what God is really interested in receiving from His people. What is true defilement, what is truly authoritative, and what is wrong with their traditions?



Lately the Jewish leaders have mostly followed Jesus from a distance and they are well aware of His successful ministry. The Pharisees have appointed a new leader, Josiah, who recently arrived from Jerusalem, and he is specifically assigned to deal with Jesus.

Josiah had thought that maybe the death of John the Baptist would at least slow Jesus down and perhaps discourage Him from His work. But, if anything, with John gone Jesus seems even more determined to expand His ministry. Josiah asked himself, “Where is His weakness?” He knew Jesus must have one. “I know”, he thought to himself, “maybe it is His disciples?” With this new angle of approach Josiah knew it was time again for action, for each of Jesus’ successes endangered the authority of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders.

So Josiah gathered his fellow Pharisees and again they drew near and observed Jesus. *Why, it is so obvious; can it be this easy?* Josiah marveled to himself. When Jesus' disciples eat bread they do not wash their hands according to tradition. Everyone—every good Jew—knows this is wrong. The elders throughout Jewish history had established this practice through much debate. These are rules carefully passed on down through many generations. (For the Jewish leaders generally viewed these religious traditions as authoritative for life and practice.) With renewed confidence in his tactics, Josiah thought, “What could Jesus possibly say to this charge?”

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 7 and Mark 8:1-13 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- Why were the disciples eating their bread with unwashed hands?
- What are the traditions of the elders?
- How do the Jewish leaders cancel the commandments of God?
- What is the source of true defilement?
- What happens when Jesus goes to the Gentiles?
- Why is the healing of the deaf/mute in stages?
- Why does Jesus repeat the miracle of healing a multitude?
- Why does Jesus deny the Jewish leaders any signs?

Assignment

- Read Mark 7:1-13 again.
- Read “Traditional Cleanliness.”

Traditional Cleanliness (Mk 7:1-13)

The Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem and gathered around Jesus (Mk 7:1). They challenged Him because His disciples ate bread with ceremonially impure hands (Mk 7:2, 5). As their teacher, Jesus was responsible for their conduct. These Pharisees and Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands according to the tradition of the elders. This is especially true when returning from the marketplace where they feared they may have come in contact with something or someone unclean—usually Gentile. They followed the traditions of the elders precisely and considered them to be as binding as the Law of Moses. They saw keeping these rules as fulfilling their duty to God.

This traditional washing possibly came from the use of the laver in the tabernacle the priests used to wash their hands and feet before beginning their service (Ex 40:30). This tradition was eventually extended to all Jews to use ritually before their formal prayers and eating, but the extremes of these rules were only practiced by the Jewish leaders. (Note: the key concepts here are ritual uncleanness and human traditions.)

Jesus focuses on the authority of the Scriptures over that of human tradition. He quotes Isaiah as prophesying about their hypocrisy of honoring God with their lips but keeping their hearts far from God, worshipping God in vain, and teaching human precepts as God's doctrine (Isa 29:13; Mk 7:6-7). Pretending to worship God, they were really only keeping human rules that found ways to put aside God's concerns.

He gives them an example of honoring fathers and mothers; read Mark 7:10-12.

The word *corban* in Mark 7:11 means devoted to God. For example, if a son declared money he had for taking care of his parents as *corban* he was exempt from supporting them with that money. The money would be untouchable and he was supposedly relieved of his God-given responsibility to honor his parents.

This was one example of how the traditions of the elders nullified the clear teaching of God's law. Jesus clarified that this was only one of many ways they did this (Mk 7:13).

QUESTION 2

Match the title to the corresponding reference.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 7:1-23	Healing the Deaf and Dumb Man
Mark 7:24-30	No Signs for the Leaders
Mark 7:31-37	Feeding the 4,000
Mark 8:1-10	The Disciples Eat with Unclean Hands
Mark 8:11-13	Gentiles Feeding on Crumbs

QUESTION 3

The Jews believed the elders' traditions were as binding as the Law of Moses. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

What does the word *corban* literally mean?

- A. Help your parents
- B. Under a curse
- C. Devoted to God
- D. Untouchable money

Key Points:

- The Jewish leaders saw their own interpretations of God's Word as binding as the Law of Moses.
- The Jewish leaders had hypocritical rules to circumvent God's intentions and one example was declaring their money *corban*.

Topic 2: True Cleanliness (Mk 7:14-23)

In Mark 7:1-13 Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders and how they “neatly reject the commandment of God in order to set up your tradition” (Mk 7:9). In that passage His focus was on refuting the teaching of the Jewish leaders.

Now, as is His tradition with His teaching, He called the crowd to Him to further teach those in the crowd who followed Him more closely. The key to cleanliness does not lie with external practices. Instead, cleanliness is internal.

After teaching the crowds, Jesus goes into further detail with His disciples regarding the cleanliness of food. Mark uses this account to prepare his readers for the shock that Jesus' ministry spreads to the Gentiles.

Assignment

- Read Mark 7:14-23.
- Read "True Cleanliness."

True Cleanliness (Mk 7:14-23)

As with the kingdom of heaven parables, Jesus tells the multitude to listen and understand. Nothing a man eats can defile him; but the things that proceed from a man, those can defile him (Mk 7:14-16). Defilement does not come by eating but by disobeying God.

When His disciples asked Him about this teaching, He asked them if they were so lacking in understanding also (Mk 7:17-18). They continue with hard hearts as they have with all the signs Jesus is showing them. Jesus explained that whatever goes into a man from the outside cannot defile him; because it goes into his stomach, not his heart, and is eliminated (Mk 7:18-19).

In contrast, what comes from within a man does defile him. Jesus explains that evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, deceit, envy, pride, and other evils all come from the human heart so it is from the inside that people are defiled (Mk 7:21-23). Both individual acts and attitudes are listed in these verses as defiling someone. Jesus' point is that what is eaten is not inherently an issue of good and evil, but our disobedience to God is what ultimately defiles us.

Since we cannot change from the outside inward, we must have God change us from the inside, which enables us to change on the outside (Ps 51:1-19). Only those trusting Christ for their salvation can do work undefiled and fully pleasing to Him.

Mark purposely placed this teaching to prepare His readers for the next story he would tell. In Jesus' teaching on defilement, he showed his readers that through Christ, God would cleanse the Gentiles and minister to them also (Acts 11:1-18).

QUESTION 5

According to Jesus' teaching, Jews who eat unclean food become unclean because of what they eat. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Please briefly explain how Jesus' teaching on uncleanness prepares the way for His ministry to the Gentiles.

QUESTION 7

The Pharisees opposed Jesus because He condemned some of their traditions, yet some of their traditions were good. Record in your Life Notebook what you think it was that made their traditions either bad or good. Write down examples from your own life of both good and bad traditions that you have.

Key Points:

- People do not become unclean because of what they eat but rather because they disobey God.

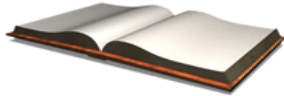
- Jesus’ teaching on uncleanness prepares the way for His ministry to the Gentiles.
- The Pharisees opposed Jesus because He condemned some of their traditions.

Topic 3: An Overflowing Ministry

After the controversies with the Jewish leaders over defilement, Jesus enters Gentile territory seeking rest. Jesus’ lesson on defilement was important preparation for His disciples for this ministry to the unclean Gentiles. The Jews were even concerned with going to a marketplace where Gentiles were present—imagine their reservations about entering Gentile territory.

News of Jesus reached even this Gentile area and this was the only recorded time Jesus’ ministry left the land of Israel. The Gentile woman approached Jesus asking Him to cast a demon out of her daughter. Jesus points out that He has only been sent to His children, the Jews. She is not trying to take Him away from His primary mission; rather she looks for the benefits that come while He ministers to His people. But this incident fulfills Isaiah 42:1-9, as He brings His light to the nations (Gentiles). As His ministry to the Gentiles continues, He performs some of the same signs among them that He did among the Jews.

Crumbs off the Table (Mk 7:24-30)



Peter noticed that Jesus teaches again about uncleanness. Before he began following Jesus he had always seen that subject as one of righteousness. Peter knew that righteousness was achieved by what you could avoid and, if you could not avoid uncleanness, one must follow the prescribed ritual to become clean again. That is why Peter avoided contact with Gentiles and even Gentile lands. But Jesus seemed unconcerned with the unclean. He touched lepers and all types of illness, blood, death, and even went to a Gentile land to rescue the demoniac.

Jesus leaves Israel for Gentile territory again responding to Jewish rejection. Last time He responded to this rejection by teaching in parables and delivering a demoniac in the Decapolis region. Peter thought, “That trip to Gentile land was stressful enough: what will we encounter this time?” After all, to any observant Jew, even setting foot on Gentile soil is humiliating.

His fears are confirmed when they meet a Gentile woman who says her daughter has an unclean spirit. Fortunately, Jesus is now telling her He was sent to Israel and not the Gentiles. Yet, knowing Jesus, Peter feared He will find some way to help her.

Assignment

- Read Mark 7:24-30.
- Read “Crumbs Off the Table.”

Crumbs off the Table (Mk 7:24-30)

Jesus now enters purely Gentile territory for the only known time of His adult ministry. He apparently leaves Israel, seeking rest and privacy (Mk 7:24). As the Jewish leaders confronted Him, He again left the area instead of remaining to fight. Mark says He went secretly to a house in the region of Tyre, but even in Gentile territory He cannot escape notice.

While there, He meets a Syrophenician woman who had heard about Him. She had a little daughter

with an unclean spirit. When she found Him, she came and fell at His feet (Mk 7:25-26). Falling at His feet means that she knew she could do nothing about her situation, and it showed her great respect for Him. The language Mark used in his account showed she was poor as opposed to rich and in Mark that is a key to Jesus working on her behalf. She kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter (Mk 7:26).

His response was to satisfy the children's needs first before throwing their bread to the dogs (Mk 7:27). Here Jesus used figurative speech to present this problem to her. The bread represents the healing benefits of His ministry and the children He referred to are the Jews. The dog represents the Gentiles (the word in Greek was used for a house pet). The original language is different from the insulting word for dog used in other passages of Scripture (Phil 3:2).

She thereby takes His example to another level and points out that the dogs under the table get some food when the children do, if only what spills from their table (Mk 7:28). They get this food without interfering with the children's meal.

She may also imply that the Jews had stumbled over Him. The dogs get fed when the children make an error by spilling. The Jews had stumbled in rejecting Jesus' ministry, but in contrast she cherished it. She willingly fed on the crumbs.

Jesus said He would heal the woman's daughter because of the way she responded and the faith and understanding she showed. Jesus responded this way only when a person showed confident faith. He replied the same way to the woman with the hemorrhage who He healed when she touched His garment (Mk 5:34) and to Bartimaeus when he was healed of blindness (Mk 10:52). The woman's response prompted Jesus to tell her, "the demon has left your daughter" (Mk 7:29). She found her child lying on a bed without the demon (Mk 7:30). The emphasis is not on the spectacular miracle, but on the conversation and the message taught.

Jesus will eventually reach out to all people and foreshadowed the believers today who proclaim the gospel primarily to Gentiles. Even in this brief story, no details of the law are mentioned as they usually were when Jesus interacted with the Jews.

There is also a glimpse of the eager response some Gentiles will have to the gospel message and the person of Christ. Romans 9:23-33 tells us the Gentiles will receive a righteousness by faith that the Jews will not receive because they pursue it by law. A contrast is drawn between the opposition of the Jewish leaders to Jesus and this Gentile woman who accepts the crumbs that fall from their table.

Jesus continues finding faith in the places we would least expect, especially since this faith is not yet found among His disciples or the religious leaders of Israel. Various individuals who have the humility to know that their situation is hopeless have faith, their situation preparing them to depend on God. This is where we must be to take the first step in our walk of faith, and this is the continuing lesson we learn as we grow in Christ. When we stop trusting in ourselves, we are ready to start trusting in God.

QUESTION 8

How did Jesus respond in this topic to the hostility of the Jewish leaders? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. By correcting their misunderstanding on defilement
- B. By leaving Galilee to minister to the Gentiles
- C. By starting to follow the traditions of the Jewish leaders
- D. By ignoring them and continuing with His ministry

QUESTION 9

Please match the figure with what it represents from Mark 7:24-30.

<i>Figure</i>	<i>What it Represents</i>
Falling at someone's feet	The Gentiles
The children	Jesus' overflowing ministry
The dogs	The Jews
Bread	Respect and helplessness
The bread spilled	Jesus' ministry

QUESTION 10

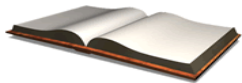
Which of the following incidents so far in Mark is most like the faith that the Syrophenecian woman showed toward Jesus?

- A. Peter's mother-in-law healed of her fever
- B. The man with the withered hand
- C. The rescued demoniac
- D. The woman with the hemorrhage

QUESTION 11

When Jesus said, "Because you said this...the demon has left your daughter," what was Jesus impressed by (Mk 7:28)?

The Deaf Hear (Mk 7:31-37)



Peter is concerned. Jesus leaves Gentile territory to return to Israel only to enter Decapolis. This predominantly Gentile area was the location of his greatest nightmare while following Jesus: the night He rescued the demoniac. The last time they were here, the townspeople rudely sent Jesus away. Peter wondered if they would even be allowed to stay.

To his surprise, the people gave them a warm reception and brought out a man for Jesus to heal. Peter wondered to himself asking, "But how can this be?" Then he remembered: these people must have responded to the testimony of the demoniac to Jesus! The Lord left him behind as a witness instead of allowing him to follow us as he requested.

The deaf man is brought to Jesus and Peter is convinced that Jesus, as usual, will instantly cure him. But instead Jesus goes through a series of motions and signs and the healing takes time. Peter asked himself, "Why the delay? Has Jesus lost some of His power? Or is it from the peoples' lack of faith like in Nazareth?" Throughout the time Peter has spent with his rabbi, Jesus has taught them that they must have ears to hear. Peter wondered, "Is He trying to tell us something?"

Assignment

- Read Mark 7:31-37.
- Read “The Deaf Hear.”

The Deaf Hear (Mk 7:31-37)

Jesus now leaves Tyre to return to the Sea of Galilee in the area of Decapolis. Before He starts His road to Jerusalem, Jesus’ ministry to the multitudes will include many Gentiles. This was a foretaste of the complete breakdown of the barriers between Jew and Gentile accomplished through Jesus’ finished work on the cross.

Jesus returns to the Sea of Galilee within the region of Decapolis where the crowd brought Him a deaf man who spoke with difficulty (Mk 7:31-32). Usually a deaf person’s speech is affected also, even if there is nothing wrong with its functions because people who hear adjust how they speak by listening to their speech. However, this man had difficulty speaking because his tongue was actually bound. They kept begging Jesus to lay His hand on him (Mk 7:32). “Difficulty speaking” is the translation of a rare word only found here and once in the Old Testament in Isaiah 35:1-7. In Isaiah, this verse refers to signs that show that God Himself has come to deliver Israel. This word functions as a sign-post, telling us the passage in Isaiah is being fulfilled by Jesus at this time. Wanting Jesus to lay hands on this man symbolically pictures the transfer of Jesus’ vitality to him.

Jesus first takes him away from the multitude (Mk 7:33). He often did this to avoid the publicity that came from doing the miracles. Similarly, when Jairus’ daughter died, Jesus first dismissed the professional mourners before raising her from the dead (Mk 5:39-43). Other times, He quickly did the miracle before more people gathered (Mk 9:23-27). He did not want people seeking Him for purely temporal blessings.

In performing this miracle Jesus does several peculiar things. He uses the following aids:

- He put His fingers into the man’s ears (Mk 7:33). This probably helped illustrate that Jesus intended to open his ears.
- He spit and touched the man’s tongue with saliva (Mk 7:33). This showed His intent to restore his speech. (We will see that Jesus used spittle to heal another blind man in Mark 8:23.)
- He looked up to heaven, sighed, and said “Ephphatha!” (Aramaic word meaning be opened; Mk 7:34). His glance heavenward and the word He used showed His dependence on God’s power, and His sighing shows His compassion for the man.

Suggestions are sometimes made that Jesus did these extra steps because this problem was difficult for Jesus to cure. This suggestion is wrong. When the God of the universe speaks them away, physical problems are removed immediately. He had no problem casting out a legion of demons at once, so why would this problem be more difficult?

There were good reasons for doing this healing with dramatic delays. He wanted the deaf man to understand what He did so He appropriately communicated His intentions to accommodate the man’s condition.

Mark also pictures the disciples’ response to Jesus, illustrating how they are slow to hear and respond. Other stories, before and after this one, also pictures the disciples’ response, for example:

- The disciples’ boat blown off course (Mk 6:45-53)
- The healing of the blind man in stages (Mk 8:22-26)

After Jesus’ teachings about bread, these stories show the disciples difficulty in learning their lesson. They are either blown off course, or healings are done slowly, until they finally understand

and make their confession through their representative, Peter (Mk 8:27-30). In other words, it pictures physically what the disciples are experiencing spiritually. Jesus was sent to a people slow to hear and this shows their need for divine healing.

The secrecy theme continues as Jesus gives orders not to tell anyone about this cure, but the more He ordered them to silence, the more widely they proclaimed it (Mk 7:36). The people see how Jesus fulfills the predictions of the Messiah and are astounded.

Utterly astonished, they remark on how He did everything well, making the deaf hear and the mute speak (Mk 7:37). Mark clarifies that Jesus fulfills the signs predicted of the Messiah. This leads to the full revelation and confession of Jesus as the Messiah in Mark 8.

QUESTION 12

Jesus only needed to cure this man's deafness because once he could hear he could learn to speak. *True or False?*

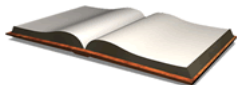
QUESTION 13

What healing evidences was Jesus providing that He was the Messiah?

QUESTION 14

In the story of healing this deaf and dumb man, Mark also may be illustrating the spiritual condition of the disciples, i.e., they were slow to learn (Mk 7:31-37). Put yourself in the place of one of Jesus' disciples and write down which lessons you should learn in your Life Notebook. Then write down any lessons you think the Lord is teaching you that you have been slow to learn.

Feeding the Four Thousand (Mk 8:1-10)



Peter had just witnessed Jesus feeding the four thousand. Oddly, he had a strange sense of familiarity: Jesus had fed a large group of people previously in Israel and now He feeds a large group in Decapolis. But he did not understand what Jesus did then, or now. Jesus keeps asking the disciples to feed the multitude, as if they have the resources to feed them. It really bothered him and Peter could tell it bothered the other disciples also. Jesus kept asking them to inventory the supplies on hand. Again, just like last time, the supplies are meager and they do not have the money for supplies even if they were available.

Jesus asks, "How many loaves do you have?" It is like asking who bumped Him in a crowd of jostling people. It is as if He wants them to see how inadequate they are. But why would He do that? What are they expected to learn?



Assignment

- Read Mark 8:1-10.
- Read “Feeding the Four Thousand.”

Feeding the Four Thousand (Mk 8:1-10)

Jesus’ healing of the deaf and dumb man was only one of many exciting miracles that He performed before the multitude. They also received the benefit of His great teaching; no wonder they followed Him. The multitude marveled as they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled restored, the lame walking, and the blind seeing (Mt 15:30-31).

Now Jesus performs a familiar miracle to meet the need of the crowd. They had not planned on staying with Jesus as long as they did, so they needed food. The things He taught them and the miracles He did made them want to stay with Him longer. Just as He previously fed the five thousand, He now feeds the four thousand. Once again, they inventory the supplies and find few provisions. Jesus again provides for the multitude with much left over and again the disciples fail to learn who Jesus is.

Jesus was in mainly Gentile territory, so many in this crowd were Gentiles. Jesus expanded His ministry, thereby extending salvation the Gentiles who believed. This fulfills Old Testament prophecy that says that God reaches out to Gentiles in the end times (Isa 66:19).

Feeding the four thousand is obviously similar in many ways to feeding the five thousand. When a sign like this is repeated, it indicates emphasis. The disciples were supposed to learn a lesson about Jesus from the first miraculous feeding, but they do not. So Jesus gives them another chance to learn it now. It is hard for us to understand how the disciples do not pick up on the similarities and learn the second time.

Mark shows the challenge of this situation from Jesus’ perspective. Out of compassion for the multitude, Jesus tells the disciples that the great multitude has followed Him for three days and has nothing to eat. This may mean that the people had brought some provisions for themselves but stayed longer than planned and ran out of them. Jesus does not want them sent home hungry or they may faint on the way, because some have come from a distance (Mk 8:1-3). These people were so intent on feeding on Jesus’ words that they were unprepared to meet their physical hunger.

Mark next gives the challenge of this situation from the disciples’ perspective. They asked, “Where will anyone be able to find enough to satisfy these men with bread here in a desolate place?” (Mk 8:4). Notice the disciples had the same question the first time Jesus fed the five thousand.

Just like the previous miracle, an inventory of available resources is taken, and they find only seven loaves of bread (Mk 8:5). Even though the situation is so similar to the first, the disciples do not understand. So Jesus reminds them of the first miracle by asking them to tediously inventory the available supplies. Similarly, He has the crowd sit down while He takes the seven loaves and gives thanks to God. He broke them and gave the pieces to His disciples to serve the multitude, then He did the same with the few fish they had (Mk 8:6-7).

We now see the results of this miracle. The four thousand not only ate and were satisfied, but they picked up seven large baskets full of leftover pieces (Mk 8:8-9). These large baskets were different from the smaller ones used in feeding the five thousand. Sometimes these baskets were large enough to carry a man, like the one that held the apostle Paul in Acts 9:25.

The last time twelve baskets of leftovers were collected, because the disciples carried one of the smaller baskets to pick them up. This time, the seven baskets may contrast that Jesus’ provision started with seven loaves.

Once again Jesus fully supplies the needs of a multitude of people with an abundance left over. He alone can be their provider. The amount of supplies He begins with does not matter. Jesus’

compassion again motivated this miracle. The following table displays the times Jesus felt great compassion.

Times Jesus Felt Great Compassion

Reference	Situation
Mark 1:41	A leper wanting to be made clean; “moved with compassion, He stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’”
Mark 5:19	The man possessed by a legion; Jesus did not let him follow Him, but He said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.”
Mark 6:34	Before feeding the 5,000; when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He “had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he taught them many things.”
Mark 8:2	Before feeding the 4,000; “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me three days already and have had nothing to eat.”
Mark 9:22	The father of the son, speaking to Jesus, who was possessed by a demon; “it has often thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if You are able to do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

QUESTION 15

What did Jesus expect the disciples to learn from feeding the four thousand? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. They were to learn about defilement.
- B. They were to learn His reluctance to perform miracles.
- C. They were to learn about who He is.
- D. They were to learn about depending on Him.

QUESTION 16

What is the answer to the disciples question about where they can get enough food?

- A. From the nearby market
- B. From Jesus
- C. From the donations of the crowd
- D. From the Pharisees

QUESTION 17

Match the Bible reference with the corresponding time Jesus felt great compassion.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Time Jesus Felt Compassion</i>
Mark 1:41	The man who had a legion
Mark 5:19	Feeding the four thousand
Mark 6:34	Feeding the five thousand
Mark 8:2	The leper wanting to be made clean
Mark 9:22	The son possessed by a demon

Key Points:

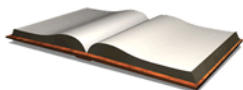
- Jesus responds to the hostility of the Jewish leaders by correcting their misunderstanding on defilement and by leaving Galilee to minister to the Gentiles.
- Jesus responded to the Syrophenecian woman's faith as He did to the woman with the hemorrhage that He healed when she touched His garment (Mk 5:34) and to Bartimaeus when he was healed of blindness (Mk 10:52).
- Jesus healed the deaf and dumb man completely and immediately even though humanly speaking he would need time to learn to talk.
- Jesus expected the disciples to learn who He is and to fully depend on Him from His feeding of the multitudes.

Topic 4: No Signs for the Leaders (Mk 8:11-13)

Jesus successfully taught the multitude and fed the four thousand. But wherever Jesus was successful, the Jewish leaders were not far behind. They would do what they could to ruin His successful ministry.

They came to argue with Him and this time they wanted a sign from heaven. Jesus publicly performed all kinds of miracles and gave many evidences that He was the Messiah. However, they rejected the signs He gave. Casting out demons, healing the blind, the deaf, and the lame were the very signs the Old Testament said would happen when the Messiah appeared. Their demand was further evidence of their rejection of Him.

While He refused to give heavenly signs to them, He did explain some of His signs to His disciples. He warned them about the leaven of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod. The disciples did not understand His meaning. He told them their problem was the hardness of their hearts and explained what He taught them with the miraculous feedings. What would it take for them to understand?



The Jewish leaders impatiently watched while Jesus worked His miracles and fed the crowd. Did He think He was the Prophet? Or maybe even Moses himself? It may be easy to fool this mostly Gentile crowd of untrained and God-forsaken people. But it would be much more difficult to fool them. They were trained to know the signs of a true prophet; the signs of a Messiah.

Why does he not give a real sign? But what sign should they ask for? What would it take for them to believe? They discussed this and decided; if He could produce a sign from God—a sign from the

heavens—they would believe. Otherwise they would demand that He stop His pretense and arrest Him if He refused.

Assignment

- Read Mark 8:11-13.
- Read “No Signs for the Leaders.”

No Signs for the Leaders (Mk 8:11-13)

After feeding the four thousand, Jesus gets into a boat with His disciples and they go to the district of Dalmanutha (Mk 8:10). Dalmanutha was a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Pharisees arrive to argue with Jesus, asking for a sign from heaven in order to test Him (Mk 8:11).

In asking for a sign, the leaders are acknowledging that Jesus may have power that He is not revealing—that Jesus’ mission on earth had a hidden nature—and they wanted direct confirmation of His mission from the Father in heaven. They had already rejected His ministry and even said they thought He cast out demons by demonic power (Mk 3:20-30). Their request was out of order: the signs He gave already showed that He was the Messiah. This request was just another rejection of His claim. They wanted to walk by sight—by proof—instead of by faith.

Jesus responded to their request by sighing deeply in His spirit (Mk 8:12). In this way He expressed His compassion, and He felt that for these lost men. But He refused to have the course of His ministry determined by men and continued following the Father’s plan refusing to give a sign to this generation (Mk 8:12).

Jesus, clearly unhappy with their demand for a heavenly sign, abruptly leaves Galilee and again departs for the other side of the sea (Mk 8:13). The request for a sign was proof that their hearts were hopelessly hardened against Him. The Jewish leader’s reaction to Jesus is shown in this passage; after the next miracle, Mark will show the disciples’ reaction.

QUESTION 18

Jesus uses the short description “this generation” as a technical term in the Synoptic Gospels. Read the instances in Mark 8:12; 9:19; 13:30 where He uses this description and write your own brief definition.

Key Point:

- According to Mark, Jesus refused to give any sign to this generation.

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 19

In Mark 7:1-13 the Jewish leaders had human rules that they valued as highly as God’s Word. Please open your Life Notebook and list some of the rules that your Christian community values highly that may not be taught in God’s Word.

QUESTION 20

As we have seen in this lesson, it continues to be difficult for Jesus' disciples to learn the lesson of the loaves. In your Life Notebook explain a spiritual lesson that you have found difficult for you to learn. What will it take for you to learn this lesson?

QUESTION 21

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry and record them in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 22

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry and record them in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 5 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following passages contains the story of Jesus healing the deaf and dumb man in stages?

- A. Mark 7:1-23
- B. Mark 7:24-30
- C. Mark 7:31-37
- D. Mark 8:1-10

QUESTION 2

What does the word *corban* literally mean?

- A. Devoted to God
- B. Help your parents
- C. Under a curse
- D. Untouchable money

QUESTION 3

Through Jesus' teaching in Mark 7:1-23 He effectively declared all foods clean. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

In the story of the Syrophenecian woman, who did the children represent?

- A. Actual children
- B. Small pet dogs
- C. The Gentiles
- D. The Jews

QUESTION 5

Why was the deaf and dumb man in Mark 7:31-37 healed relatively slowly and in stages?

- A. The man was both deaf and dumb
- B. Jesus was healing the man in a way that accommodated the man's limitations
- C. Jesus was responding to the man's lack of faith
- D. Jesus' power was less available in Gentile lands

QUESTION 6

Jesus expected the disciples to depend on their available resources when He fed the four thousand in Mark 8:1-10. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

What was different about the feeding of the four thousand compared with the feeding of the five thousand?

- A. The emotion that led Jesus to feed the multitude
- B. The Gentile character of the audience
- C. The kind of supplies Jesus began with
- D. The question Jesus asked of the disciples before He fed the multitude

QUESTION 8

Jesus refused to let the Jewish leaders determine the course of His ministry. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

When Jesus refers to “this generation” He is referring to the disciples and His faithful followers. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

Which story in this lesson may have been illustrating the spiritual understanding of the disciples?

- A. Healing the deaf and dumb man in stages
- B. Healing the Syrophenecian’s daughter
- C. Jesus’ teaching on uncleanness
- D. The Jewish leaders asking for a sign

Lesson 5 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 7:1-23	The Disciples Eat with Unclean Hands
Mark 7:24-30	Gentiles Feeding on Crumbs
Mark 7:31-37	Healing the Deaf and Dumb Man
Mark 8:1-10	Feeding the 4,000
Mark 8:11-13	No Signs for the Leaders

QUESTION 3: True [They saw keeping these rules as fulfilling their duty to God.]

QUESTION 4

C. Devoted to God

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Mark likely placed this teaching to prepare His readers for the next story he would tell about the Syrophenician woman. There was a division between Jews and Gentiles that centered around the issue of uncleanness. Through Jesus' teaching on defilement, Mark's readers learn that through Christ, God would cleanse the Gentiles and minister to them also.

QUESTION 7: *Your answer*

QUESTION 8

A. By correcting their misunderstanding on defilement

B. By leaving Galilee to minister to the Gentiles

QUESTION 9

<i>Figure</i>	<i>What it Represents</i>
Falling at someone's feet	Respect and helplessness
The children	The Jews
The dogs	The Gentiles
Bread	Jesus' ministry
The bread spilled	Jesus' overflowing ministry

QUESTION 10

D. The woman with the hemorrhage

QUESTION 11: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

“Because of this” means the way she responded—the faith and understanding she showed. Jesus responded this way only when a person showed confident faith and she received her reward: “the demon has gone out of your daughter” (Mk 7:29).

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

As usual, except when human will is involved, when the God of the universe speaks a command, what He speaks becomes reality. He commanded the man's ears to open and they opened! Also, the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he spoke plainly (Isa 35:1-7; Mk 7:35).

QUESTION 14: *Your answer*

QUESTION 15

C. They were to learn about who He is.

D. They were to learn about depending on Him.

[These are the same lessons they were to learn from the first miraculous feeding.]

QUESTION 16

B. From Jesus

QUESTION 17

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Time Jesus Felt Compassion</i>
Mark 1:41	The leper wanting to be made clean
Mark 5:19	The man who had a legion
Mark 6:34	Feeding the five thousand
Mark 8:2	Feeding the four thousand
Mark 9:22	The son possessed by a demon

QUESTION 18: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The references are mostly negative to describe not only the lack of faith of the people He came to but also their active animosity to God's will.

QUESTION 19: *Your answer*

QUESTION 20: *Your answer*

QUESTION 21: *Your answer*

QUESTION 22: *Your answer*

Lesson 5 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

C. Mark 7:31-37

QUESTION 2

A. Devoted to God

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4

D. The Jews

QUESTION 5

B. Jesus was healing the man in a way that accommodated the man's limitations

QUESTION 6: False

QUESTION 7

B. The Gentile character of the audience

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: False

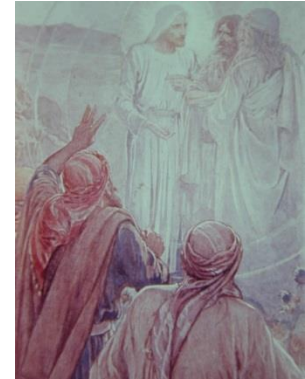
QUESTION 10

A. Healing the deaf and dumb man in stages

Lesson 6: The Disciples' Understanding (Mk 8:14–9:29)

Lesson Introduction

Mark illustrates the disciples' spiritual understanding by telling how Jesus healed a blind man in stages (Mk 8:22-26). Again, this healing was not more difficult for Jesus; instead it illustrated a point: as the blind man was restored to partial sight, seeing men like trees before seeing clearly, so the disciples slowly learn who Jesus is without understanding His mission. Next, Mark tells of Peter confessing Jesus as the Christ (Mk 8:29). Though they now understand who He is, their new struggle is to learn His mission (Mk 8:31-33).



Through the blind man's healing, the disciples gain partial vision of who Jesus is. They are not happy after discovering His mission (Mk 8:31-33; Mk 9:31). Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem (Mk 8:31), the home of Jesus' enemies. His mission is suffering, being killed by the Jewish leaders, then rising again (Mk 8:31). Peter responds like Satan, tempting Jesus to turn aside from His mission (Mk 8:33). The Messiah's followers expected glory but anyone following Jesus is on the same death march He is—they must deny themselves and carry their cross without shame (Mk 8:34-38).

Discouraged with this news, Peter, James, and John preview Jesus' kingdom glory (Mk 9:2). In this preview, His clothes have been laundered by heaven (Mk 9:3) as the disciples are eyewitnesses of His inner glory. Mark again shows Jesus as the new Moses ascending a high mountain for this revelation (Mk 9:2). Moses and Elijah even appear to talk with Him (Mk 9:4).

Peter again misunderstands and sees Jesus as equal to Moses and Elijah (Mk 9:5). The heavenly Father appears in clouds that manifest His glory (Ex 24:16; Mk 9:7). He ends the transfiguration saying that Jesus is His unique Son, so listen to Him (Mk 9:7). As they descend from their 'vision,' the disciples ask Jesus about Elijah, but Jesus explains that John the Baptist was Elijah and they killed him (Mk 9:11-13).

Separated from Jesus, the remaining disciples are disconnected from the power source. To remain empowered, they need the connection of faith and prayer (Mk 9:23, 29). The key to success is humility and dependence as illustrated by a child as Jesus again turns their thinking upside-down (Mk 9:35-37).

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Disciples' Progress

Their Lack of Understanding (Mk 8:14-21)

Their Lack of Vision (Mk 8:22-26)

They Can Finally See (Mk 8:27-30)

Topic 2: The Mission Explained (Mk 8:31-33)

Topic 3: The Call to Follow (Mk 8:34-38)

Topic 4: The Coming Kingdom

The Transfiguration (Mk 9:1-10)

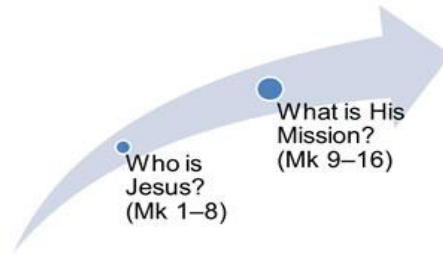
The Question of Elijah (Mk 9:11-13)

Topic 5: After He Leaves

The Problem: Unbelief (Mk 9:14-24)

The Solution: Prayer (Mk 9:25-29)

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing



Topic 1 shows Jesus healing a blind man. This healing is done in several stages, which illustrates the disciples' progress in learning about Jesus and His mission. However, their hard hearts are taught and their spiritual blindness about Jesus is gradually lifting.

Topic 2 continues with Jesus teaching a different lesson. Now that they know who He is they will need to learn His mission. What will that mission be like for Him and His followers?

In Topic 3 Jesus explains His mission to His followers. They expected immediate glory for following the Messiah; instead they will feel the shame of the cross and lose their life to save it.

Topic 4 shows the true nature and glory of Jesus revealed from within. Moses and Elijah also appear to speak with Jesus while the Father testifies to His Son.

Topic 5 tells the story of discipleship failure. When Jesus returns a crowd has gathered around His disciples. Though they have done it before, this time they are unable to cast out a demon. Jesus shows them why they failed.

Summary: In this lesson Mark looks at how well the disciples have learned the lessons Jesus is teaching. They have learned and confessed who He is, now they must learn what their mission is. The disciples have started on the road to Jerusalem.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

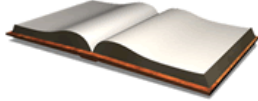
- Explain how Jesus healed in stages to illustrate the disciples' slow learning
- Discuss the three times Jesus shared His mission with the disciples
- Look for ways to take up your cross and follow Jesus daily
- Understand the importance of relying on God in all things

Topic 1: The Disciples' Progress

Jesus spent much of His time and energy to teach His disciples to understand who He is. As we have seen, Mark emphasizes that they learned this lesson slowly. Finally, they understand and confess who He is. Peter, speaking for all the disciples (except Judas), confesses "You are the Christ" (Mk 8:29).

Immediately after this confession Jesus begins teaching them a new lesson, and this lesson will also be learned slowly. In fact, this lesson lasts the rest of Mark.

Their lack of Understanding (Mk 8:14-21)



Peter felt embarrassed. He thought to himself, “It’s normal that I don’t understand Jesus’ teaching; in fact I usually don’t understand Him until He explains things to me in private. Here Jesus just taught me passionately about what the symbolism of the loaves means. It was like He mentally took me by the collar, shook me alert and said, ‘Look, this is what I’m teaching!’ I can tell the others don’t understand either, but I’m the leader and I should understand. Even while teaching, He has chided us all for not understanding, for our hard hearts, and for eyes that don’t see and ears that don’t hear. Then He taught us about the loaves and asked if we still don’t understand.”

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 8:14-38 and Mark 9:1-29 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- Why was Jesus frustrated with the disciples in Mark 8:14-21?
- Why does Jesus heal the blind man in stages?
- Why do Jesus and Peter conflict after Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ?
- What happens at the transfiguration?
- What happens and why when nine of the twelve disciples are asked to cast out a demon?

Assignment

- Read Mark 8:14-21 again.
- Read “Their lack of Understanding.”

Their Lack of Understanding (Mk 8:13-21)

The disciples left quickly after Jesus entered the boat (Mk 8:13). Consequently, they forgot to bring extra supplies of bread with them and they ended up with only one loaf (Mk 8:14). Jesus used this opportunity to teach them to watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod (Mk 8:15). The leaven Jesus referred to was their traditions that were more important to them than God’s Word, and trying to establish their own righteousness. Since they had these problems, they also had a bigger problem—unbelief.

Jesus mentioned leaven, and the disciples immediately misunderstood and discussed amongst themselves the fact that they had no bread (Mk 8:16). This continues Mark’s theme of the disciples not understanding Jesus’ teachings. In this case it is especially disturbing because Jesus has twice fed a multitude from limited supplies. Why should they worry about whether they had enough bread?

Jesus is not pleased with their misunderstanding. He desires their hearts to be softer and receptive to His teaching; it is vital they understand who He is. Read the series of questions He asks them in Mark 8:17-21. While the disciples did answer a few of Jesus’ questions, the final question is significantly left unanswered.

He rebuked them because they misunderstood due to their hardness of heart, blindness, deafness, and lack of memory (Isa 6:9-10, Jer 5:21; Ezk 12:2). They show no evidence of understanding who He really is.

This story on spiritual blindness is followed by a story on physical blindness. That story deals with the disciples' ability to spiritually see, but only vaguely, both who Jesus is and what His mission is.

QUESTION 2

Match the section titles to the appropriate Scripture reference.

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 8:14-21	Jesus Explains their Mission
Mark 8:22-26	Jesus Warns the Disciples about Leaven
Mark 8:27-30	Jesus Heals a Blind Man in Stages
Mark 8:31-38	Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ
Mark 9:1-13	Jesus is Transfigured
Mark 9:14-29	The Nine Disciples Fail

QUESTION 3

Match the reference with the corresponding times Jesus rebuked and then instructed His disciples.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Instance</i>
Mark 4:13	After teaching on the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod
Mark 4:40	After teaching on defilement
Mark 6:52	After He calmed the storm
Mark 7:18-19	After giving the Kingdom of Heaven Parables
Mark 8:17-21	After He walked on water

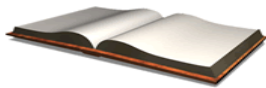
QUESTION 4

It is significant that Mark leaves Jesus' final question to the disciples in this topic unanswered. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

List the questions Jesus asks the disciples in Mark 8:14-21. Then, in your Life Notebook, write out how this applies to a current situation in your life.

Their lack of Vision (Mk 8:22-26)



“The last healing Jesus did really irritated me,” Peter thought. “Instead of healing that man instantly like I know He could, He purposefully did it in stages. It’s really difficult not to take it personally.”

He's trying my patience! It's pretty obvious this is an object lesson again, intended for me. It seems like Jesus did it because I've learned so slowly."

As Peter settled down and started to feel less offended he decided, "Maybe I had better pay closer attention. But what is it He wants me to learn?"



Assignment

- Read Mark 8:22-26.
- Read "Their Lack of Vision."

Their Lack of Vision (Mk 8:22-24)

They now came to Bethsaida, a town on the west side of the Sea of Galilee (Mk 8:22). This town was their original destination in Mark 6:45 but they were blown off course, illustrating that they had not learned the lesson Jesus taught them in Mark 6:52. When they arrive, the Great Physician is brought a patient who needs a cure. The man they bring is blind, and his friends ask Jesus to touch him (Mk 8:22).

Instead, Jesus takes him by the hand and brings him out of the village. Again, Jesus does His best not to attract attention that would hinder His message. Especially after feeding the five thousand, when they tried to make Him king, He purposely avoids the crowds.

This miraculous cure is again done in stages, and Jesus used means to illustrate the cure. These are the actions He took:

- He spit on the man's eyes.
- He laid His hands on him.
- He asked him, "Do you see anything?" (Mk 8:23).

Jesus used His own saliva and touch and then asked how well he could see. In other miracles, Jesus just accomplished it all without any means and without any delay. Here He had a purpose for doing it in stages. Recent events in Mark lead up to the story of Peter's confession of who the disciples think Jesus is (Mk 8:27-30). Peter is commonly recognized by commentators as a spokesman for the disciples, though others at times function in this role also. At this time, they still do not understand. A secondary meaning illustrates how the disciples come to some understanding of who Jesus is without understanding His ministry. This understanding comes slowly—in stages.

Jesus asked him if he could see anything, indicating He did not expect him to see perfectly right away. The delay was neither a lack of faith on the man's part nor a lack of ability on Jesus' part. The man responded that he could see men as if they were trees walking around (Mk 8:24). By this, he told Jesus his sight had only partially been restored.

In this same way the disciples come to understand who Jesus is. They learn slowly and only come to understand who Jesus really is when the Father reveals this to them—just as He does us today.

Until now, Jesus taught the disciples to see Him as the Messiah. They confess that understanding in the next passage. What they will not understand until Jesus dies and rises is that He must also suffer. Jesus illustrates their understanding at this time by the first stage of the blind man's healing. It will take His resurrection for them to see clearly.

We now come to the second stage of this miracle (Mk 8:25-26). To complete the cure, Jesus again lays His hands on the man's eyes. The man looked intently (opened his eyes widely) and was restored, and saw everything clearly (Mk 8:25). Jesus sent him home and commanded him to stay out of the town to avoid unnecessary distractions (Mk 8:26). Jesus is intent on His mission, and He

does not want this man or his cure as a distraction.

The disciples are hard-hearted and do not easily see who Jesus is or what God’s plan is. They worry about worldly issues instead of trusting in Jesus to provide. They have earthly plans instead of heavenly plans. This keeps them from seeing what they should about Jesus.

QUESTION 6

Jesus expected this blind man to see clearly right away. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

This blind man had no human responsibility in obtaining this cure. *True or False?*

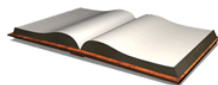
Mark uses the story of the healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 to illustrate how the disciples come to understand who Jesus is.

QUESTION 8

To better understand Mark 8:27-30 read the verses the precede them listed below and then match the reference with the corresponding description of the disciples .

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Description</i>
Mark 8:22	The background of the healing
Mark 8:23	Partial sight established
Mark 8:24	The command to silence
Mark 8:25	Jesus’ initial actions
Mark 8:26	Full sight established

They Can finally See (Mk 8:27-30)



“Where are we going now?” Peter wondered. From the Sea of Galilee Jesus suddenly turned north and seems headed toward Caesarea Philippi about forty kilometers out of their way! There was much discussion amongst the disciples because this city and area was known for its many gods and religions, but they were all sure Jesus was not interested in learning about them. “Many of us are weary,” Peter thought, “and frankly we need some rest.”

Suddenly Peter saw a sheer rock cliff inset with statues of various gods. Now Jesus is calling us all together, but still the question remains: why here?

“Who do people say I am?” Jesus asks as He looks out over the rock wall with its many gods. Did He really bring them over a day’s journey just to ask this question? He could have asked this anywhere, couldn’t He? Why waste a day? What was His point?

Assignment

- Read Mark 8:27-30.
- Read “They Can Finally See.”

They Can Finally See (Mk 8:25-30)

Jesus and His disciples now enter Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:27). Caesarea Philippi is twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee, as far north as Jesus was known to minister. The likely site of the transfiguration, Mount Hermon is also located near this city (Mk 9:2-8). Caesarea Philippi was the focal point for worship of the Greek god Pan as well as many other pagan deities. It was named for a son of Herod the Great who built a white marble temple for the supposedly divine Roman Caesar.

Mark shows an underlying battle between Herod's family and Jesus. The battle first appears when John the Baptist is beheaded (Mk 6:14-29). Herod the Great also built the palaces at Jericho, at Herodian, and started building the glorious new temple that Jesus soon curses (Mk 11:12-25). Jesus purposely chose this site. Historically, scholars have reported that this location had a sheer rock cliff inset with statues of various gods—Jesus probably used this as a backdrop for referring to Peter as a rock—its multi-religious background, and its connection with Herod's family to ask who people say He is (Mt 16:15-18).

Jesus shifts from a public ministry before the multitudes to teaching His disciples privately about His mission. While on the way to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples who people think He is (Mk 8:27). They said, "John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets" (Mk 8:28). This was the same answer given in Mark 6:14-16 by people in general and by Herod himself.

Jesus pressed them further by asking who they say He is (Mk 8:29), and the readers of Mark are meant to ask this question of themselves as well. He wanted their opinion as His disciples as opposed to people's opinions in general. Peter, apparently speaking for the group, answered saying, "You are the Christ" (Mk 8:29). Finally, after all the teaching Jesus gave them trying to get them to understand—they finally do. They are now like the blind man who sees things vaguely—like trees walking around (Mk 8:22-26).

This is the pivotal point for this gospel: The first half of Mark led to this confession that Jesus is the Christ while the second half shows the mission of Christ and what it means for His disciples. They need to know and understand who He is, especially because of opposition from the Jewish leaders and the dullness of the multitudes, before they could learn His mission.

Having led the disciples to this confession, Jesus now "warned them not to tell anyone" (Mk 8:30). The disciples recognize what only the demons and the Father have confessed until now.

The disciples are warned to silence because, though they know His person, they do not understand His mission. The Jews in general do not know the Messiah's mission either. They expected a triumphant political Messiah to rid them of Roman oppression and lead their country as the head nation (Deut 28:13). His true mission in His first advent was far different than that. Up until this point His power and authority are emphasized, but from now on His submission and apparent weaknesses are displayed.



Mark's accounts of the two blind men who were healed frame the section of Mark's gospel covered in this lesson. Before the disciples confess Jesus is the Christ, Jesus heals the first blind man in stages (Mk 8:22-30). Then before the triumphal entry, Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46–11:10).

The disciples learn slowly, but they now have a key understanding of Jesus' person. Next they learn His mission and its meaning for their lives. Will this lesson be any easier for them to learn?

QUESTION 9

What teaching techniques do you see Jesus use in taking the disciples to Caesarea Philippi in Mark 8:27-30?

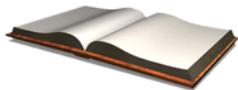
Key Points:

- Jesus needed to rebuke and privately instruct His disciples at several significant points in His ministry.
- Jesus specifically asks the disciples to understand the lesson of the loaves.
- Mark shows Jesus performed this miracle in stages primarily to show the pace of the disciples' learning and how patiently Jesus teaches.

Topic 2: The Mission Explained (Mk 8:31-33)

In Mark 8:27-30 the disciples confessed that Jesus is the Christ, though Matthew points out they did not learn this on their own, because the Father revealed it to them (Mt 16:17). Now that they know His person, they must learn His mission. Jesus teaches them that He must be rejected by the Jewish leaders, be killed and rise again.

But for Peter, this is the exact opposite of what he expected. He looked for a glorious Messiah reigning on David's throne with Israel as the head nation. So, Peter rebukes Jesus for predicting His rejection and death. In turn Jesus points out that Satan is behind Peter's rebuke, tempting Him away from the cross. Tensions are high and Peter speaks for all the disciples as future events will reveal.



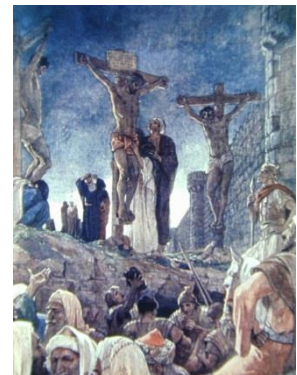
The disciples agreed how great it was to have Jesus plainly agree He is the Christ Peter thought, "Finally, this is what I signed on for!" Until now Jesus never seemed serious about advancing God's kingdom and defeating Israel's enemies. That's what I've always been taught the Messiah would do when He appeared. Since He is the Christ, God's kingdom in power should be imminent. "It's about time!" Peter thought.

Jesus again called them together and Peter hoped He would announce the kingdom will now be restored to Israel. But no, He is saying that He—the Messiah—will suffer and die?

Peter is beside himself! "I haven't signed on to a losing cause; it is time to set Jesus straight. Jesus has walked away from other chances to advance His mission; I, Peter, will not allow this mistake again. I can tell the other disciples are with me. A private rebuke is necessary!" Peter thought.

But Jesus just looked at Peter with that piercing gaze, as He stated, "Get behind Me, Satan!"

"Jesus had never spoken to me like that! When He looked back at the other disciples, He must have suspected that they had also thought this.



After an uncomfortable delay to collect his thoughts, Peter concluded, “If we are not setting up the kingdom, what is our mission?”

Assignment

- Read Mark 8:31-33.
- Read “The Mission Explained.”

The Mission Explained (Mk 8:31-33)

Immediately after the disciples confess Jesus as the Christ, Jesus starts teaching them and states plainly the following:

- The Son of Man must suffer many things (Dan 7:13; Mk 8:31)
- The elders, chief priests and scribes will reject Him (Mk 8:31; 12:10-11)
- He will be killed (Dan 9:26; Mk 8:31)
- He will rise again (Mk 8:31-32; 1 Cor 15:4)

Jesus explains what it means to be, and what happens to, the Messiah. He is the Son of Man. This title helped prevent the misunderstandings that came with the title of Messiah or Christ. His only previous reference to the “Son of Man” was in Mark 2:10, and Mark 2:28. The most important point is God’s plan that the Messiah must suffer first before He can return in glory. The Greek word translated “must” expresses obligation, or necessity.

After Peter’s confession, Jesus warned the disciples to keep this confession to themselves. Now, after Jesus tells them His mission, “Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him” (Mk 8:32). The rebuke Peter receives from Jesus is the same word He used in Mark 3:12 to rebuke the evil spirits’ confession of Him. Mark compares the demons who oppose Jesus by stating His purpose and mission and the opposition caused by the disciples’ misunderstanding Him.

Peter obviously had dreams of his own of the Messiah’s mission and what it meant for him as His follower. His rebuke was also the voice of Satan behind Peter, hindering Jesus’ mission. Jesus recognizes this and rebukes Peter accordingly (Mk 8:33).

The disciples’ struggle to learn this lesson continues through the end of this book. The disciples, like the blind man, momentarily see who Jesus is, but do not see His mission. Peter had set his mind on man’s interests, not God’s; for the road to Jerusalem ends at the cross and that was the will of the Father for Jesus. The problem for the disciples is that their fate is tied to Jesus’.

Every time Jesus reveals His mission, the disciples show they misunderstand it. But a lot of their misunderstanding is tied to not accepting it. When He next states it, they argue about who is the greatest (Mk 9:30-34). Then, after that, James and John ask to sit at Jesus’ right and left hand in glory (Mk 10:32-45). This helps explain why Jesus does not want them telling anyone yet that He is the Messiah. He has just revealed that the end of His road is suffering and shame, but in contrast they are concerned about the glory.

We see that Jesus’ question about who He was effectively led them to their confession (Mk 8:29). Mark wants us to see ourselves in the disciples’ responses and attitudes. Are we seeking glory for ourselves while following a Savior who suffered and died? How can we seek high positions when “He gave His life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45)?

QUESTION 10

In this topic the disciples now confess that they understand Jesus’ mission. *True or False?*

QUESTION 11

Three times in Mark 8–10 Jesus explains to His disciples that He must suffer, die, and then rise from the dead. Each time He does, the disciples show they misunderstand Him. Please match the reference with the disciples' misunderstanding.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Misunderstanding</i>
Mark 8:31-33	The disciples argue about who is the greatest
Mark 9:30-34	James and John ask Jesus to sit at His right and left hand
Mark 10:32-45	Peter's rebuke of Jesus

Key Points:

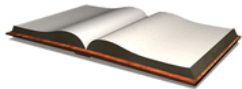
- The disciples must now learn Jesus' mission to suffer before receiving glory.
- Jesus states three times that His mission involves rejection, suffering, dying, and rising again but each time the disciples show they do not understand.

Topic 3: The Call to Follow (Mk 8:34-38)

Jesus expands the teaching on His mission and applies it to those who follow Him. He wants others join Him, but they must know their fates are linked to His. The same cosmic battle He fights will also involve them. There is much to lose if they want to preserve their life in this present world. Paradoxically, even if they save their lives in this current world, they will soon lose it and have nothing to show for it.

In contrast, there is much to gain by joining with Him. This world and our lives in this world will soon pass away. But by following Jesus we are connected to eternity and what we accomplish now will last forever.

There is shame associated with the cross and Jesus wants them to know that also. By accepting this shame, because of the desire to follow Jesus, results in reward when He returns with His angels. His followers will share an intimacy with Jesus that no one else can. This will be shown in the transfiguration (discussed in the next topic) and in how they are taken into His confidence.



As Jesus explained their mission and what it would mean to follow Him, the disciples' hopes were crushed! They thought they signed on to a mission of glory, following the Messiah to establish His kingdom, but instead they signed on to a mission of death. What is more, this issue is clearly not open to discussion. Jesus declared God's mission for Him and His followers and those who oppose it are partners with Satan.

“So would there be no kingdom? What about all the promises to Israel from Moses and the prophets?” Peter wondered.

Assignment

- Read Mark 8:34-38.
- Read “The Call to Discipleship.”

The Call to Discipleship (Mk 8:34-38)

After Jesus explained His mission and suffering, He calls His followers to detail the ways this affects them and how they share in these sufferings. This call is not just to the twelve, as He summoned the entire multitude along with His disciples (Mk 8:34).

Jesus gives three requirements for those who wish to follow Him:

1. **They must first deny themselves.** Jesus was not concerned with His own best interests; they would need the same attitude. They must give their lives in service to Him, whatever the outcome. That could mean losing their lives because they chose to follow Him. But even if they did not lose their physical life, they would lose their own self-directed life.
2. **They also must take up their own crosses.** Those sentenced to death by crucifixion carried the crossbeam of their cross to the place of crucifixion. Similarly, each disciple would carry a cross as His follower. Peter knew how oppressive the pressure of that burden could be when he denied any relationship with His Messiah (Mk 14:66-72). Jesus wanted His followers to make an informed decision about following Him.
3. **The final instruction is to follow Him.** He leads the way. He gave up His personal will to fulfill the Father's plan and, because He did, He achieved salvation for us. So we get behind Him and by faith allow Him to lead us. This also tests our faith—do we trust Him enough to follow? Peter tried to lead and steer Jesus' path—away from the cross and suffering. We must be alert to continue following when the road becomes difficult—toward the cross and suffering.

Believers are held responsible for their decision to follow Him (Mk 8:38). Preferring worldly gain and status are equal to shame, (spiritual) adultery, and contempt for Christ. This person in turn is exposed to shame when Christ returns with His angels. This is a call to perseverance. The temptation is to return to a life lived for self and a love for the world.

After giving the three requirements, He teaches three pieces of logic that support following Him. From the world's perspective, it is foolish to follow Him. But from eternity's perspective, it is wise (Mk 8:35-37). Our life in this world is transitory while eternity is not.

Jesus predicts His death three times in this section of Mark (Mk 8:31–10:52). Each time the disciples react to the announcement and each time Jesus teaches a discipleship lesson. This is the first in the series of three predictions.

Starting at this point in Mark, Jesus is now on the road to Jerusalem. Mark vividly contrasts Jesus' attitude with the disciples' attitudes. What Jesus sees ahead of Him is His suffering and death. What the disciples see ahead of them is their glory when Jesus establishes His kingdom. They now understand who Jesus is, but Jesus must teach them what His mission is and how that affects them. The road to Jerusalem does not lead to receiving His kingdom in glory—it is the end of the road.

This is the first mention of the cross. Jesus used this Roman invention to portray a condemned man carrying his crossbeam on his way to crucifixion. Jews understood this to picture someone under God's curse (Deut 21:22-23). As Jesus was thought of as being punished and attacked by God, the follower of Jesus will be seen the same way (Isa 53:4). The disciple of Jesus must suffer with his Savior.

The call is not only to the twelve, but the call is for every follower (Mk 8:34). When Jesus says, literally, "let him keep following Me," the wording is the same as what Jesus used to call Peter and John as disciples (Mk 1:17).

When Jesus asks about forfeiting or exchanging a man's soul, the expected answers to His questions are that nothing is gained and nothing can be exchanged (Mk 8:36-37). Only the life lived for Him

endures into eternity. Everything else accomplished in this life stops at the grave. We must make an informed decision of whether to follow Him, which helps us continue following when the road gets rough.

Yet if we stumble, the disciples' examples can encourage us. They had the same struggles with these issues that we do, and they failed many times, but they continued learning and following Him even while stumbling on the way.

QUESTION 12

What does Jesus say are the three requirements for those who want to follow Him in Mark 8:34?

QUESTION 13

Not wanting to experience personal shame at Jesus' return should motivate us to follow Jesus in this present world. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

Starting at this point in Mark, Jesus' destination is _____.

Key Point:

- Jesus' followers must deny themselves, take up their cross, and willingly accept the shame of the cross.

Topic 4: The Coming Kingdom

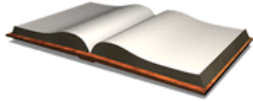
After telling His followers the bad news about His impending death and resurrection, and if they follow Him they face the same fate, Jesus gives His disciples some needed encouragement. First He promises that some will get to see His kingdom coming in power and glory. Then, Mark immediately tells the story of the transfiguration.

The 'inner three' disciples see a preview of Jesus' glory and the return of Moses and Elijah to talk with Him. Then, when Peter gets confused, the Father speaks from heaven and corrects his misunderstanding.

Returning from the mountain, the disciples ask both what happened—and what will happen—when Jesus is glorified. They ask about Elijah coming first and Jesus tells them John the Baptist fulfilled that role. From the encouragement of the transfiguration, they come to a scene of discouragement and discipleship failure. What lessons can we learn from their failure?



The Transfiguration (Mk 9:1-10)



Jesus gathered the inner three and the rest of the disciples were curious: it was especially important when Jesus took them with Him. Though Jesus said nothing, He seems headed up this mountain. Peter remembered back to all the great things that happened in Israel when someone ascended a mountain. The most prominent in his mind was when Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Law and he also recalled the time Elijah confronted King Ahab on Mount Carmel. Though he had just confessed Jesus as the Christ, it was hard for him to see Jesus as their equal much less their superior.

“Finally we’re nearing the top,” Peter thought. Then immediately he was alerted by an intense light. “It’s like Jesus is glowing from the inside out” Peter thought. “This may be greater than I thought. If I’m not mistaken Moses and Elijah are here also! In fear Peter thought, “This is the kingdom come in power!” Just when I think the kingdom will never come, this happens. As the scene continued Peter’s character urged him to take action: “Let us make shelters for each of you,” he said awkwardly. But his words were like putting a snuffer on a flame. A cloud suddenly appeared blocking out the light and a voice said, “This is my one dear Son. Listen to him!” Suddenly, Jesus alone stood beside them.

“Oh no,” Peter thought. “I’ve done it again. I’ve missed the point.”

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:1-10.
- Read “The Transfiguration.”

The Transfiguration (Mk 9:1-10)

Mark continues his vivid contrasts. The disciples confessed Jesus as the Christ and had high expectations for His mission. They expected Jesus to enter Jerusalem and establish His kingdom in glory, but Jesus explains that instead of glory, His death lies ahead of Him in Jerusalem. He also said the disciples’ fate is tied with His. So they will receive the same persecutions and misunderstandings as Jesus.

When they heard this, the disciples’ hopes fell. To counteract this, Jesus makes a prediction: “there are some standing here who will not, meaning absolutely not experience death before they see the kingdom of God come with power” (Mk 9:1). This statement was meant to restore their hopes. Jesus mentioned death here because He revealed His coming death and how their fate connected to His.

The prediction in verse one connects with the transfiguration account that begins in verse two. Both verses are linked logically and thematically by the statement “six days later.”

Six days later, He brought them up to a high mountain (Mk 9:2). A high mountain, in this case Mount Hermon by Caesarea Philippi, is the biblical place for divine revelation. Mark compares Jesus with Moses: God gave him the Ten Commandments at the top of Mount Sinai (Ex 19:20). Moses also waited six days at the top of Sinai for God to meet with him (Ex 24:16). Jesus is the prophet Moses predicted would come after him (Deut 18:15).

Again Jesus takes with Him Peter, James, and John—the inner three disciples (Mk 9:2). Jesus was transfigured before them, and His clothes became radiantly white, more so than any bleach could achieve (Mk 9:2-3). The word “transfigured” means changed to another form. This was not just an outward change; Jesus was as He will be when He returns to earth in power and glory. Mark mentions only that His clothes changed.

Two heavenly persons appeared speaking with Jesus. Mark reports that Elijah and Moses appeared with Him. The three were speaking to each other but Mark does not tell us the topic of the conversation.

Peter responds to this scene by asking if they could make three shelters (Mk 9:5-6). Elijah appears as predicted before the coming day of the Lord (Mal 4:5). Elijah, like Moses, led God's people to a closer relationship with God: Moses led Israel out of Egypt and Elijah them away from Baal worship (Deut 34:9-12; 1 Kgs 18:16-46).

Peter responded inappropriately, because he was terrified. The word used to describe his terror is the same one used to describe how Moses was terrified by the presence of God on Mount Sinai. Again Peter thinks Jesus can escape the suffering in Jerusalem and establish His glorious kingdom immediately. God clarifies things as He announces from a cloud over them, "This is my one dear Son. Listen to him!" (Mk 9:7). God emphasizes to the three their need to listen to His Son, maybe specifically about His mission to Jerusalem.

At Caesarea Philippi the disciples learned that Jesus is greater than all other supposed gods that the unbelieving world worships. Here on the mountain they learn that He is greater than Israel's greatest patriarchs: Moses and Elijah.

This is the second of three times in Mark that God tears open the heavens to reveal who Jesus is. It is also the second fulfillment of Isaiah's longing (Isa 64:1). The first was at His baptism, and the last is when He tears the veil of the temple from top to bottom.

Clouds often accompany an appearance of God and the presence of His throne (see Isa 14:14; Mk 14:62). They were also present when God led Israel in the wilderness and when He gave the commandments to Moses at the top of Mount Sinai (Ex 24:15-18; Num 14:14). So the transfiguration compared Jesus to Moses as the one leading God's people to the greater Promised Land, but for Jesus, His journey must go through Jerusalem.

Peter's misunderstanding brings the transfiguration to an abrupt close. God corrects Peter's misunderstanding, leaving Jesus standing there with the disciples alone. Jesus is not equal with Moses and Elijah—He is God's unique Son (Heb 1:1-4).

Leaving the mountain, Jesus commands silence about the transfiguration until He rises from the dead (Mk 9:9). Jesus gave other orders to silence, but only this one had a time limit. Only His resurrection will reveal its meaning and then they can tell others about it and there will no longer be secrecy about Jesus.

Just as Peter misunderstood the transfiguration, the disciples misunderstand what Jesus means by the rising from the dead and discuss what rising from the dead might mean (Mk 9:10). The discussion here is about Jesus' resurrection, not just resurrection in general.

QUESTION 15

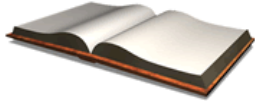
What did Moses, Elijah, and Jesus discuss when they met during the transfiguration?

- A. Jesus' coming death
- B. Jesus' coming resurrection
- C. We are not told
- D. When the kingdom would be established

QUESTION 16

List the three times in Mark God tears open the heavens to testify about who Jesus is.

The Question of Elijah (Mk 9:11-13)



Peter puzzled over what he saw. Elijah appeared and everything was set to establish the kingdom and then, in the blink of an eye, it was gone! “My head’s still spinning,” Peter thought to himself. But now they were all starting back down the mountain. Jesus was commanding them to silence until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. “Whatever that meant,” Peter thought. James and John did not seem to know either.

“Lord,” Peter said, “What about Elijah? Why do the experts in the law say that he must come first?” “You know the answer to that Peter; it fulfills prophecy. The more important question is why the Son of Man must suffer,” Jesus replied. “I tell you Elijah did come and they did to him what was prophesied.”

“He must mean John the Baptist,” Peter thought. “What highs and lows. First the kingdom is not being established, then it looks like it is, now it’s not again. I still don’t get it.”

Reminder: The above conversation is part of the Storybook. We are not suggesting Jesus said these words, but have included them based on the understanding of Mark 9:12-13.

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:11-13.
- Read “The Question of Elijah.”

The Question of Elijah (Mk 9:11-13)

The disciples now ask Jesus why the scribes say Elijah must come first (Mk 9:11). Jesus agrees that “Elijah does indeed come first, and restores all things” (Mk 9:12). With Elijah’s appearance on the Mount, the disciples’ hopes were raised that the kingdom would now appear, but Jesus continues teaching them His passion must come first. After agreeing that Elijah must come first, Jesus asks them why the Son of Man must suffer and be despised (Mk 9:12).

He then said, “But I tell you that Elijah has certainly come, and they did to him whatever they wanted, just as it is written about him” (Mk 9:13). Jesus here refers to John the Baptist who went before Jesus preparing His way (Mk 1:2-3).

In Malachi, God promises to send Elijah the prophet before the “great and terrible day of the Lord comes” (Mal 4:5). He says He will encourage people to return to Him so that judgment will be avoided (Mal 4:6). Since John was this Elijah and the fathers and their children did not return as a nation through John’s work, Israel is promised a curse from God for their rejection of her Messiah (Mt 27:25). A partial fulfillment of this curse came in AD 70 when their temple and city were destroyed by the forces of the Roman Titus. This curse and judgment of spiritual blindness for Israel continues through this present age (Rom 9; 10; 11). The fate of the messenger, John the Baptist, is linked with Messiah’s; as they did whatever they wanted to John, so they do with Jesus.

The disciples continue misunderstanding, but Jesus continues instructing. He is on the road to His death, and they share His fate. This same lesson applies to those who follow Him. Do we think we will receive glory and honor without suffering first? If so, we must change our thinking.

QUESTION 17

Malachi predicted that Elijah would return before the day of the Lord and if Israel did not return to God they would receive judgment. *True or False?*

QUESTION 18

The disciples were ordered not to tell anyone what they had seen at the transfiguration until after the _____.

Key Points:

- The transfiguration reveals that Jesus is God's Son and is the second of three pictures Mark paints of God breaking through the barriers between heaven and earth.
- John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi's prophecy of Elijah coming before the day of the Lord while Israel's rejection of John's ministry resulted in judgment for Israel.

Topic 5: After He Leaves

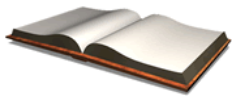
Returning from the glory on the mount of transfiguration, Jesus and the inner three disciples return to controversy and discouragement. A crowd had gathered around the remaining disciples and the experts in the law. The argument centers on a demon possessed boy and his father. The father brought his son to the disciples to have them cast it out, but they could not.

The disciples tried to use their power, but now ask Jesus why they were unable to cast out the demon (Mk 9:28). Jesus tells them, "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mk 9:29).

Contrasted with the disciples' hardness of heart and dependence on self is the father of the boy. His only hope is in Jesus, though the failure of His disciples has shaken his faith. Jesus rebukes his wavering faith and the man asks for help with his faith! Responding to his humility, Jesus casts the demon out and raises the boy to his feet.

The One on the road to His own death pauses to raise a demon-possessed boy to new life.

The Problem: Unbelief (Mk 9:14-24)



The nine disciples prepare to rest as Jesus and the inner three ascend the mountain. But people no longer seek out only Jesus, because after the disciples successful mission they seek them out also. The crowd finds the disciples at Caesarea, along with a man seeking Jesus whose son is possessed by an evil spirit. They enjoy seeing healings and exorcisms, understanding the powers of God are brought close to them. Of course, the Jewish leaders find them also and come to observe and attack any weakness.

The nine are confident of their spiritual power: they have had successful missions before so they can cast out this demon even without Jesus present. But they try and cannot. What has happened? Was their empowerment just for a single mission? They had understood it was permanent.

The scene has become chaotic as the crowd suddenly sees Jesus descending the mountain. What will His reaction be? What had happened to the disciples' power and what problems will the Jewish leaders cause?

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:14-24.
- Read “The Problem: Unbelief.”

The Problem: Unbelief (Mk 9:14-24)

From the proverbial mountain top experience, Jesus and His inner three disciples return finding the other nine disciples arguing with experts of the law, likely scribes (Mk 9:14). A crowd had also gathered, and they were amazed at seeing Jesus. They ran up to greet Him when He arrived (Mk 9:14-15). The amazement of the crowds previously came after He did something miraculous, but it now comes simply with Jesus' appearance.

Several major themes are present in this story: the opposition of the Jewish leaders, Jesus' popularity with the multitude, and the cosmic battle with Satan. But the disciples' failure apart from Jesus is the focus. One in the crowd tells Jesus his son is possessed by a spirit that makes him mute but the disciples were not able to cast out the spirit (Mk 9:17-18).

The disciples are spiritually ineffective. Jesus gave them authority over the demons, and their previous mission was successful (Mk 6:7). But apart from His physical presence, they had not relied on God's power, accessed by prayer. This is always our situation and we must rely on prayer.

Jesus responds saying, “You unbelieving generation! How much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I endure you? Bring him to me” (Mk 9:19). Jesus previously addressed the Jewish leaders this way but now He addresses the disciples this same way (Mk 3:5; 8:12).

The demon responded immediately to Jesus' presence by throwing the boy into convulsions, falling to the ground, rolling about and foaming at the mouth (Mk 9:20). Demons seek to destroy their hosts. Many are described as throwing their hosts to the ground or into fire. Theirs is the kingdom of darkness, death and destruction and they do not release their prisoners easily.

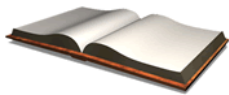
Jesus responds to the man's doubt and clarifies that His ability is not in question (Mk 9:23). The issue is the man putting limits on the power of God. So the father responds quickly, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mk 9:24). Mark does not emphasize the struggle with the demon but rather the man's struggle with his faith. This man answered honestly, acknowledging his weakness and asking for God's help. He declared his faith but, under the circumstances, he started to doubt.

QUESTION 19

In this story of the demon-possessed boy, what struggle does Mark emphasize?

- A. The struggle between Jesus and the demon
- B. The man's struggle with his faith
- C. The disciples' struggle to cast the demon out
- D. The struggle between Jesus and His disciples

The Solution: Prayer (Mk 9:25-29)



As the disciples reflected on Jesus' words, they concluded that their power from the previous mission does not transfer to a new mission. “What are we missing?” they wondered.

“This seems to be a familiar mistake we’ve made” they said among themselves. “Doesn’t this have something to do with the loaves?”

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:25-29.
- Read “The Solution: Prayer.”

The Solution: Prayer (Mk 9:25-29)

Jesus documented this poor boy’s lack of proper treatment; the symptoms are disclosed and the diagnosis is made. The man’s faith is restored and Jesus is ready to deliver. So when Jesus sees a crowd quickly gathering, He rebukes the unclean spirit commanding it to come out from the boy and never return (Mk 9:25). Jesus is not healing people to provide entertainment or to attract people for the wrong reasons. He cures people from compassion and leads them to faith in Him. So when a crowd gathers, He quickly heals the boy before even more people gather.

In response, the demon came out after shrieking and throwing the boy into violent convulsions. The boy looked as if he were dead and many believed he was (Mk 9:26). Jesus picked the boy up and helped him stand (Mk 9:27).

The resistance of demons to Jesus’ commands increases throughout this book. At first, they instantly obey, then negotiate their departure, and here they throw a violent fit before coming out. Their end is near as Jesus seals their fate at the cross.

The language used in raising this boy suggests resurrection. Mark does not specifically say that the boy was dead, but the language used suggests it. But now freed from demon possession, it was like life after death even if he had not really physically died.

When Jesus went into the house, his disciples asked him privately why they were unable to cast the demon out (Mk 9:28). Again Jesus’ followers get private instruction from Him, and Jesus teaches His followers today also through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:6-16).

He told them that only prayer would make the demon come out (Mk 9:29). Jesus likely refers to a casting out demons in general and not a certain kind of demon. The mistake of the nine was not depending on God, and it showed in their lack of prayer and faith. The disciples always struggled to respond to Jesus praying. They were sometimes unintentional hindrances to Jesus’ prayer life. Once they interrupted Him (Mk 1:35-38) and in the Garden of Gethsemane and in great spiritual peril, they fell asleep instead of watching with Him (Mk 14:32-42).

As Jesus’ followers, we must always remember, we can accomplish nothing spiritually apart from Him. Satan and demons are more powerful than we are! Our flesh is weak and spiritually we are even weaker because of our sin nature. We cannot be spiritually effective apart from faith and prayer. During temptation is the most difficult time to pray. We often do not feel close to God during temptation, even when we have not sinned. But this is exactly when we need Him most and He is faithful to hear our prayers.

QUESTION 20

Jesus tries to perform His miracles in the most sensational way possible to draw as many people as possible to the witness of His works. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

Jesus said that this kind (meaning the demon) only comes out by _____.

Key Points:

- Jesus responds to the father's faith when He casts the demon out from his son.
- Spiritual tasks are only accomplished by relying on Jesus' power through faithful prayer.

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing**QUESTION 22**

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 23

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 6 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following stories comes between Mark's story of the blind man healed in stages and the story of Jesus explaining His mission?

- A. Jesus is transfigured
- B. Jesus Warns the Disciples about leaven
- C. Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ
- D. The Nine Disciples Fail

QUESTION 2

In Mark 8:14-21 Jesus praised the disciples for finally learning the lesson of the loaves. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Which of the following is a likely reason that Jesus healed the blind man in stages instead of instantaneously?

- A. Because of the unbelief of the people
- B. Jesus was in Gentile territory
- C. There was a gradual lessening of His powers
- D. To show how the disciples learn slowly

QUESTION 4

What city did Jesus go to teach His disciples who He was?

- A. Caesarea Philippi
- B. Capernaum
- C. Dalmanutha
- D. Decapolis

QUESTION 5

By confessing Jesus as the Christ the disciples show they also understand Jesus' mission. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Which of the following are requirements Jesus gives in Mark 8:34-38 for those who wish to follow Him? *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. Let him deny himself.
- B. Let him follow me.
- C. Let him give his money to the poor.
- D. Let him take up his cross.

QUESTION 7

What did Moses, Elijah and Jesus discuss when they met during the transfiguration?

- A. When the kingdom would be established
- B. We aren't told
- C. Jesus' coming resurrection
- D. Jesus' coming death

QUESTION 8

We can safely assume that immediately after the transfiguration, Peter shared the details of this experience with the other disciples. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

In this story of the demon-possessed boy, what struggle does Mark emphasize?

- A. The disciples' struggle to cast the demon out
- B. The father's struggle with his faith
- C. The struggle between Jesus and His disciples
- D. The struggle between Jesus and the demon

QUESTION 10

Which of the following was the main reason the nine disciples failed to cast the demon out of the boy in Mark 9:14-29?

- A. The boy's father had insufficient faith.
- B. The disciples tried to be self-sufficient.
- C. The Jewish leaders were present.
- D. The special kind of demon this was.

Unit 2 Exam

QUESTION 1

Which of the following about Jesus impressed the people of Nazareth?

- A. His teaching
- B. His carpentry
- C. His heritage
- D. His family

QUESTION 2

The people of Nazareth showed their unbelief in Jesus by implying His illegitimate birth. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

Why is the story of the death of John inserted into the story of Jesus sending out the disciples?

- A. To help reveal who Jesus is
- B. To emphasize the need to keep the Law
- C. To emphasize the need for caution
- D. Because Mark tells these stories in chronological order

QUESTION 4

When the disciples went on their mission in Mark 6:7-13, what sign did they give to show the town they were leaving will receive God's judgment?

- A. The sign of Jonah.
- B. They left a pillar of salt.
- C. They pointed to the red sky in morning.
- D. They shook the dust off their feet.

QUESTION 5

One indication the disciples' mission was successful is that Jesus asked them to come away with Him to rest. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

What question is Mark most concerned about when he tells the story of John the Baptist's death?

- A. What happened next chronologically?
- B. What happened to John the Baptist?
- C. What intrigues was Herod involved with?
- D. Who is Jesus?

QUESTION 7

How do we know that the crowd who witnessed the feeding of the five thousand were beginning to understand who Jesus is?

- A. They called Him the Messiah.
- B. They wanted Him to feed them again.
- C. They wanted Him to heal them.
- D. They wanted to make Him king.

QUESTION 8

When Jesus walks on the water to come to the disciples, He identifies Himself in the same way that Yahweh did in the Old Testament. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

The Jewish leaders saw the Mosaic law as more binding on them than the traditions of the elders. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

The word *corban* literally means completely defiled. *True or False?*

QUESTION 11

Jesus taught that a person cannot become defiled because of what he eats. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

In the story of the Syrophenecian woman, who did the dogs represent?

- A. Children
- B. Small pet dogs
- C. The Gentiles
- D. The Samaritans

QUESTION 13

Jesus only needed to cure the deaf and dumb man's deafness because once he could hear he could learn to speak on his own. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

What was different about the feeding of the four thousand compared with the feeding of the five thousand?

- A. The question Jesus asked of the disciples before He fed the multitude
- B. The kind of supplies Jesus began with
- C. The Gentile character of the audience
- D. The emotion that led Jesus to feed the multitude

QUESTION 15

When the Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign from heaven, they admit that He is the Messiah. *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' request for a sign?

- A. He gave them a sign immediately.
- B. He said that no sign would be given to this generation.
- C. He said that He was insulted by their request.
- D. He instructed the disciples to perform signs.

QUESTION 17

Which happens next after Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ?

- A. Jesus heals the blind man
- B. Jesus explains their mission
- C. Jesus is transfigured
- D. The nine disciples fail

QUESTION 18

Which of the following is a likely reason that Jesus healed the blind man in stages instead of instantaneously?

- A. To show how the disciples learn slowly
- B. There was a gradual lessening of His powers
- C. Jesus was in Gentile territory
- D. Because of the unbelief of the people

QUESTION 19

What city did Jesus go that had a cliff inset with various gods?

- A. Capernaum
- B. Caesarea Philippi
- C. Dalmanutha
- D. Decapolis

QUESTION 20

When Jesus healed the blind man, He expected him to see clearly right away. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

Which of the following are requirements Jesus gives in Mark 8:34-38 for those who wish to follow Him? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Let him take up his cross.
- B. Let him give his money to the poor.
- C. Let him follow Me.
- D. Let him deny himself.

QUESTION 22

What did Moses, Elijah and Jesus discuss when they met during the transfiguration?

- A. Jesus' coming death
- B. Jesus' coming resurrection
- C. When the kingdom would be established
- D. We aren't told

QUESTION 23

Jesus told Peter, James, and John to immediately tell the other disciples what they saw during the transfiguration. *True or False?*

QUESTION 24

In the disciples' discussion with Jesus after the transfiguration, Jesus said that John the Baptist was the Elijah Malachi predicted. *True or False?*

QUESTION 25

In the story of the demon-possessed boy, what struggle does Mark emphasize?

- A. The struggle between Jesus and the demon
- B. The struggle between Jesus and His disciples
- C. The father's struggle with his faith
- D. The disciples' struggle to cast the demon out

Lesson 6 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 8:14-21	Jesus Warns the Disciples about Leaven
Mark 8:22-26	Jesus Heals a Blind Man in Stages
Mark 8:27-30	Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ
Mark 8:31-38	Jesus Explains their Mission
Mark 9:1-13	Jesus is Transfigured
Mark 9:14-29	The Nine Disciples Fail

QUESTION 3

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Instance</i>
Mark 4:13	After giving the Kingdom of Heaven Parables
Mark 4:40	After He calmed the storm
Mark 6:52	After He walked on water
Mark 7:18-19	After teaching on defilement
Mark 8:17-21	After teaching on the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

QUESTION 4: True [When Mark leaves the question, “Do you not yet understand?” unanswered, it leaves us hanging with this most important question needing an answer.]

QUESTION 5: *Your answer*

QUESTION 6: False [This is understood because Jesus asked him “do you see anything?”]

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Description</i>
Mark 8:22	The background of the healing
Mark 8:23	Jesus’ initial actions
Mark 8:24	Partial sight established
Mark 8:25	Full sight established
Mark 8:26	The command to silence

QUESTION 9: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

He took the disciples on a day’s journey to Caesarea Philippi simply to ask them one question. Based on what we know of cultural and historical background, Jesus may have shown them a visual: the pantheon of gods inset on a cliff by the city, and asked them who they thought He was compared to all the other gods depicted there.

QUESTION 10: False [Peter confesses he knows Jesus is the Christ, but they show over and over they do not understand, and will not accept, His mission of suffering before receiving glory.]

QUESTION 11

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Misunderstanding</i>
Mark 8:31-33	Peter’s rebuke of Jesus
Mark 9:30-34	The disciples argue about who is the greatest
Mark 10:32-45	James and John ask Jesus to sit at His right and left hand

QUESTION 12: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

His teaching is a challenge: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mk 8:34).

QUESTION 13: True

QUESTION 14: Jerusalem [He has His final destination in mind; it is important for Him to bring His disciples to understanding His mission and how it affects them.]

QUESTION 15

C. We are not told

QUESTION 16: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The first was at His baptism, and the last is when He tears the veil of the temple from top to bottom. This is the second of three times in Mark that God tears open the heavens to reveal who Jesus is. It is also the second fulfillment of Isaiah's longing (Isa 64:1).

QUESTION 17: True [God said, "He (Elijah) will encourage fathers and their children to return to me, so that I will not come and strike the earth with judgment (curse)" (Mal 4:6). A partial fulfillment of this curse came in AD 70 when their temple and city were destroyed by the forces of the Roman Titus.]

QUESTION 18: Resurrection [Jesus knew the disciples would not understand properly the coming of Jesus in glory until after He rose from the dead.]

QUESTION 19

B. The man's struggle with his faith [The man's struggle with his faith is what Mark emphasizes. This is the key issue; it is never Jesus' ability to do something.]

QUESTION 20: False

QUESTION 21: Prayer [Without Jesus there they were self-reliant. They did not depend on the faith and prayer they needed to access God's power. It is unlikely Jesus is referring to a type of demon more difficult to cast out.]

QUESTION 22: *Your answer*

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

Lesson 6 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

C. Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

QUESTION 2: False

QUESTION 3

D. To show how the disciples learn slowly

QUESTION 4

A. Caesarea Philippi

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6

A. Let him deny himself.

B. Let him follow me.

D. Let him take up his cross.

QUESTION 7

B. We aren't told

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9

B. The father's struggle with his faith

QUESTION 10

B. The disciples tried to be self-sufficient.

Unit 2 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1

A. His teaching

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3

A. To help reveal who Jesus is

QUESTION 4

D. They shook the dust off their feet.

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6

D. Who is Jesus?

QUESTION 7

D. They wanted to make Him king.

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: False

QUESTION 11: True

QUESTION 12

C. The Gentiles

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14

C. The Gentile character of the audience

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16

B. He said that no sign would be given to this generation.

QUESTION 17

B. Jesus explains their mission

QUESTION 18

A. To show how the disciples learn slowly

QUESTION 19

B. Caesarea Philippi

QUESTION 20: False

QUESTION 21

A. Let him take up his cross.

C. Let him follow Me.

D. Let him deny himself.

QUESTION 22

D. We aren't told

QUESTION 23: False

QUESTION 24: True

QUESTION 25

C. The father's struggle with his faith

Unit 3: Jesus' Mission Announced

In Unit 1 Jesus' ministry began primarily to the people of Israel. Unit 2 showed a further outreach to Gentiles of faith. Near the end of Unit 2, the pivotal point in Mark occurs when Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ (Mk 8:29). Before Peter's confession Jesus taught the disciples about discovering who He is. However, after Peter's confession, Jesus' teaching to them will focus on what His mission is (Mk 8:34-38).

In Lesson 7 we will look at Mark 9:30–10:52, in which Mark describes a series of incidents with Jesus and the disciples. Though many see little connection between these stories, they all seem to center on a certain theme. The disciples learn the lesson of Jesus' mission with difficulty, just as they learned the lesson of His identity. One reason they learn so slowly is that they cannot accept Jesus' mission until they have learned humility. All of these stories have this concept as the common theme.

In Lesson 8 Jesus ends the minor theme of the messianic secret (Mk 11:1-12:12). He arrives in Jerusalem and is ceremonially proclaimed as Israel's Messiah. Then, as the crowds disperse at the end of that day, their Messiah enters the temple and looks around. What He finds leads Him to curse the temple, symbolically pictured by a withered fig tree. As He continues His look at the temple area, He encounters the Jewish leaders who challenge Him.

In Lesson 9, Jesus continues His tour of the temple grounds and His interaction with the Jewish leaders (Mk 12:13-13:37). He is asked about taxes, resurrection, the greatest commandment, and then teaches on being David's son. Then He teaches on pretention: first the haughtiness of the Jewish leaders contrasted with the widow who gave her mite. Then in the crowning example of pretention, He condemns the existing Jewish temple for its pretention in the Olivet Discourse.

Unit Outline

Lesson 7: Jesus' Mission to Jerusalem (Mk 9:30–10:52)

Lesson 8: Presentation of the Son (Mk 11:1–12:12)

Lesson 9: Teaching of the Son (Mk 12:13–13:37)

Lesson 7: Jesus' Mission to Jerusalem (Mk 9:30–10:52)

Lesson Introduction

The cosmic battle puts Jesus against Satan and his demons (Mk 9:38-40). Anyone performing miracles in Jesus' name helps His cause, if only by not saying anything bad about Him—as does a simple cup of cold water for His sake (Mk 9:41). All assistance is welcomed and rewarded (Mk 9:41).

In contrast, anyone opposing His people receives retribution (Mk 9:42). The potential offender must take immediate action against themselves—even amputating the offending member—rather than risking the fires of hell (Mk 9:43-49). Ironically, Jesus uses salt to illustrate both judgment and purity: Jesus wants the disciples to purify themselves so they can live in peace with one another (Mk 9:50).

One way Jesus' little ones stumble is through the rampant sin of divorce (Mk 10:2-12). From creation, God made two flesh to become one and thereafter never be separated (Mk 10:6-9). His concern is mainly with the powerless in society: in this case, women. Similarly, little children concern Him also. They have no money or power either (Mk 10:14-15). In contrast to the rich young ruler, these have few status barriers keeping them from the kingdom. All who enter it enter apart from riches, status, and self-righteousness. The barriers to the rich are so formidable that the possibility of a rich man entering is like getting a camel through the eye of a needle (Mk 10:25). It is only possible with God (Mk 10:27).

In contrast, those who willingly lose their life in this world for Jesus receive temporal and future rewards along with persecutions (Mk 10:28-31). The first are last and the last first as Jesus again turns the world upside-down (Mk 10:28-31).

For Jesus, flogging and death lie ahead, but the disciples look for position and glory. They see glory on His right and left in His kingdom but, ironically, those on His right and left are the criminals crucified with Him (Mk 10:32-40). Instead, greatness comes by the servant giving His life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45). Even blind Bartimaeus can see Jesus as the son of David and give up all to follow, though the sighted in the crowd cannot (Mk 10:46-52).



Lesson Outline

Topic 1: His Mission Announced (Mk 9:30-32)

Topic 2: The Need for Humility

Illustrated by a Child (Mk 9:33-37)

Illustrated by Fellow Followers (Mk 9:38-41)

Topic 3: Its Intensity Illustrated (Mk 9:42-50)

Topic 4: In Relation to Social Status

Illustrated by Divorce (Mk 10:1-12)

Illustrated by Children (Mk 10:13-16)

Illustrated by Riches (Mk 10:17-27)

Illustrated by the Disciples (Mk 10:28-31)

Topic 5: His Mission Repeated

Jesus Leads to Jerusalem (Mk 10:32-34)

James and John Respond (Mk 10:35-40)

The Disciples Respond (Mk 10:41-45)

Topic 6: Beginning to See (Mk 10:46-52)

Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Topic 1 shows Jesus giving the key to His mission. Once more, to His disciples, He predicts His death and resurrection, though again they do not understand. In contrast to Jesus' coming sacrifice and humiliation, the disciples soon discuss who is greater.

In Topic 2 Jesus teaches that even someone outside of Jesus' circle of disciples will receive rewards for faithful service. Those who welcome followers of humble status welcome Jesus Himself.

Topic 3 uses intensity and irony to teach the importance of Jesus' mission. In extreme images of hell and amputation, Jesus teaches the danger of sin and leading yourself or others astray.

Topic 4 shows the contrast between the base social status of children and divorced women; especially in contrast to the rich young ruler asking Jesus about eternal life. Jesus teaches on true greatness and promises to reward for all who leave possessions to follow Him.

Topic 5 continues Jesus' teaching about the death ahead of Him. In contrast to His fate, James and John ask Jesus for the highest seats in glory. Jesus uses this request to teach on true greatness in the kingdom.

In Topic 6 a blind man receives healing and understands that Jesus is the Son of David. Jesus heals him because of his faith and the man follows Him. This is another story Mark uses to illustrate how the disciples begin to see spiritually.

Summary: In this lesson, Mark looks at Jesus' announced mission to Jerusalem. He teaches His disciples the path to true greatness before God and the disciples are beginning to see.

Lesson Objectives

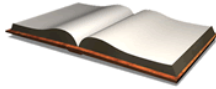
By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Discuss the role of humility in following Jesus
- Evaluate the ways Jesus valued those who were viewed as worthless in their society
- Take steps to align yourself with God's perspective as you consider the people around you

Topic 1: His Mission Announced (Mk 9:30-32)

Throughout all the topics in this lesson, Jesus concentrates on teaching His disciples. The crowds are no longer His focus. His focus is on teaching them what His mission is: "The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise" (Mk 9:31). But as usual the disciples did not understand, but did not ask Jesus to explain (Mk 9:32).

Throughout this lesson Mark contrasts Jesus' attitude in humbly accepting His mission and the disciples' attitude as they pursue greatness despite Jesus' impending fate (Mk 9:34).



After personally seeing the transfiguration the inner three disciples were encouraged once again. They thought to themselves, “So Jesus will eventually establish His kingdom in power.” One of them commented for all saying, “We were beginning to wonder!”

Then Jesus called them all together again and again told them He would be betrayed by men and killed before rising again.

This made no sense to the inner three. They were just feeling better about the mission. “How can both be true?” they wondered, as they decided to let Jesus walk farther ahead of them than usual. These disciples were all attracted to the glory they observed on the mount. No one was closer to Jesus than them, they thought. Surely they would share in His glory. But which of them? Were the positions in the kingdom already set with the inner three getting the chief seats as those three assumed? But those three were not the only ones Jesus sent out on missions. The other nine had accomplished great things too and wouldn’t they also covet chief positions? Before they knew it, they found themselves arguing amongst themselves.

Suddenly, Jesus again called them together and asked, “What were you discussing on the way?” Uh oh, they did not want to talk with Him about this...

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 9:30–10:52 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to address are:

- What happened when Jesus announced His mission a second time?
- What does Mark record with children and followers?
- What do divorce, children, riches and Jesus’ disciples have in common?
- What happens when Jesus announces His mission a third time?
- What happens in the healing of blind Bartimaeus?

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:30-32 again.
- Read “His Mission Announced.”

His Mission Announced (Mk 9:30-32)

Jesus and His disciples now go through Galilee—probably leaving Caesarea Philippi to head toward Capernaum, starting to go to Jerusalem—but Jesus did not want anyone to know (Mk 9:30). For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise” (Mk 9:31). Jesus taught His disciples, preparing them for the future—His death.

The disciples were afraid to ask questions to help them understand Jesus’ statement (Mk 9:32). Jesus continued teaching them that His mission in Jerusalem would not end the way they expected. They do not and will not understand until they learn a lesson of humility. This is the unifying theme of all the encounters Mark reports in chapters nine and ten.

Christians today have the same misunderstanding the disciples did about receiving glory before suffering. Many evangelistic messages are on the temporal benefits of following Jesus. Every topic in this lesson shows how mistaken that is. The key is to follow the example of Jesus, who came to

serve people and sacrifice Himself for them (Mk 10:45). Should we really look for how following Jesus benefits us in this world?

QUESTION 2

Read Mark 9:30-10:52 at least once and then match the section titles to the appropriate Scripture reference.

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 9:30-32	Jesus' Mission Announced a Second Time
Mark 9:33-41	Humility in Children and Followers
Mark 9:42-50	Jesus Mission Announced a Third Time
Mark 10:1-31	The Intensity of Jesus' Mission
Mark 10:32-34	The Disciples Respond to Jesus' Mission
Mark 10:35-45	Healing Blind Bartimaeus
Mark 10:46-52	Jesus' Mission and Social Status

QUESTION 3

What is the unifying factor in the encounters described in Mark 9:1–10:52?

- A. Humility
- B. Prayer
- C. Love
- D. Forgiveness

QUESTION 4

Some Christian leaders teach that if we are a faithful Christian, God wants us to be rich, healthy, and free of suffering. Please open your Life Notebook and compare that teaching with Jesus' teaching to His disciples in Mark.

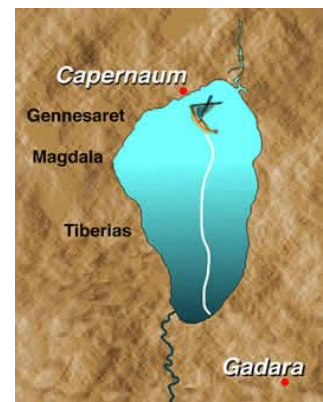
Key Points:

- The unifying factor in every encounter Mark reports in Mark 9:1-10:52 is humility.
- Jesus clearly predicts His death and resurrection and discloses that to His disciples for the second time in Mark.

Topic 2: The Need for Humility

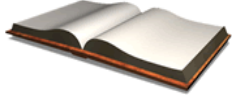
In this topic the disciples argue about which of them is greatest. Jesus taught them that if anyone wants to be first he must be the last of all. To illustrate this He took a child and said, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me" (Mk 9:37).

Jesus' teaching continues on the same theme with His next illustration. John had encountered someone who did not follow along with the disciples and he was casting out demons in Jesus' name. John had forbidden him from casting them out. But Jesus said he must not be forbidden for he fights on



the same side they do. Anyone helping them because they bear His name will be rewarded. They must not think they were the only ones serving on God's mission.

Illustrated by a Child (Mk 9:33-37)



The disciples had been caught discussing their selfish ambitions as Jesus bravely journeyed on to Jerusalem. Peter was embarrassed and confused at the same time. It seemed like every time he felt good about Jesus' mission, Jesus rebuked him. But then when he was most discouraged, Jesus had reaffirmed that the kingdom would be established in glory! Which was it?

Now he is fully embarrassed, as were the other disciples. He thought to himself, "It is inappropriate to seek our glory and we were all caught discussing it." Jesus is again telling them that servants will be first. "How can that be," he thought. "Everyone knew rich men were blessed by God."

Peter wondered as Jesus led a nearby child into their midst. Picking the child up in His arms, Jesus talked about welcoming the child. "But no one pays attention to children," Peter thought. "In fact, they're at the bottom of the social status ladder. What's the point? They could do nothing for their mission."

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:33-37.
- Read "Illustrated by a Child."

Illustrated by a Child (Mk 9:33-37)

Jesus and His disciples now arrive in Capernaum (Mk 9:33). Jesus had just taught them again about His coming death and resurrection. Mark now contrasts Jesus' attitude with the disciples' when Jesus asks them what they were discussing and they did not want to admit the topic of their discussion (Mk 9:33-34). The disciples' lessons, like ours, are learned as they follow Jesus. Jesus teaches them that suffering and service come first, and they become convicted but they do not understand.

Jesus sat down and called the twelve to Him, by sitting down Jesus seems to draw greater emphasis to what He said next about the first being the servant of all people (Mk 9:35). He then uses a visual with children stating that one who welcomes a child in His name welcomes Him (Mk 9:36-37).

Jesus uses a child because children had the lowest status of anyone in both Jewish and Roman societies. So He illustrates the humility needed to receive them in His name. The way people treat a child, or the lowest member of society, represents how they treat God Himself.

Determining to be last of all and servant to all is a voluntary choice all can make in obedience to Christ. Jesus demonstrates that greatness is achieved by serving others, not the one who lords it over others. This is a worthy goal for us: we can all determine to serve other believers.

The original problem in this passage is ambition improperly handled and that, in turn, led to arguments among the disciples (Mk 9:33-34). Jesus gives the other key to this problem in the next lesson—to be at peace with one another (Mk 9:50).

QUESTION 5

What were the disciples arguing about on the way (Mk 9:33-37)?

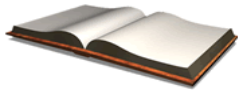
- A. Whether Elijah would come first
- B. Whether Jesus would die in Jerusalem
- C. Which of them was like a child
- D. Who among them was the greatest

QUESTION 6

Jesus used a child as an example to the disciples, because the child represented _____.

- A. Family values
- B. Innocence
- C. Low social status
- D. Simple trust

Illustrated by Fellow Followers (Mk 9:38-41)



Peter's head was still spinning trying to figure out why Jesus was identifying Himself with despised children. "Oh no," Peter thought to himself. "John's asking Jesus about that exorcist we ran into earlier who was casting out demons in Jesus' name." By Jesus' answer it sounds like we were wrong about him, too.

Peter remembered back—they had forbidden him and had thought it was difficult enough for them as Jesus' close disciples to do the right thing. Peter wondered how hard it must be for others outside their group to get things right. But Jesus was telling them not to forbid anyone doing miracles in His name, because they are fighting on His side. He's even saying they will be rewarded. Peter thought, "There is less for me all the time..."

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:38-41.
- Read "Illustrated by Fellow Followers."

Illustrated by Fellow Followers (Mk 9:38-41)

Most recently, the disciples' self-promotion is contrasted with Jesus' announcement of the death and suffering that lie ahead of Him. That discussion triggered a thought, or conviction, in John's mind. He mentions someone they saw casting out demons in His name and they stopped him (Mk 9:38). Jesus tells them not to stop those who use His name to do miracles because they will not hurt His mission (Mk 9:39). Jesus implied they were not greater because they were His twelve disciples and they were not the only ones capable of doing works in His name.

John thought the small circle of disciples were the only ones faithfully following Jesus and capable of good works in His name. If we do this, we are like the disciples and see ourselves as greater than other believers. We can have the same limited vision and think that we are one of a few faithfully serving God. Even Elijah felt alone in his ministry, and God had to correct his misunderstanding (1 Kgs 19:14-18). There are others outside of their immediate group who follow Him and they must not be hindered.

He expands the definition of works done for Him from exorcisms to any acts of kindness and helpfulness (Mk 9:40-41). Even the smallest kindness shown because someone follows Christ, especially evident during times of persecution like the tribulation period, is promised a reward by Christ Himself.

QUESTION 7

Who is the example of someone of low social status in the story of John trying to stop the man casting out demons in Jesus' name?

- A. Jesus
- B. The disciple John
- C. The man casting out demons
- D. The possessed man

QUESTION 8

What are the reasons Jesus gives for not stopping this man, who is technically not one of His disciples, from casting out demons? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Whoever is not against us is for us
- B. Whoever is not with me is against me
- C. The man is one of His secret disciples
- D. The man will not soon be able to say anything bad about Jesus

QUESTION 9

The most difficult time to help others is when we are personally hurting or on a difficult mission. Yet, Jesus faced both situations throughout His ministry and never failed to help those in need. We will face the same situation often in our ministry. Write down in your Life Notebook what you will do to find the strength to help people even while in the midst of suffering yourself.

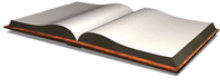
Key Points:

- Children had the lowest social status in Jewish and Roman society so Jesus used them as an example of humility for His disciples.
- Others outside of the twelve disciples are valued fellow workers in Jesus' kingdom. If they perform miracles in His name they are on his side and will not soon be able to speak evil of Him.
- Anyone receiving a worker for Christ in Christ's name will receive an equivalent reward.

Topic 3: Its Intensity Illustrated (Mk 9:42-50)

Jesus had just told the disciples not to forbid others, outside their circle, from doing miracles in His name. Now He continued teaching the importance of not causing others to stumble. These teachings apply just as much to us. Whatever leads to sin—either for ourselves or for someone else—must be addressed immediately.

Jesus taught that having this salt in ourselves allows us to live in peace with one another (Mk 9:34).



Peter noticed Jesus' attention to detail and intensity had changed. Previously, He patiently taught without demanding results, but now He insisted that they learn their lessons. He wondered, "Is time so pressing?" It was like they were approaching a decisive battle in a war or a strategic time in a serious sport. It was time to gird their loins.

Now He made sharper divisions between friend and foe. All offering assistance—even a cup of cold water—were appreciated friends sure of reward. Those causing any of His followers to stumble will be dealt with severely.

Peter noticed the difference and adjusted his intensity, trying to match Jesus'. But now Jesus became even more adamant: He taught them that if someone caused a little one to sin he was in danger of hell! As they discussed this amongst themselves, they were unsure how to understand this. Is He teaching by hyperbole? And the solution He suggested to this problem had something to do with salt? But what? After all, salt could be either good or bad and He seemed to be using it both ways here.

Assignment

- Read Mark 9:42-50.
- Read "Its Intensity Illustrated."

Its Intensity Illustrated (Mk 9:42-50)

Jesus again teaches on reward but now He focuses more on the negative side—judgment for sin. There is a definite change in this passage as the teaching intensifies. Through the two warnings Jesus exposes the abuse of spiritual power He sees in both the disciples and the Jewish leaders.

He first warns against causing little ones to stumble, because "it would be better for him to have a huge millstone tied around his neck and to be thrown into the sea" (Mk 9:42).

- The millstone Jesus refers to is the flat heavy top stone turned by the donkey while grinding grain.
- Little ones refer to any believer in Jesus. This warning may refer back to the man the disciples rebuked for casting out demons because he did not follow them, and the word translated "sin" means to stumble by causing someone to turn away from Jesus. This warns us against causing another believer to fall, especially because they do not follow exactly the same way.

Jesus now modifies His teaching and warns against personal sin, causing yourself to stumble:

- "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter into life crippled than to have two hands and go into hell, to the unquenchable fire" (Mk 9:43).
- "If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell" (Mk 9:45).
- "If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out! It is better to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies and the fire is never quenched. Everyone will be salted with fire" (Mk 9:47-49).

As the Messiah's disciples, they used their influence to keep children away from Jesus perhaps because they thought His time was too precious, or that the children would keep Him from His ministry work. Jesus' second warning about sin also exposes the pride and power of religious leaders who overstep the authority God gave them.

Many interpreters take these two warnings as a hyperbole meant to illustrate the need to take serious action against sin in our lives. The sin that tempts His followers must be dealt with immediately and decisively. The word translated as hell is the Greek word *gehenna*, referring to the valley of Hinnom just south of Jerusalem. In the past, some Jews and even their kings burned their children there as sacrifices to false gods (2 Chr 28:3). When Jesus lived, it was a garbage dump where the fires burned continuously, and the worms that fed on the garbage were ever present. This burning garbage dump appropriately illustrated the fires of eternal punishment (see Isa 66:22-24).

Jesus ends His negative teachings on rewards and punishment by saying that “everyone will be salted with fire” (Mk 9:49). Jesus probably uses a play on the word salt; if so, in this verse salt is used in a negative sense, but in the next verse, Jesus uses salt in a positive sense. Understanding that salt is used symbolically in several different ways helps understand this passage. Negatively, it usually refers to judgment, and that use fits this context well. Jesus says that those who cause His followers to stumble will be salted with the fires of judgment.

When salt is used positively, it can mean priestly use in preparing sacrifices, to make edible, to make something last a long time (forever), or more commonly, to purify. He said, “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other” (Mk 9:50). In this verse, Jesus responds to the initial problem the disciples had: quarreling with one another (Mk 9:34). Before teaching about believers being salt in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that peacemakers are blessed and called children of God (Mk 5:9). So even in that context, the two uses of salt were identified in Jesus’ mind.

QUESTION 10

The disciples thought they were doing what Jesus wanted when they sent the children away from seeing Jesus. Think of a time where you thought you were doing the right thing, but the Holy Spirit (through prayer or a fellow believer) had to warn you and redirect your focus. Write about this experience in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 11

Who are the little ones Jesus refers to in Mark 9:42-50?

- A. Any believer in Him
- B. Children in general
- C. His twelve disciples
- D. Unbelievers

Key Points:

- Jesus uses salt to illustrate good effects and damaging effects—just as we assist or damage His cause with our behavior.
- Jesus wants to protect believers from sin from any source.

Topic 4: In Relation to Social Status

Jesus continues taking advantage of opposition to Him to turn it into teaching opportunities.

First, the Pharisees come to trick Him with a question about divorce. There were two main views on divorce in their day and the Pharisees wanted Jesus to take sides. At the same time they will also cause problems for Him with Herod, who had already killed John the Baptist over this very issue. But Jesus answers wisely and stakes out His own position by going back to God’s original intent for marriage.

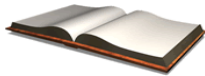


Mark's next picture is of people bringing little children to Jesus so He can bless them. But the disciples scolded those who brought the children, likely thinking that Jesus should not be bothered with them. After all, children had the lowest status of any group of people in the Jewish and Roman cultures at the time. But in response, Jesus again uses them as an example of how one must receive the kingdom of God.

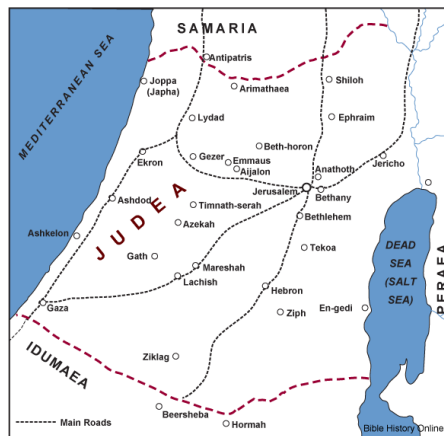
Mark next tells about someone with abundant status. A rich man comes to Jesus to ask Him how to inherit eternal life, but how does he come to Jesus? Does he believe he already qualifies and simply wants to impress Jesus or does he come to Jesus as a rabbi to submit to?

Peter quickly points out how the disciples left everything to follow Jesus. Jesus assures him that this has been noticed and they will be rewarded many times over for their act of faith.

Illustrated by Divorce (Mk 10:1-12)



The Jewish leaders had caught up with Jesus again. This time they were delighted with His choice of destination: He was in the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan River. "This is the area ruled by Herod," the leaders said, "We thought He would continue avoiding his territory," for Herod had already put to death John the Baptist and Herod mistakenly thinks Jesus is John resurrected. "Maybe we can bring up the issue of divorce again," they cleverly thought, "for John confronted Herod on that issue and Herod had John killed."



Assignment

- Read Mark 10:1-12.
- Read "Illustrated by Divorce."

Illustrated by Divorce (Mk 10:1-12)

Jesus now goes to Judea on the east side of the Jordan River as He approaches Jerusalem. Jesus' teaching is popular as crowds draw near to Him and He teaches them (Mk 10:1). Pharisees come to test him asking about divorce (Mk 10:2). These Pharisees were not interested in a correct answer but in getting Jesus to take sides in a popular argument of the time and possibly getting Him in trouble with Herod (Mk 6:17-30). According to historical records, popular rabbis of the time held different positions on this issue: Rabbi Hillel believed it was lawful to divorce for any reason at all and Rabbi Shammai taught only if a wife committed adultery.

Jesus immediately pointed them back to what Moses commanded (Mk 10:3). Moses allowed a man to write a divorce certificate (Mk 10:4). Jesus then explained that Moses only allowed it because the

people had hard hearts (Mk 10:5). This was contrary to what all Jews believed; they thought Moses permitted it (Deut 24:1-4). They only disagreed on the allowable grounds for it. For His answer, Jesus went back to God’s original purpose in the creation account that He made male and female; a man and woman will be joined together in marriage, becoming one flesh and no one should separate them (Mk 10:6-9).

Jesus again takes the law of Moses and reinterprets it in light of God’s intentions. He did the same for the teachings on the Sabbath day and cleanliness as discussed earlier in Mark and in His Sermon on the Mount (Mk 2:23; 7:1). Jesus gives such a wise answer that it avoids their trap. It does not cause Him to take sides in the argument, and it allows Him to teach on truly pleasing God. When married, the two actually become one flesh and cannot be separated. Customarily, He gave additional private instruction to His disciples: a divorced man or woman who remarries commits adultery against their first spouse (Mk 10:11-12).

Mark includes teaching on divorce here, continuing his underlying theme of social status. The wife lacked social status in Jewish and Roman societies and she usually suffered more as a divorcee. Jesus’ married followers must realize the special relationship God creates between husband and wife. These relationships are permanent before God and need nurturing. Jesus’ followers are vulnerable because Satan destroys the testimony of Jesus’ followers through acts of adultery and divorce. We must pray for each other and our marriages to receive God’s help in keeping our marriages pure and healthy.

QUESTION 12

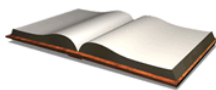
Match the teacher with his corresponding teaching about divorce.

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Rabbi Hillel	Lawful to divorce for any reason
Rabbi Shammai	Allowable with a written certificate of divorce
Jesus	Only lawful if a wife commits adultery
Moses	A remarried man commits adultery against his first wife

QUESTION 13

Read again Jesus’ words on divorce in Mark 10:5-9 and use them to answer the following question. How would you counsel a couple considering divorce because they do not feel like their relationship is a healthy one?

Illustrated by Children (Mk 10:13-16)



“Jesus is on an important mission and shouldn’t be disturbed,” Peter thought. “Why do these people insist on bringing their children to Him?” As a leader he would now take control, get the others to help and rebuke the mostly women who bothered Jesus with their children. But he wanted to do it subtly and out of Jesus’ sight. He had just talked with the first few waiting their turn when Jesus noticed.

As Jesus approached him, He gathered a child in each arm. He looked right at the disciples and told them not to forbid them. Then He added that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these! “What?” Peter almost said out loud, “Are we to become as nothing and give up our positions?”

Assignment

- Read Mark 10:13-16.
- Read “Illustrated by Children.”

Illustrated by Children (Mk 10:13-16)

The disciples repeatedly rebuke people during Jesus’ ministry. Recently Peter even rebuked Jesus when He first revealed His mission (Mk 8:31-32) and John tried to stop someone from casting out demons in Jesus’ name (Mk 8:38-39). Here again they err by scolding the people who brought children to Him (Mk 10:13). Again, as before, the disciples do not understand Jesus’ mission.

Jesus reacts indignantly, wanting the children to come to Him because the kingdom of God belongs to them. In fact, believers must receive the kingdom like a child does in order to enter it. The language used in this passage reveals that Jesus felt passionately about what He taught.

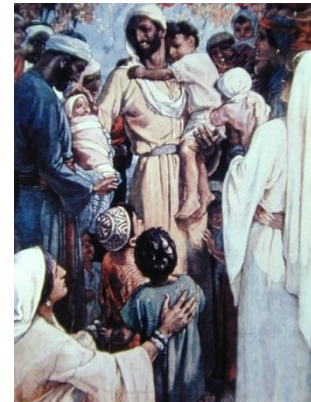
Remember, Mark uses children to illustrate their low social status—the lowest of any group in the Jewish and Roman cultures of that time. They come to Him empty. This is the same lesson He has taught His disciples since Peter made his confession of faith (Mk 8:29). His followers must deny themselves (Mk 8:34), receive glory after suffering (Mk 9:1), depend on God’s strength (Mk 9:28-29), and be last of all (Mk 9:35). This fits the context for Jesus soon teaches that it is impossible for the rich to enter the kingdom of God (Mk 10:25). The disciples will react against this, because it is the opposite of what they expect (Mk 10:26). Jesus then summarizes His teaching by saying, “but many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Mk 10:31).

Others suggest receiving God’s kingdom like a child represents a child’s simple trust and dependence, but these ideas are not what Jesus and Mark use children to illustrate. Their lack of status is the most important point. Jesus delights in blessing them because they are so undeserving. All believers must come to Jesus in the same way—as undeserving sinners needing His blessing.

QUESTION 14

How do we receive the kingdom of God like a child? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. We come to Him completely undeserving.
- B. We come to Him with no status.
- C. We come to Him in complete innocence.
- D. We come to Him in simple faith.

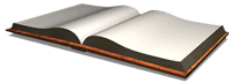


QUESTION 15

Jesus has been teaching similar discipleship lessons ever since Peter confessed Him as the Christ. Match the Scripture to the corresponding teaching.

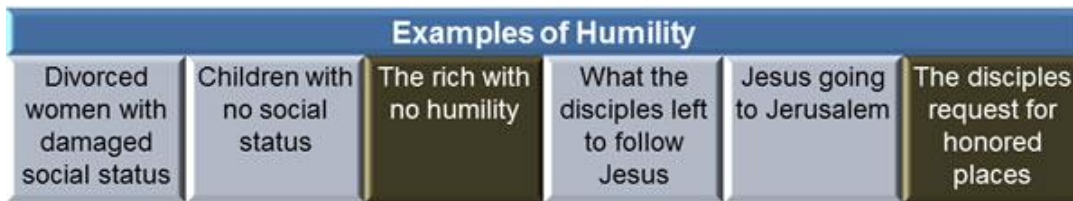
<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Mark 8:34	Receive glory after suffering.
Mark 9:1-13	His followers must be the last of all.
Mark 9:28-29	The last will be first.
Mark 9:35	His followers must deny themselves.
Mark 10:31	Depend on God’s strength.

Illustrated by Riches (Mk 10:17-27)



As this man approached, Peter was curious and asked himself, “Who is this rich young man coming to Jesus and what could he possibly need?” Few from this class of society would ever approach Jesus and His group of disciples. All the crowds that trailed after them came from the lower classes — supposedly God-forsaken, untrained and consequently cursed.

Everyone knew the rich are already blessed by God—they have His stamp of approval—what would this man lack?



In this chart, two examples of true humility are each followed by a negative example of pride (shown in the darker segments).

Assignment

- Read Mark 10:17-27.
- Read “Illustrated by Riches.”

Illustrated by Riches (Mk 10:17-27)

Jesus again starts out, and while on His way, someone came to Him on his knees to ask how to inherit eternal life (Mk 10:17).

Jesus gives a clue regarding who He is by responding to the man’s calling Him good when He said that only God was good (Mk 10:18). This was vital—was he recognizing that Jesus was God by calling Him good? Unfortunately, no, since the next time the man responds to Jesus, he simply calls Him teacher (Mk 10:20). After reviewing the commandments about relationships, the man testifies that he has kept them all (Mk 10:20).

Jesus now gave the man a penetrating, discerning look, and felt a love for him and because He loved him, He told him, “You lack one thing. Go, sell whatever you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Mk 10:21). By saying “follow me,” Jesus called him as a disciple. However, he had not really kept the spirit of the commandments because he withheld his goods from his fellow man (1 Jn 3:17). He also broke the first half of the ten commandments by putting his love of money before his love of God (Phil 3:6-8).

In response, the man was sad and left Jesus (Mk 10:22). He left grieving because he refused Jesus’ call and had not committed himself to following Jesus. When Jews in Jesus’ time committed to follow a certain rabbi they committed themselves to whatever the rabbi asked of them. This may have been the reason for his sadness, but if he obeyed Jesus’ instructions, he ultimately would have found the source of eternal blessing.

Jesus now turns to His disciples and remarks that it is hard for the rich to enter God’s kingdom (Mk 10:23). The disciples’ astonishment shows their continued misunderstanding. They thought the rich were specially blessed by God (Mk 10:24), but now they learned entering the kingdom of God would be hard for the rich. He illustrated the difficulty by using the image of a camel passing through the eye of a needle being easier than a rich person entering the kingdom (Mk 10:25). Even

more astonished, the disciples ask, “Then who can be saved?” (Mk 10:26).

Their reaction shows that they took Jesus’ teaching seriously and understood it. Additionally, they applied it to themselves and wondered how, if this was true, they themselves could be saved. Jesus assures them all things are possible for God, even when it is impossible for humans (Mk 10:27).

The main contrast Jesus makes is between the previous topic (receiving the kingdom as a child does with no riches or status) and this rich man—who has money and status—and how these make it more difficult. Mark does not want our earthly possessions or status to keep us from Jesus. He also points out that this is humanly not possible, but with God it is possible. Only by total dependence on God can someone inherit eternal life and enter the kingdom of God.

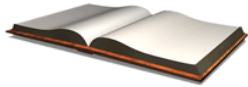
QUESTION 16

The rich young ruler was ultimately acknowledging Jesus as God by calling Him “good.” *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

Riches and status in this life make it more difficult to enter the kingdom of God. *True or False?*

Illustrated by the Disciples (Mk 10:28-31)



“It is amazing!” Peter thought. “Jesus turns away the rich and invites the poor to join them. No one does that!” As the rich young ruler walked away, Peter wondered how this applied to him and his fellow disciples. After all, they had already done what Jesus asked of the rich man. They had left home and family and jobs to follow Jesus. Did Jesus’ promises apply to them?

Assignment

- Read Mark 10:28-31.
- Read “Illustrated by the Disciples.”

Illustrated by the Disciples (Mk 10:28-31)

Peter, like the other disciples, did well by seeing exactly how Jesus’ teachings applied to him and his fellow disciples. He said, “Look, we have left everything to follow you” (Mk 10:28). Peter emphasizes the word “we.” He knows that he and the disciples responded to Jesus’ call differently than the rich man. But, he wondered, was what they did enough and will the promise Jesus made to the rich man apply to him (and them)?

Jesus indicates verbally that something is certainly true or will surely come to pass by saying all who leave behind earthly treasures for His sake will receive one hundred times as much in eternal life (Mk 10:29-30).

Though what man does for God cannot be compared with what God does for man, there are things God wants us to accomplish for Him. He promises us a reward for faithful service because God does not forget the work and love of His servants (Heb 6:10).

Jesus’ last statement in this story relates to the discipleship lessons He has taught since the disciples confessed Him as the Christ. He says, “Many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Mk 10:31). In Mark 9:35, Jesus made a similar statement, saying, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” Mark uses this saying to set this section apart. This technique tells

us that everything within these verses deals with the same point. This drives our interpretation of the stories within the bracketed section. The main point is what Jesus says in Mark 10:31. Due to the gift of God (God's grace)—because He delights in blessing the undeserving—many who are last in this world will be first in the next.

These lessons on humility apply to us also. This is the path to God's blessing.

- Social status means nothing to God (Mk 9:33-37).
- Whether someone is in our group is not important if the other person is on Jesus' side also (Mk 9:38-41).
- We must not cause others to sin, but we must decisively stop sin in our lives (Mk 9:42-50).
- We must treat our wives and marriages as God intends (Mk 10:1-12).
- We must be as one with those who have no status, like children (Mk 10:13-16).
- We must not let money or social status come between us and God (Mk 10:17-31).

QUESTION 18

What are some of the factors that Jesus mentions in Mark 10:28-31 that determine whether and how much we receive as a reward?

Key Points:

- In Jesus' time children illustrate those God loves to bless: those undeserving and without status.
- These teachings on status fit in perfectly with Jesus' other teachings on humility since Jesus explained the costs of discipleship (Mk 8:34-38).
- Riches and status in this life make it more difficult to enter the kingdom of God.
- In eternity Jesus rewards those who make sacrifices for His sake.

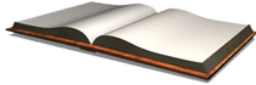
Topic 5: His Mission Repeated

Jesus again predicts His own death and resurrection as He has repeatedly done since Peter's confession of faith. He knows what lies ahead of Him on the road to Jerusalem, but He also knows the disciples do not yet understand. They still look for Him to ride into Jerusalem in glory and set up His kingdom. But suffering and death lie ahead of Him and their fate is tied to His. However, His predictions of death are always teamed with a promise of His resurrection.

Every time Jesus predicts His death, Mark illustrates how much the disciples misunderstand His teaching. Jesus' attitude is of submission to the Father's will, even submission to a death on the cross. He does not look out for His own best interests. In stark contrast, Mark tells how James and John come to Jesus with a naïve request to sit on His right and left hands in glory. Jesus again points them to the suffering that comes with those positions—positions that are not even His to give.

When the other disciples hear their request, they are indignant. Jesus teaches them how it will be among them: their path to greatness lies in being a servant to all. He can point to Himself as their example because He came to give His life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45).

Jesus Leads to Jerusalem (Mk 10:32-34)



Peter is upset. Jesus has just told him and the disciples—for the third time—that He will soon die and rise again. He is troubled because until now he had simply ignored Jesus’ announcement hoping that He would forget all about this crazy idea—and the defeatist attitude that went with it. But Jesus kept stating it and Peter has now lost confidence in his strategy.

It not only upsets him because he cared about his leader but because if what Jesus predicted truly happened, it would ruin his plans. He had hoped that joining Jesus would better his life; why would he join a losing cause?



Assignment

- Read Mark 10:32-34.
- Read “Jesus Leads to Jerusalem.”

Jesus leads to Jerusalem (Mk 10:32-34)

The disciples are again on the way to Jerusalem with Jesus leading (Mk 10:32; 16:7). Mark tells us the disciples’ were amazed but also afraid (Mk 10:32). They were amazed at His determination to go to Jerusalem but fearful of what lay ahead. Jesus specifically told them that He would die there yet He determined to continue His journey. Jesus again tells the twelve where they are going and what awaits Him (Mk 10:33-34).

Jesus was not surprised by His troubles in Jerusalem. The Old Testament predicted them and so did He. But the disciples kept stumbling over His predicted sufferings and how they apply to them—notice that Jesus emphasizes “we” in verse 33. The predictions in verses 33 and 34 are certain, but His resurrection to follow is equally certain.

Jews would not normally deliver a fellow Jew into the hands of Gentiles, but this was the only way Jesus could be crucified because that Roman form of punishment was one that only the Romans could carry out. These sufferings were predicted in several passages in the Old Testament (see Ps 22; Isa 50:6; 52:13–53:12).

Note to all followers: He goes where God sends Him and trusts God wherever He leads. The follower does not get to choose the mission.

QUESTION 19

In this third prediction, how does Mark show the disciples misunderstood Jesus' teaching?

- A. They asked when He would establish the kingdom.
- B. They asked for the chief seats.
- C. They kept silent.
- D. They rebuked Him.

James and John Respond (Mk 10:35-40)

Assignment

- Read Mark 10:35-40.
- Read "James and John Respond."

James and John Respond (Mk 10:35-40)

Mark makes yet another contrast as he continues his theme of misunderstanding. Since Jesus reminded them of His destination and fate, James and John come to Jesus with a request (Mk 10:35). After Jesus asks them what they want, they ask for one of them to sit on the right and the other on the left in His glory (Mk 10:37).

They still do not understand what Jesus has taught them ever since their confession (Mk 8:27). Jesus will not receive glory on this mission; instead, He will suffer and die, and their fate is tied to His. So their request is both inappropriate and revealing. If the disciples learn this lesson with difficulty, we also will learn it with difficulty. We must make sure we learn and apply it.

Notice that James and John had prominent seats with Jesus while He walked this earth. They were members of the inner three of the disciples. John sat next to Jesus "in a place of honor" at the Last Supper—he even rested on Jesus' bosom (Jn 13:23). The seats they requested were the highest human positions, only below Jesus Himself.

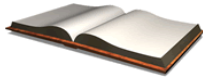
Jesus tells them they do not know what they ask and in turn asks them a question about their being able to share His cup and His baptism (Mk 10:38-39). Jesus' coming cup was God's judgment on all sin; Jesus despaired of accepting this to the point of death (Mk 14:34-36). This baptism was the total experience of His coming passion that ended with His death on the cross. Jesus struggled with accepting this cup—the disciples were naively saying they could drink it. Jesus said they will drink His cup and be baptized with Him, but the places to sit are not His to give (Mk 10:39-40).

James and John did share Jesus' sufferings, and James became the first apostle martyred (Acts 12:1-2). John suffered persecution and exile (Rev 1:9). However, neither one suffered for the sins of mankind like Jesus did. Also the Father, not Jesus, is responsible for preparing and assigning these seats.

QUESTION 20

Jesus' question in this passage shows that He expected that the disciples could drink the same cup He could. *True or False?*

The Disciples Respond (Mk 10:41-45)



Earlier Peter had been upset because Jesus kept predicting doom instead of seeking to establish a glorious new kingdom for Israel. But now he found that James and John had asked Jesus for the favored seats in His kingdom. “Aren’t I the established leader of Jesus’ followers?” Peter asked himself. He wasn’t alone with his feelings either, for the other nine disciples had gathered around James and John and they were just as offended. Though offended, deep down Peter knew that they had just asked before he did. He also suspected the same was true of the other disciples.

Peter looked up as Jesus approached the gathered disciples. “Maybe Jesus will clarify who will have the favored seats,” Peter thought.

Assignment

- Read Mark 10:41-45.
- Read “The Disciples Respond.”

The Disciples Respond (Mk 10:41-45)

Maybe James and John are the exceptions, and the rest of the disciples have learned the lesson? The others were outraged at James and John (Mk 10:41). Instead, Jesus wanted them to learn to not misuse their authority but serve others for the greatest among them will be the slave of all (Mk 10:42-44). Jesus’ followers should not be like the Gentiles where authority is lorded over others. The one who wants to be great or first must be the slave of all and last of all. This is still the same discipleship lesson Jesus has taught since the disciples’ confession that Jesus is the Christ (Mk 8:27-38).

Mark 10:45 clearly presents the heart of the gospel message: Jesus bore our sins as our substitute: He died in our place. The word translated ransom means to pay to free someone from slavery. That is what Jesus did for us; He gave His life as a ransom and died in our place. We deserve death, but He paid our debt and, by trusting in Him, we are saved.

Besides being the heart of the gospel, Mark 10:45 is Jesus living the lesson He has taught His disciples since Mark 8:31. Jesus does not ask His disciples to pursue the way by sitting on the sidelines. He is out front blazing the trail, and our course will not be more difficult than His. We must follow His attitude and example.

QUESTION 21

In which of the following ways can the disciple become great in God’s kingdom? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. By being a servant
- B. By being a slave of all
- C. By lording it over each other
- D. By using their authority

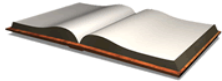
Key Points:

- The disciples show they do not understand Jesus’ passion prediction by asking for the chief seats in His kingdom.
- Jesus did not think the disciples were ready to faithfully endure the suffering that He would soon endure.

Topic 6: Beginning to See (Mk 10:46-52)

This story on healing blind Bartimaeus forms a bookend with the last story of Jesus healing a blind man. Peter's confession is the pivot point for these bookends. Immediately before his confession, Mark told the story of the blind man healed in stages. That story illustrated the disciples' slowly understanding who Jesus is. Even though the disciples stumbled on their way, they did understand some of Jesus' teaching.

Bartimaeus is a persistent man. He recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, calling Him the Son of David. He is rewarded for his faith and persistence as Jesus restores His sight. But then he receives even more as Jesus personally calls him. At this call, Bartimaeus leaves all he has—as represented by his cloak—which contrasts to all the rich man's possessions, and after receiving his sight, follows Jesus on the road.



Having explained true greatness to His disciples, Jesus and the disciples were now passing through Jericho. Looking around him Peter wondered at the gathered crowds. They didn't seem interested in who Jesus was, only what He could do for them. What would it take for them to understand? Jesus pays them a lot of attention, but they seem more of a nuisance to Peter.

But then again, many times before Jesus had chastised the disciples when they thought someone a bother; Peter remembered especially the children he turned away because Jesus seemed busy with important matters. He thought, "Maybe, if we can quickly get past Jericho without complications we can get back to our routine." So far there had been none.

Suddenly, as they passed, a blind beggar called out to Jesus. "Just what I didn't want," Peter thought to himself, knowing that Jesus would tend to him. "Curious," Peter thought, "A blind beggar in Jericho, a city famous for curing blindness! Now this was a man without hope." It was strange that the beggar called Jesus the Son of David; how would he know that? And asking for mercy from a humanly hopeless position? Few approached Jesus that way. But the crowd was quieting him; maybe Jesus would simply pass on by? After all, there were enough other distractions.

Assignment

- Read Mark 10:46-52.
- Read "Beginning to See."

Beginning to See (Mk 10:46-50)

Still on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus and the disciples now arrive in Jericho (Mk 10:46). Jesus uses a few unique features of Jericho as a backdrop to heal this blind man whose cure was beyond human reach—the very miracles Jesus sought to do:

- Jericho has the lowest elevation, 274 meters below sea level, of any city in the world.
- Herod the Great built a winter palace in Jericho to take advantage of the mild climate caused by its low elevation. Jesus often intentionally does miracles as a contrast with Herod whose brilliant building works dominated the minds (and landscape) of the Jews of that time. (We will address other examples of this in future lessons.)
- A rare plant also grows in this area that is used to produce the balm of Gilead. This balm is legendary as a cure for blindness, and Bartimaeus likely came to Jericho seeking this cure.

The previous healing in Mark was of the blind man right before Peter made His confession (Mk 8:22). Now Jesus meets a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, literally "the son of Timaeus" (Mk 10:46). The prefix "bar" means "son of" as Mark explains the meaning of his name. These healings

of the blind men mark the beginning and end of this section of lessons for Jesus' followers, summed up in Mark 10:45.

Bartimaeus heard that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by and he called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mk 10:48). The crowd tells him to be quiet but Bartimaeus shouted again for mercy. The crowd's lack of compassion for this blind man is striking. He called Jesus "Son of David" when the crowd simply called Him "Jesus the Nazarene" (Mk 10:47; 14:37; 16:6-8). Son of David is a messianic title and a new identification of Jesus in Mark (Jer 23:5-6; Mk 12:35-37). Ironically, this blind man recognizes Jesus as the Messiah without his physical sight.

Bartimaeus is a great example of persistence. Hearing his plea for mercy, Jesus called Bartimaeus and he responded by throwing off his cloak and coming immediately to Jesus (Mk 10:49-50). Jesus only called him once, but this call is mentioned multiple times in verse 49 (Mk 10:49). Bartimaeus has faith in the Messiah to heal him; the next step is following Him. When Bartimaeus heard Jesus call, he did not ask anyone for help but immediately jumped up and came to Jesus. Nothing would keep him from getting to Jesus.

He left behind his cloak, most likely the only possession he had worth anything. It was considered indispensable in that society and could not be taken from a fellow Jew under any circumstances. Moses' law stated that the garment of a neighbor must be returned by sundown because it is the only covering he has (Ex 22:26). When Bartimaeus gave up his cloak, he willingly gave up his protection, symbolically, everything he had to follow Jesus.

What Bartimaeus understood is exactly what Jesus was teaching His disciples. When feeding the multitudes, it did not matter how much bread they had, He would provide; He was sufficient. He is sufficient for us also. Bartimaeus understood—even a blind man can see. Jesus asked Bartimaeus what He can do for him and Bartimaeus responds to have his sight again (Mk 10:51). We saw earlier that healings of lepers in the Old Testament were rare so, when Jesus healed them, it testified that He was the Messiah. No blind person was healed in the Old Testament, so healing the blind also testified that the Messiah, the Son of David, had come (Isa 29:17-24; 35:1-10).

Jesus told Bartimaeus that his faith healed him, and when he regained his sight Bartimaeus follows Jesus on the road (Mk 10:52). Mark emphasizes Bartimaeus' faith instead of the miracle as no details of the miracle are given. He previously showed a healing (in stages) of the blind right before Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ (Mk 8:22-26). That story illustrated the disciples' partial understanding of His mission. Between then and now, the disciples continue in misunderstanding Jesus' teaching, but He continues teaching them, and Mark illustrates that they are learning, starting to see.

We must not get discouraged on the road as Jesus' followers. Many times we will misunderstand or fall on the way just as the disciples did. We must learn from it and continue following Him. He has blazed us a trail, but, as we follow, we must patiently endure many sufferings. We have Jesus who led the way and watches over us; He is sufficient for us.

QUESTION 22

Both Bartimaeus and the crowd following Jesus called Him the Son of David. *True or False?*

QUESTION 23

According to Mark, what did Bartimaeus leave behind when Jesus called for him?

- A. His blindness
- B. His family
- C. His cloak
- D. His pride

Key Points:

- Blind Bartimaeus could see Jesus was the Son of David.
- Bartimaeus showed the discipleship principles of disadvantage, perseverance, spiritual insight, and giving up everything for Jesus, thereby showing trust in Him.

Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 25

Jesus loved using the disadvantaged in this world as teaching examples. He presents them as having easier access to them than those advantaged in this world. Please open your Life Notebook and record what that teaches you about how to live the Christian life now.

QUESTION 26

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 27

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 7 Self Check

QUESTION 1

What is the unifying factor in every encounter Mark reports in chapters 9 and 10?

- A. Lessons based on miracles
- B. Lessons on acceptance
- C. Lessons on faith
- D. Lessons on humility

QUESTION 2

After Jesus predicted His death for the second time in Mark 9:33-37, what did the disciples argue about?

- A. Who among them was the greatest
- B. Which of them was like a child
- C. Whether Elijah would come first
- D. When Jesus would establish the kingdom

QUESTION 3

Jesus used a child as an example to the disciples, because the child represented what?

- A. Childlike faith
- B. Innocence
- C. Low social status
- D. The kingdom

QUESTION 4

Who is the example of someone of low social status in Mark 9:38-41?

- A. Jesus
- B. The disciple John
- C. The man casting out demons
- D. The possessed man

QUESTION 5

Which of the following ways is **not** a way that salt is used in Scripture?

- A. As fertilizer
- B. In judgment
- C. To make edible
- D. To purify

QUESTION 6

Satan destroys the testimony of Jesus' followers through acts of adultery and divorce. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

Riches and status in this life make it more difficult to enter the kingdom of God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Jesus declines to offer additional rewards for His followers because of all they have received by simply believing in Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

Jesus' question to the disciples showed that He expected that by this point in their walk with Him that His disciples would be able to drink the same cup He would. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

What did Bartimaeus give up to show He was fully trusting Jesus to meet all his needs?

- A. He gave all his money to the poor
- B. His cloak
- C. His family
- D. His property

Lesson 7 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 9:30-32	Jesus' Mission Announced a Second Time
Mark 9:33-41	Humility in Children and Followers
Mark 9:42-50	The Intensity of Jesus' Mission
Mark 10:1-31	Jesus' Mission and Social Status
Mark 10:32-34	Jesus Mission Announced a Third Time
Mark 10:35-45	The Disciples Respond to Jesus' Mission
Mark 10:46-52	Healing Blind Bartimaeus

QUESTION 3

- A. Humility [The disciples did not understand that Jesus would really die in Jerusalem and were afraid to ask him (Mk 9:32). They do not and will not understand until they learn a lesson of humility. This is the unifying theme of all the encounters Mark reports in chapters nine and ten.]

QUESTION 4: *Your answer*

QUESTION 5

- D. Who among them was the greatest

QUESTION 6

- C. Low social status [In the Jewish and Roman society of that time children had no status and that is why Jesus used them as an example. In that society they were last. This lesson was part of their lesson on humility.]

QUESTION 7

- C. The man casting out demons [Jesus implied they were not greater because they were His (twelve) disciples and they were not the only ones capable of doing work in His name. John thought the small circle of disciples were the only ones faithfully following Jesus and capable of good works in His name.]

QUESTION 8

- A. Whoever is not against us is for us
 D. The man will not soon be able to say anything bad about Jesus
 [This is part of working together with others to accomplish God's purposes and this cooperation will be rewarded.]

QUESTION 9: *Your answer*

QUESTION 10: *Your answer*

QUESTION 11

- A. Any believer in Him

QUESTION 12

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Rabbi Hillel	Lawful to divorce for any reason
Rabbi Shammai	Only lawful if a wife commits adultery
Jesus	A remarried man commits adultery against his first wife
Moses	Allowable with a written certificate of divorce

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

QUESTION 14

- A. We come to Him completely undeserving.
 B. We come to Him with no status.
 [Children are not innocent before God because we are all born in sin. Children are not used to illustrate simple faith either. But they represent those without status in this world and seemingly are undeserving of blessing. Those are the type of people we must be as Jesus' followers—those He delights to bless!]

QUESTION 15

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Mark 8:34	His followers must deny themselves.
Mark 9:1-13	Receive glory after suffering.
Mark 9:28-29	Depend on God's strength.
Mark 9:35	His followers must be the last of all.
Mark 10:31	The last will be first.

QUESTION 16: False [Jesus gives him a clue asking, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone” (Mk 10:18). Was he recognizing that Jesus was God by calling Him good? Unfortunately, no, since the next time the man responds to Jesus, he simply calls Him “teacher” and drops the reference to “good” (Mk 10:20).]

QUESTION 17: True

QUESTION 18: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Leaving something—family, home, fields—for Jesus’ sake and enduring persecutions for the sake of the gospel leads to rewards.

QUESTION 19

- B. They asked for the chief seats. [Immediately after Jesus taught them this, James and John asked for the chief seats in the kingdom. This showed that their attitude was the exact opposite of Jesus’.]

QUESTION 20: False [Jesus answers saying, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I experience?”(Mk 10:38).]

QUESTION 21

- A. By being a servant
B. By being a slave of all

QUESTION 22: False [The crowd had not yet had their eyes opened to who Jesus is and called Him the Nazarene.]

QUESTION 23

- C. His cloak [The cloak was the only protection he had from the cold of the night. It was so vital, the Bible forbid any Jew from taking it from a person under any circumstances. This showed Bartimaeus’ total trust in Jesus to provide for his needs.]

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

QUESTION 26: *Your answer*

QUESTION 27: *Your answer*

Lesson 7 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

D. Lessons on humility

QUESTION 2

A. Who among them was the greatest

QUESTION 3

C. Low social status

QUESTION 4

C. The man casting out demons

QUESTION 5

A. As fertilizer

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9: False

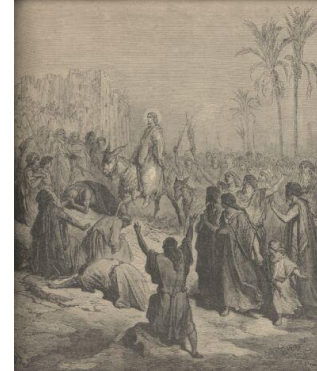
QUESTION 10

B. His cloak

Lesson 8: Presentation of the Son (Mk 11:1-12:12)

Lesson Introduction

Jesus now presents Himself to national Israel as their King (Mk 11:10), but He does not look like a king—except to those with prophetic vision (Zech 9:9). He enters humbly, riding an unbroken colt (Mk 11:2; 11:7). Though proclaimed by the multitudes as a victorious king like Jehu, for them it is only an empty Passover ritual (2 Kgs 9:13; Mk 11:11). This emptiness in the ritual connects to the emptiness of the temple and its ritual.



Hungry, Jesus approaches a leafy fig tree (Mk 11:12-13). Though it was not the season for figs, since it had leaves Jesus knew it should also have fruit. However, like the temple and the prideful clothes of Israel's leaders, it was all pretention (Mk 12:38-40). Therefore, Jesus cursed the tree, possibly foreshadowing what would happen to the temple (Mk 11:14; 11:21). For though the temple was designed as a house of prayer, it had become a hideout for robbers (Mk 11:17). The next day the fig tree was dead from the roots, which continues to illustrate the fate of the temple and its nation (Mk 11:20).

Just as He spoke and the fig tree withered, Jesus tells the disciples that through faith and prayer they can cast a mountain into the sea (Mk 11:20-24). Jesus likely had in mind Herodian, which is a mountain in Bethlehem that Herod ordered to be created from two hills for his palace.

When the Jewish leaders challenge Jesus on His authority with the temple, He claims the same heavenly authority that John the Baptist had (Mk 11:27-33). Then, in a parable Jesus pictures Israel as God's choice vineyard and the tenants as its leaders (Mk 12:1-12). They deny God His produce and kill His messengers like they will kill His dear Son Jesus (Mk 12:8). By doing so they reject the very capstone God prepared and invite His judgment (Mk 12:10-11).

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: His Triumphal Entry (Mk 11:1-10)

Topic 2: His Rejection of the Temple

Illustrated by Cursing the Fig Tree, Part 1 (Mk 11:11-14)

Illustrated by Rejecting the Temple (Mk 11:15-19)

Illustrated by Cursing the Fig Tree, Part 2 (Mk 11:20-26)

Topic 3: His Heavenly Authority (Mk 11:27-33)

Topic 4: His Rejection as the Stone

The Parable of the Tenants (Mk 12:1-8)

The Parable Interpreted (Mk 12:9-12)

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Topic 1 shows the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. He presents Himself to the nation during the Passover holiday as the Messiah, the expected Son of King David. The people join in the celebration and seem to embrace Him, but then they abruptly leave.

Topic 2 illustrates Jesus cursing Israel's magnificent temple through the fate of a fig tree. This story of the temple's rejection is sandwiched by the story of Jesus cursing a fig tree, illustrating God's rejection of the Jewish leaders and their temple.

Topic 3 presents a conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. They want to know His authority for His actions in the temple. Jesus says He will tell them His authority if they will tell Him the source of John the Baptist's authority.

In Topic 4 Jesus tells the parable of the tenants about the Jewish leaders. He shows how they are just like previous leaders of Israel who have refused God's messengers. He is the rejected Son and their rejection of Him will be overturned by God.

Summary: Lesson 8 shows Jesus coming to Israel as their rightful Messianic King in the triumphal entry. He curses their temple and shows the Jewish leaders His heavenly authority. Yet, He is the rejected prophecy, rejected by the Jewish leaders, as He teaches the people of His nation.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

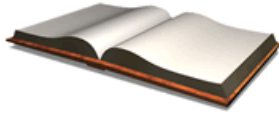
- List the ways that the details of the triumphal entry show God's sovereignty
- Explain Jesus' message about prayer
- Reflect on the Jewish leaders' errors in leading the people and evaluate your own leadership for ways to follow God better

Topic 1: His Triumphal Entry (Mk 11:1-10)



Jesus now reaches the end of His road by entering Jerusalem. He has prepared His disciples for what was ahead of Him and them. As they enter Jerusalem, the veil of secrecy over His identity lifts. In this topic, Jesus enters Jerusalem and presents Himself as the Messiah.

However, He is not coming to His people in royal splendor, but meekly and humbly riding on a donkey. This is an un-ridden donkey that does not object to Jesus riding on its back. Mark reports the triumphal entry as if something great is about to happen. The reader may conclude: "Maybe in His glorious entry they will recognize Him and accept His kingdom?" The people do celebrate His entry, but at the end of the day, they simply leave. What once looked promising proves anticlimactic. Meanwhile, Jesus curiously pauses at the end of the day to inspect the temple.



As the disciples continued following Jesus many pilgrims going to the Passover feast joined them on their way. Suddenly Jerusalem came into view. They had been to Jerusalem many times to celebrate the feast but they had never experienced the collective shudder they felt now. Instead of seeing Jerusalem as they always had, as the glorious city and hope of Israel, they now saw a cloud of gloom hanging over it. The contrast of what should be and what was sickened them: this city was the capital of God's covenant nation and Jesus had told them that this is where they would crucify their Messiah.

But as they came into Jerusalem, the people recognized Jesus. Soon they were celebrating and receiving the Messiah! "Maybe I was wrong," Peter thought, "Maybe Jerusalem will accept their rightful King after all..."

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 11:1-33 and Mark 12:1-12 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to consider are:

- How did the different groups in Mark view the triumphal entry?
- Why does Jesus react so strongly against the fig tree?
- Why does Jesus react so strongly against the activities in the temple?
- Why does Jesus compare His authority to that of John?
- What does Jesus claim for Himself in the Parable of the Tenants? What does He claim for the Jewish leaders?



Assignment

- Read Mark 11:1-10 again.
- Read "His Triumphal Entry."

His Triumphal Entry (Mk 11:1-10)

Jesus knew exactly how the two disciples would find the colt and He instructed them accordingly (Mk 11:1-3). Thus, Mark shows that Jesus, as the Sovereign God, was aware of and controlling these events.

Jesus now arrives at Jerusalem. This is the home of his enemies—the spiritual rulers of Israel—who have opposed Him from their spiritual base in this capital city. Their opposition started at the beginning of His ministry (Mk 2:7). They even said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul" and "by the ruler of demons he casts out demons" (Mk 3:22). They have also plotted to kill Jesus since the beginning of His ministry: "So the Pharisees went out immediately and began plotting with the Herodians, as to how they could assassinate him" (Mk 3:6). Jesus, though aware of His fate, pressed on to His destination, to the amazement of His followers (Mk 10:32-34).

At this time, Jesus' servant character becomes more prominent as the cross gets nearer. He voluntarily submits His will to the Father's. Because of the horrible fate awaiting Him, and His full knowledge of the details, this submission was exceedingly difficult. This difficulty was illustrated by His grief and prayers in Gethsemane (Mk 14:33-36). By this Mark showed that submitting to God's will is not always easy or pleasant.

Now in Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village to find an unbroken colt to bring to Jesus. He gave His disciples detailed instructions, which they followed precisely. Just as Jesus knew His fate, He knew exactly how the disciples would find the colt He needed to ride. He made His triumphal entry on this colt and fulfilled the Messianic prophecies (Mk 11:4-6). Usually a colt needs breaking in, but not with Jesus riding.

“Then they brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it” (Mk 11:7). The multitude responded by spreading their cloaks on the road or spreading branches that they had cut. They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” (Mk 11:8-10).

The crowd gets caught up in the celebration of the Passover. To them, Jesus’ role is simply part of the normal ritual celebration of the Passover feast they went through every year. They are completely unaware of the significance of His entry. Jesus is the only one who understands.

Seeming to understand, the crowd spread their garments in the road just they did when Jehu was announced as king: “This is what the Lord says, ‘I have designated you as king over Israel.’ Each of them quickly took off his robe and they spread them out at his feet on the steps. The trumpet was blown and they shouted, ‘Jehu is king!’” (2 Kgs 9:12-13).

Hosanna in the highest means save us now, so with their words they called for the messianic age—for the kingdom of their father David. If only they believed their own words. Ironically, many true statements in Mark are spoken by those who do not realize the importance of what they say. The kingdom was near and was offered to the nation if they only would accept it (Mk 1:15).

The crowd sang the words from Psalm 118, a messianic psalm. Here are some of the words (notice how perfectly this applies to His entry here):

This is the Lord’s gate—the godly enter through it. I will give you thanks, for you answered me, and have become my deliverer. The stone which the builders discarded has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord’s work. We consider it amazing! This is the day the Lord has brought about. We will be happy and rejoice in it. Please Lord, deliver! Please Lord, grant us success! May the one who comes in the name of the Lord be blessed! We will pronounce blessings on you in the Lord’s temple” (Ps 118:20-26).

Mark presents Jesus as the promised Davidic king (Amos 9:11). The people were not looking for this kind of king; they looked for a political deliverer from Rome. Their celebration was similar to what happened every year at Passover. It was so benign that neither the Jewish leaders, nor the Roman soldiers on special alert during this celebration, were alarmed in the least. The promised Messiah of Israel had appeared, presented Himself according to prophecy, and the nation had missed it (Luke 19:42).

QUESTION 2

Read through Mark 11:1-12 at least once and then match the story descriptions to the appropriate Scripture reference.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
Mark 11:1-10	Jesus curses the Fig Tree
Mark 11:11-26	Jesus claims John’s Authority
Mark 11:27-33	Jesus’ Parable of the Tenants
Mark 12:1-12	Jesus makes His Triumphal Entry

QUESTION 3

What event did Mark use to show that Jesus was aware of and controlling events?

- A. Jesus' determination to get to Jerusalem
- B. Jesus' relationship to the temple
- C. The crowd's reaction to His entry
- D. The way He obtained the services of the colt

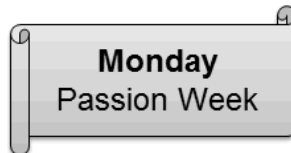
QUESTION 4

Why was entering Jerusalem so ominous for Jesus?

Key Points:

- The way Jesus obtained the colt He rode on showed He was the sovereign God aware of and controlling His fate.
- When Jesus enters Jerusalem it is not just as His covenant nation's capital but as the headquarters of His enemies the Jewish leaders.
- This Jewish Passover ritual pictured the reception the Messiah would get when He appeared and the emptiness of Jewish rituals at this time.

Topic 2: His Rejection of the Temple

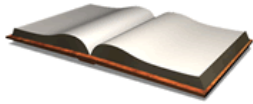


In the triumphal entry, Mark says Jesus ended His day by looking around the temple area and then leaving because it was late. Then Mark abruptly drops the temple reference and continues the next day with the story of a fig tree. He leaves us wondering why he even mentioned Jesus looking around at the temple.

Mark likely did this to emphasize what Jesus did the next day. But Jesus does not just look around; when He looks, He looks with scrutiny. The fig tree Jesus encounters seems to illustrate His relationship with Israel and specifically its temple. The fig tree in Hosea 9:10 pictured Israel and most likely indicated the same in Mark. He looked around to take decisive action.

The sandwich structure of this account emphasizes the relationship of the two stories. The story of the fig tree was included on either side of the temple story not only because the Holy Spirit prompted Mark to write those words, but also for emphasis on the temple account. What happens with the fig tree helps us understand what Jesus' actions meant when He entered the temple. He fulfills the predictions the prophets made about what the Messiah would do in His temple when He came (Mal 3:1).

Illustrated by Cursing the Fig Tree, Part 1 (Mk 11:11-14)



Peter was always impressed with Herod's temple in Jerusalem. The temple was little more than half finished, yet even now the view of it dazzled his eyes. Religious leaders told him it was even more impressive than Solomon's original temple. It was curious how Jesus looked around at it at the end of the day yesterday and never seemed impressed by its magnificence. From personal experience, Peter knew that searching gaze; it was a gaze of judgment and none could stand up under it. But why would He look that way at Israel's glorious temple?

Somehow seeming connected—though Peter could not explain the connection—was a curious incident with a fig tree Jesus encountered that morning. Peter had never seen Jesus do a destructive miracle before, but this had been one. They had known He was hungry and disappointed to not find figs on the tree. But it is not even the season for figs. Yes, this tree did have leaves, which usually meant it would at least have fig buds, but though He searched it carefully He found none. Peter wondered, “Why would Jesus react so strongly against this tree?”

They also knew their destination today was the temple. Peter thought, “This should prove an interesting day...”

Assignment

- Read Mark 11:11-14.
- Read “Illustrated by Cursing the Fig Tree.”

Illustrated by Cursing the Fig Tree (Mk 11:11-14)

Once in Jerusalem, Jesus went to the temple and then went to Bethany later in the day (Mk 11:11). Suddenly, after a great buildup, Jesus is left all alone. What looked so promising when Jesus made His entry, and with the people proclaiming Him as the Messiah, abruptly stopped as the day ended. The crowd just recited their traditional Scripture, celebrated—and left. It was an empty ritual for them with no reality behind it—this was the problem with many of their religious practices. They had not really proclaimed Him as the Messiah. They made the same mistake the disciples had: they looked for a political kingdom and glorious Messiah, not the suffering, humble servant who appeared before them (Mk 8:31–10:45). Jesus looked around because it was too late to take any action, but on the next day Jesus will confront another source of empty rituals for the Jews: the temple.

The day before, Jesus completed His triumphal entry and briefly looked around at the temple. Mark next reports that Jesus was hungry as they left Bethany the next day. After a mention of the temple and the triumphal entry, the subject seems to be abandoned, but in reality is not as this fig tree illustrates the temple of Israel (Mk 11:12).

In His hunger, Jesus noticed a fig tree with leaves in the distance and searched for fruit on it. However, it was not the season for figs and He only found leaves (Mk 11:13). Jesus was not expecting fully ripe figs. During early spring, small edible buds develop that eventually become figs and as spring progresses the fig trees show their large leaves. Since this tree only had leaves, it would not produce figs this year.

Disappointed, Jesus said, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again,” which the disciples heard (Mk 11:14). Since this story is placed both before and after the temple scene, we can interpret this to mean that the nation also would not produce fruit—by recognizing their Messiah. As the tree would not produce fruit this year, neither would this nation that did not recognize their Messiah.

QUESTION 5

What happened at the end of the day after Jesus made His triumphal entry?

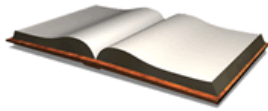
- A. He briefly visited the temple.
- B. He returned the colt to its owner.
- C. He taught the disciples about the kingdom.
- D. He walked by a fig tree

QUESTION 6

Which of the following best describes the condition of the fig tree right before Jesus cursed it?

- A. It had both leaves and fig buds.
- B. It had both leaves and fully ripened figs.
- C. It had leaves without any fig buds.
- D. It had no leaves or fig buds.

Illustrated by Rejecting the Temple (Mk 11:15-19)



Little did Peter know, but the interesting day he had anticipated would be grossly under-anticipated. Jesus entered the temple that day and took immediate action.

Peter could hardly believe his eyes. First Jesus started driving out the merchants that took up residence in the temple during these festivals. Then, when they didn't immediately leave, Jesus grabbed their tables and chairs and threw them along with their contents sprawling across the temple floor. Then He blocked the entrances so no more merchandise could enter the temple. On later reflection Peter realized that Malachi had predicted this very action by the Messiah when He suddenly entered His temple.

Now, Jesus prepared to speak. He was accusing the merchants of turning what was meant to be a house of prayer into a den of robbers. Peter could see the merchants gather the Jewish leaders to protest the actions of Jesus. Truly he had under-anticipated this day.

Assignment

- Read Zechariah 14:1-20, which is on the temple in the future.
- Read Ezekiel 8:1-18; Ezekiel 9:1-11; Ezekiel 10:1-22, and Ezekiel 11:1-25 on God's glory leaving the temple.
- Read Mark 11:15-19.
- Read "Illustrated by Rejecting the Temple."

Illustrated by Rejecting the Temple (Mk 11:15-19)

The account of rejecting the temple is sandwiched both in time and in Mark's gospel record between when the fig tree was cursed and the next day when they found it withered from the roots. Jesus and His disciples arrived in Jerusalem and entered the temple. Jesus began to drive out the merchants and money changers there and would not allow anyone to even carry merchandise through the temple (Mk 11:15-16).

The outer story that Mark wraps this story within should guide our interpretation. Did Jesus cleanse the fig tree? No, He cursed it (Mk 11:21). So Jesus did not cleanse the temple—He cursed or rejected it! His action also fulfilled a prophecy from Zechariah 14:21 of no Canaanite, meaning merchant, being in the house of the Lord on that day, likely to do business. The words “that day” refer to the start of the earthly reign of Christ. Jesus took action toward fulfilling this prophecy in Zechariah 14:21 just as He fulfilled Zechariah 9:9 at the triumphal entry. Final fulfillments of these verses will happen again when His reign on earth begins.

What happens here parallels what happened the first time the glory of the Lord left the temple in 592 BC. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and his forces, would soon defeat Judah and destroy Jerusalem and the temple. The glory of the Lord had indwelt the temple from the time Solomon first dedicated it, and he expected God to live there permanently (see 1 Kgs 8:10-13).

God withdrew His glory because of the evil in Jerusalem and its temple in Ezekiel’s time. In Ezekiel 8–11, God shows Ezekiel the conditions in the temple that cause Him to withdraw. Mark parallels the conditions in the Jerusalem temple at the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry to the spiritual condition of the temple in Ezekiel’s time. Ezekiel describes the glory as it reluctantly starts leaving the temple.

Read Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19; 11:23-24 if you have not already. These verses show that God did not cleanse His temple, but His presence left it and soon He used Nebuchadnezzar to destroy it!

Jesus’ bodily presence in the temple parallels what happened in Ezekiel’s time—since He is the very presence of God. So His soon interaction with the Jewish leaders compares with Ezekiel’s visions of evil activity within the temple. The people had a world wonder for a temple, but the temple’s spirituality was empty. It did not change lives! As God’s glory withdrew to the Mount of Olives in Ezekiel’s time, Jesus withdrew to the Mount of Olives also. Many other parallels can be made between Ezekiel’s temple and Jesus’ actions here. For further study, see Ezekiel 8 in which the Lord is in His temple and He conducts an inspection of it, the same type of inspection Jesus conducts here in Mark. At the north of the altar gate was a statue of jealousy (Ezk 8:5-6), in the court were idol images and the elders were burning incense to them (Ezk 8: 7-13), then women weeping for Tammuz (Ezk 8:14-15), and sun worshippers (Ezk 8:16-18). Though these sins in the temple are not identical, they are still sins and they incited the Lord’s fury then as they do Christ’s now.

Jesus told them that He intended His temple to be a house of prayer for all nations. But they turned it into a hideout for robbers (Mk 11:17). The people thought they were safe because they had God’s temple. Jeremiah tells them to stop putting their confidence in false beliefs that lead them to think they are safe because the temple of the Lord is there, urging them to change their way of life to do what is right and fair (Jer 7:4-5). Jeremiah’s prophecy continued that the Lord’s house is not a hideout for robbers; the people need to pay attention to their actions because the Lord sees it all (Jer 7:10-11).

They thought it did not matter how they acted; for they could just take shelter in the temple. They thought they could rob—act wickedly—and then run to God’s house, like a robber going to his hideout, and take shelter. Is that the way we use church or prayer or being a Christian? We also have no shelter—because God is our God—if we continue acting wickedly.

QUESTION 7

The sandwich structure of this story shows us that Jesus meant to cleanse the temple. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

In Ezekiel's time, God's glory left the temple and stopped at least temporarily at which three of the following locations? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The court of the Gentiles
- B. The entrance to the east gate
- C. The mountain to the east of Jerusalem
- D. The pool of Siloam
- E. The sacrificial altar
- F. The threshold of the temple

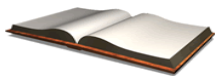
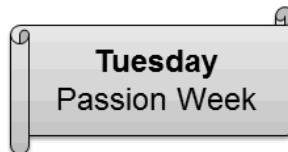
QUESTION 9

Explain what Israel did that caused Jesus and Jeremiah to refer to the temple as a "den for robbers" (Jer 7:10-11; Mk 11:17).

QUESTION 10

Jesus rejects the nation of Israel and its temple because it looks spiritual, but it is not. It is easy to merely look spiritual because we are Christians. List areas of sin and weakness in your own life that need to be overcome and especially look for areas of hypocrisy. Note them in your journal and bring them to the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to help you overcome them and pray believing that He has answered.

Illustrated by Cursing the Fig Tree, Part 2 (Mk 11:20-26)



After Jesus basically trashed the merchants goods in the temple, Peter saw them gather with the Jewish leaders. "What will they do?" he asked himself. "Will Jesus be arrested?" Yet they did not stop Jesus from teaching that day and when evening came Jesus gathered the disciples to leave and, though still whispering amongst themselves, they allowed Jesus to go.

To Peter's surprise, however, the next morning Jesus insisted on returning again to Jerusalem. But on the way in, they passed the fig tree Jesus had cursed the day before. It was completely withered from the roots on up. Its condition was not natural for a tree that only died yesterday, but rather it was a miracle; for the tree now looked like it died years ago. Peter was astonished and could not keep from blurting out, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered."

Assignment

- Read Mark 11:20-26.
- Read "Jesus' Judgment on the Fruitless Tree."

Jesus' Judgment on the Fruitless Fig Tree (Mk 11:20-26)

Jesus used a fig tree to illustrate the subject in the middle of the two parts of the story—the ornate temple of Israel (Mk 11:15-19). Now He uses Peter's amazement at the condition of the fig tree to teach them about believing prayer.

The next morning, when they passed the fig tree it was withered at the root, which Peter pointed out to Jesus (Mk 11:20-21). A plant that withers from the roots is hopelessly dead and will not return to life (Jude 12). The judgment is final.

Again, the disciples do not understand. Why would Peter, after spending years with Jesus and seeing His miracles, continue in amazement about anything Jesus did? He confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God—he should have been amazed if it did not come true. Jesus uses Peter's response to teach about effective prayer; He solemnly declares its truth.

Jesus makes, what seems to us, an unusual statement about moving mountains (Mk 11:22-25). Jesus' focus here is on faith and prayer. We must pray believing, not doubting, that we have received our request (for a biblical example of this see Acts 12:1-19 where the church prays for Peter's release without expecting it to happen). Another condition for effective prayer is mending our relationships with other believers. If we stand praying and have not forgiven someone, we must forgive them before returning to prayer. Then, as Herod was able to move a mountain by employing slaves to manually move it, Christians can also move mountains solely by exercising prayer and faith in God (Mk 11:22-24).

What does God want to accomplish through us? Is it worth being holy and faithful to effectively accomplish it? If you would like to, you can respond to these questions in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 11

What elements does Jesus mention that are necessary for the effective prayer that can to move mountains?

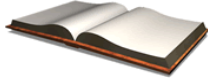
Key Points:

- Jesus did not cleanse His temple but instead illustrated the hopeless spiritual state of national Israel and its temple by cursing a fig tree.
- Israel used the temple as a place to hide after they sinned.
- Believers can move mountains by prayer:
 - Conditioned by faith
 - Conditioned by forgiveness to mended relationships with others

Topic 3: His Heavenly Authority (Mk 11:27-33)

The Jewish leaders noticed Jesus' actions in the temple and they confronted Him the next day as He returned to it. After all, they were the religious leaders of Israel and they had authority. They received many benefits from running the temple cult, including social status and many made good money from it. With His actions He endangered their benefits.

So they challenged Him to defend His authority. Jesus declined to answer their challenge directly but instead used a commonly practiced rabbinic technique from His culture and time. He explained He would answer their question if they answered His question first. He asked them where John’s authority came from—heaven or men? They refused to answer this even though they were the rulers of Israel and responsible for knowing the answer.



The delegation of Jewish leaders sent to watch Jesus had returned to Jerusalem for the Passover just as He had. Though Jesus had offended them many times when they challenged Him, He always successfully fended off their attacks. However, now He was in their headquarters and they felt more comfortable controlling Him here.

The leaders were present when Jesus had thrown their merchants out of the temple. The merchants had come right to them with their complaint saying, “Didn’t we pay you for permission to sell our goods in the temple?” Yes, they had given their permission. Clearly, He must be corrected. What gave this Nazarene the right to come in and throw things around in the temple? It was bad enough when He threatened their spiritual leadership but now He attacked them in a second vulnerable spot— their pocketbook.

Assignment

- Read Mark 11:26-33.
- Read “His Heavenly Authority.”

His Heavenly Authority (Mk 11:27-33)

After Jesus’ actions in the temple, He returns to the temple courts. The Jewish leaders want to know His source of authority (Mk 11:27-28). During this last week of Jesus’ earthly life, Mark focuses his attention on the temple and His disputes with the Jewish leaders. They controlled Jewish religious life and Jesus threatened that control.

They also made a good living because of the temple. There were moneychangers there because there were Greek, Roman, and Jewish coins in circulation. The moneychangers received money for transferring coins into the appropriate currency for paying the temple tax. They also sold sacrificial animals and collected the offering from the Jewish people. So Jesus not only threatened them religiously, but also financially.

The three groups of Jewish leaders mentioned were members of the Sanhedrin, so quite possibly these were official representatives of that group sent to confront Jesus. They demanded to know the following: officially, where did He get the right to do these things? Who had sent Him? Jesus said He would answer—conditionally: If they told him the source of John’s authority for baptism—was it from heaven or from people? (Mk 11:29-30).

Even here, despite all of Jesus’ works, all the miracles of healing, all of the teaching, and the triumphal entry, the Jewish leaders would have us believe His authority is still a mystery. Of course, these groups were ones who did not want to believe, and the truth is purposely disguised from these. In Ezekiel, God says, speaking of Israel, those who do not pay attention are a rebellious house (Ezk 3:27). This sounds like what Jesus said after giving the parable of the sower, “Whoever has ears to hear had better listen!” (Mk 4:9).

Jesus’ challenge presented the leaders with a dilemma. If they admitted John’s heavenly authority, Jesus would ask them why they did not submit; while if they said it was only from people, they would incite the crowd against them (Mk 11:31-33).

Their question seems simple, but they have set a trap: they want Him to reveal Himself. They do this not to believe in Him but to accuse Him before the people: either of blasphemy, as they have in

the past and as the High Priest will at His trial (Mk 2:7; 14:63-64); or of sedition to the Romans, by trying to be an earthly king replacing Caesar (Mk 15:2-4).

Jesus turns their trap on them, because of their unbelief, they are hypocrites—no matter which way they answer. The expected answers to Jesus' questions are "from heaven" or "from men." They are stuck with no good answer. Not having any good option they said "we don't know."

These were the religious leaders of Israel; it was their duty to know! By refusing to believe, their only option was saying they did not know. Truly, their hearts were hardened. Jesus drove that point home in the conflicts that followed during this Passion Week. The next illustration Jesus uses, the parable of the tenants, is a good example of this.

Are our hearts hardened about anything in our relationships with Jesus? Is there anything our conscience is aware of that we refuse to bring before Him or obey Him in? If so, let's bring that before Him now and not follow the example of these leaders. You may want to record your thoughts and responses to these questions in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 12

Jesus' question to the Jewish leaders implied that He had the same authority as John the Baptist. *True or False?*

QUESTION 13

Why didn't the Jewish leaders want to say that John's authority was from men?

- A. Because they feared Jesus
- B. Because they feared the crowd
- C. Because they knew it was from heaven
- D. Mark doesn't say.

Key Points:

- Jesus' greater authority threatened the established religious and financial practices of the Jewish leaders.
- Jesus' authority, like John's, is greater because it comes directly from God and does not come from people.

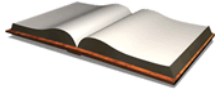
Topic 4: His Rejection as the Stone

The religious leaders revealed their hypocrisy by not answering Jesus' question. Jesus made that clearer by telling them the Parable of the Tenants.

Jesus receives strong opposition to His ministry. He now responds the same way He did when He previously received opposition—He began teaching in parables (Mk 4:1-33). The Jewish leaders were present and this parable of the tenants was told about them. Jesus accuses them of doing exactly what their fathers did and persecuting God's messengers.

Something unusual happens at the end of this parable in Mark's gospel: The Jewish leaders understand it for previously they had not understood His parables. For they knew it was directed at them. They also understand that Jesus claims to be the Son in this parable. The veil cloaking His identity lifts and the religious leaders are even more determined to kill God's Son and heir.

The Parable of the Tenants (Mk 12:1-18)



“The Jewish leaders were embarrassed by Jesus’ refusal to answer their question about authority,” Peter thought. “They seem satisfied that He made no blatant outward case for His source of authority either. Interesting.” But as the leaders gathered to discuss their next move, they saw the crowd gather around Jesus as He began a parable—and loud enough that they knew He meant them to hear. Usually they didn’t mind when He spoke His parables because they didn’t understand them anyway. “So,” they thought, “what difference does it make what stories He tells?”

But as they listened, they could tell that this parable was different. The story was obviously about Israel, God’s vineyard, and how its leaders had treated God’s messengers throughout their history. They could tell it was directed at them as the current generation of Jewish leaders.

Assignment

- Read Isaiah 5:1-30, which is on Israel pictured as a vineyard.
- Read Mark 12:1-8.
- Read “The Parable of the Tenants.”

The Parable of the Tenants (Mk 12:1-8)

In further response to the Jewish leaders, Jesus tells them a parable of a vineyard God planted. A vineyard commonly illustrated Israel in the Old Testament (Isa 5:1-7). The first time Jesus spoke in parables was to respond to opposition (Mk 4:1-34). He again responds the same way, but this time His parable speaks directly to his opponents. Also, something unusual happens because, at its conclusion, they understood it and knew it illustrated them (Mk 12:12)!

This parable is based on a business relationship in Palestine in Jesus’ time. Absentee landlords owned the land and rented it out to tenant farmers who planted and cared for the crops while the landlords returned home. They did not return until harvest time came. Then the owner’s representatives were sent to collect the crop and pay the tenants their share.

The following list points to who is represented in figure in the parable:

- The man who planted the vineyard was **God**.
- The vineyard was **Israel**.
- The pit collected the **produce** (juice).
- The fence and watchtower were **protection**.
- The tenant farmers were the **Jewish leaders** throughout their history.
- The slaves were the **prophets**.
- The son was **Jesus**. (Usually the son was only sent if the father had died. So when these tenants tried killing the son, they were attempting to claim the son’s inheritance.)

QUESTION 14

Match the people or items named in the parable of the tenants with what they represent.

<i>People or Items</i>	<i>What They Represent</i>
The man who planted the vineyard	Jesus.
The vineyard	For protection
The pit	The prophets
The fence and watchtower	For collecting the produce
The tenant farmers	The Jewish leaders
The slaves	God
The Son	Israel

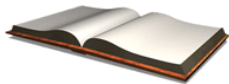
QUESTION 15

Briefly explain the business relationship of the tenant farmers that the Parable of the Tenants is based on.

QUESTION 16

The parable of the tenants was spoken by Jesus directly to and about the Jewish leaders but, once again they did not understand that it referred to them. *True or False?*

The Parable Interpreted (Mk 12:9-12)



Again, the Jewish leaders were furious. In this parable Jesus plainly identifies Himself as God's Son. That is outrageous enough, but he also compares them to the worst of Israel's former leaders. The current Jewish leaders were aware that some of Israel's former leaders had persecuted and murdered some of the great prophets in Israel's history. They had always taught amongst themselves that they were not of that tradition. They were faithful leaders whose teachings were sometimes on par with Moses'. Worse yet, Jesus made this accusation in front of this cursed multitude. "If it wasn't for them, we would have arrested Him already," they had decided amongst themselves.

Assignment

- Read Acts 7:1-60 on Stephen's speech.
- Read Mark 12:9-12.
- Read "The Parable Applied."

The Parable Applied (Mk 12:9-12)

In this parable, the treatment that God's messengers received progressively worsened. Repentance was no longer an option; for they were set in their ways. What alone remained was God's response to their treatment of His son (Mk 12:8-11).

The Old Testament Scripture quoted is Psalm 118:22. The New Testament quotes it several times, teaching that man rejected Jesus but God chose Him, and He became the author of salvation. The cornerstone is probably the capstone, the key building stone. It is the final stone that finishes the arch and makes it complete. God overrules man's judgment in the person of His Son.

Mark explains that the religious leaders realized the parable was about them and so they left (Mk 12:12). Mark again contrasts the response of the leaders with the response of the people. It is sad that their hearts are so hard. Jesus warned them against their course, but they would not repent.

Has Scripture warned us about something that we will not change or give up? If so, why continue this course to destruction?

QUESTION 17

What are some of the parallels between Stephen's speech in Acts 7 and Jesus' teaching in the parable of the tenants?

QUESTION 18

In the parable of the tenants, God was longsuffering with the nation of Israel. He is also longsuffering with us as Christians. Ask God to bring to your mind times in your life when He has been longsuffering with you. Then bring them before God in prayer asking Him to reveal to you how to respond. Write down in your Life Notebook how you will depend on God and resolve those issues.

Key Point:

- The Jewish leaders understand that Jesus compares them, Israel's present leaders, to past leaders who killed God's messengers.

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 19

In Mark and in this lesson, the parable of the tenants shows Israel's spiritual leaders as leading the people away from God's purposes. Read through Mark 12:1-12 again; then open your Life Notebook and record your thoughts about the dangers you can see for yourself as God's leader.

QUESTION 20

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 21

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 8 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Mark consistently depicts Jerusalem as friendly to Jesus and His followers. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

Jesus is the only one amidst the crowd who understands the significance of His triumphal entry. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

The sandwich structure with the story of Jesus in the temple told within the story of the fig tree would suggest that Jesus meant to curse the temple. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

The references, by Jesus and Jeremiah, to Israel using the temple as a “den of robbers” suggest that they were doing something wicked and then using the temple as what?

- A. Hideout
- B. Marketplace
- C. Animal shelter
- D. Bank

QUESTION 5

Which of the following is **not** something Jesus mentions as necessary for the effective prayer that can move mountains in Mark 11:22-24?

- A. Endurance
- B. Faith
- C. Forgiveness
- D. Prayer

QUESTION 6

The Jewish leaders believed John the Baptist was a true prophet of God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

When Jesus answered the question about His authority with another question, the leaders understood that Jesus claimed heaven’s authority for His deeds. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

The religious leaders realized the parable of the tenants was about them. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

In the parable of the tenants, which of the following plays the role of the slaves?

- A. God and Jesus
- B. Israel
- C. The Jewish leaders
- D. The prophets

QUESTION 10

The messengers are progressively treated worse in the parable of the tenants. *True or False?*

Lesson 8 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
Mark 11:1-10	Jesus makes His Triumphal Entry
Mark 11:11-26	Jesus curses the Fig Tree
Mark 11:27-33	Jesus claims John's Authority
Mark 12:1-12	Jesus' Parable of the Tenants

QUESTION 3

- D. The way He obtained the services of the colt [Jesus knew in advance how they would find the colt. He controlled the circumstances of His fate, just as He controls ours. Not only that, but Mark wants us to know that Jesus knew His fate yet did not let it deter Him from His mission.]

QUESTION 4: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

This is the home of his enemies, the spiritual rulers of Israel, who have opposed Him from their spiritual base in this capital city. Their opposition started with the beginning of His ministry (Mk 2:7). Jerusalem is the place He knew He would die; it was the city that killed its prophets.

QUESTION 5

- A. He briefly visited the temple. [Jesus completed His triumphal entry by briefly looked around at the temple, in which He would spend an eventful day the next day.]

QUESTION 6

- C. It had leaves without any fig buds. [The fig tree had leaves so it should have had the edible buds that would become ripe figs in season. However it had no budding figs. This illustrated the empty spiritual condition of Israel even though they had confidence in their fancy temple.]

QUESTION 7: False [Jesus did not cleanse the fig tree—He cursed it. So the sandwich structure does not help us much if we understand it as a cleansing. It helps us interpret it as a cursing and shows His rejection of it.]

QUESTION 8

- B. The entrance to the east gate
C. The mountain to the east of Jerusalem
F. The threshold of the temple

[Mark parallels the conditions in the Jerusalem temple at the time of Jesus' earthly ministry to the spiritual condition of the temple in Ezekiel's time. God's presence in Ezekiel's time left the rejected temple taking the same basic route that Jesus did when He rejected the temple in His time.]

QUESTION 9: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

They thought they could do any evil they wanted as long as they had God's temple to purify and protect them. Jesus and Jeremiah compared this to robbers doing their thievery and then running to their hideout that also housed other thieves.

QUESTION 10: *Your answer*

QUESTION 11: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Jesus' focus here is on faith, prayer, and forgiveness. We must pray believing, not doubting, that we have received our request. Another condition for effective prayer is mending our relationships with other believers through forgiveness. Then, as Herod was able to move a mountain by employing slaves to manually combine two hills, Christians can also move mountains through believing prayer (Mk 11:22-24).

QUESTION 12: True [Because of Jesus' challenge, the leaders found themselves in a dilemma—they could not identify an answer to Jesus' question that He would not be able to refute. So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Then Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things" (Mk 11:31-33).]

QUESTION 13

- B. Because they feared the crowd [The people believed John’s ministry was from heaven, and he endorsed Jesus, so if they answered from heaven they knew Jesus would point out their disbelief. They could not answer “from men” because they feared the people’s reaction.]

QUESTION 14

<i>People or Items</i>	<i>What They Represent</i>
The man who planted the vineyard	God
The vineyard	Israel
The pit	For collecting the produce
The fence and watchtower	For protection
The tenant farmers	The Jewish leaders
The slaves	The prophets
The Son	Jesus.

QUESTION 15: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Absentee landlords owned the land and rented it out to tenant farmers who planted and cared for the crops while the landlords returned home. The owner’s representatives were then sent to collect the crop at harvest time and pay the tenants their share.

QUESTION 16: False**QUESTION 17:** *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

In Stephen’s case, the Jewish leaders were not concerned about the multitudes’ reaction, so they went ahead and killed him. Each had a message against the Jewish leaders who killed God’s prophets and disobeyed God’s law; and both cited the nation’s history and God’s faithful care.

QUESTION 18: *Your answer***QUESTION 19:** *Your answer***QUESTION 20:** *Your answer***QUESTION 21:** *Your answer*

Lesson 8 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1: False

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4

A. Hideout

QUESTION 5

A. Endurance

QUESTION 6: False

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9

D. The prophets

QUESTION 10: True

Lesson 9: Teaching of the Son (Mk 12:13–13:37)

Lesson Introduction

Jesus' duel of words with the Jewish leaders on the temple grounds continues as He uses a coin to illustrate a lesson on paying taxes (Mk 12:13-17). Then, in the next dispute, Jesus shows the faithful God of the living ensuring resurrection (Mk 12:18-27).



A superior rabbi with advanced training now arrives to evaluate Jesus' answer (Mk 12:28). He is an expert in the Law and he asks Jesus' opinion about the greatest commandment. Jesus says the *shema* is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices (Mk 12:29-40). The *shema* is the Jewish statement of faith in one God, based on Deuteronomy 6:4-9. This is especially important now because, as we saw in the last lesson, the temple has been cursed as an approach to God. Jesus reverses roles again and judges this leader as close to—but not in—the kingdom (Mk 12:34).

Jesus shows that the experts do not understand their own teaching about David's Son and Lord (Mk 12:35-37). Like the fig tree, they make a showy display of their clothes and position—in other words saving their lives in this world—but Jesus knows and will repay them for their pride (Mk 12:38-40). In stark contrast, the widow offers all she has in her life—she loses her life to save it (Mk 12:41-44).

The disciples misunderstand about fleshly pride by admiring the great stones in their temple (Mk 13:1). However, Jesus predicts its destruction at the end of the age, pictured in a near and distant fulfillment (Mk 13:2).

Jesus then lists the birth pains coming before the end of the age:

1. A parade of false messiahs (Mk 13:6)
2. Wars (Mk 13:7-8)
3. Earthquakes and famines (Mk 13:8)

Then Jesus lists the signs of the end of the age:

1. Persecutions from family and government that lead to opportunity for testimony (Mk 13:9-13)
2. The abomination of desolation in the temple
3. Israel's need for immediate unencumbered flight (Mk 13:14-23)
4. The sun and moon are darkened, the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven are shaken (Mk 13:24-25).
5. The Son of Man arrives with the clouds (Mk 13:26).
6. The angels gather His elect (Mk 13:27).
7. The illustration Jesus gives of the nearness of His coming from the fig tree (Mk 13:28-31).

These events will overtake the unprepared, but the elect are doorkeepers who stay alert through all watches of the night and anticipate Jesus' return (Mk 13:31-37).

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: His Teaching

On Obligations (Mk 12:13-17)

On the Resurrection (Mk 12:18-27)

Topic 2: Teaching the Experts in the Law

On the Greatest Commandment (Mk 12:28-34)

On being David's Son (Mk 12:35-37)

Topic 3: Teaching on Pretention

The Jewish Leaders (Mk 12:38-40)

The Widow's Mite (Mk 12:41-44)

The Temple (Mk 13:1-2)

Topic 4: The Beginning of the End

The Beginning of Birth Pains (Mk 13:3-8)

The Call for Endurance (Mk 13:9-13)

Be Careful! (Mk 13:14-23)

Topic 5: The Lord's Return (Mk 13:24-31)

Topic 6: Be Ready! Stay Alert! (Mk 13:32-37)

Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Topic 1 shows various Jewish leaders challenging Jesus in the temple precincts. The questions in this topic are about paying taxes and the resurrection. These leaders come with questions, hoping to trap Him and to get Him to choose sides, but it is their teachings and beliefs that need correcting.

In Topic 2 Jesus teaches on the greatest commandment. The question is: What summed up the teaching of the Old Testament law? Following that, He asks a question of His own to help reveal more about who He is. Since the Messiah is David's son, and David calls the Messiah Lord, in what way is He David's Son?

Topic 3 gives Jesus' observations on two contrasting incidents on the temple grounds. Like the fig tree, the teachers of the law put on a showy display. They put on a look of spirituality, but there is no reality behind it. Then the widow who gives little—but gives everything—is held up as an example of how to please God. Meanwhile the disciples are shown admiring the outer beauty of the temple.

Topic 4 shows us that Jesus is not impressed with the temple's outer beauty as He predicts its total destruction. This leads the disciples to ask when will these things be and what will be the sign of the end. In answer, Jesus gives His Olivet Discourse. In it, He warns them of persecution and how to respond to it. This will be a time of great suffering for them.

In topics 5 and 6 Jesus concludes His teachings on the Olivet Discourse by exhorting them to be ready for His return. Then once more He warns them to be alert; they have been warned and know what to look for.

Summary: Mark again explores the teaching of the Son. He teaches people about the greatest commandment and the greatness of David's Son. He previously taught His rejection of the temple and the nation, but by their questions the disciples show they do not yet understand. Jesus then prepares them by answering their questions on the signs of the end—His return.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

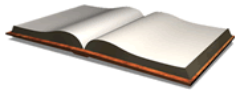
- Explain how Jesus wisely addressed the traps of the religious leaders
- Examine the Messianic prophecies Jesus fulfills in this section of Mark
- Discuss practical ways you can be prepared for the Lord's return

Topic 1: His Teaching

The religious leaders come from everywhere to question Jesus. Every major group has found their way to Him. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, and even official representatives from the Sanhedrin have all questioned Him. Even groups that would normally oppose each other temporarily unite to meet their common foe, Jesus.

The questions they present Jesus with in this topic are on taxes and resurrection (Mk 12:14, 19-23). Both questions are submitted to Jesus by various leaders who have a clever question they hope will trip Him up. How well will their trap work?

On Obligations (Mk 12:13-17)



The leaders were furious, saying, “Lucky for Him that He has this crowd around Him or we would kill Him now!” As they met to discuss their ongoing strategy, the Pharisees and Herodians thought they saw a weakness: What if they could use the crowd and the Roman soldiers that were milling about against Him?

The Pharisees who were anti-tax and the Herodians who were pro-tax disagreed on the issue about paying taxes to the Romans, so both knew this was an inflammatory issue. They agreed to call a temporary truce between themselves and get Jesus to take a stance on whether to pay taxes or not. They thought, “Whichever position He takes, He would alienate the followers of one group and they could use that as an excuse to riot against Him.” If He decided against Rome, they could get the soldiers to notice His sedition; if He sided with Rome, they could get the crowd to rebel and the soldiers would get involved in that, too.

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 12:13–13:37 and write your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to consider are:

- Where do these incidents happen?
- How are all of these events connected? What do they have in common?
- What is Jesus teaching through these events?
- Who best exemplifies what Jesus is looking for?
- What are the disciples impressed by that Jesus is not?
- What is Jesus' main point in the Olivet discourse?

Assignment

- Read Mark 12:13-17 again.
- Read “On Obligations.”

On Obligations (Mk 12:13-17)

Jesus’ next parable is on the denarius, one of which was brought to Him by the Pharisees and Herodians in order to trap Him. They asked Him if it was right to pay taxes to Caesar after offering flattery of His impartiality (Mk 12:13-14).

The questioners are again the Jewish leaders—this time the Pharisees and Herodians. They form an interesting partnership of opposing groups: the Herodians were strongly pro-Roman, and the Pharisees anti-Roman. What they agreed on was their opposition to Jesus. If He supported paying the tax, He would anger the Pharisees and if He favored not paying it, He angered the Herodians. They flattered Him in four ways (Mk 12:14):

1. Called Him truthful
2. Admired Him not courting anyone’s favor
3. Admired Him not showing partiality
4. Complimented His teaching God’s way in truth

They set their trap by asking, “Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” (Mk 12:14). This was a tax the Jews paid yearly to the Romans. The denarius was worth about a day’s wages and it was the only coin accepted in payment. It had Augustus’ portrait on one side and the title Chief Priest on the other. The Jews saw this Roman boast as blasphemy.

However, Jesus saw their hypocrisy and instead of answering their question, He first asks them why they test Him. After looking at the denarius they brought, He makes them admit Caesar’s face and inscription are on the coin and tells them to give Caesar what belongs to him (Mk 12:16-17).

As with the question about divorce (Mk 10:1-12), Jesus answered the heart issue without choosing sides. In His response, Jesus implied that the Jews received benefits from Roman rule, so they should pay taxes to support it; their ultimate loyalty is to God, and they must give Him His due. They must not submit to Caesar in worship, for that belonged only to God.

Jesus’ answer allowed believers to obey government as long as it did not overstep its bounds and demand what only rightly belongs to God. God instituted government and gave it His authority, so the general rule for believers is submission to our government and its laws.

QUESTION 2

Match the story descriptions to the appropriate Scripture reference.

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 12:13-27	The Olivet Discourse
Mark 12:28-37	On Obligations and the Resurrection
Mark 12:38–13:2	On the Greatest Commandment and David’s Son
Mark 13:3-37	On Pretention

QUESTION 3

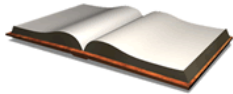
Explain the trap the Pharisees and Herodians set for Jesus when they asked about paying taxes to Rome.

QUESTION 4

What was inscribed on the denarius coin Jesus was given when the Jewish leaders asked about paying taxes to Caesar? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. An image of Augustus Caesar
- B. An image of Zeus
- C. Chief Priest
- D. Hail Caesar

On the Resurrection (Mk 12:18-27)



The Sadducees had watched the plotting of the Pharisees and the Herodians. They saw how well Jesus answered their question on taxes. However, the Sadducees believed they had a better issue. It was one that none of the Pharisees had been able to adequately answer. After all, they knew their education was superior to that of the Pharisees so they were still confident their plot against Jesus would work.

Sadducees don't believe there will be a resurrection. It wasn't something that could be understood by pure intellect. In fact, intellect told them it would cause unanswerable difficulties. They would present one of these to Jesus to show Him that they knew better than to believe in such superstitions. Besides that, it would reveal Jesus as the fraud He surely was.

Assignment

- Read Mark 12:18-27.
- Read "On the Resurrection."

On the Resurrection (Mk 12:18-27)

Now another trick question comes from still another group of Jewish leaders, the Sadducees. These Jews came from the priestly class, were prominent in the Sanhedrin, and high in social status. They did not believe in the resurrection or angels, and they thought they could prove their beliefs to Jesus. They accepted only Moses' teachings—the first five books of our Bible—and believed that resurrection was not taught by him.

The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, addressed Jesus as "teacher." They asked Him about the law Moses gave them regarding a brother marrying his widowed sister-in-law if she had not had any children with his brother (Mk 12:18-21). Their question centered on whose wife she would be in the resurrection and mocked a belief in the resurrection.

Their question referred to the passage that teaches about remarrying within a family according to the Mosaic law. Their blessing was tied to their inheritance in the land; it was important to the Jews to pass down their inheritance within their families. This law helped with that by commanding that if a man's brother died without having a child, the brother was to take her as his wife and provide children for his brother (Deut 25:5-10; Mk 12:19). The first child only was considered the dead brother's son, for inheritance rights.

Jesus answered by saying they erred because they did not know the Scriptures or God's power. He continued saying that marriage does not occur in heaven and that God is not the God of the dead but of the living (Mk 12:22-27).

In the passage above, the following verses use repetition for emphasis:

- Verses 24 and 27 use the original Greek statement “You are badly mistaken.”
- Verses 24 and 26 point to a lack of knowledge of Scripture as the reason for the mistake.
- Verses 25 and 26 teach on the resurrection, supported by Jesus’ main teaching: “They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”

Thus, we see that the clever question they invented was not a valid question because there is not marriage in heaven.

So from the only Scripture they believe is authoritative, Jesus shows that resurrection must be true. His reference to angels is especially ironic because the Sadducees do not believe in them either. This is Jesus’ point: for God to fulfill His promises to Abraham and the other patriarchs, they must be resurrected. Though we will not receive all our promises in this lifetime, we will receive many of them after our resurrection. This encourages us to live faithfully to receive all of God’s promises.

QUESTION 5

In which of the following did the Sadducees believe?

- A. Angels
- B. Life after death
- C. The resurrection
- D. The Torah

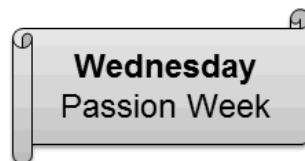
QUESTION 6

The Sadducees were in error because they did not know the Scriptures. Write down in your Life Notebook the areas of Scripture or doctrine that you feel you need to study more. Then write out your study plan. What will you study next to correct that weakness?

Key Points:

- Jesus shows His omniscient understanding in avoiding the traps of the Jewish leaders.
- Taxes should be paid by Jesus’ followers to support the services we receive from the government but believers owe their ultimate allegiance to God.
- Jesus said the Sadducees erred by not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God.

Topic 2: Teaching the Experts in the Law

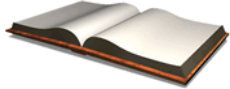


Jesus teaches while still moving through the outer courts of the temple. In the last lesson, He first taught those representing the Sanhedrin on the source of His authority. He then taught the Pharisees and Herodians on taxes and the Sadducees on Levirate marriage and resurrection. Jesus now addresses still another group of Jewish leaders, the experts in the law. Their question is, “What is the greatest

commandment?” After satisfying at least one member of this group, Jesus continues teaching about His person. He asks how is the Messiah the Son of David and points out that David also calls Him his Lord!

Though these teachings seem random, they are all connected. Jesus expands on His teachings to the disciples from when they confessed Him as the Christ (Mk 8:29). From then on He teaches the following: the last will be first, social status in this world is unimportant, and the Son of Man comes to sacrifice His life (Mk 10:45).

On the Greatest Commandment (Mk 12:28-34)



Out of the group of Jewish leaders watching Jesus and listening to His teaching on taxes emerged a prominent leader. He was impressed with the answer Jesus gave, especially from someone without formal rabbinic training. His motive was different than the leaders trying to trap Jesus: he wanted to impress Jesus and to show Him his superior training. Jesus gave a good answer to the previous question; but he was convinced he could get the best of Jesus and get his chance to advance in the sight of his peers.

He had in mind a question the leading rabbis often debated: What are the grounds for divorce? But he heard that Jesus already skillfully answered that one. Another similar question was, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” He was sure of his answer and knowing the answer to this question was like having the key to the kingdom; because it summed up the law of Moses.

Assignment

- Read Mark 12:28-34.
- Read “On the Greatest Commandment.”

On the Greatest Commandment (Mk 12:28-34)

Jesus has just answered the Sadducees’ question about resurrection. Seeing Jesus answered them well, an expert of the law came forward asking which commandment is the most important one (Mk 12:28).

This man’s motive was different than that of the last few questioners. He asked because Jesus had answered the previous question well. The Jewish leaders commonly argued about which of the 613 commandments they identified from the Law were most important. But this teacher errs in his analysis of Jesus’ answer, and Jesus has the final word. The commandment to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is the most important, along with loving your neighbor as yourself (Mk 12:29-31).

Jesus answers by quoting the *shema*, which is Deuteronomy 6:4. Devout Israelites said this twice daily as a confession of faith. There are two perspectives in Jesus’ answer: Man’s total dedication to God is expected because God holds nothing back, including His own dear Son, in His love toward man. Then people should also love their neighbor in the same way they love God.

The expert in the law said His answer is right “for that is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mk 12:32-33). The teacher determines Jesus’ answer as true as if he is Jesus’ superior, after all, he has the superior religious training. When Jesus saw that he had answered thoughtfully, He said that he was not far from the kingdom of God (Mk 12:34). Jesus’ answer shows He has judged the teacher.

“Not far from the kingdom of God” means that the teacher’s answer showed his proper

understanding of the demands of God’s law. That is never enough because the Law does not give life. By saying he was not far, Jesus challenges him to take the final step into the kingdom; placing his faith in Him. Jesus also made it clear that He is this man’s judge, not vice versa. Jesus judges him as not far from the kingdom but not in it.

Did this teacher take the step needed to enter the kingdom? Mark does not say. He leaves it to the reader to decide whether to take that step of faith.

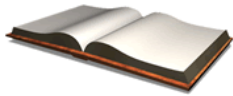
Until now the various leaders of the Jews all came to Jesus and challenged Him with trick questions, expecting to get the best of Him. However, Jesus exposed the questioners as hypocrites, and they no longer dared to question Him. They will now wait for a more opportune time to take Him by force.

QUESTION 7

Why was this expert in the law not far from the kingdom of God?

- A. Because he placed his faith in Jesus as the Messiah
- B. Because he quoted the *shema*
- C. Because he showed proper respect to Jesus
- D. Because he understood the intent of the law

On Being David’s Son (Mk 12:35-37)



But after being asked a question by an expert rabbi, Jesus had a question of His own: How could David call his own son Lord? He asked this question to the delight of the crowd, for they could again see the religious leaders squirming. These leaders had always taught and oppressed them as ones with absolute authority; but now they had met their superior. Jesus had already claimed heaven’s authority for His ministry. As He continued walking through the temple grounds, He had cleverly outwitted the teachers of the law: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians.

Here again He was claiming humanly to be in the Messianic line and more than that, to be more than human—in the very words of David!

Assignment

- Read Mark 12:35-37.
- Read “On Being David’s Son.”

On Being David’s Son (Mk 12:35-37)

Mark continues with scenes of Jesus teaching in the temple courts. These teachings seem only loosely connected, but they do all connect—they illustrate Jesus’ teaching to His disciples about His mission, since the time of Peter’s confession. These teachings echo the first being last and the last first, denying self to follow Jesus, losing your life for Jesus’ sake, and Jesus giving His life as a ransom for many (Mk 8:31-38).

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, He asked why the experts in the law say that the Christ is David’s son. David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, called Him Lord (Mk 12:35-36). The contrast is between what the Jews expected of the Messiah and how He presents Himself. That may be why Mark next shows us Jesus teaching about the pretentious scribes (Mk 12:38). One reason the people do not recognize Jesus is that He does not walk around like they do (Mk 12:38-40).

Then Jesus says, “If David himself calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” So what is the answer to Jesus’ question? As the Jews expected, He is in David’s line, so He is David’s natural son. Since He is both God and man—the Messiah—He is also David’s Lord (Mk 12:37).

In contrast with the Jewish leaders, the common people listened to Jesus with delight. Unfortunately, their reaction is shallow and, as seen in how they desert Him at His trial, they do not put their faith in Him. The leaders’ reaction is so strong against Him—because they cannot counter His teaching—they see their only option is putting Him to death.

QUESTION 8

Please explain the connection between this teaching on the Messiah as David’s son and the previous story on the greatest commandment and the next story on the pretentious teachers of the law.

Key Points:

- Understanding the intent of the law brings us near the kingdom.
- Jesus is David’s Son and David’s Lord but He is unrecognized by most because His deity is shrouded by human flesh.

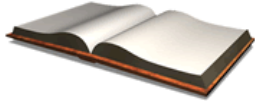
Topic 3: Teaching on Pretention

Jesus taught on the greatest commandment and that He, as the Messiah and the Son of David, is also the Lord. By understanding the demands of the law, Jesus pronounced one teacher of the law as being “not far from the kingdom.” He continues teaching the same lesson He did with the rich young ruler (Mk 10:17-31). He taught him that He is God and now He teaches about the experts’ pretentiousness. They like to walk around in showy clothes and enjoy their high social status. This is the same problem—along with riches—that kept the rich young ruler and the expert in the law in the previous topic from inheriting eternal life.

Next, Jesus shows the humble behavior that truly pleases God. The widow is someone with no social status and an insignificant amount of money. Yet He points to her as someone giving more than any in God’s eyes. This woman’s gift illustrates the lesson He has taught His disciples since their confession. As usual with Mark, the person understanding Jesus’ teaching does not come from within His group of disciples. Rather, the understanding comes from a most unlikely person.



The Jewish Leaders (Mk 12:38-40)



After Jesus taught on the Son of David, the Jewish leaders gathered together. They decided there would be no more efforts to debate with Jesus because He somehow answered skillfully and avoided their traps. However, they also knew there would come a time when the crowds are gone; at that time they would take Him by stealth. Meanwhile, they would watch Him closely and wait for their chance.

One leader suggested a change in their behavior. With Jesus challenging their authority they should demand even more that the people acknowledge them. They must always show their status by wearing their long flowing robes, demanding respect from the people they met, and sitting in the best seats. This would best show everyone that they were still in charge and still the leaders of this people. His suggestion was accepted overwhelmingly by the other leaders with not a single objection.

Assignment

- Read Mark 12:38-40.
- Read “The Jewish Leaders.”

The Jewish Leaders (Mk 12:38-40)

Jesus cautions those listening to Him to watch out for the Jewish leaders who flaunt their wealth and status with robes, elaborate greetings, and taking the best seats in synagogues and at banquets. These leaders show off with long prayers and will receive severe punishment for their actions (Mk 12:38-40).

Contrast how the experts of the law act and the way Jesus acts. These were, at that time, first in this world. According to Jesus, many of these will be last in the next world. They have the greatest social status as opposed to the women and children Jesus taught about. They make long prayers to look spiritual, but do not take care of the widows and orphans who are God’s special concern (Ex 22:22). Instead, they devour their property to enrich themselves.

Their long robes were white robes that went down to their feet. These robes had fringes on them and were worn for their religious importance. They were worn by Levites, law teachers, and priests and were originally worn only on certain religious occasions, but they started wearing them in public to attract attention. They expected the common people to rise to honor them as they walked by.

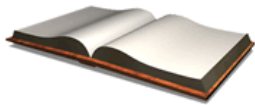
The best seat in the synagogue was on the bench facing the congregation. These seats were reserved for honored guests who visited. The guests’ actions were all designed to show off how spiritual and important they were. These religious leaders were supposed to shepherd God’s people, especially the helpless. Instead they took advantage of them because of their superior education and opportunity.

QUESTION 9

Which of the following does Jesus criticize about the pretentious teachers? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Their religious devotion
- B. What they wear
- C. Their elaborate greetings
- D. Their preference for the best seats
- E. Their long prayers
- F. That they take widows property

The Widow's Mite (Mk 12:41-44)



Again Jesus had thwarted the strategy of the leaders. Just as they started reasserting their authority by wearing their flowing robes and demanding greetings from the common people, Jesus warned the people against these very things.

But now the leaders gathered by the temple treasury. This was one of their favorite places. After all, many of the rich waited for them to appear and the crowds to gather; for the treasury had been built with trumpet-shaped receptacles that made more noise when the gift was generous. In this way they had increased the amount given to the temple treasuries. It not only encouraged the rich to give more, but it shamed the god-forsaken poor with little to give. “Surely,” they thought, “Jesus would approve this system they had created to bring more money into God’s house.”

As they approached many of the rich stepped forward to give their gifts and the trumpets rang out from their coins. All of these gifts were met with approving nods from the leaders. Now, during a pause in the giving a poor widow stepped forward and dared to present her puny gift that hardly caused the trumpet to ring. As usual, they turned away to show their disgust at such a gift. However, they noticed out of the corner of their eyes, that Jesus gathered His disciples together and pointed approvingly at her...

Assignment

- Read Mark 12:41-44.
- Read “The Widow’s Mite.”

The Widow's Mite (Mk 12:41-44)

Mark continues following the general teaching that began with the disciples’ confession (Mk 8:31-38). He illustrates this with the widow’s gift in contrast to the gifts of the rich, and also seems to contrast her with the rich young ruler (Mk 10:17-31). This ruler had everything this world could provide, including riches and social status, yet he was saddened to give those up to inherit eternal life. In stunning contrast, Mark shows us the attitude of this widow as she offered what she had (Mk 12:41-42).

In Herod’s temple, there were thirteen trumpet-shaped vessels for receiving offerings from the people. They were placed in the wall, and people could put their coins in as they walked past. Probably the bigger the coin and the more coins they put in, the more noise the trumpet would make. That attracted peoples’ attention to big contributions. Therefore, many offerings were given hypocritically to attract attention to someone’s generosity.

The coins the widow put in were the smallest coin minted and had the value of 1/64 of a day's wages, which equaled fifteen minutes of work. So when she gave before men, either no one would notice, or she would be despised because she gave so little compared to others. Jesus watched how the unsuspecting widow gave, as well as how those who were wealthier gave. This reminds us that Jesus is always aware of what we do and how we do it, and He rewards those who do well.

After the widow offered her money, Jesus told the disciples that the poor widow put more in the offering than all the others. He told them that the rich give out of their abundance but she gave everything she had to live on (Mk 12:43-44).

This was a discipleship lesson for Jesus' disciples, and He called them together to teach. One wonders what Judas thought—he would soon be one of the ones objecting to the extravagance of a woman, likely Mary, who used expensive ointment to anoint Jesus for His death (Mk 14:1-11). The emphasis of Jesus' lesson on the widow's gift is that she put in everything she had, showing her complete trust and dependence on God. This contrasts with the rich young ruler who had everything but did not trust in God. This lesson was timely for His disciples; they would soon be asked to give everything and continue to acknowledge Jesus, but would fail this test and desert Him (Mk 14:27).

Mark emphasized the importance of children, women, and widows. These groups were lower in social status and the most vulnerable and, hence, of great concern to God. God expects us, as Christian leaders, to protect and care for them. Another theme in this story is total dependence on God. Our trust must not be in riches or social status, but in God who cares for His own. We need to give sacrificially and not desert Him when times are tough.

QUESTION 10

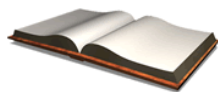
The main discipleship lesson is that the poor widow was praised by Jesus for giving a greater amount of her goods. *True or False?*

QUESTION 11

Match the story description with the theme.

<i>Story</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Paying taxes	Duty based on the image it bears
Resurrection/Levirate marriage	Pretention
The Greatest Commandment	Knowing the power of God
David's son	Dependence on God
Teachers with robes	Higher in rank
The widow's gift	Loving God and man

The Temple (Mk 13:1-2)



As Jesus walked through the temple grounds with His disciples, one thing continually impressed Peter. The temple Herod was building was extremely impressive in every detail. He along with James and John had commented over and over again how Herod thought of every detail and, as was Herod's style, everything was glorified beyond anything done in the known world. They had all

wondered at the fact that Jesus never mentioned its glory. “Surely He has noticed,” they said to themselves and continued waiting for Him to make that observation.

Now that they were leaving the temple grounds and walking out of the temple courts, they looked back on the temple. It shimmered like a snowcapped mountain from the high-grade marble it was built out of. Then the sun hit the burnished metal and their eyes could not even look upon it for the intensity of its brilliance. It seemed like a glorious desert mirage suspended on the holy mountain. “How could Jesus not comment on it?” Peter again thought.

The other disciples were also sharing Peter’s thoughts for suddenly one of them said, “Teacher, look at these tremendous stones and buildings!” Uh-oh! Peter immediately noticed the change to Jesus’ attitude. Jesus had the same expression He did when they didn’t learn the lesson of the loaves, or when Peter forbade Jesus when He predicted His death. For once he was glad he wasn’t the first to express his thoughts. “I wonder what we’ve missed this time,” he thought to himself. Suddenly Jesus told the disciples that these great buildings will crumble.



Assignment

- Read Mark 13:1-2.
- Read “The Temple.”

The Temple (Mk 13:1-2)

Jesus spent much time observing the temple area and its activities. As in the story of the cursing of the temple, this parallels what happened in Ezekiel when God’s glory left the temple for the first time (Ezek 8 and Ezek 10, also recall “Illustrated by Rejecting the Temple” from Lesson 8). God did not just destroy His temple; He first showed His people why the temple must be destroyed—because their lives and practices were evil.

One of the disciples exclaims to Jesus about the stones and buildings as they left the temple courts. Jesus responds by pronouncing that all of this grandeur will be torn down (Mk 13:1-2).

Again, Mark shows that the disciples misunderstand what Jesus does and teaches. He had taught them about the wickedness of the temple from the time He arrived in Jerusalem. He also taught them that He was not impressed with the riches of this world. They perfectly showed their dullness to the concerns and mission of Jesus by concentrating on the outer appearance of the temple. Also, this temple was built by Herod, and Mark has shown the ongoing battle between Herod and his family and Jesus throughout his gospel. His disciples were so fascinated with the pretensions of man—this is the exact opposite of what Jesus taught.

Most of Mark’s original readers lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus in AD 70. That event was a typical prophetic parallel to the tribulation period preceding the second advent of Christ, when He comes in the clouds of glory. This discourse is not properly understood unless the reader sees this twofold fulfillment. When Titus came, he completely destroyed the temple. Verse two was literally fulfilled as the temple was burned to the ground.

This destruction goes back to the covenant promises God made with Israel when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. They were promised these consequences for disobedience (Deut 28–30), but they are also promised good things for obedience.

QUESTION 12

The comment the disciples made about the beautiful stones of the temple showed they finally understood Jesus' mission. *True or False?*

Key Points:

- The Jewish leaders put on a pretentious show of spirituality and status and Jesus uses them as negative examples.
- Jesus uses the widow who gave the mite as a positive example of someone who gave everything to God.
- These discipleship lessons trace back to Jesus' teachings against pride and personal ambition after Peter's confession.

Topic 4: The Beginning of the End

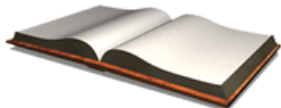
The widow's gift was the type of gift that truly pleases God. Jesus also recently rejected the temple and the way the leaders of the Jews used it. In contrast to His teaching, the disciples are impressed with the outward beauty and extravagance of that temple. Instead of looking at things as their leader did, they looked on things humanly. What would it take to get them to understand?

Jesus immediately replies saying, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left on another. All will be torn down!" (Mk 13:2). One can imagine the disciples' surprised reaction. If Jesus had not made His point clearly before, He certainly did now and the disciples get the message. They then ask the questions that lead Jesus to give His Olivet Discourse (Mk 13:3-4).

To answer the disciples' question, about what sign will tell them these things are about to take place, Jesus first gives examples of false signs. He first describes general signs that will happen throughout the age. Therefore, they are not signs indicating that this prediction is about to take place. First there will be false messiahs, wars, famines, and earthquakes, but these are only the beginning.

From His teachings on general signs He transitions into teaching about how this time will affect His followers personally. He warns them of arrest but also tells them it is this witness before leaders that the Holy Spirit will use to advance the gospel. He warns that those closest to us in earthly relationships will betray us and hate us, even to the point of putting us to death, because we name His name. He calls His followers to perseverance saying, "But the one who endures to the end will be saved" (Mk 13:13).

The Beginning of Birth Pains (Mk 13:3-8)



During this time of Jesus teaching and thrashing of the Jewish leaders, as He walked through the temple grounds, for their teachings and attitudes, Peter had finally again felt like he was on a winning team. Jesus always won these difficult disputes and He did it with obvious ease. Peter had seen the great rabbis dispute these same issues and rarely did one side convincingly win the day. He had been glad he was on Jesus' side and that he did not have the obvious attitude problems these

Jewish leaders did. After all, he was Jesus' disciple and he learned much from Him over the past few years.

Peter realized that Jesus' rebuke had made His concern so clear. The temple itself reflected the empty, but showy, spiritual condition of the Jewish leaders and therefore of the nation itself. But Jesus continued His teaching by saying this temple would be totally destroyed. Peter had to admit that he thought this temple would be worthy to be the kingdom temple. Once again, Peter thought, instead of predicting imminent glory and a kingdom, Jesus was predicting war and destruction.

Assignment

- Read Deuteronomy 30 on God's promised blessing and cursing for Israel.
- Read Mark 13:3-8.
- Read "The Beginning of Birth Pains."

The Beginning of Birth Pains (Mk 13:3-8)

The temple Herod started building, which the disciples' admired, was not even finished. Building began forty-six years previously and it would not finish for another thirty or so years. Then it would only be finished for about five years before its destruction in AD 70. After all the lessons Jesus taught on worldly wealth, He must have been frustrated with the disciples' admiration for Herod's pretentious buildings. He showed His impatience by saying all the great buildings will be torn down (Mk 13:2).

Jesus and His disciples have now walked to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and sat down on its slopes. From there they could probably see Herodian in the distance (Herod's magnificent, humanly-enhanced mountain fortress we discussed in Lesson 8). The comments Jesus made about the temple in the first two verses were to all His disciples, but the rest of this discourse was to James, John, Peter, and Andrew to answer their two questions (Mk 13:3-4). We are again taken into the inner sanctum of discipleship teaching.

First, Jesus answered their second question, about the sign. He will later answer their first question in parable and by teaching what their mindset should be: watch out and stay alert (Mk 13:28-37). Jesus told them first about false signs of His coming.

To the disciples, the destruction of the temple and the coming of the Messiah would occur at the same time. Old Testament prophecies in Daniel predicted that the Messiah would appear to set up His kingdom at about the same time the temple was desolated (Dan 7; 9; 11; 12). These predictions, like many, had a near term and a future fulfillment.

Jesus makes His first call to watch out (Mk 13:5). This exhortation is important in this discourse, and He repeats it several times. Many will come in His name as imposters, as false messiahs; they will fool many and lead them astray. These are not the signs of the end that they should look for or be alarmed about. Jesus tells them that these are just general signs. His main point is that there will be a delay before the end comes. To Mark's original readers, who suffer trials and persecution, this is important to know.

The mention of birth pains was used in the Old Testament of an unbearable judgment from God. In Jeremiah, the Lord asks Israel why men are acting as women in the pain of childbirth in this time of trouble (Jer 30:6-7). This prediction by Jeremiah, of trouble for Jacob, is for the same period of time Jesus refers to: the seven-year period known as the tribulation.

Mark's readers must distinguish times of general tribulation and trial from this unique future time. That period of time is unique, and they will know when they are in it. But they had good reason to be disturbed if they were in the tribulation.

QUESTION 13

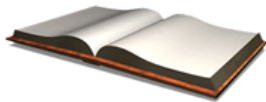
What does Jesus tell His disciples to do first in Mark 13:5?

- A. Pray that they do not fall into temptation.
- B. Follow Him.
- C. Prepare a meal for the multitudes.
- D. Watch out that no one misleads them.

QUESTION 14

Jesus expects His disciples to distinguish the times of general persecution and trial from the unique future time of tribulation also called the time of Jacob's trouble. *True or False?*

The Call for Endurance (Mk 13:9-13)



Jesus' prediction of the temple's destruction struck the disciples hard. This symbolized God's special relationship with the Jews. They knew that Israel was still recovering from the last destruction of the temple over six hundred years ago. A future destruction of the temple was important prophetically and was connected with the Messiah as Israel's deliverer and would happen immediately before Messiah's kingdom was set up.

They needed information: When would this be? What signs will accompany it? Jesus anticipated other information they needed: How will God's witness go forth? What should they look out for? What will happen to them? What are true signs and false signs?

Peter continued listening to Jesus. Besides predicting the destruction of the temple, He was also predicting persecution for the disciples. Instead of predicting universal peace, He was predicting universal warfare—especially against those that name His name. So not only will our leader not receive a glorious kingdom, but His followers—including me—have signed their own death warrant.

Assignment

- Read Mark 13:9-13.
- Read “The Call for Endurance.”

The Call for Endurance (Mk 13:9-13)

Jesus continues His discourse with what are **not** the signs (He will not teach on what the signs are until verse 14). He tells them to watch out for themselves because those in authority will persecute them (Mk 13:9). The warning is for His followers because of the risk of arrest. They will represent Him to the nations and testify before political leaders. Enduring this danger and suffering wisely will enable the gospel to advance (the same way it advanced by persecution in the book of Acts).

The opposition they will receive will not only come from governments, but from those closest to us, including family and friends. This same type of opposition happened to Mark's readers in Rome.

Mark calls for godly endurance of this persecution saying those who endure will be saved (Mk 13:13). Contextually here the saving he speaks of is their physical lives in the tribulation. The Antichrist starts such a severe persecution against the Jews that what Mark 13:14-19 talks about is fleeing for their lives. The suffering is so severe that most will die; in fact the Lord stopped those

days so that some would be saved, because He has chosen them (Mk 13:20). Foreign to the context is any idea that this involves a spiritual salvation from the penalty of sin.

These exhortations to faithfulness apply to us, even though we are not in the great tribulation. Strong persecution can still come on individual believers, as well as corporate groups of believers now.

If you would like to study this topic further, read the following: Peter's speech in Acts 2 and Stephen's speech in Acts 7 are examples of the fulfillment of this promise that the Holy Spirit will give the follower the words to speak (Mk 13:11-12; Acts 7:51-55). In Acts 2:1 Peter was hiding in an upper room with the rest of Jesus' followers, waiting for the Holy Spirit to come, and when the Holy Spirit came and gave him power, he immediately gave his bold speech to the Israelites. The Holy Spirit not only gave him the words, but the boldness. In Stephen's case, even though he spoke what the Holy Spirit gave him to say, this did not lead to his release but rather to his death. Like Stephen, we are not promised temporal deliverance from the world's vengeance either.

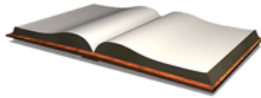
QUESTION 15

The book of Acts records the gospel advancing in the ways Jesus predicts in Mark 13:9-13. *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

Often Christians pray for opportunities to witness. Open your Life Notebook and record why you think the Scripture shows persecutions and arrest are often used by God to promote His testimony.

Be Careful! (Mk 13:14-23)



As Peter continued to listen to Jesus' teaching, Jesus mentioned the abomination of desolation. Peter remembered learning about that future event from the prophecy of Daniel. But Daniel had spoken about the end times and Jeremiah of the time of Jacob's trouble. He had always thought that Jesus' teaching about Jesus death and humiliation was a new teaching. But now for the first time he saw that this time of trouble was predicted by the prophets. "Maybe," he thought, "this time of trouble will be brief and the kingdom will yet appear soon."

Assignment

- Read Mark 13:14-23.
- Read "Be Careful!"

Be Careful! (Mk 13:14-23)

When the abomination of desolation is where it should not be, the Judeans should flee to the mountains (Mk 13:14). The first desecration and, until then, the only one recorded in the temple occurred in 167 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the altar. The next desecration, also in the past for believers today but future to this prophecy, happened when Nero ruled Rome, and the Zealots allowed a false high priest to sacrifice on the altar in AD 67-68.

The Jews have not had any temple worship since it was destroyed in AD 70, but temple worship will be reinstated during the tribulation period (Dan 9:27). The final desecration is predicted for the midpoint of the tribulation period when the Antichrist breaks his peace covenant with Israel, erects

an idol of himself in the rebuilt Jewish temple, and compels people to worship him as God (Dan 9:27). The words “let the reader understand” signal the reader to refer to previous prophecy on the abomination of desolation.

When the temple is desecrated, the people must immediately leave Jerusalem (Mk 13:15-19). So when these events happen, the readers must attempt a quick escape to avoid the approaching severe persecutions that will leave few alive. The people must not delay their departures for any reason. No personal needs, like getting a cloak—a vital personal need in that culture, should cause them delay. A woe is pronounced on any who cannot leave quickly, like those who are pregnant or nursing. Winter would also hinder their departure because of poor weather and swollen streams. The peril of these times cannot be compared to any other period of time; neither to any time in the past nor to any time in the future (Dan 12:1).

Consequently, because of its unique severity, if God would not have mercifully shortened the days, no one would have been left alive (Mk 13:20). During the tribulation period there is no need to look for hidden signs of Christ’s return (Mk 13:21-23). When He returns, the signs will be obvious, but when they see deceivers come, pretending to be Christ, they must be even more alert.

QUESTION 17

For each of the three prophetically important desecrations of the temple, please give the dates and a brief description of how the temple was desecrated at that time.

QUESTION 18

According to Mark 13:20, what did God do to allow some to be saved during the seven year period of tribulation?

- A. He cut short those days.
- B. He poured out His Holy Spirit.
- C. He sealed 144,000 Jews.
- D. He sent out gospel witnesses.

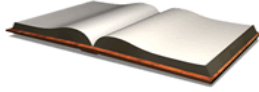
Key Points:

- Jesus expects His disciples to distinguish the times of general persecution and trial from the unique future time of tribulation (also called the time of Jacob’s trouble).
- Jesus predicts the general troubles of His followers will help them testify of Him before kings and other world leaders.
- There are three prophetically important times that the Jewish temple is desecrated and they all point to the desecration by the Antichrist in the tribulation time.

Topic 5: The Lord’s Return (Mk 13:24-31)

When Jesus gives His Olivet Discourse, He gives a prophecy and one of the characteristics of prophecy is that it often has a near term and longer term fulfillment. Many of the signs given so far are true of both the time the temple was destroyed in AD 70 and the future time of tribulation that will still occur when the temple is desecrated by the Antichrist.

Grammatically verse 24 shows that Jesus changes subjects to talk about the future time of tribulation. When He returns, there will be unmistakable accompanying signs in the sky. As the fig tree in leaf signals that summer is near, so seeing these things signals that Jesus is at the door. His followers must live their lives as faithful doorkeepers, watching for our Master to arrive at any hour. Living expectantly has a cleansing effect on our lives.



Now Jesus was teaching about His return. This teaching caught Peter's full attention. This was what he wanted to hear about. Jesus could only be speaking about finally establishing His kingdom in power.

Assignment

- Read Mark 13:24-31.
- Read "The Lord's Return."

The Lord's Return (Mk 13:24-31)

We see the true signs of Christ's return in this passage in the sun, stars, and heavens (Mk 13:24-26).

The phrase "in those days" is often used by Old Testament prophets to refer to the future kingdom of the Messiah (see Jer 3:18; Zech 8:23). The trials of the tribulation affect all creation as well as mankind; when Jesus returns, all of creation is relieved of its burden of sin. Jesus returns at the end of the tribulation and sets up His kingdom. All the suffering and pain, the birth pangs of the tribulation period, give birth to Jesus' millennial kingdom.

In Mark 13:26, Jesus arrives in the clouds of heaven, which represent the very presence of God (Deut 4:11; Job 22:14; Ps 104:3; Dan 7:13). He then gathers all Israel from their dispersion among the nations (Deut 30:3) by sending the angels to gather the elect from the ends of the earth (Mk 13:27).

Jesus tells the parable of the fig tree to illustrate His return. The branches become tender and start to leaf to indicate summer is approaching, just as they will know He is near when these signs occur (Mk 13:28-29). Leading signs, like the leafing of the fig tree predicting summer is near, warn of His soon return. Jesus assures us that His return will happen as promised (Mk 13:30-31).

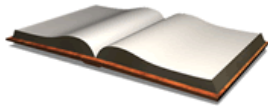
QUESTION 19

Christ's return will be unmistakable. *True or False?*

Key Point:

- There are signs in the heavens that immediately precede the second advent of Christ.

Topic 6: Be Ready! Stay Alert! (Mk 13:32-37)



As Jesus continued, Peter was disappointed. Jesus was making it clear that no one would know the time of His return. Not even Him.

The disciples received much good information from Jesus and He even gave them information they had not asked for. But He had not told them the most important information: What signs accompany His immediate return? In what specific manner will He return? How extensive is His return? How sure is the promise of His return?

Also, what should they do; what attitude should they have as they wait? Instead Jesus' disciples were to always be ready and always be alert! "That would be okay," Peter thought. "As long as the delay isn't long..."

Assignment

- Read Mark 13:32-37.
- Read "Be Ready! Stay Alert!"

Be Ready! Stay Alert! (Mk 13:32-37)

Mark 13:32 is a concise statement of purpose for this entire discourse—only the Father knows when the time will come for Christ to return to earth.

The point in these verses is that once these signs begin, His followers can tell His return is near, but not the exact time (Mk 13:33). It is certain the time is always near. What should we learn from the doorkeeper left in charge while the master is away (Mk 13:34-37)? Like the good doorkeeper, we stay alert and look for our Master. We anticipate His arrival at any hour of the night. Sleeping here is equivalent to living our lives, not expecting His imminent return.

Notice His repeated instruction to be alert. These instructions must be passed on to all of His followers—everyone in verse 37—not just the twelve. The application is to His followers throughout the generations until He returns. The inner three disciples will soon get to practice these exhortations in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:32-42).

The general teaching here is to live expectant of His return and it applies to us. This truth is not an empty doctrine but rather it has a cleansing effect on our lives. We do not want to be ashamed when He returns by not being ready.

QUESTION 20

What are the main duties of the doorkeeper described in this passage? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. To be alert
- B. To be faithful
- C. To look for the master's return
- D. To supervise the master's other servants

Key Points:

- We must anticipate our Lord's arrival at any hour of the night, living our lives by expecting His imminent return.

Topic 7: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 21

In Mark's report of Jesus' tour of the temple grounds, Jesus finds pretentious attitudes everywhere He goes. Think about all aspects of your life and ministry, can you identify areas of pride? When you find examples, record them in your Life Notebook and make them a matter of prayer, especially for ways to eliminate them.

QUESTION 22

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 23

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 9 Self Check

QUESTION 1

In Mark 12:13-17, when Jesus was questioned about paying taxes who would have been offended if He said that Jews should not pay taxes to Rome?

- A. The Herodians
- B. The Jewish people
- C. The Pharisees
- D. The Sadducees

QUESTION 2

The Sadducees did not accept the teachings of Moses. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

The expert in the law who asked Jesus about the greatest commandment understood the intent of the law. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

Jesus criticized the pretentious teachers in Mark 12:38-40 for making long prayers. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Which story is the best contrast to the teachings Jesus gives on the widow's gift?

- A. The Messiah being David's Lord
- B. The rich young ruler
- C. The story on Jesus blessing the children
- D. The teachings on paying taxes

QUESTION 6

In the dialogue that led to the Olivet Discourse, how did the disciples show they misunderstood Jesus' mission?

- A. They asked for the signs that would come before His second advent.
- B. They asked Him when the temple would be destroyed.
- C. They asked if the kingdom was being restored to Israel.
- D. They pointed out the tremendous stones and buildings in the temple.

QUESTION 7

Wars, rumors of war, earthquakes, and famines are signs that will tell Jesus' followers that they are in the seven year period of tribulation. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Jesus warned His followers to avoid arrest in any possible way for that would damage their opportunities to testify of Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

According to Mark 13:20, what did God do to allow some to be saved during the seven year period of tribulation?

- A. He sent out gospel witnesses.
- B. He sealed 144,000 Jews.
- C. He poured out His Holy Spirit.
- D. He cut short those days.

QUESTION 10

What command is repeated several times throughout the Olivet Discourse for disciples to follow?

- A. Be alert!
- B. Endure to the end!
- C. Pray at all times!
- D. Testify of me!

Unit 3 Exam

QUESTION 1

The unifying factor in every encounter Mark reports in chapters 9 and 10 is a lesson on what?

- A. A miracle
- B. Childlike faith
- C. Humility
- D. Loving one another

QUESTION 2

After Jesus predicted His death for the second time in Mark 9:33-37, what did the disciples argue about?

- A. Who among them was the greatest
- B. Which of them was like a child
- C. Whether Elijah would come first
- D. When Jesus would establish the kingdom

QUESTION 3

Why did Jesus use a child as an example to the disciples?

- A. The child represented the kingdom
- B. The child represented low social status
- C. The child represented innocence
- D. The child represented childlike faith

QUESTION 4

Who is the example of someone with high social status in the story of John trying to stop the man casting out demons in Jesus' name in Mark 9:38-41?

- A. Jesus
- B. The disciple John
- C. The man casting out demons
- D. The possessed man

QUESTION 5

Salt is sometimes used as a purifying agent in Scripture. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

After the disciples hear Jesus' teaching on divorce, they conclude that it is better not to marry. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

Jesus declines to offer additional rewards for His followers because of all they have received by simply believing in Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

What did Bartimaeus give up to show He was fully trusting Jesus to meet all his needs?

- A. His property
- B. His family
- C. His cloak
- D. He gave all his money to the poor

QUESTION 9

Mark consistently pictures Jerusalem as hostile to Jesus and His followers. *True or False?*

QUESTION 10

What event did Mark use to show that Jesus was controlling the events of His triumphal entry?

- A. Jesus' determination to get to Jerusalem
- B. Jesus' relationship to the temple
- C. The crowd's reaction to His entry
- D. The way He obtained the services of the colt

QUESTION 11

The sandwich structure, with the story of Jesus in the temple told within the story of the fig tree, would suggest that Jesus meant to cleanse the temple. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

The references, by Jesus and Jeremiah, to Israel using the temple as a den of robbers suggests that they were doing something wicked and then using the temple as a what?

- A. Marketplace
- B. Hideout
- C. Bank
- D. Animal shelter

QUESTION 13

The Jewish leaders believed John the Baptist was a true prophet of God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

When Jesus answered the question about His authority with another question the leaders understood that Jesus claimed heaven's authority for His deeds. *True or False?*

QUESTION 15

In the parable of the tenants, which of the following plays the role of the owner of the vineyard?

- A. God
- B. Israel
- C. The Jewish leaders
- D. The slaves

QUESTION 16

The Jewish leaders understood that Jesus was speaking about them when He told the parable of the tenants. *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

In Mark 12:13-17 when Jesus was questioned about paying taxes, who would have been offended if He said that Jews should pay taxes to Rome?

- A. The Herodians
- B. The Jewish people
- C. The Pharisees
- D. The Sadducees

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- C. The rich young ruler
- D. The Messiah being David's Lord

QUESTION 22

In the dialogue that led to the Olivet Discourse, how did the disciples show they did misunderstand Jesus' mission?

- A. They pointed out the tremendous stones and buildings in the temple.
- B. They asked if the kingdom was being restored to Israel.
- C. They asked Him when the temple would be destroyed.
- D. They asked for the signs that would come before His second advent.

QUESTION 23

Wars, rumors of war, earthquakes, and famines are all sure signs that will tell Jesus' followers that they are in the seven year period of tribulation. *True or False?*

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Jesus warned His followers to avoid arrest in any possible way for that would damage their opportunities to testify of Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 25

What command is repeated several times throughout the Olivet Discourse for disciples to follow?

- A. Testify of me!
- B. Pray at all times!
- C. Endure to the end!
- D. Be ready!

Lesson 9 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 12:13-27	On Obligations and the Resurrection
Mark 12:28-37	On the Greatest Commandment and David's Son
Mark 12:38-13:2	On Pretention
Mark 13:3-37	The Olivet Discourse

QUESTION 3: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

If Jesus supports paying the tax, the Pharisees will be angry because He supports Roman occupation; if He does not support it, the Herodians will be angry because He does not support Rome

QUESTION 4

- A. An image of Augustus Caesar
- C. Chief Priest

[Jesus used the image of Caesar to teach them to pay their obligations to Caesar and God. The Jews saw the words "Chief Priest" as a blasphemous claim though Jesus does not mention it.]

QUESTION 5

- D. The Torah [Jesus said they erred because they did not know the Scriptures or the power of God.]

QUESTION 6: *Your answer*

QUESTION 7

- D. Because he understood the intent of the law [The teacher's answer showed his proper understanding of the demands of God's law. By saying he was not far, Jesus challenges him to take the final step into the kingdom; placing his faith in Him.]

QUESTION 8: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Mark continues with scenes of Jesus teaching in the temple courts. While all around Him is the showy temple and the pretention of the Jewish leaders, the real Messiah is unrecognized by most because He is a humble man whose deity is shrouded by human flesh.

QUESTION 9

- B. What they wear
- C. Their elaborate greetings
- D. Their preference for the best seats
- E. Their long prayers
- F. That they take widows property

[These religious leaders were supposed to shepherd God's people, especially the helpless. But they took advantage of them because of their superior education and opportunity.]

QUESTION 10: False

QUESTION 11

<i>Story</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Paying taxes	Duty based on the image it bears
Resurrection/Levirate marriage	Knowing the power of God
The Greatest Commandment	Loving God and man
David's son	Higher in rank
Teachers with robes	Pretention
The widow's gift	Dependence on God

QUESTION 12: False [Since they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus taught that He has rejected this showy temple and that riches in this world mean nothing to God. Again they completely misunderstand His teachings, this time about the temple.]

QUESTION 13

- D. Watch out that no one misleads them.

QUESTION 14: True [Mark's readers must distinguish times of general tribulation and trial from this unique future time. That period of time is unique, and they will know when they are in it.]

QUESTION 15: True [Peter's speech in Acts 2 and Stephen's speech in Acts 7 are examples of the fulfillment of this promise that the Holy Spirit will give the follower the words to speak (Mk 13:11-12; Acts 7:51-55).]

QUESTION 16: *Your answer*

QUESTION 17: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) First desecration occurred in 167 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the altar. (2) The second desecration happened when Nero ruled Rome, and the Zealots allowed a false high priest to sacrifice on the altar in AD 67-68. (3) The final desecration is predicted for the midpoint of the tribulation period when the Antichrist erects an idol of himself in the rebuilt Jewish temple, and compels people to worship him as God (Dan 9:27).

QUESTION 18

A. He cut short those days. [This helps to show that this is not referring to a spiritual salvation from the penalty of sin but rather a saving of their physical lives. Mark calls for the believer of this time to endure to the end.]

QUESTION 19: True

QUESTION 20

A. To be alert

C. To look for the master's return

[Like the good doorkeeper, we stay alert and look for our Master. We anticipate His arrival at any hour of the night. Sleeping here is equivalent to living our lives not expecting His imminent return.]

QUESTION 21: *Your answer*

QUESTION 22: *Your answer*

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

Lesson 9 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

A. The Herodians

QUESTION 2: False

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5

B. The rich young ruler

QUESTION 6

D. They pointed out the tremendous stones and buildings in the temple.

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9

D. He cut short those days.

QUESTION 10

A. Be alert!

Unit 3 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1

C. Humility

QUESTION 2

A. Who among them was the greatest

QUESTION 3

B. The child represented low social status

QUESTION 4

B. The disciple John

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8

C. His cloak

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10

D. The way He obtained the services of the colt

QUESTION 11: False

QUESTION 12

B. Hideout

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14: True

QUESTION 15

A. God

QUESTION 16: True

QUESTION 17

C. The Pharisees

QUESTION 18: False

QUESTION 19: True

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21

C. The rich young ruler

QUESTION 22

A. They pointed out the tremendous stones and buildings in the temple.

QUESTION 23: False

QUESTION 24: False

QUESTION 25

D. Be ready!

Unit 4: Jesus' Mission Accomplished

Unit Introduction

The lessons in the first two units of Mark focused on teaching who Jesus is. Near the end of Unit 2, the focus changed to teach on what His mission is. Unit 3 focused on the humility the disciples needed to accomplish Jesus' mission. In Unit 4 Mark shows that Jesus accomplishes His mission through His death and resurrection.

Lesson 10 anticipates the Lord's death and the preparations made for it. Mary, through her anointing, shows she better understands Jesus' mission and death than His disciples. Jesus then shares His passion with His disciples at the Last Supper and in the garden of Gethsemane where He is betrayed and arrested.

Lesson 11 describes the culmination of Jesus' work. After His betrayal by one of His own, the disciples all desert Him at His arrest, just as He predicted. He is brought to trial before the Jewish authorities and they bring Him before the Roman court that sentences Him to death on a cross.

Lesson 12 reveals Jesus as the Son of God shown in the way He died. First He is mocked and crucified while most of the bystanders continue misunderstanding Him. A Roman soldier standing by recognizes, by the way He died, that He was the Son of God. The veil of the temple is rent at Jesus' death and God has fulfilled the longing of Isaiah to "tear apart the sky and come down" (Isa 64:1). Most importantly, Jesus has risen! So what will His followers do with that news? Will they cower in fear of persecution, or boldly proclaim the good news?

Unit 4 Outline

Lesson 10: Preparing for His Death (Mk 14:1-42)

Lesson 11: Drinking His Cup (Mk 14:43-15:23)

Lesson 12: Truly the Son of God (Mk 15:24-16:20)

Lesson 10: Preparing for His Death (Mk 14:1-42)

Lesson Introduction

Three feasts are pictured in Mark to teach Jesus' followers to feed on Him. They are the feeding of the five thousand, the feeding of the four thousand, and here where He celebrates the Lord's Supper with His disciples (Mk 14:22-24). This feeding on Jesus was not literal or physical, but Jesus is our sustenance and He as the one loaf is sufficient to meet our needs (Mk 8:14-21). Like the fourth cup of wine at Passover symbolized the consummation of redemption in the kingdom, He and His followers will someday enjoy another glorious feast at the beginning of the kingdom (Mk 14:25).



Judas is the shocking contrast to this victorious fellowship based on sharing a meal. The betrayer is shown dipping with Jesus in the bowl as Jesus predicts His betrayal (Mk 14:20).

The disciples' spiritual sluggishness is shown at the three times Jesus finds them sleeping, even after warning them of imminent spiritual danger (Mk 13:30, 34, 38). This assembly of sleeping sheep scatter as God strikes the Shepherd (Mk 14:27, Mk 14:50-52). The Shepherd willingly accepts the cup, though even contemplating it grieves Him to the point of death (Mk 14:34; 14: 41-42).

Peter denies Jesus because He now seems to be last, instead of first (Mk 10:31). Throughout this lesson Jesus is deserted by His companions, treated as a criminal by His enemies, mocked as a false king, and accused of blasphemy (Mk 14:1, 48, 55, 64-65; 15:4, 8-9, 15-20). In His testimony before the Sanhedrin, Jesus tells the judge that someday the last will be first and come in God's clouds to judge the first (Mk 14:62).

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Beloved and Betrayed

Discipleship Betrayal (Mk 14:1-2, 10-11)

Discipleship Understanding (Mk 14:3-9)

Topic 2: The Passover Lamb

The Passover Supper (Mk 14:12-21)

The Lord's Supper (Mk 14:22-26)

Topic 3: The Disciples Scattered (Mk 14:27-31)

Topic 4: Accepting God's Cup (Mk 14:32-42)

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

In Topic 1 Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus with costly perfume. This shows she understands His mission and she is shown in stark contrast with His disciples. They rebuke her for wasting money; for Judas this waste is intolerable. He will now seek out the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus into their hands and obtain his thirty precious pieces of silver.

Topic 2 continues with Jesus arranging to eat the Lord's Supper with His disciples. While they share this intimate meal, meant to be observed by His followers in memorial throughout this age, Jesus reveals that one of the twelve eating with Him will betray Him.

Topic 3 shows the covenant Jesus makes with His followers. He soon will give His body, represented by the bread, for their sustenance. This covenant is made in His blood, represented by the wine, which will soon be shed for them. The sole human condition for entering this covenant is faith in Christ's finished work.

In Topic 4 Jesus predicts, as Zechariah did, that the Shepherd will be struck and the sheep scattered. Again misunderstanding, Peter insists he will stand for Jesus, but Jesus predicts his denial. Then Jesus takes His most trusted disciples with Him as He goes to pray and struggle with His cup in Gethsemane. Despite His exhortation to stay alert, He returns three times to find His disciples sleeping.

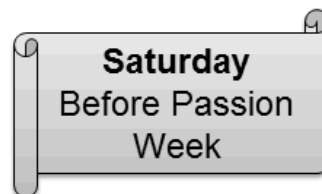
Summary: In this lesson, Mark explores the preparations for Jesus' death. Jesus' cup is quickly approaching, when the Father will lay on Him the burden of the sins of the world. He bears this burden alone as none of His followers understand, none can comfort Him, and all will scatter.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Discuss the events leading up to Jesus' arrest and God's hand in them
- Explain why Judas' betrayal is shocking to the disciples
- Identify ways you can follow Jesus' example of shepherding people even when He was struggling

Topic 1: Beloved and Betrayed

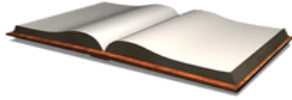


Time note: For this story of Mary's anointing, Mark goes back in time to the Saturday before Passion Week, but the story of Judas with the Jewish leaders takes place two days before His crucifixion.

Jesus has just given the Olivet discourse, instructing the disciples to "stay alert" and "keep watch" lest the Master return and find them asleep. In each event, the shadow of the cross looms larger and larger, but the disciples seem unaware of His imminent death. Though He told them many times He will soon be delivered up to death, knowing that information has not changed how they act. They worry about Mary's waste instead of seeing her precious gift.

With the failures of the disciples prominent, who is held up as the example for us from this story? And what leads Judas to betray Jesus?

Discipleship Betrayal (Mk 14:1-2, 10-11)



The Jewish leaders had reacted to the thrashing they received from confronting Jesus on the temple grounds on Monday and Tuesday. Yes, they had lost, but they still had their earthly authority and He would pay for His insolence. “We will just bide our time,” they said amongst themselves. “We can’t arrest Him until the crowds are gone or there will be a riot.”

Now fate had placed opportunity in their hands. Apparently they weren’t the only ones Jesus had offended. One of his own disciples was now here among them offering to betray Him into their hands. Apparently the only thing he wanted was money and they had plenty of that from the temple receipts. As the leaders discussed the price amongst themselves, one of them said, “Let’s offer him the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver.” Still chuckling from the irony and insult this price carried with it, they concluded their bargain with Jesus’ wayward disciple.

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 14:1-42 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- Why does Mary anoint Jesus?
- Why do the disciples get angry with Mary?
- What is the meaning of the Last Supper?
- Why don’t the disciples support Jesus on the road to His death?
- What commands do the disciples forget from the Olivet Discourse?

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:1-2, 10-11 again.
- Read “Discipleship Betrayal.”

Discipleship Betrayal (Mk 14:1-2, 10-11)

The stories of Mary anointing Jesus and Judas betraying Jesus are told in the familiar sandwich structure. The emphasis in this structure is the preparation for Jesus’ death. A contrast also exists between the hatred the Jewish leaders and Judas have for Jesus, and the love Mary has for Jesus.

The Jewish leaders meet to discuss what to do about Jesus. “Two days before the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, the chief priests and the experts in the law tried to find a way to arrest Him by stealth and kill him. For they said, ‘Not during the feast, so there won’t be a riot among the people’” (Mk 14:1-2).

Passover celebrates the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and of Israel’s firstborn sons from death. Deliverance came by the blood of the sacrificial lamb sprinkled on the doorposts. Jesus fulfilled the symbolism of this feast, and humanity was reconciled to God. Those who believe in Him are delivered from this sinful world by God’s firstborn Son, by the blood of the Lamb of God, shed for many.

The words used indicate the Jewish leaders were always seeking His arrest. This theme started with Jesus’ first contact with the Jewish leaders. When He first healed by pronouncing the person’s sins forgiven, the leaders called His words blasphemy (Mk 2:7). In the next chapter, they plot how to assassinate Him (Mk 3:6). Several other times they would have killed Him but, like here, they did

not dare when the crowd is present (Mk 12:12). Though their plans have, until now, always been frustrated, through this incident and the person of Judas they finally find their opportunity.

At this time Mark inserts the story of Mary anointing Jesus, but we will come back later and look at her story.

Mark gives Judas' motive in betraying Jesus saying that some who were there objected to Mary's waste of the expensive ointment on Jesus (Mk 14:4-5). Apparently, the objectors were Jesus' own disciples. When Jesus defended Mary's extravagant act of love and asked the disciples to leave her alone, Judas apparently felt cheated and decided to betray Jesus for money (Mk 14:10-11).

The stage is set: the leaders looked for a way to kill Jesus and now Judas looks for his opportunity to betray Him. When the leaders add money to the equation, Judas seals the agreement (Mk 14:1; 10-11). Just like the rich young ruler, Judas suffers spiritual destruction because he loves money and desires the goods of this world. Mark believes this is a danger for us also.

As part of Mark's writing style, this story about dark and devious subjects is set in great contrast to the beauty of the next story—Mary anointing Jesus for burial.

QUESTION 2

Read Mark 14:1-42 and then match the section titles to the corresponding Scripture reference.

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 14:1-2; 14:10-11	Discipleship Understanding
Mark 14:3-9	Passover Supper
Mark 14:12-21	The Disciples Scattered
Mark 14:22-26	The Disciples Sleeping
Mark 14:27-31	The Lord's Supper
Mark 14:32-42	Discipleship Betrayal

QUESTION 3

What is the topic of both stories told in Mark 14:1-11?

- A. Jesus betrayed by one of His own
- B. Preparations for Jesus' death
- C. The dangers of the love of money
- D. The disciples disapprove of Jesus' ministry

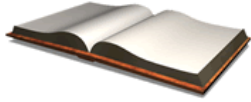
QUESTION 4

According to Mark, the root problem that led Judas to seek to betray Jesus was _____.

QUESTION 5

As the Jewish leaders lay out their plans for how and when they will kill Jesus they are able to carry them out as planned. *True or False?*

Discipleship Understanding (Mk 14:3-9)



After receiving Jesus' teaching on the Olivet Discourse, Peter again felt in tune with Jesus' mission. Jesus had corrected the disciples' misunderstanding about the showy temple and Peter knew he was on the inside as one of Jesus' close followers because he received teaching that outsiders did not.

He knew Jesus had dangerous enemies, but He had managed to avoid them so far. And He was now dining in Bethany at the house of friends with no enemies in sight. Maybe he could truly concentrate on what was important now.

But suddenly Mary took an alabaster jar of expensive ointment and poured it over Jesus' head. Without thinking Peter exclaimed, "What a waste!" while totally surprised the other disciples answered the same way almost in unison. They knew this ointment was worth a year's salary. Jesus had always taught them to care for the poor and they made regular contributions to that cause from their limited treasury. Just think how much they could help those same poor if that jar had been sold instead of wasting it in a one-time use for anointing. They knew Jesus had just taught against making a spectacle of one's self and He never sought attention. Surely He wouldn't approve of this act. They felt they knew Him well.

Besides, her action admitted defeat; Jesus had predicted His death but so far He had avoided the leader's traps. Surely Jesus would support their objections to her action, wouldn't He?

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:3-9.
- Read "Discipleship Understanding."

Discipleship Understanding (Mk 14:3-9)

Mark says that a woman came to anoint Jesus with expensive oil while He was at Simon the leper's house (Mk 14:3). The Bible shows that Mary consistently understands Jesus' person and mission. Out of her love and trust for Him, she does what He approves. She is the prime example of one who pleases God because of her great relationship with Him.

Mary's anointing is the most beautiful action taken by anyone in service to Jesus. Her actions show, in contrast with the disciples, that she is fully devoted to Him. While the disciples do not show any signs of accepting Jesus' predictions of His death, Mary responds in faith. While we do not know for sure that Mary anointed Jesus with the understanding that she is preparing Him for burial, Jesus connects her actions and His burial (Mk 14:3, 8).

Not all are pleased. The disciples speak angrily to her for wasting expensive ointment that, if sold, could benefit the poor (Mk 14:4-5). Mark notes the expense of the ointment, as well as her devotion and faith. Her act contrasts with the plots of Jesus' enemies. The ointment Mary used was worth almost a year's wages for a laborer. The three hundred coins would buy more than enough food to feed the five thousand (Mk 6:37), and this amount contrasts with the money Judas receives for betraying Jesus (Mk 14:11).

The disciples expressed their concern for the poor, but Deuteronomy 15:4-5 suggests there would be no poor in Israel if they obeyed God while in their land. The presence of the poor rebukes the Jewish nation and its leadership.

Mary does what she can in the same way the widow who gave the small offering did what she could. This is a discipleship lesson that must not be missed. She did not necessarily do everything she could; rather, she did one loving act with a special gift. Like the widow, Mary could not have

imagined her gift would be an example to all followers for all time. This story of her anointing is part of the gospel message told every time this gospel is read. The fulfillment of this prediction is another example of Jesus' foreknowledge.

Jesus, being truly human, was greatly encouraged by Mary's gift. In contrast, His disciples soon deserted Him, and one who dipped with Him in His bowl would soon betray Him (Mk 14:17-31). He feels it even now when we fall away. May He grant us the strength to follow Mary's loving example.

QUESTION 6

According to Deuteronomy 15:4-5, when Jesus told the disciples there would always be poor among them, they should have taken this statement as a rebuke from God. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

Mary's anointing of Jesus shows her ignorance of who He truly is. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Which of the following is a key discipleship lesson in Mark 14:3-9?

- A. Abiding in Christ
- B. Doing what we can
- C. Fearing God more than man
- D. Following Jesus on the way

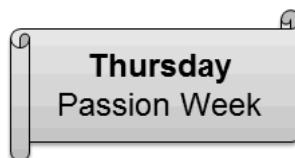
QUESTION 9

In Mark 14:3-9 Jesus praised Mary for doing what she could when she anointed Him for His death. Is there an opportunity that you have to do what you can for Jesus' mission? If so, please record what that is in your Life Notebook. Then be sure to follow through on your opportunity.

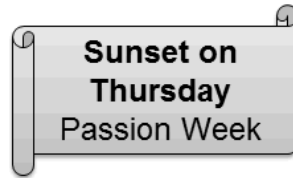
Key Points:

- The sandwich stories of Mary anointing Jesus and Judas betraying Him both set the stage for Jesus' death.
- As the Jewish leaders make their plans to kill Jesus God's sovereign hand is seen working in the background altering those same plans.
- Mary is pictured favorably in every story mentioning her and she is shown as an ideal disciple doing what she can to prepare Jesus for His death.

Topic 2: The Passover Lamb



Time note: At this point in Mark time slows down. Mark starts not only detailing events by days, as he did at the beginning of Passion Week. But now he breaks the days down into parts.

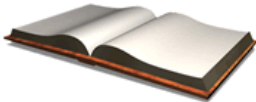


For the reader, the shadow of the cross continues darkening these stories, growing larger and more ominous all the time. Though it will take Jesus' disciples by surprise, it will not take Jesus by surprise; He is aware of all circumstances before they happen. He knows where people will be, He knows how to obtain the room for the Passover and He controls everything. Therefore He is both a victim and a willing sacrifice.

As the shadows loom, Jesus reveals a scandal: one of His own disciples, who eats in feigned fellowship with all, will soon betray Him to those who seek His death. But now, in celebrating the Last Supper, Jesus reinterprets the Passover elements and gives His followers a memorial service. He also explains the new covenant in His blood—a covenant offered to all by faith in Him. Eating a meal together in that culture was the ultimate display of fellowship. This was even truer with regard to the Passover meal. And for these disciples even more so, for they celebrated it now at the focal point of history with the Messiah!

The Lord's Supper is celebrated with our family who are all redeemed by His blood. It recalls Him giving His body and blood, represented by the bread and wine, in payment for our sins. This memorial not only looks back to the Passover, but it also looks forward to the consummation of our redemption when Jesus establishes His kingdom on earth. Then, we who enter the new covenant will also celebrate this meal with our Lord.

The Passover Supper (Mk 14:12-21)



After Mary's anointing, and Jesus' rebukes the disciples for rebuking her, Peter no longer feels confident that he understood Jesus' teaching and mission. It was an elusive lesson and one he continued pursuing, but Jesus constantly surprised him in judging what was correct under the circumstances. Though he could not take comfort in understanding their mission, he repeatedly saw that Jesus somehow controlled all situations. As it was evident when they obtained the colt for the triumphal entry, so it was evident again with how He had them obtain the room for the Passover meal.

Another comfort for Peter was that their enemies were still absent. They were all friends here and sharing a fellowship meal that really was a pledge of friendship with everyone present. One thing you never worried about in oriental culture was a traitor at the dinner table. But Jesus had an announcement that would shake his confidence again...

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:12-21.
- Read "The Passover Supper."

The Passover Supper (Mk 14:12-21)

The time has now come for the disciples to make preparations for Jesus to eat the Passover (Mk

14:12). He sent two disciples into the city to meet a man carrying a jar of water (Mk 14:13-15). That man would have a room prepared for them. Note: A man carrying a pitcher of water stood out because culturally this was a woman's job.

This story has similarities with how Jesus obtained the colt for His triumphal entry (Mk 11:1-11). Just as He knew in advance the events the disciples would meet in obtaining the colt, He knew them in obtaining the upper room. He either knew the events in advance or controlled them and made them happen. He controlled His fate. These arrangements were covert for privacy reasons because of His popularity, and for security because some sought His life. An interesting tradition says this upper room was in Mark's parents' house.

Modern enemies of Jesus and His work suggest He did not mean to die in Jerusalem. They suggest He was taken by surprise and was not purposely and voluntarily giving His life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45). The Scripture record shows He voluntarily gave His life, that He knew events in advance, and that He knew He would give His life as a ransom for sin. He knew He was going to Jerusalem to be killed; yet to the amazement of the disciples, went anyway (Mk 10:33-35).

While eating, Jesus announced that one who shared the meal would betray him (Mk 14:18). This was a devastating revelation, but it fulfilled a prediction in Psalm 41:9 of a close friend, who shared meals with him, turning against him. The disciples were horrified. Eating meals with someone in that culture showed full fellowship, and this action was like shooting an unarmed man under a flag of truce. The disciples reclining at the table added to the sense of ease and to the contrast Jesus drew between the friendship suggested in eating together and the betrayal by one of His own. Jesus revealed a deadly snake—and worse—he was in the midst of them.

They were distressed, and one by one said to him, "Surely not I?" (Mk 14:19). Each wanted this assurance from Jesus. The question in the Greek expects a negative answer to their terrified question.

Jesus then says it would be better to never have been born than betray the Christ (Mk 14:21). As Mary's name is favorably remembered throughout history, Judas' name is remembered as well, but it is remembered with horror.

Queen Esther had also faced a crossroads decision involving this principle. Would she place herself in danger to save her people? Maybe God had raised her as queen to bring deliverance for His people, as Mordecai suggests in Esther 4:14.

We face similar, though usually smaller, choices all the time. Will we stand for God daily and do His will or be shortsighted and look to temporal values in living our lives? Will His deliverance come through us or will He need to raise up someone else?

QUESTION 10

In making preparations for the Last Supper, why was Jesus avoiding attention?

QUESTION 11

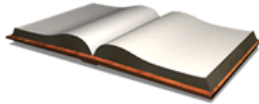
Explain why the Scripture teaches that Jesus controlled His fate and was not taken by surprise as some suggest.

QUESTION 12

What fact does Mark use to show that Judas' betrayal was such a shocking act?

- A. Jesus shared bread with Judas.
- B. Jesus taught Judas.
- C. Jesus had given Judas warnings.
- D. Judas saw miracles in vain.

The Lord's Supper (Mk 14:22-26)



“Betrayal!” The word echoed in Peter’s mind, haunting him. Jesus had said one of them would betray Him. “How could that be,” he wondered. Even worse, momentarily he wondered, “Could it be me?” But Peter figured that Jesus knew who it was...and he saw John across the table was sitting leaning on Jesus’ bosom. With a wave of his hand Peter motioned to John to ask Jesus who it was. When John simply tilted his head back and asked Jesus, He dipped a piece of bread and gave it to Judas. “But surely Jesus didn’t mean Judas,” Peter thought. “He probably just doesn’t want to say,” Peter thought as Judas left the room and went out into the night.

Peter could feel the surrounding intrigue. Jesus had not clearly predicted His death lately—at least by His words. But by illustration and in all the comments and events happening he could tell Jesus still expected to die. The disciples now knew there was a traitor among them and some knew his name. But now Jesus brought the certainty of His death even nearer to their consciousness. They could hardly believe it. Celebrating the Passover was the highlight of the year for most Jews, but Jesus turned that Passover into a memorial service commemorating His death. Yet Peter knew this meal wasn’t really an end, rather it pointed to the supper’s fulfillment in a future day that the Messiah will share with His followers.

Assignment

- Read Psalm 41 for the prediction of betrayal.
- Read Mark 14:22-26.
- Read “The Lord’s Supper.”

The Lord's Supper (Mk 14:22-26)

Mark reports that Jesus broke and blessed the bread before offering it to His disciples (Mk 14:22). Bread is discussed many times in Mark. To the Jews, bread was what God supplied, through Moses, in manna for the children of Israel while they wandered for forty years in the wilderness (Ex 16:35). This manna-miracle was memorable for them. After Jesus fed the five thousand (Mk 6:30-44), people looked to Him for physical needs, but instead He provides the eternal life that they should seek. Even the disciples were slow to learn about this bread as described in Mark 8:14-21. Their minds were on physical bread, but Jesus was referring to Himself, as their spiritual bread.

Jesus taught the same truth again by inaugurating the Lord's Supper. He gave His body so we have eternal life by believing in Him. We do this remembering how He became our Passover. He cleansed us to lead a life of purity and deliverance from sin.

As the bread represented His body, but was not His actual body, so the wine represents His blood, but is not His actual blood (Mk 14:23-24). The reference to the blood of the covenant brought their

minds back, as the Passover celebration did, to the initiation of the old covenant (see Ex 24:7-8).

Jesus showed that this new covenant was also being initiated by blood—His blood—to secure eternal redemption for believers (see Jer 31:31-34).

The blessing the Jews customarily asked at this time in the meal was for God to make them worthy of the Messiah and His coming kingdom. Jesus interpreted the bread as the element that leads to partaking of Him (eternal life) by faith. He now interprets the element of the wine as representing the benefits of the covenant, inaugurated through His blood, also appropriated by faith. This covenant is received by faith. All who believe in Jesus—the sole condition for eternal life—have entered this new covenant relationship with God. The church receives the spiritual benefits of this new covenant in His blood at this time, but Israel alone receives the physical promises of being planted back in their land with a Davidic king physically ruling over them, and this is fulfilled in the kingdom (Jer 31:31-34).

After this cup of wine, Jesus says that He will not drink it again until the kingdom of God (Mk 14:25). As usual, when Jesus spoke of His coming death, He looks beyond it to the time of His resurrection and to His kingdom reign.

After completing the meal and singing a hymn, Jesus and the disciples went to the Mount of Olives (Mk 14:26). So the disciples leave with Jesus as they sing another Hallel psalm on the way to the Mount. This Mount is mentioned many times by Mark because of its importance in fulfilling future prophecy. Jesus gave the Olivet discourse and returns at His second advent all at the Mount of Olives:

Then the Lord will go to battle and fight against those nations, just as he fought battles in ancient days. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which lies to the east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, leaving a great valley. Half the mountain will move northward and the other half southward... Then the Lord my God will come with all his holy ones with him. On that day there will be no light—the sources of light in the heavens will congeal. It will happen in one day (a day known to the Lord); not in the day or the night, but in the evening there will be light. Moreover, on that day living waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea... The Lord will then be king over all the earth (Zech 14:3-9).

QUESTION 13

Jesus gave His body only for the twelve disciples gathered with Him in the upper room. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

The old covenant was also initiated with the sprinkling of blood. *True or False?*

QUESTION 15

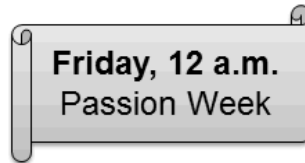
Jesus' ascension from the Mount of Olives fulfilled all known biblical prophecy about this mount. *True or False?*

Key Points:

- Jesus continues controlling the events surrounding His arrest while He stealthily makes preparations for the Supper.

- Judas' betrayal is more shocking because he feigns close fellowship with Jesus by eating a fellowship meal with Him.
- Jesus initiated the new covenant in His blood with His disciples at the Last Supper.

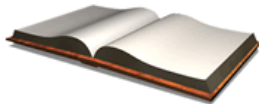
Topic 3: The Disciples Scattered (Mk 14:27-31)



Mark alternates between encouraging and discouraging topics:

- He starts this lesson with the beautiful story of Mary anointing Jesus. But, in response to Mary's action, Judas uses Jesus' approval of Mary's actions as an excuse to betray Jesus.
- Then Jesus and the disciples plan to celebrate the Passover together in fellowship but, at the meal, Jesus reveals that one of His these disciples will betray Him.
- In the last topic, they celebrate their fellowship together and Jesus tells them of the new covenant in His blood, which they enter by faith.

Now Mark tells a discouraging story again. As predicted in the Old Testament, when the Shepherd (the Messiah) is struck, the sheep (the disciples) scatter. Jesus will face His last few hours alive on earth apart from human companionship and comfort. Even worse, Peter will deny Him three times before the night is over.



After sharing the intimate fellowship of the meal Peter was again satisfied that all was as well as could be. Whatever their fate, they were together with their Lord and that is what really mattered. He was there for them and they were there for Him.

But those thoughts were again dashed by Jesus' next statement, "You will all fall away." This struck Peter's heart and he spoke for them all when he said, "Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you." But Jesus' predictions always come true...

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:27-31.
- Read "The Disciples Scattered."

The Disciples Scattered (Mk 14:27-31)

Mark tells another story sandwich style. Jesus predicts the disciples' desertion, and this prediction is soon fulfilled (Mk 14:43-52). This sandwich structure shows that Mark's purpose in his story of Jesus' temptation and prayer in Gethsemane is showing why the disciples deserted Him. This leaves Jesus facing His trial and suffering afterward without human support.

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered'" (Mk 14:27).

Ever since Peter confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the disciples had struggled to understand Jesus' mission (Mk 8:31-38). Now they face the test: Do they understand yet that Jesus must suffer and die? Peter forbade it when Jesus first suggested it and Peter rebuked Him for suggesting it (Mk 8:29-33). How will they respond now?

The disciples still could not imagine Jesus dying and, despite protesting that they were ready to die with Him and share in His cup, they were clearly not ready (Mk 10:38-39; 14:31; 14:36). What about our response to this same question? This decision comes to all His followers. Now is the time to test and fortify ourselves, before we get tested by someone or something else. When under pressure, will we stand for Him or desert Him? Standing cannot be done in our own strength; the disciples tried that and failed. As Jesus taught, warning them about their hardness of heart, so we need to watch out for this sin also.

The disciples' desertion was predicted by Zechariah's prophecy that the flock would scatter (Zech 13:7). Their desertion did not catch Jesus by surprise.

Yet, even if we fail, there is a promise of restoration (Mk 14: 28). This is an important promise in Mark because Mark contrasts this promise with the previous verse predicting the scattering of the sheep. The fulfillment is in Mark 16:7 when the angel in the empty tomb gave the message for the disciples that Jesus was going ahead of them into Galilee. Mark contrasts Galilee with Jerusalem: Bad things happen and bad people are headquartered in Jerusalem, while Galilee is a place of safety and renewal. From Galilee the disciples are restored and given a new commission.

This gives hope to us also. Mark's original readers may have idealized the disciples and thought themselves incapable of living up to their standards, as we might also. If the disciples failed and were restored, some to great ministries, then when we fail we can also be restored. If the disciples were not perfect, we also have hope that Jesus can use us despite occasional failures.

Peter protested to Jesus' prediction of the disciples' scattering and Jesus predicted Peter's three denials in response (Mk 14:29-31). Peter claims greater loyalty than the other disciples, but Jesus tells him it is his failure, not his loyalty, that would be greater. Soon their hardheartedness is revealed in the Garden, just as Jesus shows His faithfulness to God's will.

What happened to them can happen to us. The proper attitude is to serve the risen Savior, for He is the one who died for us. Is it right for us to worry about how important our role is in His service? Concern for ourselves, above others, just invites Satan's temptations. Peter was confident in his flesh and insisted, with the double negative strengthening his boast, that even if the others deny Jesus, he certainly will not. Thus Mark shows that the disciples do not understand.

Self-confidence is not the route to victory over this temptation. What if, instead, Peter had humbled himself or had asked the Lord for the strength to withstand the temptation? Those are attitudes we can take when met by temptation.

Notice Jesus already knew Peter would stumble, but instead of praying that he would not stumble, He prayed specifically that Peter's faith would not fail. He even called Peter by his original (fleshly) name, Simon, to emphasize his spiritual weakness.

QUESTION 16

Throughout this lesson, Mark has alternated good news with bad news. Match the bad news with the good news that follows it.

<i>Bad News</i>	<i>Good News</i>
Jewish leaders plan to kill Jesus	Jesus' faithfulness in the Garden of Gethsemane
Judas plans to betray Jesus	Jesus has foreknowledge of events
A disciple will betray Jesus	Resurrected, Jesus will go ahead of them to Galilee
The disciples will fall away	Mary anoints Jesus for burial
The prediction of Peter's denial	Jesus inaugurates a new covenant

QUESTION 17

How is Jesus' prediction of the disciples falling away similar to when Jesus predicted His death and resurrection after Peter's confession of faith in Mark 8:27-33?

QUESTION 18

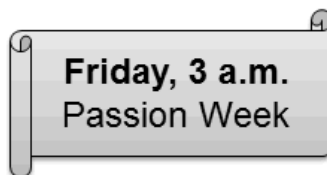
How did Peter answer when Jesus predicted that the disciples would fall away when He was arrested?

- A. He agreed with Jesus.
- B. He said he was weak in the flesh.
- C. He asked for Jesus' help against failure.
- D. He said the rest may fall away but insisted that he would never fail.

Key Points:

- Mark alternates reporting good news with stories of bad news to highlight the great spiritual contrasts of the events surrounding Jesus' death.
- Jesus' prediction that the disciples will fall away is a test of whether the disciples understand yet that He must die.

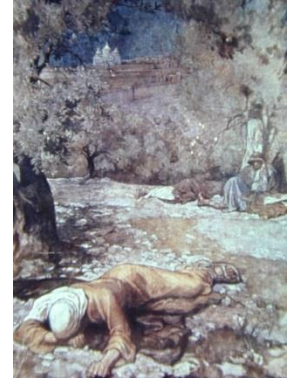
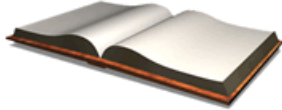
Topic 4: Accepting God's Cup (Mk 14:32-42)



In the last lesson, we studied the Olivet Discourse; in it He answered the inner three disciples' questions and they were the ones He brought with Him to Gethsemane. However, did they learn the lesson Jesus taught them there?

At Gethsemane, when Jesus went off by Himself to pray, He instructed them to stay awake and alert, and to pray. These commands should have sounded very familiar for they had just heard them in His Olivet discourse. But three times He returned and each time found them sleeping.

Jesus not only worked through His personal struggle with the cup the Father gave Him, but He was also concerned with His disciples' spiritual dangers and hardness of heart. Soon, Judas arrived to betray Jesus to those seeking His life. The cup that shook Jesus as He contemplated it, now arrived. Now the shadow of the cross fills every story.



Peter felt exhausted in the depths of his being. Yet Jesus' teaching from the Olivet Discourse somehow rang in his ears: "Watch out! Stay alert!" Besides, he sensed Jesus' anguish and wanted to be there for Him. After all, he had just insisted he would die defending him—though Jesus seemed unconvinced—should he not at least stay awake with Him? But he was physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually exhausted. "If I could only do something active," Peter thought. "I'm not good at passive watching and waiting—especially at this time of night and under this kind of stress."

Jesus warned of spiritual danger and Peter knew His life was threatened, yet he did not sense that Jesus was concerned with any spiritual danger of His own, but with theirs! True, Jesus was concerned about His coming suffering, but He had already committed His fate into the Father's hands. He knew that those who do are secure.

Assignment

- Read Psalms 115 and Psalms 116 as examples of Psalms the Jews sung during Passover.
- Read Mark 14:32-42.
- Read "Accepting God's Cup."

Accepting God's Cup (Mk 14:32-42)

Next Jesus asks the disciples to sit while He prays in Gethsemane (Mk 14:32). Gethsemane was a name for a grove of olive trees and the name means press of oils. At this time the disciples should have remembered Jesus' instructions, during the Olivet Discourse, urging them to be ready and stay alert!

Mark reports three specific occasions that Jesus prayed (Mark 1:35; 6:46; 14:32-42), and the circumstances were always the same:

- He was by Himself at night and involved in spiritual struggle.
- He was tempted to obtain His kingdom apart from suffering, but each time He committed Himself to following God's will.

Jesus' Greatest Temptation

Reference	Temptation
Mark 1:13	Satan tempts Jesus to receive the kingdom from him instead of going to the cross.
Mark 6:30-52	After feeding the five thousand, Jesus departs because He knows they want to make Him king.
Mark 8:27-33	Peter tempts Jesus by rebuking him for predicting His death and resurrection.
Mark 14:32-42	In Gethsemane, Jesus petitions the Father three times to take "this cup away from Me"
Mark 15:29-32	The witnesses of the crucifixion tempt Him to come down from the cross and save Himself.

Taking Peter, James, and John with Him, Jesus was distressed and tells them He is grieved to the point of death and asks them to remain alert (Mk 14:33-34). The importance of this event is seen because Jesus takes the inner three disciples with Him in the garden. Three times Jesus leaves them and spends time with the Father. The words used for Jesus' grief are usually translated "amazed" or "frightened," but in this passage it means distressed and grieved. Jesus feels this emotion so strongly it is "even to the point of death!" The emotion and crisis are so strong that proper words cannot be found to express it. Soon the cup He feared—the cup of sin—is placed on Him.

Jesus told them to stay alert because His followers must remain continuously ready. Contrast the disciples sleeping with Jesus' call in verse 34 to keep watch and the Olivet Discourse where the same exhortation was given repeatedly. The lesson is that disciples must be constantly alert, pray, and actively identifying with Him in His sufferings. It also shows that this command is meant to be typical for us. We are meant to stay spiritually alert at all times, identifying, or standing, with our Lord.

Now alone, Jesus prayed for His pending sacrifice to pass from Him (Mk 14:35). According to verse 37, this prayer lasted one hour.

The hour He wanted to pass Him by was the hour of the cup of human sin being placed on Him. Jesus, horrified by this prospect asked the Father for assurance that there was no other way to accomplish His mission. Since there was no other way for Jesus to impart life, He surrendered His will to the Father's plan (Mk 14:36).

Jesus does not demand anything in His prayer; He acknowledged God's sovereignty and power in His hour of trial, yet submitted Himself to God's will. Here He is the example, as Mary was in Mark 14:3-9, of true discipleship. He struggles with His cup, just as the disciples did with their comparatively small trial, but emerges victorious and submits Himself to God's will.

The emphasis here shifts from the actions and words of Jesus to the lack of action and alertness of the disciples. Jesus found them sleeping and asks them to stay awake and pray against temptation for "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mk 14:37-38).

Jesus displays proper servant-hood while the disciples display their failure. Jesus again calls Peter by his old (fleshly) name of Simon, just as He did when Peter insisted He would not deny Him.

Jesus did not expect His disciples to suffer with Him, but wanted them aware of their own danger and to fulfill their responsibility as His followers to pray. His request to pray was not for His sake, but for their spiritual danger. Three times Peter failed to stay awake.

After speaking to the disciples, Jesus returns to pray the same prayer, but again when He returned to them they were sleeping (Mk 14:39-40). These verses show the weakness of our flesh. It was the middle of the night, and the disciples could not stay awake and alert. If they had truly known the spiritual danger they were in, they may have endured. We also are unaware of spiritual danger and, hence, must always be alert. The answer to their, and our, spiritual danger is staying alert, praying, and depending on God (Mk 9:29).

Their response to Jesus finding them asleep is similar to Peter's at the transfiguration when he was speechless (Mk 9:6). As with His glory, when His suffering is revealed, they do not know how to respond. He came a third time to find them sleeping and announced the hour of His betrayal has arrived (Mk 14:41-42). He addressed them in this same tone after feeding the four thousand (Mk 8:14-21). He knew they were in spiritual danger. The good shepherd, Jesus, was not only taking care of His crisis issues but was deeply concerned with those under His care. He was dismayed when they did not respond correctly to His warning of danger. It also showed their lack of concern for Him. We must realize that we are always in spiritual danger and must live our lives in constant watch and in prayer, depending on God. As spiritual leaders, we often need to support other believers even when under temptation or pressure ourselves. We must not only look out for ourselves but also for others.

The statement that announces His betrayer approaches shows Jesus' sovereign control and foreknowledge of the events. Yet, knowing this, He willingly rises to meet His fate as He continued on the road to Jerusalem (Mk 10:32-34). For the followers of Jesus, we too must continue on the road, trusting our fate to God.

QUESTION 19

Which of the following were present each of the three times Jesus prayed in Mark? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. He was accompanied by the inner three disciples.
- B. He was free of spiritual battles.
- C. He was tempted to establish the kingdom immediately.
- D. It was during the night.

QUESTION 20

The disciples failed their test in the Garden of Gethsemane because their spirit was unwilling. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

At which time did the disciples **not** know how to respond correctly to Jesus?

- A. When He displays His glory
- B. When He suffers
- C. Both during His glory and during His suffering
- D. Mark shows they never know how to respond correctly to Jesus

QUESTION 22

During the trials in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was under intense spiritual pressure. Yet, during this time He was constantly looking after the spiritual welfare of His disciples. Explain in your Life Notebook how this applies to you as you minister to others.

Key Points:

- Jesus prayed when tempted to achieve His mission apart from the cross.
- Even during Jesus' time of spiritual distress to the point of death He continued undistracted shepherding of His disciples.
- Mark reports Jesus praying similarly three times.
- The disciples failed their test in the Garden of Gethsemane by slumbering when they should have stayed alert and prayed.

Topic 4: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 23

Out of His twelve disciples, Jesus chose three as His inner circle. They were privileged to share experiences with Him, as in the garden of Gethsemane in this lesson, which the other disciples did not share. Write down in your Life Notebook why you think Jesus chose certain disciples as an inner circle. What were the advantages of having an inner circle?

QUESTION 24

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 25

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 10 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which story from this lesson asks the disciples to apply the commands they received during Jesus' Olivet Discourse?

- A. Mary anoints Jesus for burial
- B. Judas betrays Jesus for money
- C. Jesus initiates the Lord's Supper
- D. Jesus accepts His cup in Gethsemane

QUESTION 2

What is the common topic of both stories told in Mark 14:1-11?

- A. Jesus is betrayed by one of His own
- B. Mary is the ideal disciple
- C. Preparations for Jesus' death
- D. The dangers of the love of money

QUESTION 3

Which of the following is a key discipleship lesson in Mark 14:3-9?

- A. Jesus decides our missions, not us
- B. Fearing God more than man
- C. Doing what we can
- D. Abiding in Christ

QUESTION 4

According to Mark, Judas was motivated by money to betray Jesus to the Jewish leaders. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Jesus made preparations for the Last Supper without being covert because He knew God was in sovereign charge. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Both the new and old covenants were initiated by the shedding of blood. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

When Jesus predicted that all the disciples would fall away, Peter asked for Jesus' help because he was weak in the flesh. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

The strength of our commitment to Jesus measures our ability to withstand temptation. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

Which of the following was not present every time Jesus prayed in Mark?

- A. He was accompanied by the inner three disciples.
- B. He was tempted to receive the kingdom apart from the cross.
- C. His prayers were for Himself.
- D. It was nighttime.

QUESTION 10

The disciples responded correctly to Jesus when He displayed His glory. *True or False?*

Lesson 10 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>Title</i>
Mark 14:1-2; 14:10-11	Discipleship Betrayal
Mark 14:3-9	Discipleship Understanding
Mark 14:12-21	Passover Supper
Mark 14:22-26	The Lord's Supper
Mark 14:27-31	The Disciples Scattered
Mark 14:32-42	The Disciples Sleeping

QUESTION 3

B. Preparations for Jesus' death [The stories of Mary anointing Jesus and Judas betraying Jesus are told in a familiar sandwich structure. Again this structure emphasizes a shared topic: preparations for Jesus' death.]

QUESTION 4: money [This issue of money and a love for the goods of this world leads to the downfall of many. It also kept the rich young ruler from being willing to enter the kingdom (Mk 10:17-31). This fit in perfectly with the motives of the Jewish rulers and of the disciple who betrayed Jesus.]

QUESTION 5: False [Mark 14:1-2 shows their original plan but then the opportunity avails itself though Judas and they change their plans accordingly. This shows God working in the background and how these events are within His sovereign control.]

QUESTION 6: True [This Scripture promised there would be no poor in Israel if the nation was obedient to God's voice.]

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8

B. Doing what we can [The text stated that Mary did what she could in the same way it said the widow who gave the small offering did what she could. This is a discipleship lesson that must not be missed. She did one loving act from a special gift that she had.]

QUESTION 9: *Your answer*

QUESTION 10: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Because of privacy needs, because of His acclaim, and for security, because of those seeking His life.

QUESTION 11: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The Scripture record shows that He knew events in advance and that He was giving His life as a ransom for sin. He also knew He was going to Jerusalem to be killed and that is what amazed the disciples as, despite knowing this, He continued on the way to Jerusalem.

QUESTION 12

A. Jesus shared bread with Judas.

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14: True [Jesus showed that this new covenant was also being initiated by blood, His blood.]

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16

<i>Bad News</i>	<i>Good News</i>
Jewish leaders plan to kill Jesus	Mary anoints Jesus for burial
Judas plans to betray Jesus	Jesus has foreknowledge of events
A disciple will betray Jesus	Jesus inaugurates a new covenant
The disciples will fall away	Resurrected, Jesus will go ahead of them to Galilee
The prediction of Peter's denial	Jesus' faithfulness in the Garden of Gethsemane

QUESTION 17: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Ever since Peter confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the disciples had struggled to understand Jesus' mission (Mk 8:31-38). Peter forbade Jesus' mission to suffer and die when Jesus first suggested it (Mk 8:29-33).

Now the disciples must face Jesus' mission again. They were being tested to see how well they understand and accept it.

QUESTION 18

- D. He said the rest may fall away but insisted that he would never fail. [Peter claims greater loyalty than the other disciples, but Jesus tells him it is his failure, not his loyalty, that would be greater.]

QUESTION 19

- C. He was tempted to establish the kingdom immediately.
- D. It was during the night.

[Mark reports that Jesus prayed on three times (Mk 1:35; 6:46; 14:32-42.), and the circumstances were always the same.]

QUESTION 20: False ["The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mk 14:38). Jesus calls Peter by his old name of Simon, just as He did when Peter insisted He would not deny Him. Jesus did not expect His disciples to suffer with Him, but wanted them aware of their own danger and to fulfill their responsibility as His followers to pray.]

QUESTION 21

- C. Both during His glory and during His suffering [Their response to Jesus finding them asleep is similar to Peter's at the transfiguration when he did not know what to say (Mk 9:6). As with His glory, when His suffering is revealed, they do not know how to respond.]

QUESTION 22: *Your answer*

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

QUESTION 24: *Your answer*

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

Lesson 10 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

D. Jesus accepts His cup in Gethsemane

QUESTION 2

C. Preparations for Jesus' death

QUESTION 3

C. Doing what we can

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9

C. His prayers were for Himself.

QUESTION 10: False

Lesson 11: Drinking His Cup (Mk 14:43–15:23)

Lesson Introduction

Topic 1 shows Judas betraying his Rabbi with a kiss. Jesus finishes praying in Gethsemane and awakens His disciples for the third time. Though the disciples will fight for Jesus, they are not ready to suffer with Him. They all flee when Jesus is arrested by the soldiers and an unnamed young man flees for his life.

In topic 2 Jesus is brought before a hastily called meeting of the Sanhedrin. False witnesses testify against Jesus, but they contradict themselves. On Jesus' own confession, the high priest gets the Sanhedrin to condemn Jesus for blasphemy. Then, in contrast to Jesus' good confession, Peter denied Jesus three times, as predicted.

Topic 3 shows Jesus' trial before Pontius Pilate. As a perceptive judge, he sees Jesus' innocence and the envy of the Jewish leaders who handed Him over for judgment. Therefore he seeks Jesus' release by offering to release Him instead of the criminal, Barabbas; Pilate's offer is refused and Jesus is flogged and condemned.

In Topic 4 the Roman soldiers mock and beat Jesus before leading Him to His crucifixion. Jesus is too weakened from His beatings to carry His own cross, so a man named Simon is conscripted to carry it. Though offered a sedative, Jesus refuses it.

Summary: In this lesson, Jesus finally drinks His cup and bears the burden of humanity's sin. His betrayal is at the hands of a friend, which leads to His arrest and the charade of supposedly fair trials. Then Mark shows another of Jesus' formal rejections by His people. Lastly, Jesus is sentenced, mocked, and led out to be crucified. Is this a failed mission for God's servant?

Jesus is crucified under the charge the soldiers mocked Him with: "The king of the Jews" (Mk 15:16-20, 26). Though innocent, He is identified with the criminals He dies for (Mk 15:6-15, 27, 32).

Throughout Mark's gospel he has used irony to tell his story. In this lesson irony is ever present and particularly biting in the comments of the bystanders who voice their warped perceptions about Jesus.

The bystanders misunderstand:

1. About His kingdom (Mk 15:26)
2. About His innocence (Mk 15:27; 15:32)
3. About His body as a temple (Mk 15:29)
4. About His willing death (Mk 15:29-30; 15:37; 15:44)
5. About His salvation (Mk 15:31-32)
6. About His cry (mistaken as a call for Elijah) (Mk 15:34-36)

The bystanders unwittingly witness:

1. The inscription of His crime "king of the Jews" (Mk 15:26)
2. The comment about destroying and rebuilding the temple in three days (Mk 15:29)
3. The comment that Jesus saved others but cannot save Himself (Mk 15:31)
4. The tearing of the veil in the temple (Mk 15:38)
5. The centurion cried out that Jesus was God's son (Mk 15:39)

6. A secret disciple coming to Pilate to claim Jesus' body (Mk 15:43)

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: His Arrest in Gethsemane

Betraying Him (Mk 14:43-49)

Deserting Him (Mk 14:50-52)

Topic 2: His Trial Before the Sanhedrin

Condemning Him (Mk 14:53-65)

Denying Him (Mk 14:66-72)

Topic 3: His Trial Before Pilate

Trying Him (Mk 15:1-5)

Releasing His Substitute (Mk 15:6-15)

Topic 4: His Road to the Cross

Mocking Him (Mk 15:16-20)

Leading Him (Mk 15:21-23)

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand why you may suffer for being a Christian and how you can follow Jesus' example
- Discuss Pilate's struggle to find Jesus guilty
- Appreciate the lengths to which Jesus suffered for the salvation of all people

Topic 1: His Arrest in Gethsemane



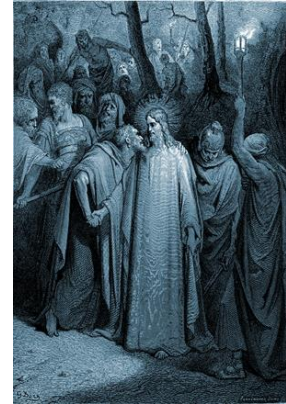
Time note: Again time slows down. Now the time is noted almost by the hour. This topic covers the event that took place around 5 a.m. on Good Friday.

Jesus entered the garden of Gethsemane with three of His disciples. He was struggling with accepting the cup, but also concerned for His sleepy disciples, who were in danger themselves. All too quickly His betrayer was at hand.

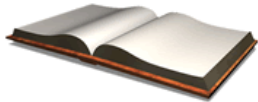
This betrayal was pathetic. Judas was one of His twelve; one Jesus had taught and fellowshiped with for three years; one whose hand had dipped in the bowl with Him (Mk 14:20). Now, dramatically, Judas betrays Him with the prearranged sign—a kiss.

Peter was ready to defend his Lord by force, but Jesus was not there to refuse His mission, instead He would willingly fulfill it. Jesus knew the sovereignty of God controlled these events and the soldiers lead Him away like a criminal. Meanwhile His disciples, after a brief attempt at forceful resistance, scatter and leave Him. Mark also mentions what happens to the young man who followed at a distance and evaded capture by leaving his clothing behind.

In this topic, the Jewish leaders accomplish their mission: They arrest Jesus and hand Him over to the authorities; these leaders intend to ensure Jesus is sentenced to death.



Betraying Him (Mk 14:43-49)



After slumbering in Gethsemane, Peter was not ready for the fateful moment that arrives. Jesus wakes him saying, “Get up, let’s go. Look! My betrayer is approaching!” Peter felt he was in a mental fog. His mind could not keep up with all that was happening.

Meanwhile, a young man from the house where they ate the Last Supper was following Jesus and the disciples, but at a distance. Though he was not one of Jesus’ twelve disciples his family had followed Jesus and assisted Him with His ministry—doing what they could. Looking for adventure and wanting to be included, his curiosity was aroused because Peter now carried a sword. Whatever happened next, he knew he would not want to miss it.

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

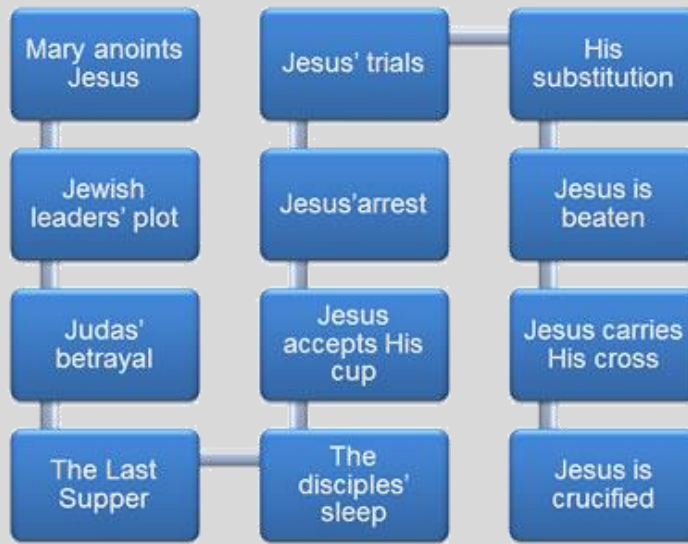
Read Mark 14:43–15:23 and write your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- Why might Mark tell the story of the unidentified young man who flees at Jesus’ arrest?
- What happens after the disciples flee at Jesus’ arrest?
- What are some of the reasons Jesus finally speaks out at His trial before the Sanhedrin?
- What politics are involved between Pilate and the Jewish leaders?
- Why does Pilate finally agree to sentence Jesus to death?

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:43-49 again.
- Read “Betraying Him.”

Betraying Him (Mk 14:43-49)



The events of Mark 14 prepare the way for Jesus' death. From Mary's anointing to Jesus' struggle in the garden, all prepare the way for what would come. Mark points out that one of the twelve betrays Jesus, and Judas' betrayal brings Jesus one step closer to the cross.

Jesus knew the exact moment Judas would arrive. He alerted His disciples to his arrival, waking them from their slumber. Judas came with the armed crowd that the Jewish leaders sent (Mk 14:43). The crowd that arrested Him consisted of both Roman soldiers and temple police. The three groups of Jewish leaders Mark mentions are all members of the Sanhedrin. They had legal permission to arrest Jesus, and the Roman soldiers were brought along to help. Extra Roman soldiers were available in Jerusalem because of the possibility of riots associated with the celebration of the Passover. However, the amount of force they brought was disproportionate to what was needed for arresting Jesus.

From early in His ministry, the Jewish leaders sought to kill Jesus (Mk 3:6). Until now they were unable to find the opportunity to arrest Him, usually because Jesus draws crowds and this helped prevent it (Mk 12:12). The crowds were especially problematic during this feast because of the great crowds of people present (Mk 14:1-2). Also several times Jesus was supernaturally delivered out of the hands of the leaders because it was not yet God's will for Him to be taken (Jn 7:25-52; 8:39-59; 10:31-39).

The arrest was swiftly and quietly done under the cover of night, the time of the evil one bruising Jesus' heel (Gen 3:15). God promised this deliverer and predicted that he would receive a blow to his heel, but at the cross Satan would receive the fatal blow.

The shock was intensified by the prearranged sign of betrayal between Judas and the soldiers—a kiss! The Greek words show that this was not just a courtesy kiss of greeting as was typical in their culture, but a kiss that displayed passionate but false affection. Besides the kiss itself, Mark was shocked that the one who betrayed Jesus was one of the twelve and had shared table fellowship with Jesus (Mk 14:20).

Mark's original readers, undergoing persecution themselves, would identify with this story. Jesus had warned that "brother will hand over brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death" (Mk 13:12). As predicted, the most dangerous persecution often comes from within our own families or churches! Jude also warned about false teachers slipping secretly in among the church family, attempting to lead us astray (Jude 3-4), and the decisive blow against Jesus came from within His circle of disciples. Hence the warning to us is

to “be alert” and “keep watch” (Mk 13:5, 9, 23, 33, 37)!

One of the disciples, identified as Peter in John’s gospel, drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s slave (Mk 14:46-47; Jn 18:10). This action showed his loyalty by his willingness to fight for Jesus if necessary (and permitted). What he could not accept was being passively taken, without a struggle, as Jesus was. Peter’s act stands out because it was the only violence by either side in Jesus’ arrest. This act shows Peter still misunderstood Jesus’ mission.

Jesus voices no objection except that they arrest Him as if He led an armed rebellion. He is neither a criminal nor violent. He came to them voluntarily and will leave with them voluntarily.

Three times Jesus is treated like a robber:

- At his arrest
- At His trial Pilate offers to substitute the criminal Barabbas for Jesus but the crowd refuses
- Pilate releases Barabbas, picturing how He—the innocent one—died for us, the criminals (Mk 15:6-15). He was even hung between two outlaws in fulfillment of Scripture (Mk 15:27; see also Isa 53:12).

QUESTION 2

Match the section titles to the corresponding reference.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Section Title</i>
Mark 14:43-49	Mocking Him
Mark 14:50-52	Leading Him
Mark 14:53-65	Betraying Him
Mark 15:21-23	Deserting Him
Mark 15:1-5	Trying Him
Mark 15:6-15	Condemning Him
Mark 15:16-20	Releasing His Substitute
Mark 14:66-72	Denying Him

QUESTION 3

List the shocking elements that Mark mentions about Jesus’ betrayal.

QUESTION 4

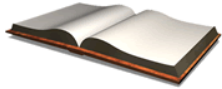
Peter wanted Jesus to go peacefully with the soldiers who came to arrest Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

What is Jesus' one complaint about His arrest?

- A. That excessive weaponry was brought
- B. That He had not been tried yet
- C. That He is innocent
- D. That it was not His time yet

Deserting Him (Mk 14:50-52)



The young man witnessed the events of the night of Jesus' arrest. He saw Judas' kiss and Peter's brief attack with his sword. But it became obvious that this was not a battle that would be won by physical force, the disciples all scattered, running past him. Clothed only in his nightgown, one of those arresting Jesus suddenly had a hold on his garment. Struggling to free himself, he ran off naked into the night.

He would later realize that his own escape would perfectly illustrate the panicked escape of all of Jesus' followers at the time of Jesus' arrest.

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:50-52.
- Read "Deserting Him."

Deserting Him (Mk 14:50-52)

The passive, spiritual suffering Christians are called to is more difficult than active, fleshly resistance of evil. Spiritual suffering is often more difficult to endure than fleshly suffering. The spiritual battle is one that is not as easily seen and is therefore harder to resist than blatant temptation of physical things that can be resisted more easily.

The disciples' flight shows they reject Jesus' mission for themselves. They looked for the kingdom, for glory, and may even fight for Him, but they would not willingly suffer for Him. This is a difficult discipleship lesson for us, also. This mission is a **spiritual** lesson of voluntary submission, not a mission accomplished in the flesh. When faced with the same, will we willingly suffer or flee? When we lose a job or promotion because we are Christians, how will we react? When we are falsely accused, will we endure it as Jesus did or will we strike back in anger? The provision for this comes with Jesus' resurrection when they follow Him to Galilee. After Jesus is resurrected, He sends the Holy Spirit to empower our lives (Acts 1:4-5). We can patiently endure in Jesus' resurrection power. Yet the question remains for each person, will we endure or flee in terror and bewilderment (see also Mk 16:8)?

Who was this certain young man following Jesus wearing only a linen cloth (Mk 14:51-52)? Mark likely describes his own eyewitness of Jesus' arrest. The word translated "young man" describes someone in his prime, maybe in his late twenties. This would make him a few years younger than Jesus and most of the disciples. If the upper room used for the Last Supper was Mark's parents' house, he may have followed the disciples on this night, but the main point in including this singular event is that it depicts the panicked flight of all of Jesus' followers at His arrest.

QUESTION 6

What is the main point taught in the story of the young man who flees naked?

- A. Mark knows the young man.
- B. Jesus had other followers besides just His disciples.
- C. All of Jesus' followers panicked and fled at His arrest.
- D. The soldier's only focused on arresting Jesus.

QUESTION 7

In the story of Jesus' arrest, how did Peter show that he did not yet understand Jesus' mission? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. By rebuking the soldiers
- B. By denying Jesus
- C. By attacking with a sword
- D. By deserting Jesus

Key Points:

- Judas gave every outward indication of continuing fellowship with Jesus up to and through his betrayal of Him.
- The passive, spiritual suffering Christians are called to is more difficult than active, fleshly resistance of evil.
- All of Jesus' followers panicked and deserted Him at His arrest.

Topic 2: His Trial Before the Sanhedrin

After His arrest in the garden, Jesus is hastily led away to trial before the Sanhedrin. Jesus' one objection was to how He was arrested. He protested that they came out against Him with weapons as if He was an outlaw. Yet everyday He had openly taught in the temple courts and no one tried to arrest Him. They also bound Him like a criminal as they brought Him to the trial before the high priest.

In this topic there are two parallel stories. In one, Jesus is on trial before the Sanhedrin. In the other, Mark tells of Peter, who had his own private trial. After Jesus' arrest, he had followed Jesus at a distance until the arresting soldiers had brought Him to the high priest's courtyard. This is the sandwich style Mark often uses to emphasize common points within stories.

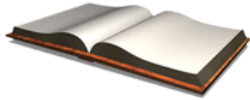
Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin in a hastily called trial. False and conflicting witnesses testify and obviously contradict each other. It looks like the trial will end without conviction. But Jesus breaks His silence—giving a good testimony—to testify to the high priest that He is the Son of Man and will return with the clouds of heaven. This revelation resulted in His conviction on blasphemy along with a beating at the hands of the council.



In this case, the common teaching between these two stories is the contrast between these two trials. The contrast is Jesus' good testimony and faithful suffering while under intense pressure from powerful men and Peter's denial of Jesus while attempting to avoid suffering under the slightest pressure from a young slave girl.

Peter's denial happened even though Jesus had shared with him some of His knowledge of future events. He warned Peter in advance that he would deny Him and also gave him the sign that accompanied it. When Peter denied His Lord the third time, the rooster crowed and Peter remembered that Jesus predicted his denial.

Condemning Him (Mk 14:53-65)



The Jewish leaders were scrambling. They had finally accomplished their mission by stealthily arresting Jesus and rushing Him to an illegal trial. They arrested Him away from the crowds, at the quietest time of the morning. Now that they had Him, they wanted His trial over before any crowds could gather, or objections could be made as they bent the rules to accomplish their plan.

Witnesses were quickly gathered against Jesus and the reluctant were even pressured or bribed to testify. However, progress in the trial was slow because the witnesses were not telling the same story. "What," the Jewish leaders wondered together, "would finally get the conviction they were determined to have?"

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:53-59.
- Read "Condemning Him."

Condemning Him (Mk 14:53-65)

They brought Him bound to the courtyard of the high priest (Annas) where Jewish leaders were gathered (Mk 14:53). Both Annas and Caiaphus were related and in some way shared the high priestly duties at this time. The high priesthood was no longer a position for someone spiritually qualified for but was an appointed political position.

Peter followed Jesus and his arrestors at a distance (Mk 14:54). Since it was a cold morning in early spring, Peter likely came into closer contact with these people than he otherwise would have in order to warm himself. This helped the bystanders recognize him as his features were lit by the fire.

The Sanhedrin looks for evidence against Jesus in order to sentence Him to death, but all they collect is false testimonies from witnesses (Mk 14:55-56). The law of Moses set down the principle they followed; read Deuteronomy 19:15-20. The law made it difficult to put an innocent man to death, but they were determined to do so. If they followed the law, they should have sought impartial witnesses and each false witness should have faced the penalty prescribed in Deuteronomy 19.

The false witnesses misunderstood what Jesus said about His body and resurrection (Mk 14:57-59). The words Jesus used for His body as a temple (meaning inner temple or Holy of Holies) and the physical building of the temple (meaning the temple buildings) were different, but apparently the listeners did not distinguish between them. The destruction of a temple was a capital offense under Roman law, so the false accusation against Jesus was serious enough to accomplish their goal of putting Him to death.

Seven hundred years before Jesus' birth Isaiah prophesied about the treatment the Messiah would receive at the hands of His persecutors. The Messiah would be treated harshly, but would not open His mouth even though He would be led away after His unjust trial (Isa 53:7-8). Notice the parallels to this in Mark's account in this lesson: Jesus was silent, refusing to answer the high priest and Pilate (Mk 14:60-61). The high priest wants Jesus to incriminate Himself. In the Greek, his first question expects a positive answer-something like "you are going to answer, aren't you?"

Jesus turns the tables on the high priest, predicting that He would someday, as the predicted Son of Man, return in judgment over him (Mk 14:61-62; Dan 7:13-14; 7:27).

Jesus, for the first time in Mark, clearly states publically that He is the Messiah. He testifies before governors and kings (Mk 13:9) and gives a good testimony before them as His followers will need to someday as well.

This is the first of three great testimonies to who He is, all under the same conditions and all with the same results. Before Pilate He confesses He is the king of the Jews (Mk 15:2) and, when He died it was obvious, even to a centurion, that He was the Son of God (Mk 15:39). Each confession led to dire consequences and yet He did not falter.

While the high priest questioned Jesus, he asked if Jesus was "the Son of the Blessed One" (Mk 14:61). He called God "Blessed One" out of respect for the divine name. Jesus said "I am" in response to the high priest's question, which caused him to tear his clothes and say, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard him blasphemy! What is your verdict?" (Mk 14:63-64). They decided Jesus deserved death (Mk 14:64).

Jesus, still in control and aware of the consequences of His statement, said exactly what the high priest hoped He would and incriminated Himself in their eyes. When the high priest tore his clothes, he did what Joshua and Caleb did when the children of Israel refused to enter the Promised Land (Num 14:6). By pronouncing this statement as blasphemous, the high priest probably thought he was doing God a favor, protecting His good name.

Jesus was spat on and blindfolded as people began clamoring for Him to prophesy as they beat Him (Mk 14:65). Spitting on someone was an extreme insult and customarily resulted in disgrace lasting for seven full days (Num 12:14). They took these seemingly strange actions because there was a common understanding that the Messiah could judge correctly even without seeing and by sense of smell (see Isa 11:2-4). Jesus, with all of His power, voluntarily chose not to fight back to fulfill the will of God. He did this as a perfect example for us, His followers.

QUESTION 8

According to the law of Moses, the ones who falsely accused Jesus should have been put on trial and faced the same sentence He did. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

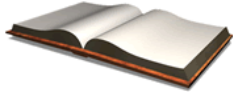
What was the issue the false witnesses against Jesus brought up at His trial?

- A. He claimed He could forgive sins.
- B. He claimed He was a king.
- C. He claimed He was the Son of God.
- D. He claimed He would destroy the temple.

QUESTION 10

Why did Jesus now openly admit His identity when He had never done this before?

Denying Him (Mk 14:66-72)



The slave girl at the high priest's residence was used to sudden gatherings of people for trials; but she could tell that this was different. She wondered to herself, "Trials never take place before dawn. And this trial is uncharacteristically during the Passover feast." But from the conversations of the religious leaders she had overheard, she knew that Jesus and His followers were also unusual and an especially troublesome group for them. She had just seen Jesus and His disciples earlier in the week as they made their way through the temple courts.

Now Jesus was here at her master's residence. None of His followers were with Him now and she did not blame them for she suspected they would share His fate. She had overheard the various Jewish leaders plotting against Him for a couple of years now. "They've finally arrested Him," she said to herself. "I wonder what the charge is."

She could see Him upstairs with the Sanhedrin while she did her duties in the courtyard below on this brisk spring morning. Many soldiers and bystanders warmed themselves by the fire and she sometimes made out faces as she came close. Unexpectedly she saw someone she recognized but she could hardly believe her eyes. So she said with a start, "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus."

Assignment

- Read Mark 14:60-72.
- Read "Denying Him."

Denying Him (Mk 14:66-72)

Jesus gave His good testimony, in total isolation, under extreme duress, even though He suffered and died for doing so. This was a great contrast to how Peter would soon, under the slightest threat, deny Him.

One of the high priest's slave girls saw Peter while he was near a fire and said, "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus" (Mk 14:66-67). Peter's informal trial takes place at the same time that Jesus gives His testimony before the high priest. A slave girl identifies Peter by his association with Jesus. He denied it, by claiming he did not understand what she was talking about (Mk 14:68).

After she confronted Peter, he walked out to the gateway, probably trying to avoid further confrontations. Immediately the first ominous sign for Peter, the rooster's crow Jesus predicted, occurs just as Jesus said it would (Mk 14:30). We must ask ourselves, how will we react when we are tested?

The slave girl addresses Peter with no real power, especially compared with the high priest and the Sanhedrin in Jesus' trial. Yet, Peter cowered before her and would not admit he knew anything about Jesus. So Peter walked away from her, hoping to avoid the controversy. Then another slave girl sees him and points him out as one of Jesus' disciples and Peter again denies it. A short time later the bystanders again tell Peter that he must be one of the disciples because he spoke with a Galilean accent (Mk 14:69-70).

What Peter wants to avoid happens anyway (God's providence often works that way, and there are some trials He wants us to face). So, instead of avoiding the issue, another girl runs into Peter and asks the same question before others in the crowd. As the crowd mingles, the bystanders again ask Peter if he was one of them. They could not help but notice he was Galilean. By now Peter felt the pressure, cursing and swearing that he did not know Jesus. Immediately a rooster crows for the second time. Then Peter remembers what Jesus said to him and he weeps (Mk 14:71-72).

As Peter continues to be asked about Jesus, he gets in deeper trouble. He tries to deflect his danger by making each denial stronger. Here are three suggestions of what Peter's swearing could have been:

- He may have called God to witness the truth of his statements.
- He cursed his accusers as supposed false witnesses.
- He called down curses on himself if he was lying.

What is Peter afraid of? After all, he would fight for Jesus if he could use weapons such as swords. He also determined that he, even though the rest might fall, would not deny Jesus (and we are meant to see ourselves in him). He gave the good confession (Mk 8:27-30). He walked on the water (Mt 14:28-29). His self-confidence does not help avoid his denial. The most difficult perseverance for us also may not be physically fighting for Christ, but in patiently enduring suffering and trial—sometimes just for being one of His and naming His name.

How does that apply to us? We must rely on God and not on our own self-confidence. He has even promised the help of His Holy Spirit in our time of need (Mk 13:11). We should feel weak, vulnerable, and insufficient in ourselves. This lesson applied perfectly to Mark's original readers also who faced the threat of death if they confessed to following Jesus.

Jesus made many predictions in Mark. Some are listed below. See how many came true, how they were fulfilled, and which are yet future. How literally His predictions were fulfilled will guide us to understand future fulfillments:

Jesus' Predictions

Reference	Prediction
Mark 2:20	“The days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them”
Mark 8:31	“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and after three days rise again”
Mark 9:1	“There are some standing here who will not experience death before they see the kingdom of God come with power”
Mark 9:31	“The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise”
Mark 10:29-30	“There is no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive in this age a hundred times as much—homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, fields, all with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life”
Mark 10:33-34	“Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and experts in the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles. “They will mock him, spit on him, flog him severely, and kill him. Yet after three days, he will rise again”
Mark 11:14	“He said to it (the fig tree), “May no one ever eat fruit from you again”
Mark 13:2	“Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left on another. All will be torn down”
Mark 13:9-10	“You must watch out for yourselves. You will be handed over to councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a witness to them. First the gospel must be preached to all nations”
Mark 14:9	“Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her”
Mark 14:18	“I tell you the truth, one of you eating with me will betray me”
Mark 14:27	“Then Jesus said to [the disciples], “You will all fall away”
Mark 14:62	“You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven”

The desire to please our Lord and not let Him down should purify our lives also.

QUESTION 11

Peter was recognized as a follower of Jesus because they noticed that he was a _____.

QUESTION 12

How did Peter's reaction to the continued accusations change?

- A. He grew more timid.
- B. He denied being with Jesus more adamantly.
- C. He admitted being one of Jesus' disciples reluctantly.
- D. He started accusing others.

QUESTION 13

Based on how Mark presents Peter's denial, patiently suffering is easier than physical abuse. *True or False?*

Key Points:

- According to the law of Moses, the individuals giving false testimony against Jesus should have faced the same sentence He did.
- Peter denied Jesus under slight pressure from a slave girl while Jesus was testifying under extreme duress before powerful men.
- The Jewish leaders broke the rules established in the law of Moses in the way they tried Jesus.
- Jesus is our example in how to suffer righteously and give a good testimony in the face of His unjust trials.

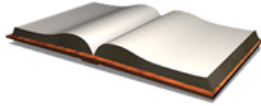
Topic 3: His Trial Before Pilate



Jesus is convicted by the Sanhedrin for blasphemy and they hurriedly take Him to a Roman court. By themselves they could only convict Jesus, but they wanted Him sentenced to death. Also, Pilate, the Roman procurator would not care whether Jesus had violated rules of Jewish religion. He expected the Jews to take care of that issue themselves. So they needed to accuse Him of a Roman offense and they now accuse Jesus of sedition; claiming to be the king of the Jews and opposing Caesar.

Pilate saw Jesus' innocence and asked, "What has he done wrong?" (Mk 15:14). He saw that their envy of His authority was their motive (Mk 15:10). But Pilate also had a motive; he knew Jesus was innocent, yet he sentenced Jesus in order to appease the crowd (Mk 15:15). The innocent Jesus was now condemned, the criminal Barabbas was released and Jesus, as his substitute, will die instead. How well this illustrates what Jesus did for us.

Trying Him (Mk 15:1-5)



Pilate hated the Jews. He thought they were an unusual people that had their own religion and caused problems for him many times because of it. But Pilate saw an unusual opportunity here. “The Jewish leaders want something,” he thought to himself. “Maybe I can make them squirm.”

But he had many misgivings about this man Jesus. He was uncomfortable with his wife’s dreams about Jesus, his conscience told him that Jesus is innocent; he knew the motives of the Jewish leaders and he had his own fear that Jesus might be deity. Yet Pilate saw this as a chance to get a confession from the Jews that would gain him a personal victory over them. After all, they had questioned his loyalty to Caesar. How dare they bring his position before Caesar into this issue!

In turn he would draw out a confession from them that denied God’s leadership of their nation. If that confession was made he would allow this mockery to continue. For that would be worse on their part—to deny their King—than their accusation had been against him, when they implied that he opposed Caesar. Only then, if he accomplished his purpose, would he allow this farce against this innocent man to proceed.

Assignment

- Read Mark 15:1-5.
- Read “Trying Him.”

Trying Him (Mk 15:1-5)

Pilate was the Roman procurator of Judea from AD 26-36. His headquarters were in Caesarea, but he often came to Jerusalem to conduct his affairs. He was known to hate the Jews and they, in turn, accused him of corruption. He had several run-ins with the Jews, and a common issue was Pilate’s attempts to bring symbols of the Roman emperors into Jerusalem. The Jews always objected because of their high concern for the place of God.

At daybreak, the Sanhedrin had a plan and bound Jesus to take Him to Pilate (Mk 15:1). The Sanhedrin convicted Jesus of blasphemy but, when they brought Him before Pilate, the charge was treason, saying He claimed to be king of the Jews. Pilate asked Jesus if He was the king of the Jews and Jesus simply replied, “You say so” (Mk 15:2).

Pilate was not concerned with the Jews’ religious disputes but with whether Jesus claimed to be “king of the Jews.” If He did, He was guilty of treason, but Jesus did not personally make that claim; He just points out that Pilate had said so. The Jewish leaders are unrelenting. They are determined to put Him to death so they continue their accusations. So Pilate asked him again if He had nothing to say in response to the charges against Him; Jesus’ silence to all the questions amazes Pilate (Mk 15:3-5).

The irrational and intense hatred of Jesus’ accusers is emphasized and is something we may face someday in our testimony for Him.

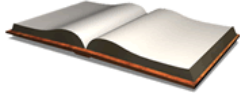
QUESTION 14

What was Pilate’s concern about sentencing Jesus?

QUESTION 15

Pilate readily agreed with the Jews convicting Jesus of blasphemy. *True or False?*

Releasing His Substitute (Mk 15:6-15)



“What should he do with their king?” Pilate wanted to know. He could tell it really wounded the Jewish leaders for Him to call Jesus their king. This was especially after their remark about his fidelity to Caesar. They knew his weak spot and he had found theirs. But he knew Jesus was innocent and he would work toward getting Him released.

He knew the established tradition of releasing a prisoner for the Jews on the Passover. He would offer to release Jesus and hope they would choose Him instead of the other prisoner, Barabbas. Barabbas was an evil man, clearly guilty, who had led an insurrection. The people could choose between Jesus and Barabbas. Surely they wouldn’t release the guilty Barabbas in the place of this innocent man?

Assignment

- Read Mark 15:6-15.
- Read “Releasing His Substitute.”

Releasing His Substitute (Mk 15:6-15)

Mark shows the intense opposition Jesus received in His trial before Pilate. Yet He endured it calmly, not striking back. Customarily, one prisoner was released during the Passover feast according to the request of the people (Mk 15:6-7). Barabbas was imprisoned for murder during a rebellion and was guilty of what Jesus was only accused. He apparently led an uprising, was a robber and murderer, and awaited execution.

When Pilate asked if the crowd would like Jesus to be released, the priests stirred them up to have Barabbas released (Mk 15:8, 11). If the leaders were as concerned with justice as they pretended, they would not release Barabbas. Barabbas is a perfect picture of us—guilty sinners deserving of death—yet ones to whom pardon is available because Jesus died in our place.

Pilate apparently thought the crowd would ask for Jesus’ release. As an experienced judge, he saw Jesus’ innocence and knew He was only handed over out of envy. In response to the demands of the people, Pilate asked what he should do with the “king of the Jews.” The crowd shouted for Him to be crucified (Mk 15:12-14). To satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas.

Pilate makes a generous offer to the crowd. He will release Barabbas and also offers Jesus’ destiny to the crowd. Mark shows that the Jewish leaders successfully used a crowd mentality to get the multitude, always previously favorable toward Jesus, to change their opinions. The Jews were warned against this very thing in their law (Ex 23:2).

So Pilate flogged Jesus and sent Him to be crucified (Mk 15:15). The flogging was a beating delivered by multiple guards holding leather whips containing sharp pieces of bone and metal. The Jews were legally required to stop flogging at forty lashes but the Romans had no limitations. Often the man would not survive the flogging. Pilate may have done this to get sympathy from the crowd, but their blood thirst would not be sated even at this. They still call out to crucify Him.

QUESTION 16

In Mark 14 and Mark 15, Jesus gives three testimonies to who He is. Match the title given of Jesus with the corresponding person He testified to.

<i>Jesus' Title</i>	<i>Person He Testified To</i>
Son of Man	Pontius Pilate
King of the Jews	The high priest
Son of God	A centurion

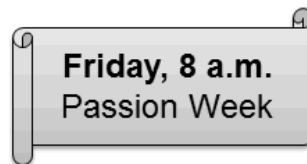
QUESTION 17

Explain how Pilate attempted to release the innocent man, Jesus.

Key Points:

- Pilate recognized that Jesus was not guilty of sedition because His kingdom is not of this world.
- Jesus witnessed to His identity before the high priest, Pilate, and a Roman centurion.
- Pilate recognized Jesus' innocence and tried to release Him, but the crowd cried out against Him.

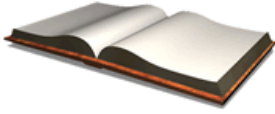
Topic 4: His Road to the Cross



God the Son has existed from eternity past as one of the eternal Godhead. His rightful place was always as ruler of the universe. Mark contrasts Jesus' rightful place with how He is treated by humanity. He shows the Sanhedrin spitting on Him and striking Him with blows. Then after Pilate's condemnation, the Roman soldiers flog Him, mock His just claim as King, and dress Him up while hurling abuse at Him and beating Him.

All this time, Jesus suffered for their sins and ours and asked the Father for their forgiveness. Now He is led away and crucified while refusing the drink of sedation. Will bystanders see the truth and come to salvation? Or how about us, will we understand why—when God Himself suffered to save us—that refusing His salvation results in eternity spent in Hell and that this sentence is just?

Mocking Him (Mk 15:16-20)



Pilate's soldiers especially enjoyed mistreating prisoners. Most were bored with their job and they entertained themselves the best they could. As loyal Romans, many shared their master's distaste for the Jews; those proud people who denied Caesar's lordship over them. This mockery of Jesus was especially entertaining because He claimed kingship. However, much of their mockery unintentionally revealed spiritual truths.

They clothed Him in royal purple and significantly wove Him a crown of thorns as He bore the curse of human sin. They unintentionally foreshadow the day when they will pay real homage to Him instead of mocking Him. Little did they know that, though there were hundreds of them, they could never have led Him anywhere—much less to crucifixion—unless He allowed it.

Assignment

- Read Mark 15:16-20.
- Read "Mocking Him."

Mocking Him (Mk 15:16-20)

The soldiers led Jesus to the governor's residence and called the cohort of Roman soldiers together (Mk 15:16). Usually a cohort had six hundred Roman soldiers, but this group was smaller.

Possibly finding a discarded royal garment lying around, they dressed Jesus in it, mocking His kingdom claim. The crown of thorns also mocked Him, but thorns in Scripture often portray the curse of sin (Gen 3:17; Heb 6:8) and Jesus bore that curse for us on the cross. Verse 18 mocks the Roman hail of Caesar: They said, "hail, Caesar" in the presence of the emperor while here they say, "hail, king of the Jews."

If they only knew that Jesus is the Son of God, before whom the entire created universe will one day bow their knee. It will not matter then whether a person willingly comes to Him, as we can now, because then all the unwilling will bow before him. How much better to come now, willingly?

This same Son of God allowed this mistreatment. At any time He had the power to stop them. He is our example to follow in how to treat our enemies. Isaiah 50:6 predicted His attitude: "I offered my back to those who attacked, my jaws to those who tore out my beard; I did not hide my face from insults and spitting."

After they mocked Him, Jesus was led to be crucified (Mk 15:20).

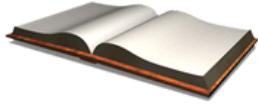
QUESTION 18

Isaiah prophesied about Jesus' attitude during His suffering. *True or False?*

QUESTION 19

Explain what Pilate's soldiers did that intensified Jesus' sufferings.

Leading Him (Mk 15:21-23)



Simon's life was changed that day. He and his family had come all the way from North Africa to attend the Passover in Jerusalem. During the festival, after eating the Passover meal, they passed the prisoners being brought out for crucifixion. As one group came right beside him, one of the prisoners fainted while carrying the crossbeam and they had whipped Him so severely He was unable to stand.

Suddenly, a Roman soldier grabbed him by the arm. He said, "This young man is a Jew. He can carry the cross as a service to his 'King!'" As he mockingly said this, Simon was surrounded by soldiers, cut off from his family, and forced to carry the man's cross to the place of crucifixion.

Little did he know, and little did the soldier know, what an honor that soldier gave Simon that day. Though he didn't know the man at that time Simon later found out who he had carried that cross for. For some reason, God honored him by allowing him to carry the cross of his Messiah, the Savior he grew to know and love through the teaching of His disciples.

Assignment

- Read Mark 15:21-23.
- Read "Leading Him."

Leading Him (Mk 15:21-23)

Customarily, the condemned carried the crossbeam to the place of execution. This crossbeam weighed about forty-five kilograms. Jesus was led through the streets on a slow walk, allowing those He passed to hurl abuse. His crime was written prominently for all to see. Jesus was drained from the abuse He had suffered and was unable to carry His cross. This showed the magnitude of the suffering He had already endured. So the soldiers leading Him forced a man in the crowd, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross (Mk 15:21).

"They brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull)" (Mk 15:22). Most commentators feel this place was just north of Jerusalem and on a hill with rock outcroppings that vaguely resembled a skull.

Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh, but He declined it (Mk 15:23). Most feel the wine mixed with myrrh was a sedative to dull the pain. There was a tradition that the righteous women from Jerusalem made this mixture and brought it to those being crucified. Jesus refused this drink in order to suffer the cup of suffering for human sin without having His senses dulled. He still had important things to communicate and teach to others, and this would ensure He was in control of His senses.

Compare Isaiah 53:1-12, written 750 years before Jesus died, with what happened to Jesus.

QUESTION 20

Most commentators feel the wine mixed with myrrh, offered to Jesus before His crucifixion, was a sedative to dull the pain. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

Jesus' being unable to carry His own cross showed His body had reached the point of human failure. *True or False?*

Key Points:

- Jesus suffered as prophesied, willingly offering Himself to those who abused Him.
- Pilate's soldiers mocked Jesus as a king while inadvertently showing that He carried our curse by giving Him a crown of thorns.
- Jesus refused the sedative at least partially because He had more to clearly communicate before death and choosing to fully endure His cup.
- Jesus' inability to carry His cross was an indication that He had been beaten until His body could not handle any more.

Topic 5: Knowing, Being, and Doing**QUESTION 22**

In this lesson, Jesus continues to endure hardship and suffers unjustly. In your Life Notebook, add to your list of injustices that Jesus has suffered so far in this lesson. Put yourself in His place and write down how you would feel and how you would naturally respond if you were treated this way. Then go back and write down how you would respond if you followed Jesus' example.

QUESTION 23

The Bible is clear that unbelievers will spend eternity in Hell. Sometimes, from a human point of view, this seems too severe. After studying this lesson and seeing what Jesus willingly endured to save us, the sentence may be easier to understand. Write down in your Life Notebook how you would answer the objections of someone who felt the sentence to hell is unjust.

QUESTION 24

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 25

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 11 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Which of the following stories is told to parallel the story of Jesus on trial before the Sanhedrin?

- A. Judas betraying Jesus
- B. Peter denying Jesus
- C. Pilate releasing Jesus' substitute
- D. The disciples deserting Jesus

QUESTION 2

Jesus objects to His arrest to proclaim His innocence. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

What is the main point taught in the story of the young man who flees naked?

- A. All of Jesus' followers panicked and fled at His arrest.
- B. Jesus had other followers besides just His disciples.
- C. Jesus sovereignly protected His followers even during His time of trial.
- D. Mark is the young man who fled.

QUESTION 4

In the story of Jesus' arrest, how did Peter show that he did not yet understand Jesus' mission?

- A. By rebuking Jesus
- B. By deserting Jesus
- C. By denying Jesus
- D. By attacking with a sword

QUESTION 5

One reason Jesus clearly testifies about who He is at His trials is that He can speak to the governors and kings. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

Peter's denials of Jesus become more vehement each time. *True or False?*

QUESTION 7

Pilate was interested in convicting Jesus of violating the Jew's religious laws. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Pilate probably beat Jesus during Jesus' trial as part of a plan to get Jesus released. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

Which of the following references teaches that God's servant offered His back to those who attacked?

- A. Genesis 3:17-18
- B. Isaiah 50:6
- C. Luke 23:24
- D. Hebrews 13:13

QUESTION 10

The fact that Jesus was unable to carry His own cross showed He had been beaten to the point of human physical failure. *True or False?*

Lesson 11 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

Reference	Section Title
Mark 14:43-49	Betraying Him
Mark 14:50-52	Deserting Him
Mark 14:53-65	Condemning Him
Mark 15:21-23	Leading Him
Mark 15:1-5	Trying Him
Mark 15:6-15	Releasing His Substitute
Mark 15:16-20	Mocking Him
Mark 14:66-72	Denying Him

QUESTION 3: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

(1) The shock was how this betrayal was accomplished. (2) The prearranged sign of betrayal between Judas and the soldiers was a kiss. (3) Judas gave the false appearance of fellowship with Jesus as one of His twelve, had shared table fellowship with Jesus (Mk 14:20).

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5

- A. That excessive weaponry was brought [Jesus voices no objection except that they arrest Him as if He led an armed rebellion. He is neither a criminal nor violent. He came to them voluntarily and will leave with them voluntarily.]

QUESTION 6

- C. All of Jesus' followers panicked and fled at His arrest. [Mark is showing the contrast between Jesus' faithfulness and calm in the face of arrest and His followers' complete panic in an effort to save themselves.]

QUESTION 7

- C. By attacking with a sword
D. By deserting Jesus

[These two actions are fleshly actions he took instead of the spiritual action of standing by Jesus in the silent and passive suffering that Jesus called them to.]

QUESTION 8: True [This is part of what the law says in Deuteronomy 19:15-20, which states that a false witness is subject to the same punishment as the accused.]

QUESTION 9

- D. He claimed He would destroy the temple. [Though words Jesus used for His body as a temple (meaning inner temple or Holy of Holies) and the physical building of the temple were different, these listeners did not distinguish between them. The destruction of a temple was a capital offense under Roman law, so the false accusation against Jesus was serious enough to accomplish their goal of putting Him to death.]

QUESTION 10: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

With the crowds gone, who would take Jesus by force and make Him king. Jesus, for the first time in Mark, clearly states that He is the Messiah. He is testifying before governors and kings (Mk 13:9) and will give a good testimony before them as His followers will need to.

QUESTION 11: Galilean

QUESTION 12

- B. He denied being with Jesus more adamantly. [Once he had started on his path of denial, each denial led to a worse situation. He tried to deflect this by making each denial stronger but this only drew more attention to him. If we start down the same road, we should not be too proud to admit we made a mistake instead of digging ourselves a bigger hole.]

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Pilate was concerned whether or not Jesus claimed to be “king of the Jews.” If He did, He was guilty of treason. But Jesus did not personally make that claim, He just points out that Pilate had said so.

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16

<i>Jesus' Title</i>	<i>Person He Testified To</i>
Son of Man	The high priest
King of the Jews	Pontius Pilate
Son of God	A centurion

QUESTION 17: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

He offered Barabbas to the crowd, he probably displayed his beaten prisoner hoping for the crowd's sympathy, and he asked the crowd what punishment Jesus should have.

QUESTION 18: True

QUESTION 19: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

They clothed Him with a purple cloak. They put a crown of thorns on His head. They cried out, “Hail, king of the Jews!” They struck Him and spit on Him repeatedly. Kneeling, they paid homage to Him (see Mk 15:17-19). It was their treatment that so weakened Him that He could not carry His crossbeam to Golgotha.

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21: True [Only His total inability to continue would have led His persecutors to spare Him one drop of bitterness or one throb of pain.]

QUESTION 22: *Your answer*

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

QUESTION 24: *Your answer*

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

Lesson 11 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1

B. Peter denying Jesus

QUESTION 2: False

QUESTION 3

A. All of Jesus' followers panicked and fled at His arrest.

QUESTION 4

D. By attacking with a sword

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: True

QUESTION 9

B. Isaiah 50:6

QUESTION 10: True

Lesson 12: Truly the Son of God (Mk 15:24–16:20)

Lesson Introduction

Jesus is flogged by soldiers until He is nearly unconscious and so weak that he cannot even carry His own crossbeam (Mk 15:15; 15:21). In this condition He hears the bystanders' comments that reveal their own misunderstanding as He hangs on the cross:

- “Aha! You who can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross!” (Mk 15:29-30).
- “He saved others, but he cannot save himself!” (Mk 15:31).
- “Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, that we may see and believe!” (Mk 15: 32).
- “Listen, he is calling for Elijah!” (Mk 15:35).

After Jesus dies, Joseph of Arimathea lovingly cares for His body and places it in a garden tomb while His female followers watch from a distance (Mk 15:42-47). The women waited until after the Sabbath (Mk 16:1), but they could have anointed Jesus on the Sabbath. Jesus taught the Sabbath was made for people not people for the Sabbath, that He is Lord of the Sabbath, and a day for doing good and not evil (Mk 2:27-3:6). None of their actions would have violated His teachings, but they went to the tomb early the next day (Mk 16:2).

They are also naïve about getting past the stone blocking the entrance (Mk 16:3) and about His predicted resurrection. They give no thought to the possibility that He has risen (Mk 16:5-6). So, the heavenly messenger's news caused alarm, flight, terror, and bewilderment rather than the expected rejoicing (Mk 16:5-6, 8). Instead of seeking Him in Galilee and spreading the news as the angel directed, they are afraid and say nothing to anyone (Mk 16:7-8).

Mark's abrupt ending leaves us with the following questions: Will we give in to fear or spread the news of His resurrection? Will we follow Him to Galilee as He continues to lead us?



Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Crucifixion of Jesus

Crucified King of the Jews (Mk 15:24-28)

Not Saving Himself (Mk 15:29-32)

Topic 2: The Death of Jesus

His Cry to God (Mk 15:33-36)

Events after His Death (Mk 15:37-41)

Topic 3: The Burial of Jesus (Mk 15:42-47)

Topic 4: The Resurrection of Jesus (Mk 16:1-8)

Topic 5: The Ascension of Jesus

Testimony of Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9-11)

Testimony of the Disciples (Mk 16:12-20)

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing

Topic 1 shows Jesus continuing on the way to fulfill the Father's will. This journey to the cross is a public procession. His crime is written above the cross for all to see: King of the Jews. Jesus is crucified with outlaws on each side as the bystanders mock Him.

Topic 2 begins as darkness falls over the whole land and the bystanders' dialogue reveals their misunderstanding of Jesus' teaching. Jesus yields His spirit to death and in the torn veil and the centurion's confession we glimpse what His death accomplished.

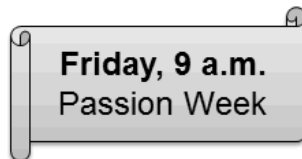
Topic 3 shows the previously secret follower of Jesus—Joseph of Arimathea—a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin, now boldly going to Pilate to request Jesus' body. Joseph lovingly cares for it and places it in his own tomb in a garden.

In topic 4 the women go to anoint Jesus' body that first Easter morning, just as a new day dawns. But, instead of Jesus, an angel is in the tomb announcing that same type of new dawn in Jesus' resurrection. After receiving the angel's message, the women are afraid and run away. After Jesus visits Mary Magdalene, she delivers the message from the angel that Jesus is alive to the disciples.

Topic 5 looks at the end of Mark's gospel and includes information from accounts that help explain events after Mark's book ended so abruptly. Jesus' resurrection is verified, the disciples are commissioned, and He is ascended and seated at the right hand of God.

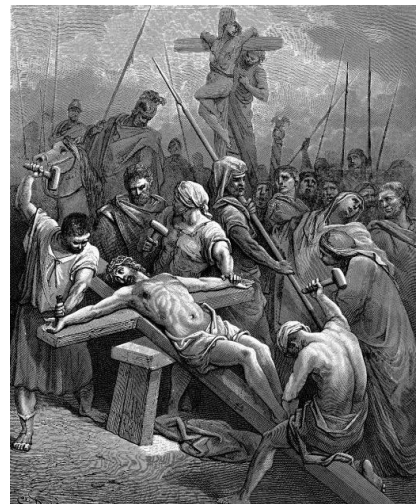
In this lesson Mark shows that Jesus truly is the Son of God, a conclusion now obvious even to a hardened Roman centurion. He goes to the cross in obedience to God's will. He suffers and dies in our place. An angel and empty tomb announce His resurrection and He regathers His scattered flock of followers while continuing the journey to Galilee.

Topic 1: The Crucifixion of Jesus

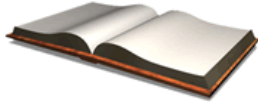


In the previous lesson, Jesus followed God's will even to crucifixion. He is arrested and condemned by both the Jewish and Roman courts. His mocking and beatings start with His trial before the Sanhedrin and intensify during His trial before Pilate.

The first step in the vindication of Christ is, as Mark simply states, that they crucified Him (Mk 15:24). As was customary, His crime was boldly written on a plaque over His head, "king of the Jews" (Mk 15:26). He died as a criminal between two criminals (Mk 15:27). As He hung, the bystanders mocked and tempted Him to come down from the cross and save Himself—as He saved others. Satan's desire is seen behind these taunts as he tried to turn Jesus away from the cross (Mk 8:33).



Crucified King of the Jews (Mk 15:24-28)



Fully human, Jesus struggled to maintain consciousness after enduring a flogging that often killed its victim. Yet He turned down the sedative lovingly offered by the righteous women from Jerusalem. Though He was not exactly thinking clearly due to the pain caused by His beating, it was not the result of any drugs. Jesus had important information to communicate and He wanted His mind as clear as possible. What He experienced on the cross was too real for a nightmare; but the taunts from the bystanders came across warped and twisted as if in a nightmare. All of these statements are crucial spiritual issues, but the bystanders misunderstand Jesus' work.

QUESTION 1

Observing the Text

Read Mark 14:43-15:23 and record your observations in your Life Notebook. Some questions you might want to ask are the following:

- Why does Mark include the mocking comments of the bystanders?
- Who ends up standing closest to Jesus during His death and resurrection?
- What purpose does the centurion's statement serve?
- What are the women concerned about when they go to anoint Jesus' body?
- How do the women respond to the angel's directive?

Assignment

- Read Mark 15:24-28 again.
- Read "Crucified King of the Jews."

Crucified King of the Jews (Mk 15:24-28)

Mark's original readers had seen crucifixions and knew all about them, so he does not give them a detailed description. The four soldiers who supervised His crucifixion would receive His clothing and Mark quotes the scripture it fulfills: "They are dividing up my clothes among themselves; they are rolling dice for my garments" (Ps 22:18; see Mk 15:24).

Mark likely used clothing symbolically to teach spiritual truth. For example:

- John wore the clothing of a prophet, though it was humble compared to what the Jewish leaders wore in their glory (Zech 13:4; Mk 1:6; 12:38).
- The healed demoniac was finally "clothed and in his right mind" (Mk 5:15).
- The woman with the hemorrhage knew that if she only touched Jesus' cloak she would be healed (Mk 5:28).
- Everywhere He went, people tried to touch His cloak to be healed (Mk 6:56).
- In the transfiguration, His clothes were glorified along with Him (Mk 9:3).
- The high priest tore his garment at Jesus' confession to be the Christ and the soldiers mocked Him by dressing Him up as a false king (Mk 14:36; 15:16-20).
- Here they take His clothes from Him and He bears the shame of our nakedness for us (Mk 15:24; see Gen 3:7; 3:10).

“It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him” (Mk 15:25). Mark mentions the third hour here using the Roman system of keeping time. The Romans had a watch every three hours. Mark started keeping time by these watches starting with Peter’s denial at the third watch (the first cock crow, 3 a.m.) and dawn (the second cock crow, 6 a.m.). The four watches of the night are detailed in the Olivet Discourse when it says of Jesus’ return, “whether during evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows, or at dawn” (Mk 13:35). Mark now continues noting these three hour intervals during the day of Jesus’ crucifixion.

Though the charge against Jesus labeled Him “the king of the Jews,” Jesus rejected all of the political aspects of the Messiah through His ministry and yet He is crucified with this title over His head (Mk 15:26). The Romans, through Pilate, used this title to mock the Jews—especially their desire for freedom from Rome and for their own king. Pilate crucifies Jesus with this plaque stating His crime.

Jesus was placed in the middle of two criminals who were crucified with Him (Mk 15:27). Jesus, who lived His life identifying with sinners (Mk 2:15-17), is identified with sinners in death. Remember Jesus’ response to the request of James and John: “You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism I experience, but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give. It is for those for whom it has been prepared” (Mk 10:39-40). Having two men crucified with Jesus seems ironic when looking back to James’ and John’s desire to be on Jesus right and left in heaven. While on earth, these coveted positions were filled by two criminals.

QUESTION 2

Match the section titles to the corresponding reference.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Section Title</i>
Mark 15:24-32	The Crucifixion of Jesus
Mark 15:33-41	The Death of Jesus
Mark 15:42-47	The Burial of Jesus
Mark 16:1-8	The Ascension of Jesus
Mark 16:9-20	The Resurrection of Jesus

QUESTION 3

Mark notes clothing to illustrate Jesus’ teachings and power throughout his gospel. Match the reference with the corresponding lesson taught.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Mark 1:6	Jesus warned the people about the Jewish leaders’ clothes.
Mark 5:15	On the cross Jesus bears our nakedness.
Mark 5:28	A touch of Jesus’ clothing healed the bleeding woman.
Mark 6:56	After Jesus’ healing the demoniac was clothed in his right mind.
Mark 9:3	Jesus’ clothing is brilliantly clean at the transfiguration.
Mark 12:38	Many people touch Jesus’ clothes to be healed.
Mark 15:24	John wore the clothing of a prophet.

Not Saving Himself (Mk 15:29-32)

The taunts hurled at Jesus both while on His road to the cross and while on the cross all seem warped and twisted as if glimpses of reality seen in a nightmare. Jesus might refer to this period of time as a His nightmare.

- He is betrayed by one of His own who, in feigned fellowship, betrays Him with a kiss (Mk 14:18, 43-45).
- He is deserted by all of His followers as they flee in panic, as pictured by one fleeing naked into the night (Mk 14:50-51).
- He endures a sham trial with witnesses falsely accusing Him (Mk 14:53-65).
- He is denied three times by His most ardent follower when questioned by a slave girl and those gathered near her (Mk 14:66-72).
- He is mocked and dressed up as a phony king as abuse is hurled at Him (Mk 15:16-20).
- He is chosen for death over a criminal deserving death and crucified between two criminals (Mk 15:6-15; 15:27).

Yet His nightmare is not induced by narcotics as He denies the sedative offered (Mk 15:23).

- He is derided by the crowd because He said He could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days (Mk 15:29).
- He is scorned for not saving Himself by coming down from the cross, though He could save others (Mk 15:30-32).
- He quotes Psalm 22 from the cross and the bystanders misunderstand, thinking He looks for Elijah to save Him (Mk 15:34-36).
- He is only understood by a centurion who pronounces Him God's Son (Mk 15:39)

Each situation in the list above reveals a spiritual truth that many gathered at the crucifixion did not understand or realize.

All through this gospel Mark emphasizes the unwilling response of people to Jesus. They are amazed and astonished at Him, but most do not respond correctly to their subconscious conclusion—that He is deity or at least supernatural. The leaders say things like only God can forgive sins, yet when Jesus then proceeds to forgive sins they accuse Him of blasphemy (Mk 2:7; see also Mark 14:61-62). The disciples fear who He is (Mk 4:41).

Note: The subconscious is an important witness to Jesus and people are held responsible for responding appropriately to that witness, as the centurion did.

Assignment

- Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12.
- Read Mark 15:29-32.
- Read “Not Saving Himself.”

Not Saving Himself (Mk 15:29-32)

As Jesus passed by the onlookers, they “defamed” Him (Mk 15:29-30). “Defamed” in the original Greek is the word “blasphemy” and it brings to mind the high priest’s charge of Jesus committing blasphemy at His trial (Mk 14:64). The ones really committing blasphemy against God, in the person of Jesus, are the leaders who do not even realize it.

There are three times in the Psalms where the enemy says “aha” as a taunt. One example of this is

“they are ready to devour me; they say, ‘Aha! Aha! We’ve got you’” (Ps 35:21). Read Lamentations 2:15-16, which is an Old Testament example of the attitude of someone who shakes their head. At its heart the rejoicing is because of an apparent defeat of God Himself and His plans. In the same way, Mark reports that the people standing by were continuously throwing insults at Jesus and many were similar to those listed above.

Like the people gathered at His trial (Mk 14:58), the common people mocked Jesus’ statement about destroying and rebuilding the Temple in three days (Mk 15:29). The Jewish leaders mocked Jesus about His claim to save others even though He would not save Himself (Mk 15:31-32). Jesus saved others but did not save Himself; for if He did, He really could not save others (He who saves His life in this world will lose it).

The most difficult temptation for Jesus was that of receiving His kingdom apart from the cross. This was true from His first temptations with Satan (Mk 1:13) to His feeding of the five thousand when the people wanted to take Him and make Him king (Mk 6:45-46) to Peter’s confession when He rebuked Jesus for predicting His death (Mk 8:31-33). Jesus referred to Peter as Satan in the latter reference because he was the tempter behind Peter’s rebuke. The climax of this temptation was in the garden of Gethsemane where the issue was resolved and Jesus accepted the cup (Mk 14:36). Here Satan, through these mockers, continues pressuring Jesus to depart from God’s will and save Himself by coming down from the cross. As Jesus’ followers we will face times in our life when we want put down our cross, but we must follow Jesus’ example and submit to God’s will.

The men who were crucified with Jesus mockingly asked Him if He was the Christ and told Him to save all three of them (Mk 15:32). Mark paints a hopeless situation filled with mocking: the crucifixion of the God of eternity was accompanied by derision from every corner. Again, we may face this derision from unbelievers in our lives as we seek to follow Him. It must not turn us from our path.

QUESTION 5

Lamentations 2:15-16 tells of mocking that sounds like the crucifixion scene. What is being mocked in those verses?

- A. Belief in the resurrection
- B. The city of Jerusalem
- C. The fall of the Northern Kingdom
- D. The destruction of the temple

QUESTION 6

Match the people with the corresponding statement they made.

<i>People</i>	<i>Statement</i>
The common Jew	You who would rebuild the Temple in three days
The Jewish leaders	Aha! Aha! We’ve got you!
The criminals crucified with Him	Save yourself and us
The enemy in Psalm 35:21	He saved others but cannot save Himself
The high priest	You have heard the blasphemy.

QUESTION 7

The most serious temptation for Jesus had always been to receive His kingdom apart from the cross. Match the reference with the corresponding teaching in Mark.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Mark 6:45-46	Come down from the cross now
Mark 8:31-33	Jesus' temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane
Mark 14:36	The people trying to take Him and make Him king
Mark 15:31-32	Peter's rebuke of Jesus for saying He must die

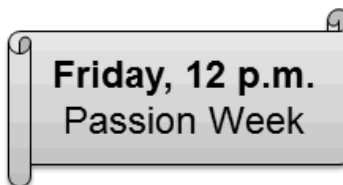
QUESTION 8

Record in your Life Notebook the steps Jesus took to defeat the temptation to receive the kingdom without the cross and continue in doing God's will. Then record what you think is your most serious temptation and the steps you will take to defeat this temptation and continue to do God's will.

Key Points:

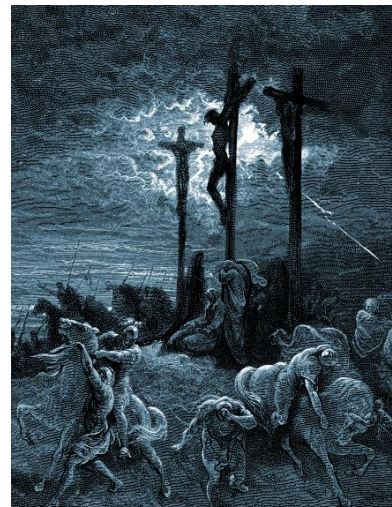
- The mocking of Jerusalem in the Old Testament prefigured the mocking Jesus received on the cross, as both represented God.
- The bystanders to Jesus' crucifixion mocked Him, making statements that helped illustrate His work on the cross.
- When the bystanders ask Jesus to "come down from the cross" it is the same temptation He has faced before in Mark to receive the kingdom apart from the cross.

Topic 2: The Death of Jesus



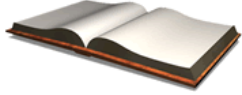
As our leader, Jesus stayed true to the Father's will through unimaginable trials and pain. Now the scene visibly darkens as God predicted it would during the time of Israel's judgment: "In that day," says the sovereign Lord, "I will make the sun set at noon, and make the earth dark in the middle of the day" (Amos 8:9). However, Israel as a nation did not recognize their day of visitation.

By quoting Psalm 22 Jesus expresses His confidence that, though He looks deserted by God now, God will soon deliver Him (Mk 15:34). The bystanders continue misunderstanding Him and think He calls to Elijah for help, but not everyone misunderstands. The centurion standing in front of Jesus carefully observed the way He died. So what does this hardened Gentile soldier conclude? The centurion said, "Truly this man was God's Son" (Mk 15:39). Mark uses this



confession to show that what was once known only by heaven is now obvious to a Gentile centurion on earth.

His Cry to God (Mk 15:33-36)



The centurion assigned to observe Jesus' execution was overwhelmed with unusual phenomena, circumstances, and conversations. The sign above Jesus' cross made Jesus stand out as unique. Then there were celestial signs—like darkness at noon—that also caught his attention. While other men cursed their executioners; this man forgave them and made sure His mother was cared for. Never had he seen any of these things in any crucifixion scene.

Assignment

- Read Psalm 22, written by King David around 1000 BC of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Read Mark 15:33-36.
- Read "His Cry to God."

His Cry to God (Mk 15:33-36)

The prophet Amos recorded a messianic prophecy that the sun would set at noon and the Lord would cause mourning that would be fitting for the loss of an only son, calling it "a bitter day" (Amos 8:9-10). This prophecy is fulfilled when Jesus hung on the cross and it was dark from noon until three in the afternoon (Mk 15:33). The prophecy will have a dual fulfillment in the darkness just before Jesus returns at His second advent (see Joel 3:9-16; Mk 13:24-27). This darkness is a sign from God to Israel that the day of the Lord, their day of visitation, is here. Because Israel rejects Jesus, the day of the Lord will return in the seven years of God's wrath (the tribulation) before His second advent at the Mount of Olives (Zech 13:7-14:11).

At the end of the three hours of darkness Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34-35). This cry is also the first verse of Psalm 22, a messianic psalm, and by saying this one verse Jesus may refer to the whole psalm. Dedicated Jews knew their Scriptures well and knew this entire Psalm from memory. They did not have chapter and verse divisions so they referred to an entire passage with one reference. This common rabbinic teaching technique is also illustrated by the time Jesus referred to the passage about Abiathar the high priest at the time of David (Mk 2:23-28). If Jesus did think of the entire Psalm instead of just the first line, He felt forsaken because of His current situation. However, He was confident in the Lord since birth and anticipates His deliverance (Ps 22:10; 22:21).

Someone in the crowd filled a sponge with wine and lifted it on a stick to Jesus' lips, taunting Him, "Let's see if Elijah will come to take him down" (Mk 15:36). The bystanders continue their mocking, revealing their own misunderstanding of what Jesus says. Misunderstanding can often be a source of trial for Christians trying to follow Jesus. Elijah had already come. The first time was through John the Baptist who called the people to make the Messiah's paths straight (Mk 1:2-4). But they had already killed Elijah in the person of John the Baptist (Mk 6:27). Then Elijah himself came and met Jesus at the transfiguration (Mk 9:4). Jesus is not calling for Elijah at this time, but Elijah will come again before His second advent. The people thought Jesus called for Elijah to rescue Him from the cross and they view Elijah as the superior figure. When Peter mistook Elijah as an equal, the Father terminated the transfiguration early and clarified that Jesus was His beloved Son (Mk 9:5-8).

QUESTION 9

What happened at noon on the day Jesus was crucified that hinted to Israel that this was their day of visitation?

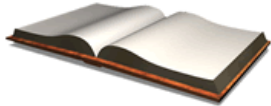
- A. An earthquake
- B. Darkness
- C. The sun turned to blood
- D. Jesus' death

QUESTION 10

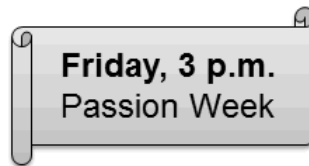
In one of Jesus' sayings on the cross, who did the bystanders think Jesus called to rescue Him?

- A. The Father
- B. The centurion
- C. Moses
- D. Elijah

Events after His Death (Mk 15:37-41)



In addition to the celestial signs the centurion observed, and his observations of Jesus' compassion and character, another phenomenon now caught this man's eye. He had watched Jesus as He approached His cross. Even before being crucified He was at the point of bodily failure, as someone else carried His crossbeam. But now, after six hours on the cross, He seemed to regain His strength. "This is not a mortal man," he thought to himself. He even verbally trusted God to care for His spirit! And His cry before dying was not that of a weakened man ready to die, but the loud victorious cry of a well-trained athlete seizing the moment: "It is completed!" There is only one conclusion, as he now found himself saying, "Truly this man was God's Son!"



Assignment

- Read Isaiah 64. This passage records Isaiah's longing for God to rip open the heavens.
- Read Mark 15:37-41.
- Read "Events after His Death."

Events after His Death (Mk 15:37-41)

Jesus' loud voice shows He died suddenly and not from being crucified (Mk 15:37). He yielded His spirit and was in control until His last breath. The Greek word translated as "loud voice" has not appeared since Mark 1:3 where John the Baptist was shouting in the wilderness to make the path of the Messiah straight. Jesus' shout shows He has accomplished His purpose and fulfilled God's will.

After Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom (Mk 15:38). Both the direction of the tear—from top to bottom—and the passive verb suggest that God tore the curtain. The veil was made in a way that it was humanly impossible to tear and no natural phenomena could tear it. The tearing of the veil symbolizes direct access to God. There are good arguments for it being either the inner curtain, between the holy place and the holy of holies or the outer curtain, between the court of the Gentiles and the holy place. If it was the inner curtain, it opened the access into God’s presence for all, not just the high priest once a year. If it was the outer curtain, it opened access for Gentiles to areas previously reserved for Jews. Besides opening access, the tear symbolized the removal of the temple ritual of Mosaic law as the way to approach God (see Hebrews 10). This tearing happened at the time of the evening sacrifice and the ministering priests would have witnessed it tear.

The outer veil in the temple pictured the stars of heaven (minus the signs of the Zodiac). So this is the third time in Mark, this time symbolically, that God rips open the heavens to testify of His Son (Mk 1:10; 9:7). This fulfills the longing of Isaiah who said, “If only you would tear apart the sky and come down” (Isa 64:1). Other times Mark pictured God opening the heavens in Mark were at Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration. Symbolically, God is breaking through the barriers that separate heaven from earth and is revealing His Son. (Adapted from David Ulansey. *The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark’s Cosmic “Inclusio”*. Internet Article. [Originally published in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110:1 (Spring 1991) pp. 123-25])

The manner of Christ’s death caused one guard to exclaim, “Truly this man was God’s Son!” (Mk 15:39). This scene shows a Gentile seeing who Jesus is even before the Jewish leaders and other Jews surrounding the cross. Similarly, blind Bartimaeus at Jericho saw Jesus as the Messiah before the multitude with physical sight (Mk 10:46-52).

The guard came to see by observing all of the events of the crucifixion and based on them he came to this inescapable conclusion. He saw the counter-testimony, the insults and abuse, and still saw this. The centurion’s testimony showed that by the end of Mark, the gospel had gone out to and could be understood even by Gentiles. So the message that was a heavenly revelation is now revealed by humans on earth (Mk 1:11; 9:7; 16:8; 16:20). The message is right here with us.

The women who followed and supported Jesus in Galilee were in Jerusalem at the time (Mk 15:40-41). The one Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses, is likely identified because the early church knew James and Joses. The other Mary was from Magdala on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had released Mary Magdalene from being possessed by seven demons (Mk 16:9). The words translated “followed” and “support” indicate that the women continually did these services for Him. Mark lists them here because they were eyewitnesses of His crucifixion and to show their faithfulness to Jesus in contrast to the men who followed Him. As with them, Jesus has not called any of us because we are great, but we can all be faithful.

QUESTION 11

Jesus’ loud cry when He died showed He was in control of the time of His death. *True or False?*

QUESTION 12

Which of the following is true about the torn veil in the temple? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. It was torn from left to right.
- B. Its construction made it virtually humanly impossible to tear.
- C. Priests were ministering at the time it was torn.
- D. The passive verb suggests that God tore it.

QUESTION 13

What was the significance of the centurion's statement naming Jesus as the Son of God in Mark 15:39?

Key Points:

- The darkness at noon was a sign to Israel that this was their day of visitation.
- The bystanders misunderstand and think Jesus calls for Elijah to rescue Him.
- Jesus' loud cry when He died showed He was in control of the time of His death and gave a cry of victory before breathing His last breath.
- Tearing the veil witnessed that Jesus is the Son of God and showed that God had successfully broken through the barrier between earth and heaven in the person of Christ.

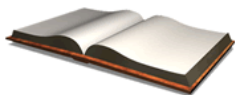
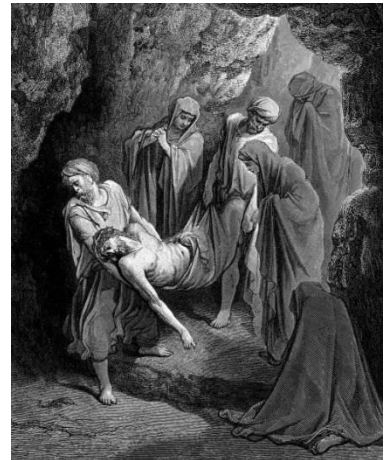
Topic 3: The Burial of Jesus (Mk 15:42-47)

Friday, 6 p.m.
Passion Week

The death of Jesus drew a confession from the Gentile soldier. It also changed the life of one of His secret disciples—Joseph of Arimathea. He was a rich member of the Sanhedrin that recently condemned Jesus to death. He now comes boldly, at the cost of his reputation and safety, and lovingly cares for Jesus' body (Mk 15:43, 46).

The love and devotion of Jesus' followers during His time of passion, starting with chapter 14, is shown mainly two ways:

1. They stayed as close as they dared to where He was. Peter and John did this at Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin when they stay in the high priest's courtyard when Jesus is inside his residence on trial and by the women who observe the crucifixion and try to visit His body early Sunday morning (Mk 14:66; Mk 16:1-4).
2. They anoint, or attempt to anoint, His body. Mary of Bethany and the three on Sunday morning do this and Joseph did after he asked Pilate for Jesus' body, wrapped it in spices and laid it in his tomb (Mk 14:1-11; 15:42-47; 16:1-4).



Joseph of Arimathea had known of Jesus for years. Joseph and Nicodemus, another secret disciple of Jesus, were mysteriously excluded from Jesus' early morning trial today. Both understood that if they publicly acknowledged Jesus that they would at least be excommunicated and removed from office—and even their lives may be in danger.

But after hearing about the mockery of a trial and how Jesus suffered and died, Joseph decided he must step forward and do what he could for Jesus. In this case that was by caring for Jesus' body and burying Him in his own tomb, in the middle of the beautiful garden.

Assignment

- Read Mark 15:42-47.
- Read "The Burial of Jesus."

The Burial of Jesus (Mk 15:42-47)

In the evening, on the day before the Sabbath, "Joseph of Arimathea... went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus" (Mk 15:42-43). He now declares boldly his belief in Jesus by asking Pilate for Jesus' body. This bold move endangered him with not only the Jewish leaders but also the Roman authorities. His reputation with the Sanhedrin was also at stake because they had already condemned Jesus. Joseph laid Jesus in his own tomb that was cut out of the rock, thus fulfilling the Scripture that predicted that He would be with a rich man in His death (Isa 53:9).

Joseph's actions were bold, especially considering that all of Jesus' twelve disciples had deserted Him. For us, though we may seem insignificant, the time may come in our lives when we can do something significant to advance the cause of Christ or serve Him in some unexpected way. Let us be ready and looking for such a time to serve Him or His servants. It can have lasting effect; Joseph is a good example of someone stepping forward at some personal risk to proclaim himself a follower of Christ.

People who were crucified lost their rights to any dignity, and many scholars believe this included burial. Because of this, Joseph needed to get permission from Pilate to obtain Jesus' body. These requests were not usually granted in cases of treason, which indicates Pilate may have believed Jesus was innocent. Jews believed burial was a right for all and the body must be buried before sundown or the land became defiled. Jesus bore the curse of God in His crucifixion because He hung on a tree (see Deut 21:22-23). His burial was especially important on Friday, for on the Sabbath day a burial was not allowed.

Pilate was surprised when Jesus died so quickly and called the guard to ask how long Jesus had been dead (Mk 15:44). Pilate's surprise is understandable because death on the cross often took two to three days of excruciating pain. To speed up the death of the criminals, soldiers would break their legs so that they could not lift themselves up to breathe. Jesus' legs did not have to be broken, which shows He was the one in control of His death. After Pilate knew Jesus was dead, he let Joseph have His body (Mk 15:45). The word translated "body" technically meant a corpse, confirming that Jesus was dead.

Mark endeavors to show that Jesus received an honorable burial in describing Joseph's care for Jesus' body (Mk 15:46). Because of the coming Sabbath, he had to finish their loving task before the first star appeared. The tomb was then secured by a large round rock that rolled down an incline to cover the opening of the tomb. It took the help of many men to move this rock.

Again Mark mentions that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus witnessed all these events, including this burial (Mk 15:47). They will also witness the empty tomb in the next topic.

QUESTION 14

Describe the personal sacrifices Joseph made in order to care for the body of Jesus.

QUESTION 16

What happened to Jesus' dead body was important to Mark. *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

In Jesus' passion, several of Jesus' followers took steps to show their love and devotion to Jesus. Each person does what he or she can. Record in your Life Notebook what each of those steps were and then record what you think you can do to show your devotion to Jesus.

Key Points:

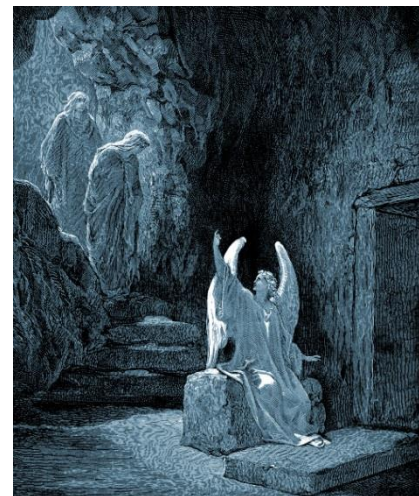
- Joseph, like the rest of Jesus' followers took steps at personal cost, to make sure Jesus received an honorable burial again doing what he could.
- The term used for Jesus' body refers to a corpse and it shows Jesus was officially pronounced dead.
- Mark includes in his gospel that Jesus received a proper burial and that His followers lovingly cared for His body.

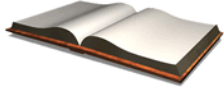
Topic 4: The Resurrection of Jesus (Mk 16:1-8)

Sunday at
sunrise

Watching with great interest where Jesus' body was laid to rest, the three women visit His tomb as early as possible Sunday morning. They continue to show their loving devotion to Jesus by caring for His body. How the Jews cared for the dead showed their belief in the resurrection and the promises of God. For example, Joseph had this same faith in God's promises and he made Israel promise to bring his bones back with them to the Promised Land (Gen 50:24-26).

Though Jesus clearly predicted His resurrection after three days, these women did not expect the news the angel brought. They are unprepared for their visit and do not even know how they will roll away the stone. Jesus is alive and ready to lead them on to Galilee. Instructed by the angel to tell His disciples and Peter, instead the women leave with fear and trembling. So the road prepared at the beginning of Mark is now accomplished by the Pioneer of our salvation who leads us on to Galilee (Mk 1:2; Mk 16:7).





The women who followed Jesus were aware of how much they could assist His mission. They could serve Him in many ways that His male followers could not in their society. They served meals and contributed in many traditional ways to the human needs of Jesus and His disciples. They especially had many chances to minister to Him in the circumstances surrounding His death.

Assignment

- Read Mark 16:1-8.
- Read “The Resurrection of Jesus.”

The Resurrection of Jesus (Mk 16:1-8)

After the Sabbath, three women took spice to the tomb to anoint Jesus (Mk 16:1). Women become prominent in Mark starting in Mark 14:1 when Mary anoints Jesus’ body (Mk 14:1-11). In these last three chapters, women are important witnesses and because of their loving devotion, they either anoint Jesus’ body or expect to do so. Jesus’ passion (holy week) begins and ends with women anointing Him. They connect Jesus’ anointing for death together with His death, His burial, and His resurrection. They are the witnesses to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and lend credibility to the truth of the story. If someone were to invent such a story, he would use more credible witnesses by this society’s standards, because the witness of women was not highly regarded.

Early in the day after Sabbath, the women went to the tomb wondering how they would get past the large stone blocking the entrance (Mk 16:2-3). Jesus’ followers continue misunderstanding Jesus and His mission—though He taught them plainly about it. Jesus predicted His resurrection, as He did whenever He taught about His death, but none of His followers expect to find Jesus raised from the dead.

When the women reached the tomb, they found the stone already rolled out of the way (Mk 16:4). Mark emphasizes the women’s helplessness to move the large stone. But the size of the stone is not a barrier to God and He removes it for them. The sunrise symbolizes Jesus’ resurrection in the same way the announcement of the dawn of a new age did when Mark first announced the gospel (Mk 1:1). For Mark’s original readers, even though they suffer now, they belong with Jesus’ glory and will share that with Him in eternity. When we remember that, it is easier to bear the trials and sufferings.

When the women enter the tomb, they see a young man in a white robe and they were alarmed (Mk 16:5). “Young man” is the same Greek word used of the young man who flees naked in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:51-52). He appeared as a man in the prime of life. Mark likely refers either to the more prominent angel or to the designated speaker. The Greek word translated “alarmed” describes the terrified reactions of people to a revelation of God. This reaction is similar to how the disciples reacted when Jesus calmed the storm (Mk 4:41).

The angel calms their fears and assures them they are at the right tomb, that Jesus is resurrected and that they need to tell the disciples about it. In addition to this news, the angel tells the women that they, too, will see Jesus in Galilee (Mk 16:6-7). Next he gently chides them for not believing that He would be resurrected as He told them He would. The words translated “has been raised” are from a passive verb showing that God raised Him.

Jesus predicted the disciples’ scattering when God struck Him, but He also promised to re-gather them in Galilee (Mk 14:28). Peter is mentioned to allow for his restoration to fellowship after his denial of Jesus. This invites all followers—even grievous sinners—to return to fellowship with Him. Jesus leads on the way to Galilee just as He boldly led the frightened disciples to Jerusalem, so He continues leading them and us. Jerusalem and the temple are no longer the spiritual center of His

people. In Galilee they will see the resurrected Christ. There they will learn what Jesus has taught them since Peter's confession (Mk 8:31-33; 10:45). Mark shows the disciples did not immediately respond to this call to Galilee.

The women, representing all of Jesus' followers, do not respond immediately to the angel's direction not to fear (Mk 16:8). They remain alarmed and do not tell Jesus' disciples that He is raised. Now the facts about Jesus' identity are no longer secret and must be proclaimed.

Many of the actions taken in the early verses of Mark are resolved at the end of his book:

- The new age pictured as dawning with the announcement of the new emperor is pictured at the end by the resurrection (Mk 1:1; 16:2).
- Mark's introduction of Jesus as the Son of God in the opening verse and by the Father at His Baptism changes at His death to a human confession of Jesus as the Son of God (Mk 1:11; 15:39).
- The forerunner's cry in the wilderness is fulfilled by Jesus' cry of victory and achievement on the cross and the testimony of His followers to the entire world (Mk 1:3; 15:37; 16:8; 16:20).
- The gospel message of a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to Israel has changed to the gospel of forgiveness through Jesus' death and resurrection also to the entire world (Mk 1:4; 16:6).
- Where John's baptism once drew people out of Jerusalem, Jesus now calls them to follow Him to Galilee and then to spread His message into the entire world (Mk 1:5; 16:7; Acts 1:8).
- He delighted His Father while on earth at the beginning of His ministry and that delight is also present at the end of His earthly ministry and proven by His resurrection and ascension (Mk 1:11; 9:7; 16:6; 16:19).
- He endured all of Satan's temptations and triumphed over them fulfilling His mission by being obedient to death, even death on a cross (Mk 1:13; 15:30-31; see also Phil 2:8).

Despite His accomplishments, the obedience of His followers—even those who have received His deliverance—to His call is not assured (Mk 1:44-45; 16:7-8). This should cause the believer to ask, "Is my obedience to His call assured? How will I personally respond?"

From the course author's perspective, the gospel of Mark ends at verse eight. This gospel started with a cry in the wilderness to make the Messiah's paths straight and it ends with Jesus having made the path straight and leading the way to believers' new destination. The abrupt ending of Mark is intentional and allows the readers to fill in the ending with their own response. The original readers faced fear in their own lives; they were commanded to testify but fear prevented them. The question is, though fearful, would they go on in obedience or cower in fear? Would they be restored like Peter, or protect their lives in this world and deny Him? Would they save their lives and ultimately lose them or lose their lives and save them? Mark wants us to face these same questions.

QUESTION 18

Women are rarely mentioned as followers of Jesus in Mark until He begins His passion and then they provide valuable services for Him. Match the reference with the corresponding service provided.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Service</i>
Mark 14:8	Mary anointed Jesus' body beforehand for burial.
Mark 15:40-41	The women watched His crucifixion from a distance.
Mark 15:47	Mary and Mary Magdalene witnessed where Jesus' body was buried.
Mark 16:1	The angel sent the women with a message to the disciples.
Mark 16:7	Three women attempted to anoint Jesus' body in the tomb.

QUESTION 19

Which of the following is **not** an argument for the truthfulness of Mark's account?

- A. The women are witnesses of the resurrection.
- B. Jesus' followers expected to find Jesus' body to anoint.
- C. The followers of Jesus expected Him to die and be resurrected.
- D. The major events are witnessed by two or more witnesses.

QUESTION 20

What questions does Mark want us to face at the end of his gospel (Mark 16:8)?

Key Points:

- Women have important roles in serving Jesus and their role became more prominent as His death approached.
- Mark's gospel uses unlikely people as witnesses to events and this fact witnesses to its truth.
- The abrupt ending of Mark asks the readers to fill in the ending with their own lives.

Topic 5: The Ascension of Jesus

There is much debate about the verses in this lesson. Were they part of what Mark originally wrote or, even if they were not, are they part of inspired Scripture? We do know they are a collection, or summary, of things Jesus did after Mark ends at verse eight:

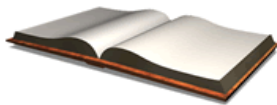
- Verses nine through eleven summarize the story of Mary Magdalene as told by John (Jn 20:10-18).
- Twelve and thirteen summarize Luke's story of the disciples on the Emmaus road (Lk 24:13-35).
- The rest of the verses continue summarizing the post-resurrection appearances in John—the Great Commission, the



ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father, and the proclamation of the gospel. The validating signs accompanied the message as the early chapters of Acts describe.

Some suggest that after Mark finished his gospel and it was distributed to others, a scribe added this material. Therefore many Bible scholars do not think these verses are part of inspired Scripture. Most Bible translations available today include the longer ending with a note that it is not included in the earliest Greek manuscripts. The scribe may have thought he could help those who did not have access to the other gospels to understand what happened after Mark's gospel ended. While we cannot be sure that these verses were part of the original gospel Mark wrote, we do know that these verses do not contradict or add anything that does fit with the New Testament. Still, these final twelve verses remain a perplexing problem.

Testimony of Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9-11)



The scribe read through Mark's gospel and was struck not only by its content, but by how the book ended. To him, it appeared that the ending to the book was lost. "Why would anyone end a book like this?" he thought. From the reading he had done in the other gospels and Acts, he knew more information than Mark provided. He was concerned for the church only had a copy of Mark's gospel. "I think this book should end with more detail. The people need to know important things that happened after Mark's record stopped," he thought to himself. So, he carefully researched important events that occur after Mark's story ended.

Assignment

- Read Mark 16:9-11.
- Read "Testimony of Mary Magdalene."

The Testimony of Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9-11)

The author of the last section of Mark first discusses Mary Magdalene, the first human witness to Jesus' resurrection in Mark 16:9-11. The author clearly distinguishes which Mary this is; identifying her as the one from whom Jesus had driven out seven demons. She is mentioned in Luke 8:2 as being one of the women who accompanied Him along with the twelve disciples. Mary's first witness to the resurrection is detailed in John 20:1-18.

QUESTION 21

Mary Magdalene is carefully identified in this passage as the same Mary who anointed Jesus' body before His death. *True or False?*

Testimony of the Disciples (Mk 16:12-20)

Assignment

- Read Mark 16:12-20.
- Read "Testimony of the Disciples."

The Testimony of the Disciples (Mk 16:12-20)

In these verses the author recounts the story of the Emmaus road disciples from Luke 24:13-35 (Mk 16:12-13). Jesus appeared in different form so that the men did not recognize Him immediately. After speaking with Jesus, the men went and told the other disciples, but they did not believe the report.

Next the author recounts the story from John 20:19-29 and Luke 24:36-43 when Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples on the first day of the week in a locked room (Mk 16:14). He rebuked their unbelief of the witnesses' reports and the disciples then believed. Next, the author gives a summary of the Great Commission from Matthew 28:18-20 (Mk 16:15-16). The author focuses on believing in Jesus for eternal salvation and consequently not believing results in condemnation, similar to John 3:18. He also adds baptism because of its importance as a first step of Christian testimony.

Then the author adds verifying signs that accompany those who believe (Mk 16:17-18). All but one of these signs was recorded of the apostles on their journeys testifying for Christ:

- Driving out demons (Mk 3:13-15)
- Speaking in new languages (Acts 2:1-4)
- Picking up snakes with their hands (Acts 28:3-5)
- Drinking poison (no recorded examples in the New Testament)
- Placing hands on the sick and healing them (Acts 3:1-10)

The next event recorded is Jesus' ascension (when He was taken up into heaven), and His sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 1:9-11). He ended by telling how the disciples went out everywhere proclaiming the message while Jesus "worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs" (Mk 16:20).

So, for the most part, these last twelve verses are summaries from other Scripture of what Jesus did after Mark ended his gospel at verse 8.

QUESTION 22

Even though He had a resurrection body, Jesus' followers always recognized who He was when they saw Him. *True or False?*

QUESTION 23

Read Mark 16:16. Notice that Jesus said one must believe and be baptized to be saved. Does this mean that a person who is not baptized is not born again? Consider the verse and Acts 10:44-48 in your answer.

After you composed your answer in your Life Notebook, you can read a suggested answer in the Answers section at the end of this lesson.

Key Points:

- The book of Mark carefully identifies Mary Magdalene as the first human witness of Jesus' resurrection.
- After Jesus' resurrection He can only be perceived with divine help.
- Jesus' duties as He ascended into heaven and our duty to evangelize the world are related to each other.

Topic 6: Knowing, Being, and Doing

QUESTION 24

Mark's gospel was written to believers who had fears about testifying about Jesus. We have those same fears and choices that they did. Write in your Life Notebook what fears you have about testifying. Then write in the answers to those fears as provided by Mark.

QUESTION 25

The Bible is clear that unbelievers will spend eternity in hell. Sometimes, from a human point of view, this seems too severe. After studying this lesson and seeing what Jesus willingly endured to save us, the sentence may be easier to understand. Write down in your Life Notebook how you would answer the objections of someone who felt the sentence to hell is unjust.

QUESTION 26

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about the nature and character of Jesus? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your response in your Life Notebook.

QUESTION 27

What did you observe and understand in this lesson about how Jesus viewed and applied discipleship in the lives of His followers? Make one or two practical applications for your ministry. Record your application in your Life Notebook.

Lesson 12 Self Check

QUESTION 1

Jesus was crucified with two criminals identifying Jesus, who ministered only to the righteousness, with sinners as He died. *True or False?*

QUESTION 2

Which of the following mocked Jesus, misunderstanding His teaching about rebuilding the temple in three days?

- A. The common Jew
- B. The criminals crucified with Him
- C. The Jewish leaders
- D. The Roman soldiers

QUESTION 3

The tearing of the temple veil had been prophesied and it told Israel that their day of visitation by God had come. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

Which of the following is **not** a time that Mark pictures God tearing open the heavens in Mark?

- A. At His baptism
- B. At His temptation
- C. At His transfiguration
- D. At His death

QUESTION 5

Priests would have been ministering at the temple at the same time that Jesus' died. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

What event on the day of Jesus' crucifixion did Mark use to show that the gospel had gone out even to Gentiles?

- A. Jesus' burial by Joseph of Arimathea
- B. Pilate granting Jesus' body to Joseph of Arimathea
- C. Simon of Cyrene carrying Jesus' cross
- D. The Roman centurion calling Jesus the Son of God

QUESTION 7

Jesus' followers best showed their devotion to Him in Mark by caring for His body. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

Which of the following is **not** a question Mark wants us to face at the end of his gospel?

- A. Will we go on in obedience or remain cowered in fear?
- B. Will we be restored like Peter, or will we protect our lives in this world and deny Him?
- C. Will we continue on the road with Jesus to Jerusalem?
- D. Will we save our life and ultimately lose it or lose our life and save it?

QUESTION 9

The Mary who was the first to witness Jesus resurrected is identified by Mark as

- A. Mary the mother of Jesus
- B. Mary the mother of James
- C. Mary of Bethany
- D. Mary Magdalene

QUESTION 10

Jesus' followers always recognized Him when He appeared after His resurrection. *True or False?*

Unit 4 Exam

QUESTION 1

Which story from Mark 14 asks the disciples to apply the commands they received during Jesus' Olivet Discourse?

- A. Mary anoints Jesus for burial.
- B. Judas betrays Jesus for money.
- C. Jesus initiates the Lord's Supper.
- D. Jesus accepts His cup in Gethsemane.

QUESTION 2

What is the common point of both stories told in Mark 14:1-11?

- A. Jesus is betrayed by one of His own
- B. Mary is the ideal disciple
- C. Preparations for Jesus' death
- D. The dangers of the love of money

QUESTION 3

Which of the following is a key discipleship lesson in Mark 14:3-9 when Mary anointed Jesus for His burial?

- A. Jesus decides our missions
- B. Fearing God more than man
- C. Doing what we can
- D. Abiding in Christ

QUESTION 4

According to what you have learned about Jewish culture, what about Judas betraying Jesus likely weighed heaviest on Jesus' heart?

- A. That Jesus had shared bread with Judas
- B. The teachings Jesus had given Judas
- C. The warnings Jesus had given Judas
- D. The miracles Judas had seen in vain

QUESTION 5

Jesus' ascension from the Mount of Olives fulfilled all known biblical prophecy about this mount. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

How did Peter answer when Jesus predicted that the disciples would fall away when Jesus was arrested?

- A. He agreed with Jesus.
- B. He said he was weak in the flesh.
- C. He asked for Jesus' help against failure.
- D. He said the rest may fall away but insisted that he would never fail.

QUESTION 7

The strength of our commitment to Jesus measures our ability to withstand temptation. *True or False?*

QUESTION 8

The disciples respond correctly to Jesus' mission once they see that He truly must suffer. *True or False?*

QUESTION 9

Which of the following stories does Mark tell to parallel the story of Jesus on trial before the Sanhedrin?

- A. Judas betraying Jesus
- B. Peter denying Jesus
- C. Pilate releasing Jesus' substitute
- D. The disciples deserting Jesus

QUESTION 10

Jesus' one objection to His arrest is that they came with too much weaponry as they would against a dangerous criminal. *True or False?*

QUESTION 11

What is the main point taught in the story of the young man who flees naked?

- A. All of Jesus' followers panicked and fled at His arrest.
- B. Jesus had other followers besides just His disciples.
- C. Jesus' sovereign protection of His followers even during His time of trial.
- D. Mark is the young man who fled.

QUESTION 12

In the story of Jesus' arrest, how did Peter show that he did not yet understand Jesus' mission?

- A. By rebuking Jesus
- B. By deserting Jesus
- C. By denying Jesus
- D. By attacking with a sword

QUESTION 13

According to the law of Moses, the ones who falsely accused Jesus should have been put on trial and faced the same sentence He did. *True or False?*

QUESTION 14

What did the false witnesses report as facts at Jesus' trial?

- A. He claimed He could forgive sins.
- B. He claimed He was a king.
- C. He claimed He was the Son of God.
- D. He claimed He would destroy the temple.

QUESTION 15

Though Peter failed and denied Jesus, the reassuring look of His Lord helped comfort him in his failure. *True or False?*

QUESTION 16

Pilate made several attempts to release the innocent man, Jesus. *True or False?*

QUESTION 17

The fact that Jesus was unable to carry His own cross showed He had been beaten to the point of human physical exhaustion. *True or False?*

QUESTION 18

Which of the following mocked Jesus asking Him to save Himself and them?

- A. The common Jew
- B. The criminals crucified with Him
- C. The Jewish leaders
- D. The Roman soldiers

QUESTION 19

The darkening of the sun had been prophesied and it told Israel that their day of visitation by God had come. *True or False?*

QUESTION 20

Which of the following is **not** a time that Mark pictures God tearing open the heavens in Mark?

- A. At His baptism
- B. At His temptation
- C. At His transfiguration
- D. At His death

QUESTION 21

Jesus controlled the time and manner of His death. *True or False?*

QUESTION 22

On the day of Jesus' crucifixion, the most important Gentile testimony to who Jesus was came from Simon of Cyrene. *True or False?*

QUESTION 23

In Mark's story the disciples immediately believed the testimony of Mary Magdalene who was the first human witness to Jesus' resurrection. *True or False?*

QUESTION 24

The specific question Mark wants us to face at the end of his gospel is Will we go on in obedience or remain cowered in fear (Mk 16:8)? *True or False?*

QUESTION 25

The Mary who was the first to witness Jesus' resurrected is identified by Mark as

- A. Mary the mother of Jesus
- B. Mary the mother of James
- C. Mary of Bethany
- D. Mary Magdalene

Notes

Suggested Answer to Question 23

In the second part of the verse, it says those who “disbelieved will be condemned.” This indicates that belief alone was all that was required for salvation. Also in Acts 10:44-48 it is clear that Cornelius and his house received the Holy Spirit and were born again before they were baptized. In the first century, baptism was not a condition of salvation, but to be baptized was just another way of saying, “I believe in Christ.”

Lesson 12 Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Section Title</i>
Mark 15:24-32	The Crucifixion of Jesus
Mark 15:33-41	The Death of Jesus
Mark 15:42-47	The Burial of Jesus
Mark 16:1-8	The Resurrection of Jesus
Mark 16:9-20	The Ascension of Jesus

QUESTION 3

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Mark 1:6	John wore the clothing of a prophet.
Mark 5:15	After Jesus' healing the demoniac was clothed in his right mind.
Mark 5:28	A touch of Jesus' clothing healed the bleeding woman.
Mark 6:56	Many people touch Jesus' clothes to be healed.
Mark 9:3	Jesus' clothing is brilliantly clean at the transfiguration.
Mark 12:38	Jesus warned the people about the Jewish leaders' clothes.
Mark 15:24	On the cross Jesus bears our nakedness.

QUESTION 5

- B. The city of Jerusalem [Jerusalem is closely identified with God and His people. The mocking of it in Lamentations when it was destroyed by the Babylonians prefigured the satanically influenced mocking Jesus received on the cross.]

QUESTION 6

<i>People</i>	<i>Statement</i>
The common Jew	You who would rebuild the Temple in three days
The Jewish leaders	He saved others but cannot save Himself
The criminals crucified with Him	Save yourself and us
The enemy in Psalm 35:21	Aha! Aha! We've got you!
The high priest	You have heard the blasphemy.

QUESTION 7

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Teaching</i>
Mark 6:45-46	The people trying to take Him and make Him king
Mark 8:31-33	Peter's rebuke of Jesus for saying He must die
Mark 14:36	Jesus' temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane
Mark 15:31-32	Come down from the cross now

QUESTION 8: *Your answer*

QUESTION 9

- B. Darkness [This darkness is a sign from God to Israel that the Day of the Lord, their day of visitation, is here (Amos 8:9).]

QUESTION 10

- D. Elijah

QUESTION 11: True

QUESTION 12

- B. Its construction made it virtually humanly impossible to tear.
 C. Priests were ministering at the time it was torn.
 D. The passive verb suggests that God tore it.

QUESTION 13: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

Ironically this scene shows a Gentile seeing who Jesus is before the Jewish leaders and other Jews surrounding the cross. It shows that God has broken through the barriers between heaven and earth through Jesus' incarnation and ministry (Isa 64:1). For Mark, it shows that what was only known by

heaven at the beginning of Mark (that Jesus is the Son of God) can now be seen by a Gentile observer on earth.

QUESTION 14: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

He was rich and a highly regarded member of the council (the Sanhedrin) that recently condemned Jesus to death. Because he looked forward to the kingdom of God, he went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus at the stake of his reputation, his position in the council, and possibly even risking death as His follower (Mk 15:42-43).

QUESTION 16: True [It was important to Mark to show that Jesus received a proper burial and the loving devotion Jesus' followers showed for His body.]

QUESTION 17: *Your answer*

QUESTION 18

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Service</i>
Mark 14:8	Mary anointed Jesus' body beforehand for burial.
Mark 15:40-41	The women watched His crucifixion from a distance.
Mark 15:47	Mary and Mary Magdalene witnessed where Jesus' body was buried.
Mark 16:1	Three women attempted to anoint Jesus' body in the tomb.
Mark 16:7	The angel sent the women with a message to the disciples.

QUESTION 19

C. The followers of Jesus expected Him to die and be resurrected. [Women were not legally valid witnesses in that society and the followers of Jesus did not expect to find Him resurrected.]

QUESTION 20: *Your answer should be similar to the following:*

The abrupt ending is intentional. The questions may be: Will I go on in obedience or cower in fear? Will I be restored like Peter, or protect my life in this world and deny Him? Will I save my life and ultimately lose it or lose my life and save it?

QUESTION 21: False

QUESTION 22: False [This is also the case when sharing a testimony because others cannot see unless God opens their eyes.]

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

QUESTION 24: *Your answer*

QUESTION 25: *Your answer*

QUESTION 26: *Your answer*

QUESTION 27: *Your answer*

Lesson 12 Self Check Answers

QUESTION 1: True

QUESTION 2

A. The common Jew

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4

B. At His temptation

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6

D. The Roman centurion calling Jesus the Son of God

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8

C. Will we continue on the road with Jesus to Jerusalem?

QUESTION 9

D. Mary Magdalene

QUESTION 10: False

Unit 4 Exam Answers

QUESTION 1

D. Jesus accepts His cup in Gethsemane.

QUESTION 2

C. Preparations for Jesus' death

QUESTION 3

C. Doing what we can

QUESTION 4

A. That Jesus had shared bread with Judas

QUESTION 5: False

QUESTION 6

D. He said the rest may fall away but insisted that he would never fail.

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9

B. Peter denying Jesus

QUESTION 10: True

QUESTION 11

A. All of Jesus' followers panicked and fled at His arrest.

QUESTION 12

D. By attacking with a sword

QUESTION 13: True

QUESTION 14

D. He claimed He would destroy the temple.

QUESTION 15: False

QUESTION 16: True

QUESTION 17: True

QUESTION 18

B. The criminals crucified with Him

QUESTION 19: True

QUESTION 20

B. At His temptation

QUESTION 21: True

QUESTION 22: False

QUESTION 23: False

QUESTION 24: True

QUESTION 25

D. Mary Magdalene