

## MARK'S GOSPEL: The early teachings of Jesus

- ◆ Who was Mark?
- ◆ Who was John the Baptizer?
- ◆ Jesus chooses His disciples
- ◆ Jesus the friend of sinners
- ◆ God's power over Satan
- ◆ The miracles of Jesus
- ◆ Healing in the name of Jesus

THIS BOOK tells about the early days of the ministry of Jesus on earth. It tells about His teachings and His healings and what it means to be a follower of Jesus today.

*MANNA PUBLICATION Supply Bible commentaries written by Fred Morris (USA). For many years Fred, and his wife Lorna, travelled round the world teaching and preaching. When they returned home they wrote these notes for printing and selling wherever there was a need for basic Christian teaching.*

THIS REVISED UK edition is written in easy-to-read Worldwide English which will add understanding and also speed up translation into other languages. It gives basic teaching for all readers plus additional notes for Bible students, teachers and pastors.

*THESE BOOKS are to use on your own or to study in a group. They will teach you God's truth. They will help you to know God's Son, Jesus Christ. They will help you to talk about your faith in God. They will stop you from going the wrong way in life. They will tell you what is right and what is wrong. They will help lead you closer to Christ. They provide food for life.*

WE PRAY that you may have a new peace and purpose in life as you read the Bible and use these commentaries.

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# MARK'S GOSPEL

## The early teachings of Jesus Christ

**A Bible Commentary in easy-to-read Worldwide English for personal or group study**

**by Fred Morris**



**Part One:  
Chapters 1 to 8  
with parallel readings in  
Matthew and Luke**

## To the reader or leader

These Bible commentaries explain the truth about God's Word in a way which is easy to read and understand. You can use these books to study the Bible on your own or with others in a group. In a group study, each person should have his or her own book and a Bible if possible.

There is a lot of information in this book. Please study it slowly and thoughtfully. Ask God to help you apply the things you learn into your own life and situation.



Where you see this sign, it means you or your group leader should always read the Bible passage first before reading the words in this book.



**Talk about.** Where you see this sign, it gives questions that can be used in a group study. They also help the reader to understand the Bible verses.



**Multiple choice questions.** Where you see this sign there are questions with three possible answers; some are right answers, some are wrong answers. These questions help you think carefully about what you are reading. The answers to these questions are given at the back of the book. Use the questions as a personal test.



Where you see this sign inside ruled boxes, the information is mainly for Bible students, teachers and preachers.

- **Additional Bible readings** are there to give you important information. God will use them to speak to you. This is why you should check all readings now or later and use them for study at home. Some readings are from the Old Testament (OT), which we call 'the holy writings'. That is the part of the Bible written before Jesus Christ lived on this earth.

These Bible commentaries give God's truth as a foundation for all believers. The people leading the study should add applications and experiences from their own Christian life and culture.

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### For further study we recommend:

*'The Applied New Testament Commentary'* by Thomas Hale, published by Chariot Victor Publishing, U.S.A. (1-5647-6675-6) and Kingsway Publications, U.K. (0-85476-508-5)

*'Unlocking the Bible: Omnibus'* by David Pawson, published by HarperCollins, U.K. (0-00-716666-4)

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## **MARK'S ACCOUNT OF THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST**

Mark's Gospel or 'Good News', is the second of four books in the Bible about the life of Jesus Christ. A young believer named John Mark wrote it between AD42 and AD44. He learned from Peter most of the things that Jesus said and did. These things took place in Judea and Galilee, which we now call Israel. Mark's book tells us a lot about the last week before Jesus was nailed to a cross to die. It ends where Jesus comes to life again and goes back to heaven to be with His Father, God.

These first eight chapters of Mark's Gospel tell us about the early part of Jesus' work of teaching and healing. The Good News is that God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for us in this way. This means that all people everywhere who worship God and believe in Jesus will have everlasting life with Him. (TJB)

### **WHO WAS MARK?**

John Mark was a Jew who had a non-Jewish family name, Markus. He learnt much from Peter who was the disciple of Jesus. Peter loved Mark and called him 'my son' (1 Peter 5:13). Mark's mother lived in a large house in Jerusalem, the chief city of Israel (formerly Judea). She had heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and believed. Other Christians met at her house to worship and pray to God (Acts 12:12).

For a very long time, the Jewish people waited for a great leader promised by God (a Saviour or Messiah). The people thought the Messiah would save them from their enemies, the Romans, who ruled their land.

Most religious leaders had disciples and men gave up their work to follow a leader and learn from him. Mark followed Peter who followed Jesus. He heard Peter speaking about Jesus and about what He did. Young Mark believed that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ).

Mark was a cousin of Barnabas, Paul's friend. He went with Paul and Barnabas to teach the Good News in Asia Minor (Turkey). But then he left them and went back home to Jerusalem. Paul did not want to take Mark on his next preaching trip, so Barnabas took Mark with him and went to Cyprus. Later, Paul and Mark became friends again. Paul wrote from prison, 'Mark comforted me' (Colossians 4:11).

Mark wrote that Jesus Christ is 'Son of God'. Jesus called Himself 'Son of Man'. This was the name God gave to his prophets, the men chosen to speak God's message to the people (Ezekiel 12:2). But God also said that Jesus was His Son (Mark 1:11; 9:7). God chose a young girl called Mary to give birth to Jesus (Luke 1: 26–35; 2:1-20).



**Talk about:**

1. What do we know about Mark?
2. How did Mark learn about Jesus?
3. What is different about Jesus compared to the other prophets of God?

**WHAT DOES MARK SAY ABOUT JESUS?**

In this first part of Mark's Gospel, we read about the work that Jesus did when he had reached the age of 30. Jesus came to do the work of God, His Father. He fed the hungry (Mark 8:1–13). He healed the sick (2:1–12). He told demon spirits to leave people (9:14–32). He raised the dead (5:42). These miracles showed that He came from God (see John 1:14). Mark wanted us to know that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus brought the Gospel, the Good News that God will forgive our sins if we believe in His Son.

The Bible says that all people have sinned (Romans 3:23). We are born full of sin, so God sent His Son to save us. The greatest thing that Jesus did was to die for us. He came to suffer and to die. But He was born without sin. We deserve to die because we are sinners. Jesus did not deserve to die. But the Bible teaches that Jesus came to die for us, in our place, so that God can take away our sins, if we believe in His Son. These things were promised in the holy writings, hundreds of years before Jesus was born.



**20 things the Holy Writings say about Jesus in the Old Testament (OT)**

*And how they came true in the New Testament (NT)*

1. Jesus is the promised Messiah (Christ), God's Son, our Saviour. (OT: Deuteronomy 18:15; Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 53:12; NT: Matthew 16:16; Mark 1:11; Luke 2:11, Hebrews 7:25)
2. Jesus is the promised healer. (OT: Isaiah 35:5,6; NT: Mark 2:12; 7:35; 8:25)
3. Jesus came from King David's family. (OT: Isaiah 9:7; NT: Matthew 1:1)
4. God promised that Abraham's seed would bless all the nations on earth: (OT: Genesis 18:18; NT: Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:25)
5. Jesus was born in Bethlehem from the family/region of Judah/Judea. (OT: Micah 5:2; NT: Matthew 2:1)
6. Jesus was born to a young woman before she was married and before she

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Mark Chapters 1 to 3**

**Part A.** 1. b, 2. a, 3. c, 4. a, 5. c, 6. b, 7. a.

**Part B.** 1. F, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. F.

**Mark Chapters 4 to 6**

**Part A.** 1. c, 2. a, 3. c, 4. b, 5. b, 6. c.

**Part B.** 1. T, 2. F, 3. F, 4. F, 5. T.

**Part C.** 1. thirty, sixty, one hundred  
 2. twelve  
 3. about two thousand  
 4. twelve  
 5. five thousand  
 6. five, two.

**Mark Chapters 7 and 8**

**Part A.** 1. c, 2. c, 3. c, 4. b.

**Part B.** 1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T.

**Part C.** a. many, b. much, c. much, d. much, e. many  
 f. many, g. many, h. much, i. many, j. much.

- g. \_\_\_\_\_ bad spirits,                      h. \_\_\_\_\_ water,  
 i. \_\_\_\_\_ loaves,                              j. \_\_\_\_\_ salt



### Spreading the Good News

Jesus told His disciples to teach everyone everything that He taught them (Matthew 28:20). Some preachers teach the Good News of Jesus (the Gospel) by telling people that God loves everyone and will bless them and give them good things if they follow Jesus. They forget to say that God is a Holy God and hates sin. They forget to say that it is often costly to follow Jesus. Jesus came to tell the whole truth from God (John 18:37). God knows that we deserve to be punished for our sins and need to be set free from our sins. Jesus came to take the punishment for us by dying on the cross. If we believe this then we can be forgiven and set free from our sins and be accepted by God. He can then give us a new purpose in this life and hope for the future even though there will be troubles at times. This is the whole Gospel that we must teach and preach.

**GOD LOVES YOU even though  
 you do wrong things and think wrong things.  
 God sent his Son, Jesus Christ,  
 to show you the right way to God.  
 God let him die on a cross to show his love for us.  
 Jesus died for people like you and me.  
 After three days God gave Jesus a new life.  
 If you believe in Jesus and follow his teachings,  
 he will forgive you and give you a new life.  
 He will free you from your bad ways.  
 Then you will be put right with God  
 and you will live with him for ever.  
 God has freely done all this for you  
 even when you think there is no hope.**

*The Jesus Book*, SOON Publications

- had sex with a man. (OT: Isaiah 7:14; NT: Matthew 1:18)
7. As a baby, Jesus was taken to Egypt for safe keeping. (OT: Hosea 11:1; NT: Matthew 2:14,15).
  8. Jesus moved to the region of Galilee to teach the people. (OT: Isaiah 9:1, 2; NT: Matthew 4:13,14).
  9. Jesus was 'the great prophet' spoken of by Moses. (OT: Deuteronomy 18:15; NT: John 6:14)
  10. Jesus is our priest for ever. (OT: Psalm 110:4; NT: Hebrews 6:20)
  11. Jesus was wise and understanding. (OT: Isaiah 11:2; NT: Luke 2:52)
  12. Jesus was not wanted by His own people. (OT: Isaiah 53:3; NT: John 1:11)
  13. Jesus would be welcomed into Jerusalem as a humble king, riding on a donkey. (OT: Zechariah 9:9; NT: Matthew 21:2–9 and John 12:12–16)
  14. Jesus was betrayed by one of His disciples. (OT: Psalm 41:9; NT: Mark 14:10, 18–20)
  15. Jesus was betrayed for 30 silver coins. (OT: Zechariah 11:12; NT: Matthew 26:15)
  16. Jesus had untrue things said against Him. (OT: Psalm 27:12; NT: Matthew 26:59–61)
  17. Jesus did not speak when He was put on trial. (OT: Isaiah 53:7; NT: Matthew 26:62, 63)
  18. Jesus was put to death with criminals. (OT: Isaiah 53:12; NT: Matthew 27:38).
  19. The hands and feet of Jesus were pierced through. (OT: Psalm 22:16; NT: John 19:37 and 20:27)
  20. The people laughed at Jesus and said bad things about him. (OT: Psalm 22:6–8; NT: Matthew 27:39, 40)
- There are many other references in the New Testament to the Old Testament. In Mark's gospel alone there are over 50 references and nearly 90 in Matthew's gospel.

### THE EARLY DAYS OF JESUS



#### Matthew chapters 1 and 2 and Luke chapters 1 and 2

Matthew, Luke and John also wrote their own Gospels (stories of the Good News about Jesus Christ). Matthew and Luke in their Gospels tell us about the birth of Jesus and His cousin John the Baptizer. (Mark does not tell us about these things in his Gospel.)

Roman armies were in control of Israel when Jesus and John were born. Caesar Augustus, in Rome, sent the order to his soldiers in Israel to get the Jews to sign their names on a list (Luke 2:1). To do this the Jews had to travel to their home town. He wanted to count how many Jews lived in Israel. A man called Joseph was engaged to a young girl called Mary and

they travelled to his home town of Bethlehem to sign their names.

Mary was pregnant. It is a bad thing for an unmarried woman to have a child. When Joseph knew that Mary was going to have a baby, he thought it best not to marry Mary (Matt. 1:19). But God spoke to him in a dream. Then he understood that this pregnancy was God's miracle. He took Mary as his wife-to-be but did not have sex with her until after Jesus was born (1:25).

It was while they were in Bethlehem that Jesus was born. Jesus was not the son of Joseph. He was the Son of God, born from a seed planted in Mary by the Holy Spirit of God (Matt. 1:18,20). God did this so that His Son could be born without sin in His life.

The Gospel of Luke also tells us about the birth of John the Baptizer, six months earlier (Luke 1:5–24; 57–66). His birth was also a miracle of God (1:7,13). But he was not God's son. He was the son of Zechariah. Mark tells us all about God's plan for John (see below).

Local shepherds were told where to find and worship the baby Jesus (Luke 2:12). A vision of angels from God told them of this wonderful event. God wanted the ordinary, simple people to know about the birth of His Son.

At this time, Herod was ruling over Israel for Caesar. Herod was a very wicked, cruel king. One day, important men from the East went to Herod's palace. We usually call them 'the three wise men'. They were looking for the new baby King of the Jews in Israel. They had followed a new star in the sky (Matt. 2:2). But Jesus was not at the king's palace. Where was He? Herod asked the religious leaders to tell him. They read what the prophet Micah said in the holy writings that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). That is where the wise men found the baby Jesus. Wise people should read their Bible. Then they will be led in the right direction. Herod did not want a Jew to become king in his place. That is why he killed all the babies in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). Sadly, it was information from the wise men that caused the wicked king to do this.

Mary and Joseph escaped to Egypt with Jesus (Matt. 2:13). God's angel told them what to do and later guided them back to Nazareth (2:22,23). This was the town where Jesus lived for nearly 30 years of His life on earth. People thought he was the son of Joseph, the carpenter.

Jesus increased in wisdom as He grew older (Luke 2:52) but many people could not believe that He was the Son of God. Just before he died, Jesus told Pilate, 'The reason I came into the world was to teach and show the truth' (John 18:37). The angels said that Jesus came to be a Saviour, the promised Christ or Messiah (Luke 2:11). Simeon said that Jesus came to bring light to non-Jews and glory to the Jews (2:32). The prophetess Anna said that Jesus was the Saviour (Redeemer) that everyone in Jerusalem had been waiting for (2:38). What do you believe was the purpose of God when He sent Jesus into the world?



## QUESTIONS ON MARK CHAPTERS 7 and 8

*(Answers are at the end of the book)*

### A. Choose the best answer or the best phrase to complete the sentence.

- Why did Jesus not like what the Pharisees said and did?
  - They did not listen to Him.
  - They told His disciples to wash their hands and pots.
  - Their hearts were not right.
- Jesus healed the Greek lady's daughter because ...
  - He liked her.
  - she told Him a sad story.
  - she believed in Him.
- Jesus is ...
  - one of the prophets.
  - John the Baptist come back from the grave
  - the Messiah.
- Why did Jesus tell Peter that he was not thinking like God?
  - He did not believe in Jesus.
  - He did not want Jesus to die.
  - He did not want to go with Jesus.

### B. Which sentences are True (T) and which are not true or False (F)?

- Jesus said that what comes out of a person can make him dirty. T/F?
- Four thousand people were fed from seven loaves and a few small fish. T/F?
- The yeast of the Pharisees was their bad teaching. T/F?
- The Son of Man was a name of Jesus. T/F?
- God said that Jesus was His own dear Son. T/F?

### C. Which of these words can we use 'MUCH' with and which can we use 'MANY' with?

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| a. _____ pigs, | b. _____ wind,    |
| c. _____ land, | d. _____ talking, |
| e. _____ fish  | f. _____ people   |

## TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW JESUS

Peter did not want to follow Jesus if He was going to be killed. So Jesus warned them all that they could be disciples, but there was a price to pay. Every disciple had to 'take up his own cross'. The 'cross' is a way of life. Each person must be ready to die to themselves (give up their own way of life) and accept the will of God for their lives. That is what Peter needed to do.

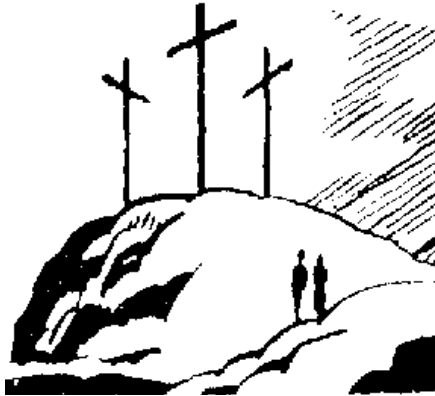
For the Christian, Christ's cross is not a pretty thing. It is not a thing of gold on a chain. His cross means death to our old life. When we 'take up' the cross of Jesus, we live to serve God. We do only those things that please Him. The cross means death to self, but it also means life to the new person that is born inside us.

The person who wishes to follow Jesus must forget himself. He must forget his own selfish desires. Jesus did that every moment of His life. He gave up His glory and power and came to earth to do what the Father wanted (Philippians 2:7–8). Now He offers His followers the same way of life and calling. He gave up everything to seek and to save those who were lost.

When Jesus told His followers to pick up their cross and follow Him (8:34), He was also thinking of the time in the future when men took Him to a hill outside Jerusalem and nailed Him on a cross.

Jesus wants His followers to put Jesus first in their lives and to **spread the Good News** (8:35). For some people, it might cost them their lives. Are we ready to do this?

Jesus also speaks about His Second Coming (8:38). We will speak more about that in the second part of Mark's Gospel. Also about what happened to Jesus before and after his death.



### Talk about:

1. What two questions did Jesus ask about himself (8:27–29)? What is your answer?
2. What should we remember when 'death to self' seems too hard? (8:35)
3. What is more precious than a person's body? (8:36)
4. Perhaps we are afraid that we will lose our lives if we follow Jesus. But what should we be even more afraid of? (8:38)



### Talk about:

1. The angel of God spoke to the father of John (Luke 1:13–20) and the mother of Jesus (1:26–38) and to Joseph (Matt. 1:20–25). How did they respond to what they were told? How can we learn from this?
2. How did the important men from the East receive guidance about King Jesus? How did the shepherds learn about Jesus? How should we seek guidance from God in our lives?
3. What did the following people think about the birth of Jesus: Mary, king Herod, the important men from the East, the shepherds in Bethlehem, Simeon and Anna in Jerusalem? What do you think about the birth of Jesus? Who do you believe Jesus was, and is, and will be?



**Mark 1:1–13** (Also in Matthew 3:1–17 and 4:1–11; John 1:19–34)

## JOHN THE BAPTIZER PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS

In the first 13 verses we meet all the main people in Mark's Gospel:

- a) John the Baptizer, who preached in the desert (1:4).
- b) Jesus, the Son of God, who came from heaven (1:9).
- c) God, the Holy Spirit, who came upon Jesus (1:10).
- d) God, the Father, who spoke from heaven (1:11).
- e) Satan, who came to tempt Jesus (1:13).
- f) The angels who served Jesus (1:13).

John the Baptizer looked like a prophet of God. He lived and spoke like a messenger from God (1:6). He fitted perfectly the picture that the prophets Malachi and Isaiah gave 700 years before. They spoke about hearing the voice of a messenger calling 'Make the way ready for the Lord!' (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3). Mark used the prophet's words to tell us who John was (Mark 1:2,3).

God filled John with His Spirit even before he was born, to do this work (Luke 1:13,41). John came to tell the people 'Stop doing wrong things and be baptized' (Mark 1:4).

When people said that they were sorry for the wrong things they had done, John baptized them. He put them under the water and brought them up again. This showed the world that they had repented. 'Repent' means that we are sorry for our sins and that we want to turn from them and get back to God. Our sins include everything wrong that we think, say or do and also the good things that we forget to do. Sin separates us from God, who is perfectly good and holy and without sin. Going under the water is a way of

showing that God has washed away our old lives and we are making a fresh, clean start with Him.

God had promised to deliver the people of Israel from their enemies and to bless them again. God had promised to send a Saviour or Messiah. Many prophets in the Old Testament spoke of this, but there had been no special prophet for 400 years and many people had given up hope. Then John came! He came to prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah. John was not the Messiah. John told the people about Jesus – he said that someone very important was coming (1:7,8). After this Jesus was sent by God's Spirit to be tested by Satan (see Matthew 4:3–9.)



### Talk about:

1. How did men know that John was a prophet (1:6)?
2. What did John come to do?
3. What did John say about Jesus (1:7)?
4. What did John ask people before he baptized them (1:4)?
5. What does 'repent' mean?
6. When Christians are baptized it makes their friends think about God and Jesus and His Good News: True or False?

## JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS

Jesus came from Galilee to the River Jordan and John baptized Him (Matthew 3:13). Jesus did not have to repent, for He had no sin (Hebrews 4:15). John baptized Jesus because it was the right thing to do (Matthew 3:15). It was God's plan and it was right in order to show others. John came to prepare the way for the work of Jesus. This was God's plan for John.

When Jesus came up out of the water, John saw three great signs:

- a) The sky was 'open'.
- b) The Holy Spirit rested on Jesus.



- c) A voice came from Heaven saying, 'This is My dear Son... I am very pleased with Him'. John said later: 'I saw the Spirit coming from the sky. He (the Holy Spirit) came down on Him (Jesus) like a dove. He stayed on Him. I myself did not know who He (Jesus) was. But He (the Father) who sent me to baptize people in water told me. He said, "You will see the Spirit coming from the sky on a man. That man will baptize people in the Holy Spirit." I saw the Spirit resting on Him, and I have told you. This man is the Son of God.' (John 1:32–34) (TJB).

In Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Him to touch his eyes (8:22). Perhaps this was the only time that Jesus had two attempts at healing someone. The disciples were like this blind man. They could not 'see' clearly at first the things that Jesus taught about the Kingdom of Heaven.

## PETER BELIEVES THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST

They were walking through the villages when Jesus asked His disciples, 'Who do people say I am?' (8:27). He wanted to hear what they would say. He wanted them to say what they really believed.

They answered, 'Some say that you are John the Baptizer, others say Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets.' (8:28).

'But what about you,' Jesus asked. 'who do you say I am?' (8:29). Peter answered, 'You are the Christ.' Peter meant the Christ, the Messiah, the King that God had promised. Jesus was pleased with this answer.

'This understanding was not given to you by man,' Jesus told Peter, 'but by My Father in Heaven.'

## A PATHWAY OF SUFFERING

Towards the end of His teaching, He told His disciples what would happen to Him. He was going to suffer many things and then die (8:31).

He spoke to them plainly, not in parables. Soon He would be killed. The Son of Man would be taken away :

- a) by His own people,
- b) by the religious leaders,
- c) by the chief priests who held great power.

They would all shout 'Kill Him!' But after three days, He would rise again from the dead. Peter was very upset about all this. He took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to You!' (Matthew 16:22).

Jesus looked at Peter and the others. He said, 'Get behind Me, Satan. You are not thinking (and saying) the things of God!' (8:33). In a very short space of time, Peter had changed from listening to God ('You are the Christ') to listening to Satan.

What Peter said was what Peter wanted. Satan had put these words into Peter's mouth. Satan would use any means to stop or hinder God's plan to save men and women.

A large crowd listened to Jesus as He spoke (8:1). They had been with Him for three days and not had anything to eat. There were no shops and no food, but the disciples had seven loaves in their baskets.

Jesus took their loaves of bread. 'He gave thanks, broke them and gave them to the disciples to give to the people.' (8:6). Again, Jesus used the disciples to perform the miracle. About 4000 men, as well as women and children, ate and were filled.

After Jesus had sent the people away, He got into a boat with His disciples and went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

There, the Pharisees 'asked for a sign from Heaven' (Luke 23:8). They did this to test Him, because they wanted to see for themselves His great power. They had no faith, and their questions made Jesus tired. 'No sign will be given to you,' He said (8:12) 'except the sign of Jonah.'

While the disciples were sailing up to Bethsaida, Jesus said, 'Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod' (8:15). The disciples must have looked confused. They thought that Jesus had said this because they had forgotten to buy bread. Jesus was warning them about sin and evil. 'Don't let your lack of faith be like theirs,' He said.

The 'bread' of this world does not last. Only Jesus will satisfy forever those people who believe in Him. He is 'the bread of life'.



### HEALING THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL

'Is any one of you sick?', James asked. 'The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well,' (James 5:14–15). Sick may mean sick in body or sick in spirit. Sin can make men sick. We can be sick with worry, and with work, and sick with disease. Some people are sick in their minds. Some are sick with demons. God can heal all sickness. The sick person must see that they need God's touch. They should call the leaders of the church – the local group of believers. These are spiritual leaders in the Christian community. They lead others because they are men of faith. They have learnt to believe God's promises. They have the authority and power of Christ (Matthew 28:18).

Those people come to pray for the sick person and anoint them with oil **in the name of the Lord Jesus**. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. He is the power of God in the Church. We ask God to heal the sick person in the name of the Lord Jesus (John 14:12–14). We ask that the Lord will heal them of sickness or despair. He heals the person that He wishes to make well or He gives them more grace, love and strength to accept their suffering (1:12). Paul asked God three times to heal 'a thorn in his flesh'. God did not heal him. He told Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in (your) weakness' (2 Corinthians. 12:9).



### Talk about:

1. Did John know who Jesus was (John 1:32–34)?
2. Why did Jesus ask John to baptize Him in the river?
3. What did God the Father say about His Son, Jesus?
4. Which prophets spoke of the Messiah, the Christ (Deuteronomy 18:18; Isaiah 7:14)?



### Names that Mark gave to Jesus

Jesus Christ (1:1)	Lord of the Sabbath (2:28)
Son of God (1:1 and 3:11)	Son of the Most High (5:7)
Jesus of Nazareth (1:24)	The carpenter (6:3)
The Holy One of God (1:24)	Mary's son (6:3)
Lord (1:3 and 7:28)	The Christ (Messiah) (8:29)
Son of Man (2:28 and 8:31)	



### Mark 1:14–20 (Also in Matthew 4:12–22; Luke 4:14,15 and 5:2–11)

#### THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

John the Baptizer called men to repent and believe in Jesus the Messiah (Christ). We repent when we are sorry for our sins and turn away from them. John told King Herod that it was wrong for him to marry his brother's wife, so Herod put John in prison. Later he killed John.

But Satan does not take God by surprise and nothing happens to us by chance. God knows everything and He has all the power. He chooses to do what He wants to do and His plans will succeed (Isaiah 46:10). God has also given Jesus the authority to choose what He will do (Matthew 28:18; John 13:3).

For hundreds of years, the Jewish people had looked for a Messiah. They wanted a leader who would deliver them from the power of their enemies, the Romans. But God first wanted them to turn back to Him away from their bad ways. Many good people of God had been killed trying to save the Jews from their bad ways and from the bad ways of other people. The Jewish prophets told of One who would come and save them. This person or 'Saviour' (Messiah) would come to save all peoples – Jews and non-Jews. This Person would bring back for us everything that was lost

when Adam first sinned (Genesis 3:17–19; Deuteronomy 18:15; Isaiah 42:1; 49:6; Galatians 3:16). This Person was Jesus. Jesus told them that the Kingdom of God was near. It would be a place in the hearts of people where He saves them and rules over them.



### Talk about:

1. What is the Good News that Jesus told the people (Mark 1:14,15; John 17:3)?
2. How did Satan try to spoil God's plan?
3. Why do men have to repent (1:15)?
4. Once again – what does 'repent' mean?

## JESUS CALLS WORKING MEN TO FOLLOW HIM

Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee. He saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, throwing a fishing net into the lake (1:16). Jesus called to them, 'Come and follow Me!' He wanted to teach them about God's Kingdom. Note that Jesus called ordinary working men to follow him.

At once they stopped fishing and followed Jesus. He gave these fishermen a promise, 'I will make you catch men' – not fish (1:17).

Andrew was one of John's disciples. He left John and followed Jesus. Then Andrew went back to his brother and told him, 'We have found the Messiah' (John 1:40,41). John helped Andrew to become a follower of Jesus.

Then Simon believed in Jesus, the Messiah or Christ, and became one of Jesus' disciples. Later on, Jesus said to Simon, 'Your name will be Cephas'. That is the same as 'Peter' in the Greek language and it means 'rock' (John 1:42). This was the same Peter who taught Mark everything that he knew about Jesus.

Jesus was now ready to teach His disciples and to tell other people about God's Kingdom and about His holiness.



### Mark 1:21–28 — (Also in Luke 4:31–37)

## JESUS BEGINS TO PREACH AND TO HEAL

Jesus went into the synagogue (Jewish religious meeting house) in Capernaum and taught the people (1:21). They were amazed at His teaching. Their own leaders read God's Law to them every Sabbath day but

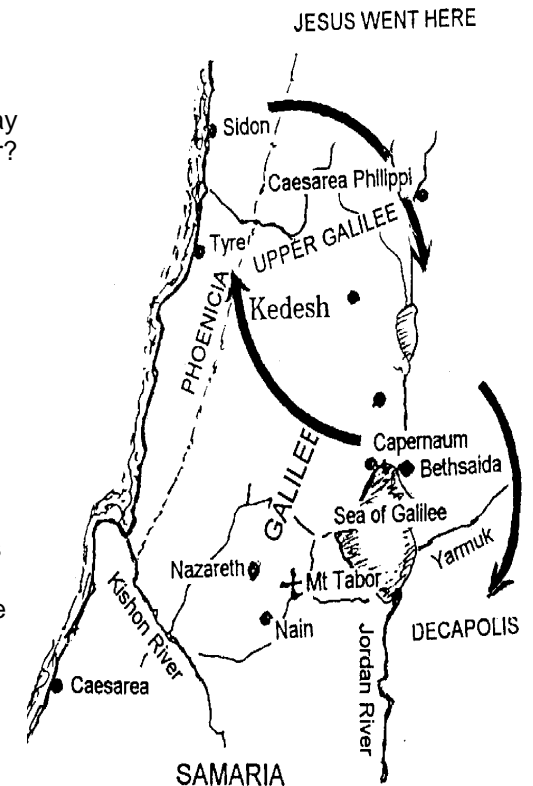
## JESUS HEALS A MAN WHO WAS DEAF AND DUMB

From Tyre, Jesus travelled a long way round to go back to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (see map). After travelling about 100 miles (150 km), Jesus healed a man who was deaf and could not speak very well. Notice that the man was healed because the people who brought him to Jesus had faith.



### Talk about:

1. Why do you think Jesus spoke to the woman this way before healing her daughter?
2. What blessing did the Gentile woman ask Jesus for?
3. What did she believe about Jesus?
4. How do we know that she understood more about Jesus than many of the Jews?
5. Why did Jesus not heal the Greek woman's daughter immediately?
6. What eight things did Jesus say and do to the deaf and dumb man (7:33–34) before he was healed?
7. Why do you think Jesus did all these things before the man was healed?



### Mark 8:1–38

## JESUS MAKES THE DISCIPLES UNDERSTAND

In this chapter, the disciples learn a lot about themselves and about Jesus:

- a) The disciples have little faith and hard hearts (8:17–21).
- b) Peter said who Jesus really was (8:29).
- c) Jesus told them about His death and resurrection (8:31).
- d) His followers must take up their cross and follow Jesus (8:34).
- e) Jesus spoke of His Second Coming (8:38).

that out of people's hearts come evil thoughts, thoughts of sex, stealing, murder, adultery, greed, cheating and lying. All these evils come from inside a person and make a person unclean (7:21–23).

So washing our hands doesn't make our hearts clean. Only God can make us clean on the inside. Some Pharisees had faith in religious traditions instead of trusting in God. That is why Jesus called them hypocrites; they were pretending to be good (7:6; Luke 11:37–54; Luke 12:1–3). People do not need to keep the old Jewish laws about clean and unclean food (7:19). (The Jews were not allowed to eat some kinds of meat.) It is not the food that matters. It is the kind of things we think and do which are important to God.



### Mark 7:24–37

## A GENTILE WOMAN HAS FAITH

Jesus left that place and went to Tyre on the Mediterranean Sea coast (7:24). Tyre and Sidon were very old cities on the coast of the Great Sea (Mediterranean). The people who lived there were Gentiles, not Jews. They worshipped other gods.

Tyre was 40 miles (60 km) away from the Sea of Galilee. Jesus did not want people to know where He was. But even in this place, the people noticed Jesus.

A woman saw Jesus and called after Him. She wanted Jesus to heal her daughter. This woman was an outsider, like a 'dog' to the Jews, but she knelt at Jesus' feet and begged for His help.

'First let the children eat,' Jesus told her. 'It is not right to throw their bread to dogs.' Jesus meant that he had come to teach the truth of His Kingdom to the Jewish nation first. She knew what He meant (John 1:11; Matthew 10:5,6). His time to 'give bread' to the Gentiles would come later (Mark 16:15).

What was Jesus asking this woman? 'Can your faith get past race and religion and come to Me? Have you enough faith for your daughter to be healed?'

The woman answered, 'Even little dogs eat the crumbs that the children leave under the table' (7:28). She showed she did have faith. She was not too proud to come to a Jew. Jesus was very pleased with her answer and He told her that her daughter was healed (7:29). It was as simple as that!

The Kingdom of God is for all people and this woman pushed in even though she was not a Jew. Maybe she was the first in her town. (Matthew 8:13; 11:12.)

Sadly, many of the religious Jews would not believe in Jesus. But strangers and ordinary people in the crowd had great faith in Jesus.

Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God with great authority, 'as if He had the right to teach them' (1:22). There was power in His words. He said that the Kingdom of God was near and that they could enjoy its blessings.

Jesus' words had so much power in them that they made a man cry out 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?' Then the man shouted, 'I know who you are – the Holy One of God' (1:24). He had an evil spirit in him, which made him speak in fear like this. Jesus knew that it was not the man who was shouting, but it was the evil spirit inside the man. 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' Jesus told the spirit. Then the demon spirit shook the man and went away. The people were amazed. 'He tells the bad spirits what to do and they obey Him,' they said (1:27).

Notice that Jesus 'would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was' (1:25,34). Jesus would not let Satan, the chief of the demons, say who He was. He did not want to attract large crowds. But it was not long before everybody knew about the teaching of Jesus and that bad spirits obeyed Him (1:27,28). Nor did He want evil spirits to talk about Him.



### Talk about:

1. How can we help others to become followers of Jesus (John 1:49).
2. Jesus wanted only the clever people to be his disciples: is this true or not true?
3. Why were the people surprised at Jesus' teaching?
4. How did these evil spirits know Jesus?



### Mark 1:29–45 — (Also in Luke 4:38–44)

## PETER TAKES JESUS HOME

Capernaum was a town on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus stayed there, at Simon Peter's house. Simon's mother-in-law was sick so Jesus went to her, took her hand and helped her to get up. Her fever left her



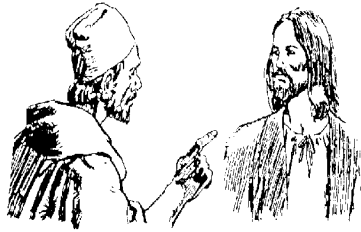
### The Jewish Synagogue

At the synagogue the Jews:

- a) worshipped and prayed to God;
- b) read and taught the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) every day;
- c) held a school for boys;
- d) met with the religious leaders who were called Scribes and Pharisees;
- e) learned the Law of God that He gave to Moses;
- f) listened to teachings, which any wise and learned members of the congregation could preach.

immediately and she began to serve them (1:31). Jesus had the power of God with Him to do miracles. He healed the sick. This showed that Jesus cared for the people who were ill: he also cared for their relatives.

By the end of the day all the people in the city crowded around the door (1:33). They brought sick people and those who had demon spirits to Jesus.



Jesus healed them all.

Next morning Simon Peter called the others and they went out to look for Jesus. He often got up while it was still dark and went to a quiet place to pray (1:35). He prayed to His Father in Heaven. Prayer kept him in the power and will of God, His Father.

Peter found Jesus and told Him, 'Everyone is

looking for You!'

Jesus replied, 'Let us go to the nearby villages.' So they walked through that part of Galilee and Jesus spoke in their meeting places. He also made the bad spirits come out of people (1:39).

## JESUS HEALS A MAN WHO HAD LEPROSY

A man who was sick with leprosy (a bad skin disease) came to Him. He knelt down and begged Jesus to help him. (People with leprosy had to live away from towns and villages.) He said, 'I know that You can heal me if You want to.' Jesus was very sorry for him. He put out His hand and touched him. He said, 'I want to. Be healed.' At once the man was healed. Then Jesus said, 'Go and show yourself to the priest...' The man had to do this to have proof that he was healed. After that, he could go back to his family. He would not have to live alone any more and shout out, 'Unclean! Unclean!'

Once again Jesus tried to stop the healed person from telling others (1:44). But the man told everyone that he met. Before long it was difficult for Jesus to go from place to place because of the crowds (1:45).



### Talk about:

1. What risks did Jesus take in touching a leper?
2. Why did the man who was healed have to show himself to the priest?
3. Find other places in Mark's story where Jesus prayed early in the day.
4. What did Jesus say to Simon Peter (John 1:42)?
5. How would His disciples catch men?

### C. Put in the missing numbers.

1. Some plants produced a crop of \_\_\_\_\_ seeds, some \_\_\_\_\_ and some \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ disciples were sent out to tell the Good News.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ pigs ran into the sea.
4. The little girl who died was \_\_\_\_\_ years old.
5. Jesus gave food to \_\_\_\_\_ people.
6. There were \_\_\_\_\_ loaves and \_\_\_\_\_ fishes.



### Mark 7:1–23

## THE TEACHINGS OF THE PHARISEES

Religious Jews always washed their hands before they ate food. And they washed them in a special way. The disciples ate without washing their hands. This was against the religious ways of the Pharisees.

Jesus called some of these Pharisees 'hypocrites'. They did not live the way that they told other people to live. They only pretended to be holy. They washed their hands but their hearts were not clean. 'Nothing outside you can make you unclean,' Jesus told them. 'It is what comes out of you that makes you unclean' (7:15). God sees into a person's heart. He knows who we are and what we are really like inside.

'Isaiah was right about you,' Jesus told them (Isaiah 29:13). The prophet spoke God's words against the hypocritical Jewish leaders. The prophet's words should make them stop and think, but the hypocritical Pharisees refused God's word and kept to their traditions – the things their fathers had taught them to do. Washing hands in a special way before they ate was one of their traditions.

Jesus told them that they were changing God's Laws. He gave them an example: they were not obeying the command, 'Honour your father and your mother'. 'You put in its place your own rule.' They allowed a son to stop helping his father and mother by saying 'this thing is *corban*'. *Corban* meant 'an offering to God' and was usually money. In this way a man held back help that his parents needed.

Later, the disciples asked Him again about the parable of the unclean heart. 'Don't you understand?' Jesus asked them, and He told them again

## QUESTIONS ON MARK CHAPTERS 4 TO 6

(Answers are at the end of this book)

### A. Choose the best phrase to complete the sentence.

1. The seed that fell on good ground and gave much fruit is like the people who hear God's message and . . .
  - a) work very hard.
  - b) have no trouble in their lives.
  - c) hold it in their hearts.
2. The kingdom of God is like a mustard plant because . . .
  - a) it grows big from a small seed.
  - b) it is useful for birds and seeds.
  - c) it grows only in good soil.
3. The man with a bad spirit . . .
  - a) ran away from Jesus.
  - b) looked after pigs.
  - c) went home well.
4. The woman was healed by . . .
  - a) the doctor's medicine.
  - b) touching Jesus in faith.
  - c) paying money.
5. People in the home town of Jesus . . .
  - a) loved Him.
  - b) were angry with Him.
  - c) said He was a prophet.
6. Herod ...
  - a) said that John was Elijah.
  - b) wanted to kill John.
  - c) wanted to listen to John.

### B. Which sentences are True (T) and which are not true or False (F)?

1. One day we will know about the things that people try to hide and keep secret. T/F
2. The wind blew the boat to the other side of the sea. T/F?
3. The daughter of Jairus was not really dead. T/F?
4. Jesus told His disciples to take food with them. T/F?
5. Jesus walked on the water to go to His disciples. T/F?



Mark 2:1–12. — (Also in Luke 5:18–26)

### JESUS HEALS A MAN WHO COULD NOT WALK

Jesus went back to Simon Peter's house. Many people heard that He was there and they filled the house until there was no more room (2:2). Jesus preached God's Word to them. The Word of God is the Good News (Gospel) of God's love shown in Jesus (Acts 8:4).

Houses in Israel were usually built with large stones and they had flat roofs made of earth, dried mud or clay. You could walk on them. Some of the buildings had very simple roofs made of wood and branches or tiles.

Four men carried their friend, who could not walk, to the house where Jesus was teaching. They could not get inside, so they went up and lifted up the roof. Then they lowered their sick friend on his bed, right to Jesus' feet. Faith in God always leads people to do brave things. People who have faith do great things because they are trusting in a great God. Jesus saw their faith and He said to the sick man, 'Son, the wrong things you have done are forgiven' (2:5). (This was a kind way of speaking – he was not really Jesus' son.)

Some Pharisees and teachers of the Law of Moses heard what Jesus said. The Pharisees were Jewish teachers who often made up religious laws besides the ones that God gave. They complained, 'Who can forgive the wrong things that people do? Only God can do that (2:7). He is blaspheming.' To blaspheme means to speak against God (Psalm 74:18; Isaiah 52:5; Romans 2:24). In the times of the Old Testament, the Jewish rulers stoned people to death who blasphemed (Leviticus 24:11–14).

Jesus knew what they were thinking. 'Which is easier to say,' He asked, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up, lift up your mat and walk?' He said this to show that He was the Son of God, who had power on earth to forgive sins and to heal (2:9,10). Then he healed the man.

Everyone saw the man get up and go home and they praised God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this before!' (2:12).



Mark 2:13–17. — (Also in Luke 5: 27–32)

### JESUS MAKES FRIENDS WITH SINNERS

Then Jesus went out and spoke to the crowd beside the lake. He wanted men who would leave everything and follow Him. On this day He found Levi, a taxman, who was also called Matthew. Taxmen worked for the Roman government and the people did not like them because they were not honest. They collected taxes from the Jews and charged them too much money.

The Jews called them sinners. Levi left his tax job and followed Jesus (2:14).

Levi invited Jesus and the other disciples to eat at his house. Some Jewish teachers of the Law who were Pharisees were there. 'Why does He (Jesus) eat with tax collectors and sinners?' they asked. Jesus told them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor. It is ill people who need a doctor. I have not come to call good people, I have come to call sinners' (2:17). Jesus wanted to help the people who needed the most help. These people welcomed Jesus but some of the religious leaders didn't want to follow Jesus. The leaders, like everyone else, were looking for the Messiah but they did not want Jesus.



### Talk about:

1. Is Jesus the only One who can forgive sins like God?
2. Why did Jesus say, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor'?
3. Why were the Jewish religious leaders unhappy when Jesus had a meal with bad people?
4. Why did bad people come to Jesus?



**Mark 2:18–22 — (Also in Luke 5:33–38)**

## JESUS SHOWS A BETTER WAY OF DOING THINGS

The Pharisees thought that they were the only good people. They fasted, that is, they did not eat food for a time, and they tried to obey all of God's Law. God said that all people were sinners. 'There is no one who does good, no one...' (Psalm 53:3).

John's disciples were fasting. People fasted for many reasons:

- a) to show sorrow when someone had died (Psalm 35:13),
- b) to think more about God and to worship Him (Nehemiah 1:4),
- c) to keep the laws about special holy days like the Jewish Day of atonement.
- d) to spend more time in prayer for something important or big.

Jesus spoke about a Jewish wedding feast. Jewish brides and bridegrooms opened their houses for the guests to come in. The guests visited, ate well and were happy for the bridegroom and the bride. He said that this was how it would be while He, the Bridegroom, was with them. He would be with them



### Talk about:

1. Why were the disciples upset to see the crowd?
2. Jesus could easily make enough bread to feed the people. True or False?
3. What should we do when God's work is too big for us?
4. How does our faith grow?



**Mark 6:45–56**

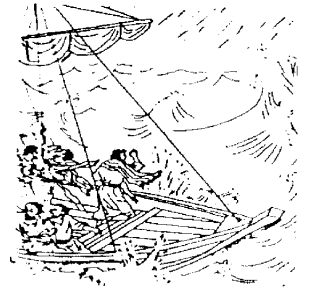
## JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

Jesus sent away the disciples in a boat. Then He sent away the crowds while He went to the mountain to pray. Jesus saw the disciples having difficulty rowing the boat. So He went to them walking on the water. They saw Him and called out in fear. Then they heard a voice, 'Be brave! It is Me. Don't be afraid' (6:50). They knew His voice well. It was not a ghost. He had called to them many times before. They had been afraid but His voice gave them peace. He got into the boat and the storm stopped (6:51).

This is like those 'storms' that come in life. We work hard and struggle because we are afraid and we do not trust God. Then Jesus comes to us and our fears disappear. He brings us calmness (peace) and strength and faith. Our troubles seem to be less when He is with us.

We see that the disciples still did not have much faith. They followed Jesus and saw God working, and yet they were very surprised when He calmed the storm and walked on water.

As soon as Jesus and His disciples landed at Gennesaret, the crowd ran to Him carrying sick people on mats (6:53–55).



### Talk about:

1. What did the disciples think when Jesus sent them away in a boat?
2. Why did Jesus pray that night instead of sleeping?
3. The disciples looked for an earthly kingdom. True or False?
4. At the end of Chapter 6, what have the disciples learned about the aims of Jesus, how much he cares for people, and His power?

Because Herod had made a promise to Salome, Herodias' daughter, he sent the order to kill John. He would not say that his promise was wrong in front of all his important guests, and he did not wait to think again about the matter (6:27).

Perhaps Herod wanted to listen to John again, or to see Jesus. Later, Jesus did not answer Herod when He stood in front of the king at His trial (Luke 23:9). Jesus knew that this evil man could not stop God's plan to save people from their sins.



**Mark 6:30–44 — (Also in Luke 9: 10–17)**

### JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND MEN

Jesus could not eat with His disciples 'because so many people were coming and going' (6:31). 'Come with Me ... to a quiet place,' He said. So they got into a boat and went across the lake to Bethsaida (Luke 9:10).

People saw that Jesus was leaving so they ran ahead. They carried the sick, hoping that they would find Him.

Jesus was sorry for them, 'because they were like sheep without a shepherd.' He saw how worried and lonely and lost they were, so He began to teach them. But the disciples were tired. They wished that they could get away from the crowds. They wanted rest and they gave Jesus three good reasons to send the people away:

- This was a long way from anywhere that they could eat or stay.
- It was already very late.
- The people needed to eat food.

Jesus said to the disciples, 'You give them something to eat.' Disciple Philip answered, 'Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a mouthful' (John 6:7). Then Andrew spoke, 'Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will that go among so many people?' (John 6:8).

Jesus told the people to sit down. Then, 'He gave thanks to God and broke the loaves.' He gave the bread to the disciples to set before the people (Mark 6:41).

The more bread the disciples gave out, the more bread they had for giving out. They could not believe it. 'They all ate and were satisfied ...' Notice that Jesus actually used the disciples to carry out the miracle.

Christians often complain that the job is too big, but God has given us all that we need, and more (Philippians 4:13). God gladly uses what we have, but if we hold back, we cannot see Him work miracles with what we have to give.



for only a short time and they would be happy. Then He would be killed and they would be sad. And that was the time when they could fast (2:20). Jesus came to show them a better way, but mixing new ideas with old ideas doesn't work very well (2:21,22). He wanted people to leave their old ways and to follow Him.



**Mark 2:23–28; 3:1–6 — (Also Luke 6:1–11)**

### JESUS HEALS A MAN ON THE SABBATH

The Pharisees were angry and Jesus knew that they wanted to kill Him (3:6). They argued with Him about what they were not allowed to do on the Lord's Sabbath day and they looked for a way to attack Him in His words.

Jesus healed a man who had a hand that did not work. He made it work again. Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath day. Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking so He asked, 'What does the Law say that we should do on the Sabbath day? Good or evil?' (3:4).

Earlier they said that Jesus' disciples were not allowed to pick and eat grain on the Sabbath (2:23–24). Jesus was angry with the Pharisees but He was also sorry for them because their hearts were hard (3:5). The Pharisees did not say anything about these things but they went out to plan how to kill Him (3:6). Jesus was kind to the man with the paralysed hand but He pitied the religious leaders because they were hard-hearted.

Note verse 28: When Jesus spoke about the Son of Man, He meant Himself. Jesus is Lord of all.



### The SABBATH

'Sabbath' means rest, stopping work. God told Adam how He made the heavens and the earth in six days of work. On the seventh day God said He 'ceased from His work'. He called the seventh day a Sabbath day (Gen. 2:3). Later, God gave His laws to Moses. In God's Law, the Sabbath was made a holy day (Ex. 20:8–11). On the Sabbath, men and women rested from work to worship their Creator. The Sabbath was the last or seventh day of the week. It started at sunset on Friday. Sadly, the Pharisees added their own rules for the Sabbath. They thought more about keeping their Sabbath rules than they did about worshipping God.

The early Christians first met for worship on the Sabbath day. Later on, they met for worship on the first day of the week, Sunday. Sunday then became a day of rest and worship for most of the Christian Church. Some believers still keep Saturday as the Sabbath, like the Jews. Why not make Jesus Lord of every day? Fill every day with worship and every day will be a Sabbath for you! Each day will be a day of rest in God for you, even though you must do your daily work.



## Mark 3:7–19

### JESUS CHOOSES TWELVE MEN

Jesus went to a house near the lake. Great numbers of people came from all around to hear Him. The people were pushing and crushing Jesus so He stood in a boat on the lake and taught them. Later, He went to the hills.

In the morning, He called His followers and chose twelve special disciples:

- to have them with Him
- to teach them
- to send them out to preach
- to give them His power to heal people and to drive out demons (3:15).

For three years, Jesus taught the twelve disciples or apostles to be messengers of God.



#### Talk about this:

- Is it wrong to pick grain on the Sabbath?
- Why did people fast?
- What kind of things should we do on the Sabbath?
- What did Jesus mean when He said, 'The Sabbath day was made for man' (2.27)?
- What was the difference between the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the religious leaders?
- How can people learn to be messengers of God?



## Mark 3:20–30 — (Also in Luke 11:14–23)

### JESUS TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S POWER OVER SATAN

Jesus had been driving demons out of people (1:39), and the Pharisees talked about it. 'He is driving out demons', they said 'by the power of the chief of demons (Satan)' (3:22).

Jesus asked them, 'How can Satan drive out Satan?' This did not make sense and Jesus used three pictures to show this:

- a kingdom of people who are fighting with one another;
- a house or family of people who are fighting each other;
- Satan fighting against himself.

There are two spirit kingdoms in this world: God's Kingdom of love and light, and Satan's kingdom of darkness and evil. Satan's demons hate the truth and they attack God's servants. This is why Jesus taught His followers to pray: 'Save us from the evil one' (Matthew 6:13).

and taught that people should repent by turning away from their sins and turn back to God (6:12). Notice that they did not go alone, but two at a time (6:7).

When a family welcomed them, they went into the house and taught the people about God. They drove out many demons and they poured a little oil on the sick people and healed them (6:13).



#### Talk about:

- Who had faith in Jesus – Jairus or his daughter?
- The woman who touched Jesus, did she have faith in Jesus or in His robe (clothes)?
- Why could not Jesus do many miracles in Nazareth?
- Hearts without faith reduce God's miracles. True or False?
- What does 'repent' mean?



## Mark 6:14–29 — (Also in Luke 9:7–9)

### HEROD KILLS JOHN THE BAPTIZER

King Herod ruled in Galilee. He was not a friend of the Jews. He was a friend of the Romans. He was called 'King' because he was governor of a large part of Israel (Matthew 14:1). He heard that Jesus healed sick people and drove out demons. Some people said, 'God has raised John the Baptizer from the dead.' Some people said, 'He is Elijah'.

This troubled Herod, because he had a guilty heart.

He had put John in prison for preaching to him (6:16–18). John had told Herod, 'It is not right for you to marry your brother Philip's wife.' Herod's wife Herodias hated John, so Herod put him in prison and then Herod was tricked into killing him.



### JESUS' TWELVE DISCIPLES (Mark 3:13-19)

**Simon** from Bethsaida, a fisherman. Jesus gave him the name **Peter** (a rock).

**James**, son of Zebedee, called '**James the elder**' and

**John**, his brother

**Andrew**, Peter's brother (John 1:40).

**Philip** who went and found

**Nathanael**, also called **Bartholomew** (John 1:43).

**Thomas** (John 11:16; 14:5).

**James**, son of Alphaeus, or '**James the younger**' (Mark 15:40).

**Matthew**, the publican or tax collector (Levi, Matt 10:2).

**Thaddaeus**, also called **Judas**.

**Simon the Zealot** (Luke 6:15)

**Judas Iscariot** (a man of Kerioth who later betrayed Jesus)

Jairus was still waiting for Jesus. But messengers came to him with bad news: 'Your daughter is dead,' they said, 'Why bother the Teacher any more?'

'Don't be afraid,' Jesus told him, 'just believe.' (5:35–36).

Jesus chose Peter, James and John to go into the house with Him. He often kept these three men close to Him (Mark 9:2). They met some mourners who were making loud cries. 'The child is not dead but asleep,' Jesus told them. They laughed at Him (5:40). But Jesus took the girl by the hand and said: 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!' At once, the girl's spirit returned to her body. She stood up and walked around.



Jesus has power to heal people and to give back life. Touch Him by faith. Wait on Him in prayer for all your needs. He has promised to answer (Hebrews 13:8; 1 Peter 5:7).



**Mark 6:1–6 — (Also in Luke 4:16–30)**

### THE PEOPLE REJECT JESUS

Jesus went back to Nazareth, where He grew up (Mark 1:9; Luke 2:39). He taught in their synagogue, the Jewish meeting house of prayer, on the Sabbath day. Many who heard Him were amazed (6:2). But they did not believe that He was the Messiah or Christ. And He only healed a few people there because they knew that He was the carpenter's son (6:3). They could not believe in Him. They believed that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God.



**Mark 6:6–13 — (Also in Luke 9:1–6)**

### JESUS SENDS OUT THE DISCIPLES

Jesus left Nazareth and went to other villages in Galilee. His time on earth would soon be finished, and many places had not heard the Good News, so He sent the disciples out to tell it. Jesus gave them power over evil spirits and they had His power to heal sicknesses (6:7).

Notice that He said to them: 'Take no bread, no bag and no money in your belts.' They were doing this work for God so they did not need to worry about food or money (4:19; 6:8). They could trust in God.

The same power that was in the disciples is in us. The disciples went out

But in God's Kingdom evil is defeated and sins are forgiven (3:28). But no one can be forgiven if they speak evil against God's Holy Spirit (3:29).

Satan is 'the strong man' in the parable of Jesus (3:27). He binds (ties up) people in their sins. Jesus came and died to bind the strong man and to free his prisoners. Jesus came to free people from their sins (Galatians 3:22). And He came to free people from the man-made laws of the Pharisees (Gal.3:23).



**Mark 3:31–35**

### JESUS AND HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS

At first when we read this passage, we have the idea that Jesus did not want to see His mother and brothers. But it is clear from an earlier verse (3:21) that they had come to take Him away. They were worried about the things people were saying back home in Nazareth – the people that they knew (their friends and neighbours) thought that Jesus was mad.

So, by not getting up to see His family, Jesus actually made sure that they would not hinder the will of God. He shows compassion for them because He does not want them to go against God's will. Instead, Jesus stayed with the people who were fulfilling God's plan for Him – the crowds who wanted Him to teach them and to heal them. He said that they were as much His mother and brothers and sisters as anyone. 'Anyone who obeys God is My brother, My sister and My mother' (3:35).

It does not say that Jesus actually turned away from His own mother and brothers. If He stepped outside to see them, however, He would have to warn them that they were disobeying God's will and purpose by trying to take Him away. So He probably stayed where He was. He chose to stay with those who were doing God's will. He did the kindest thing and the correct thing towards His family.

Sometimes, the family people closest to us can make it hard for us to do what God wants us to do. We must not always trust their loving concern. But we should trust that God will deal with every situation without us having big troubles when we make family decisions.



**Talk about:**

1. How did Jesus show love for His own mother and family?
2. When we have big family decisions to make who must we think of first?
3. The followers of Jesus are part of a worldwide family (Mark 3:34,35). What does this show to the people of the world?



## QUESTIONS ON MARK CHAPTERS 1 TO 3

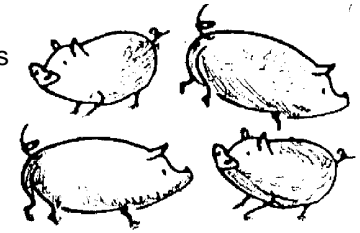
(Answers are on page 36)

**A. Choose the best answer or the best phrase to complete the sentence.**

1. Long ago the prophets wrote about a messenger from God. He was...
  - a) Jesus.
  - b) John the Baptizer.
  - c) Peter.
  
2. Who said, 'You are My own dear Son'?
  - a) God to Jesus.
  - b) John to Jesus.
  - c) Jesus to John.
  
3. Jesus taught the people...
  - a) in the same way as the scribes did.
  - b) using children's stories.
  - c) using stories with a hidden meaning.
  
4. Why did the four men make a hole in the roof?
  - a) to get a sick man to Jesus.
  - b) to watch the crowd.
  - c) to spy on Jesus.
  
5. Jesus ate with the tax collectors and sinners because...
  - a) He wanted to make the Pharisees angry.
  - b) He was hungry.
  - c) He wanted to show that God cared for them.
  
6. The Pharisees watched Jesus...
  - a) so that they could learn how to heal people.
  - b) so that they could find something wrong about Him.
  - c) because He taught well.
  
7. Jesus chose His disciples...
  - a) by calling workmen to follow Him.
  - b) by choosing religious leaders.
  - c) by accepting anyone who asked.

**B. Which sentences are True (T) and which are not true or False (F)?**

family of a son or a husband and father. Now it was time to go back and tell his family what Jesus had done for him and to tell other people about Jesus.



Often, witchcraft or sex or drugs or alcohol or gambling destroy members of our family or turn parents into cruel masters. By doing these things we invite demons into our lives. Only Jesus' power can drive these demons out. Only Jesus can give our loved ones a spirit of power and love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7).



**Talk about this:**

1. Why would a man with demons run to meet Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus ask the demons their name?
3. Do evil spirits know God?
4. What happened to the pigs?
5. What did the villagers see when they reached the graveyard?
6. Where did the man go to tell people about Jesus?



**Mark 5:21–43 — (Also in Luke 8:41–56)**

### A SICK WOMAN AND A DEAD GIRL

Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue came to Jesus and fell at Jesus' feet. 'My little daughter is dying,' he said, 'Please come and put Your hands on her.' (5:23).

The crowd pushed around Jesus, and a sick woman came close to Him. She had spent all her money on medicines, but she only got worse. In faith she reached out behind Jesus and touched the bottom of His robe and she was healed.

God always answers our weak faith. Jesus turned and asked, 'Who touched Me?' He knew that power had gone out of Him (5:30; Luke 8:45). The power was not in His clothes. The power was in Jesus, in His Person.

The woman also knew that she was healed (5:29). She came forward and fell at Jesus' feet. 'Your faith has healed you,' He told her. 'Go in peace. You are free from your suffering.' (5:34). No one had ever spoken words like these to this woman before.

Maybe you have a sickness or someone has hurt you. The hurt may have happened years ago. You have tried everything but the pain will not go away. Reach out to Jesus. He is waiting for you to trust Him and believe that He will take your pain.

Jesus wanted to know why they had not trusted in Him to protect them.

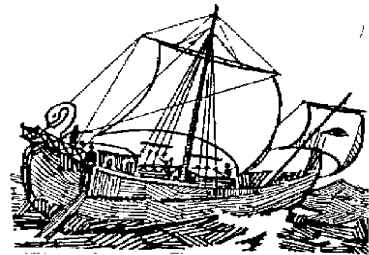
When our hearts are like the sea and they cannot rest, Jesus says the same thing to us: 'Be still! I am with you. Trust in Me.'



**Mark 5:1–20 — (Also in Luke 8:26–39)**

## JESUS BRINGS PEACE TO A PERSON'S HEART

Beside the sea, there were tombs, caves that people used for burying dead people. A wild man lived there (5:3). Evil spirits (demons) made him very strong and angry. The people tried to tie him with chains, but he broke them and ran off.



When the man saw Jesus get out of the boat, he ran up to Him and fell on his knees (5:6). The demons knew who Jesus was. 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? The demons shouted, 'Swear to God that You won't hurt me!' (5:7). The demons knew who Jesus really was. The demons were afraid of Jesus. Evil spirits know that Jesus is the Son of God. They know that He has authority over them and they fear Him (James 2:19). They know that Jesus is the Lord of Creation. He can command the demons because all evil spirits must obey Him.

Mark shows us that Jesus has authority over all things. Jesus let the demons go into a herd of pigs. (Jews do not eat pigs.) Then the man saw the pigs run down into the lake and he knew that he was free. Free from all those demon spirits. He had faith in Jesus and he praised God. But the men who looked after the pigs ran too. They went back to town to tell the owners what had happened. When the people heard this story, they went out to see for themselves (5:14).

The man was in his right mind, sitting quietly at Jesus' feet! The people of the town were afraid. Before, they were afraid of the man with the demons. Now they were afraid of the power of God (5:17). They had lost their pigs, so they begged Jesus to go away.

## GO HOME AND TELL YOUR FAMILY

The man stood beside Jesus on the shore. He had no friends, no food, no work and no place to live. 'Let me come with You,' he asked Jesus (5:19). Jesus told him, 'Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you ...' (5:19). For many years, Satan had robbed this man's

1. Jesus baptized John. T / F
2. Jesus healed Simon's mother. T/F
3. Jesus did not want everyone to hear the Good News. T/F
4. Jesus forgives sins. T/F
5. The disciples of Jesus fasted with Him. T/F
6. God will forgive people who say bad things about the Holy Spirit. T/F



**Mark 4:1–25 — (Also in Luke 8:4–15)**

## THE PARABLE OF THE FARMER AND THE SEED

Jesus got into a boat and taught the people. On calm days, people could easily hear the voice of someone a long way across water.

In this parable, the farmer who sows seed is like someone who tells the gospel. The seed is like the truth of God's message – the Good News. The one who tells it, 'sows' it in the world. He is a sower or a witness. A witness is someone who tells what he knows or what he has seen.

The farmer carried his seed in a bag. He threw the seed as far as he could (4:4). Jesus' words were like the seed. Hearts that were open would receive the truth like good soil receives seed. Hearts that were hard would not receive the truth.

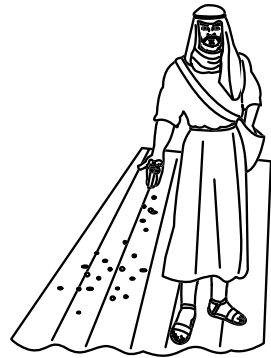
Later, Jesus explained the parable to His disciples:

1. Some hearts are hard like the path. They cannot take in the Good News of Jesus Christ. The ground is hard and there is nothing for the seed to grow in.
2. Rocky places mean hearts that are quick to receive God's message but easily give up when trouble comes. The seed grows quickly in the shelter of the rocks. But there is very little soil for the seed to grow in. When the sun is hot, the plants dry up and die.

## PARABLES

- Jesus used parables to teach truth to His followers. A parable is a simple story of everyday events but it has a deeper, spiritual meaning.
- He often explained the parable later to the twelve disciples (4:13).
- There were people in the crowd who did not want to know the truth. They did not listen or understand (4:24–25).
- People who did want to know God's truth tried to understand the meaning of the stories.
- God's Spirit reveals more and more truth to a heart that wants to understand God. (Matt 13:14–15).

3. The seed that the farmer sows among thorns speaks about a life that is full of other things. Three enemies of the soul are given here. These destroy the new, tender shoots of faith (Matthew 19:22):
  - a) seeking after too many things of this world
  - b) the love of money
  - c) the search for pleasure and success (1 John 2:16).
4. The seed that is sown on good soil is like the truth that an open heart receives. The soil is good and deep and well prepared for the seed. It grows and produces a crop. The crop is true faith and the many good works that follow it.



We sow the seed when we tell other people about God's truth or when we give them a Bible to read. Some people will not listen. Some people will listen and not understand. Some will be quick to follow Jesus but will be easily discouraged – they will easily give up because of their weak faith. Many will gladly follow the 'new way' of Jesus, then lose their way because they want to try other new things and ideas as well.

Jesus warned the people that if they did not understand this parable, then they would not understand the others (Mark 4:13). But for those people who hear and understand these things, they will live fruitful lives in God's Kingdom (v.20). This parable shows the difference between people who are saved and people who are lost. It shows what happens to people who do not listen carefully to God's truth. But many people will not understand these things.

Jesus is like a lamp. He must be 'lifted up' so that all people will see the light of God's truth (Mark 4:22; John 1:4,5). As people come to the light, so the Holy Spirit gives them more light. God will give light to their minds, if they understand and believe.



**Talk about:**

1. What did the prophet Isaiah say about hard hearts (Mark 4:12)?
2. What is 'good ground'?
3. How can we help the 'seed' to grow in people's hearts?



**Mark 4:26–34**

**PARABLES ABOUT FAITH AND GOD'S KINGDOM**

Jesus spoke about faith. Without faith a person cannot believe God and please God. Jesus spoke of a Kingdom of the Spirit, where God rules as

King, not a kingdom that kings on earth have made. Jesus' disciples did not understand what He was saying about God's Kingdom.



Again, Jesus used a common example from their lives. A man who plants seed must have faith:

- a) He must use good seed and believe that it will grow.
- b) He must be patient to wait for the seed to grow.
- c) He must believe that the seed will grow by itself (4:28).
- d) He must believe that it will make many more seeds for the harvest (4:29).

Jesus told another parable about the Kingdom of God. It was like a tiny mustard seed planted in a garden. In less than a year it would become larger than all the other plants, perhaps 12 feet (4m) high.

God's Kingdom on earth began as a very small thing. Jesus' followers were not important people. They were ordinary men without power. Yet during their lifetime, the Kingdom spread over all the known world (Acts 1:8; 17:6).

Today, the truth is preached everywhere and men and women are either rejecting God's truth or believing it and being saved and joining the Christian Church.



**Talk about:**

1. How does God's Kingdom bless the nations?
2. How does it grow?
3. What does the story of the mustard seed teach us about God's Kingdom?
4. What can we do to help the seed to grow?



**Mark 4:35–39 — (Also in Luke 8:22–25)**

**THE DISCIPLES CROSS THE LAKE**

Jesus told the disciples to go to the other side of the lake. While they were crossing the lake, a storm started and waves broke over their small boat. The disciples were afraid but Jesus was not afraid. He was asleep.

'Teacher, don't You care if we drown?' they cried out to Jesus (4:38). Jesus sat up. 'Quiet! Be still!' He said to the wind. Then the wind stopped and the lake became calm.

They looked at each other and someone whispered: 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him' (4:41). They had been afraid of the storm and now they were afraid of Jesus. He was more than a man. He was God!