

THE
GOSPEL OF

MARK

WILLIAM MACDONALD



Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

The Gospel of Mark
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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

INTRODUCTION

In this gospel, we have the wonderful story of God's Perfect Servant, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the story of One who laid aside the outward display of His glory in heaven and assumed the form of a servant on earth (Philippians 2:7). It is the story of One "who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). It is the matchless story of One who "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

If we remember that this Perfect Servant was none other than God the Son, and that He willingly girded Himself with the apron of a bond-slave, becoming a servant of men, the gospel will glow with constant splendor.

Here we see the Incarnate Son of God living as a dependent Man on earth. Everything He did was in perfect obedience to His Father's will, and all the mighty works He performed were done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The book was written by John Mark, a servant of the Lord who started well, who then went into eclipse for a while (Acts 15:38), but who finally was restored to usefulness (2 Timothy 4:11).

It is generally agreed that Mark was influenced greatly by Peter in writing this gospel. The early church fathers spoke of Peter as one who supplied Mark with much of the eyewitness material.

Mark's style is rapid, energetic, and concise. He emphasizes the deeds of the Lord more than His words. This is seen by the fact that he records nineteen miracles, but only four parables.

As we study the gospel, we will discover answers to these questions:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What lessons are there in it for me?

For all who wish to be true and faithful servants of the Lord, this gospel should prove to be a valuable manual of service.

1

THE SERVANT BEGINS HIS WORK (MARK 1)

Herald of the Good News (1:1-8)

Mark's theme is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Because his purpose is to emphasize the servant role of the Lord Jesus, he does not begin with a genealogy. Rather he begins with the public ministry of the Savior. This was announced by John the Baptist, the herald of the good news.

Both Malachi and Isaiah had predicted that a messenger would precede the Messiah, calling on the people to be morally and spiritually prepared for His coming (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3). These prophecies were fulfilled in John the Baptist. He was “the messenger” and “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.”

His message was that the people should repent in order to receive the remission of sins. They should confess and forsake their sins. Otherwise they would be in no position to receive the Lord. Only holy people are able to appreciate the Holy Son of God.

When his hearers did repent, John baptized them as an outward expression of their about-face. Baptism separated them publicly from the mass of the nation of Israel who had forsaken the Lord. It united them with a remnant who were ready to receive the Christ.

It would seem from verse 5 that the response to John's preaching was universal. This was not the case. There may have been an initial burst of enthusiasm, with multitudes surging out to the desert to hear the fiery preacher, but the majority of the people did not genuinely confess and forsake their sins. This will be seen as the narrative advances.

What kind of man was John? Today he would be called a fanatic and an ascetic. His home was the desert. His clothing was the coarsest and the simplest. His food was sufficient to maintain life and strength, but was scarcely the diet of luxury. He was a man who subordinated all these things to the glorious task of making Christ known. Perhaps he could have been rich, but he chose to be poor. He thus became a fitting herald of Him who had nowhere to lay His head. We learn here that simplicity should characterize all who are servants of the Lord.

His message was the superiority of the Lord Jesus. He said that Jesus was greater in power, greater in personal excellence, and greater in ministry. John did not consider himself worthy to untie the Savior's shoelaces—the menial duty of a slave. Spirit-filled preaching always exalts the Lord Jesus and dethrones self.

John's baptism was in water. It was an external symbol, but produced no change in a person's life. The Lord Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit; this baptism would produce a great inflow of spiritual power (Acts 1:8). Also it would incorporate all believers into the church, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Jesus Baptized in the Jordan (1:9-11)

The so-called thirty silent years in Nazareth were now at an end. The Lord Jesus was ready to enter upon His public ministry. First He traveled the sixty odd miles from Nazareth to the Jordan near Jericho. There He was baptized by John. In His case, of course, there was no repentance because there were no sins to confess. Baptism for the Lord was a symbolic action picturing His eventual baptism into death at Calvary and His rising from the dead. Thus at the very outset of His public ministry, there was this vivid foreshadow of a cross and an empty tomb.

As soon as He came out of the water, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him as a dove. The voice of God the Father was heard, acknowledging Jesus as His beloved Son.

There was never a time in the life of our Lord when He was not filled with the Holy Spirit. But now the Holy Spirit came upon Him, anointing Him for service and enduing Him with power. It was a special ministry of the Spirit, preparatory to the three years of service that lay ahead.

The power of the Holy Spirit is indispensable. A man may be educated, talented and fluent, yet without that mysterious quality which we call “unction,” his service is lifeless and ineffective. The question is basic, “Have I had an experience of the Holy Spirit, empowering me for the service of the Lord?”

Into the Wilderness (1:12-13)

The Servant of Jehovah was tempted by Satan in the wilderness for forty days. It was the Spirit of God who led Him to this rendezvous—not to see if He would sin, but to prove that He could not sin. If Jesus could have sinned as a Man on earth, what assurance do we have that He cannot now sin as a Man in heaven?

Why does Mark say that He was with the wild beasts? Were these animals energized by Satan to seek to destroy the Lord? Or were they docile in the presence of their Creator? We can only ask the questions.

It was at the end of the forty days that the angels ministered to Him (Matthew 4:11). During the temptation, He ate nothing (Luke 4:2).

Testings are inevitable for the believer. The closer one follows the Lord, the more intense they will be. Satan does not waste his gunpowder on nominal Christians. But he opens his big guns on those who are winning territory in the spiritual warfare.

It is not a sin to be tempted. The sin lies in yielding to temptation. In our own strength we are not able to resist. But the indwelling Holy Spirit is the believer’s power to subdue dark passions.

Beginning of the Galilean Ministry (1:14-15)

Mark skips over the Judean ministry of the Lord (see John 1:1-4:54) and begins with the great Galilean ministry. This extends from Mark 1:14 to 9:50 and covers a period of one year and nine months. Then he deals briefly with the latter part of the Perea ministry (10:1-10:45) before moving on to the last week in Jerusalem.

Jesus went to Galilee, preaching the good news about God. His specific message was that:

1. The time was fulfilled. According to the prophetic time-table, a date had been fixed for the public appearing of the King. That date had now arrived.
2. The kingdom of God was at hand. In other words, the King was present and was making a bona fide offer of the kingdom to the nation of Israel. The kingdom was at hand in the sense that the King had appeared on the scene.
3. Men were called on to repent and to believe the gospel. In order to be eligible to enter the kingdom, they had to do an about-face with regard to sin. Also they had to believe the good news concerning the Lord Jesus.

Fishers of Men (1:16-20)

As He walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and Andrew fishing. He had met them before; in fact, they had become disciples of His at the outset of His ministry (John 1:40-41). Now He called them to be with Him, promising to make them fishers of men. Immediately they gave up their lucrative fishing business to follow Him. Their obedience was prompt, sacrificial and complete.

Fishing is an art, and so is soul-winning.

1. It requires patience. Oftentimes there are lonely hours of waiting.
2. It requires skill in the use of bait, lures or nets.
3. It requires discernment and common sense in going where the fish are running.
4. It requires persistence. A good fisherman is not easily discouraged.
5. It requires quietness. The best policy is to avoid disturbances and to keep self in the background.

We became fishers of men by following Christ. The more like Him we are, the more successful we will be in winning others to Him. Our responsibility is to follow Him; He will take care of the rest.

A little further on, the Lord Jesus met James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as they were mending their nets. As soon as He called them, they said goodbye to their father and went after the Lord.

Christ still calls men to forsake all and follow Him (Luke 14:33). Neither possessions nor parents must be allowed to hinder obedience.

Miracles in the Synagogue (1:21-28)

In verses 21-38, we have a typical twenty-four hour day in the life of the Lord. Miracle followed miracle as the Great Physician healed those who were demon-possessed and diseased.

The healing miracles of Christ illustrate how the Savior of the world liberates men from the dread results of sin. We may illustrate this as follows:

Miracle:	Deliverance from:
1. Healing of man with unclean spirit (1:23-26).	1. The uncleanness of sin.
2. Healing of Simon's mother-in-law (1:29-31).	2. The feverishness and restlessness of sin.
3. Healing of the leper (1:40-45).	3. The loathsomeness of sin.
4. Healing of the paralytic (2:1-12).	4. The helplessness caused by sin.
5. Healing of man with withered hand (3:1-5).	5. The uselessness caused by sin.
6. Deliverance of the demoniac (5:1-20).	6. The misery, violence and terror of sin.
7. The woman with the issue of blood (5:25-34).	7. Sin's power to sap life's vitality.
8. The raising of Jairus' daughter (5:21-24; 35-43).	8. Spiritual death caused by sin.
9. Healing of Syrophenician's daughter (7:24-30).	9. The thralldom of sin and Satan.
10. Healing of deaf man with speech impediment (7:31-37).	10. Inability to hear God's Word and to speak of spiritual things.
11. Healing of blind man (8:22-26).	11. Blindness to the light of the gospel.
12. Healing of demoniac boy (9:14-29).	12. The cruelty of Satan's dominion.
13. Healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52).	13. The blind and beggarly state to which sin reduces.

Though the preacher of the gospel is not called upon to perform these acts of physical healing today, he is constantly called upon to deal with their spiritual counterparts. Are these not the greater miracles which the Lord Jesus mentioned in John 14:12: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

But now let us get back to the synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus had entered on the Sabbath and begun to teach. The people realized that here was no ordinary teacher. There was an undeniable power connected with His words. He was not like the scribes who droned on mechanically. His sentences were arrows from the Almighty. His lessons were arresting, convicting, challenging. The scribes peddled a second-hand religion. But there was no unreality in the teaching of the Lord Jesus. He had the right to say what He did, because He lived what He taught.

Everyone who teaches the Word of God should speak with authority. If we cannot speak with assurance, we ought not to speak at all. The psalmist said, “I believed, therefore I spoke” (Psalm 116:10) and Paul echoed the words in 2 Corinthians 4:13. Their message was born of deep conviction.

In the synagogue, there was a demon-possessed man. The particular type of demon that inhabited him is described as an unclean spirit. This probably means that the spirit manifested its presence in the man by making him physically or morally unclean.

Let no one confuse demon possession with various forms of insanity. The two are separate and distinct. Demon-possession means that a person is actually indwelt and controlled by an evil spirit. The person is often enabled to perform supernatural feats and he often becomes violent or blasphemous when confronted with the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that in verse 24, the evil spirit recognized Jesus and spoke of Him as the Nazarene and the Holy One of God.

Notice too the change of pronouns from plural to singular: “What have *we* to do with You? . . . Did You come to destroy *us*? I know who You are.” At first the demon speaks as joined to the man, then he speaks for himself alone.

Jesus would not accept the witness of a demon, even if it were true. So He told the evil spirit to be silent, and then commanded him to come out

of the man. It must have been a weird experience to see the convulsed man and to hear the loud, eerie cry of the demon as he left his victim.

The miracle caused amazement among the people. This was new and startling to them—that with a mere command a Man could drive out a demon. Did this mark the beginning of a new school of religious teaching, they wondered? Quickly the news of the miracle spread throughout Galilee.

Before leaving this portion, there are one or two comments that should be made:

1. It seems that the first advent of Christ aroused a great outburst of demonic activity on the earth.
2. Christ's power over these evil spirits is a foreshadow of His eventual triumph over Satan and all his agents.
3. Wherever God works, Satan opposes. All who set out to serve the Lord can expect to be opposed every step of the way. "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Simon's Mother-in-law Healed (1:29-31)

"Immediately" is one of the characteristic words of this gospel. It occurs eight times in this chapter alone. This and other similar words are specially suitable for the gospel that stresses the servant character of the Lord Jesus.

From the synagogue, our Lord went to Simon's house. As soon as He arrived, he learned that Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a fever. In verse 30, the King James Version reads, ". . . and anon they tell Him of her." This sounds as if they chatted for a while before mentioning the sick woman in the other room. Actually "anon" should read "immediately." They didn't waste any time in bringing a case of genuine need to the Physician's attention.

Without saying a word, Jesus took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. She was instantly cured.

Ordinarily a fever leaves a person in an extremely weakened condition. In this case, the Lord not only cured the fever but gave immediate strength

to serve, “she served them.” “There is a whole cluster of suggestions here. Every sick person who is restored, whether in an ordinary or extraordinary way, should hasten to consecrate to the service of God the life that is given back. Surely it was spared for a purpose, and we shall be disloyal to God if we do not thus devote it. A great many persons are always sighing for opportunities to minister to Christ, imagining some fine and splendid service that they would like to render. Meantime they let slip past their hands the very things in which Christ wants them to serve Him. True ministry to Christ is doing first of all and well one’s daily duties.” (J. R. Miller, *Come Ye Apart* (New York: Thomas Crowell & Co., 1887). Daily Reading for March 28.)

In studying the healing miracles, it is noticeable that the Savior’s procedure is different in every case. This reminds us that no two cases of conversion are exactly alike. Everyone must be dealt with on an individual basis.

The fact that Peter had a mother-in-law shows that God did not require His servants to be single. Enforced celibacy is a tradition of man that finds no support in the Word of God. Besides, it subjects men and women to terrible temptation.

Healing at Sunset (1:32-34)

News of the Savior’s presence had spread during the day. As long as it was the Sabbath, the people dared not bring the needy to Him. But as soon as the sun had set and the Sabbath had ended, there was a rush to the door of Peter’s house. There the diseased and the demon-possessed experienced the power that delivers from every phase and form of sin.

Twice in these verses, demon possession is distinguished from sickness. Those who have witnessed the former know that it is not the same as insanity.

First Circuit of Galilee (1:35-39)

Jesus rose long before daybreak, went out to a place where He would be free from distraction and spent time in prayer. The Servant of Jehovah opened His ear each morning to receive instructions for the day from God the Father (see Isaiah 50:4-5).

If the Lord Jesus felt the need of this early morning quiet time, how much more should we! Notice too that He prayed when it cost Him something; He rose up and went out a great while before day. Prayer should not be a matter of personal convenience but of self-discipline and sacrifice. Does this explain why so much of our service is ineffective?

In the morning, first of all,
Savior, may I hear Thy call;
Make me ready to obey
Thy commands throughout the day.

By the time that Simon and the others got up, the crowd was gathered outside the house again. The disciples went out to tell the Lord of the rising popular sentiment. Surprisingly enough, He did not go back to the city but took the disciples into the surrounding towns, explaining that He must preach there also.

Why did He not return to Capernaum?

1. First of all, He had just been in prayer and had learned what God wanted Him to do that day.
2. Secondly, He realized that the popular movement in Capernaum was shallow. The Savior was never attracted by large crowds. He looked below the surface to see what was in their hearts.
3. He knew the peril of popularity and taught the disciples by His example to beware when all men spoke well of them.
4. He consistently avoided any superficial, emotional demonstration that would have put the crown before the cross.
5. His great emphasis was on preaching the Word (vv. 38-39). The miracles of healing, while intended to relieve human misery, were also designed to gain attention for the preaching.

Thus to the synagogues of Galilee, Jesus went preaching and casting out demons. He combined preaching and practicing, saying and doing.

The Prayer God Answers (1:40-45)

The account of the leper gives us an instructive example of the prayer that God answers.

1. It was earnest and desperate—“imploring Him.”
2. It was reverent—“kneeling down to Him.”
3. It was humble and submissive—“If You are willing.”
4. It was believing—“You can.”
5. It acknowledged need—“make me clean.”
6. It was specific—not “bless me” but “make me clean.”
7. It was personal—“make ME clean.”
8. It was brief—five words in the original.

Notice what happened!

1. Jesus was moved with compassion. Let us never read these words without a sense of exultation and gratitude.
2. He stretched forth His hand. Think of it! The hand of God stretched forth in answer to humble, believing prayer.
3. He touched him. Under the law, a person became ceremonially unclean when he touched a leper. Also, of course, there was the danger of contracting the disease. But the Holy Son of Man identified Himself with the miseries of mankind, dispelling the ravages of sin without being tainted by them.
4. He said, “I will.” He is more willing to heal than we are to be healed. Then “Be cleansed.” In an instant the skin of the leper was smooth and clear.
5. He forbade publicizing the miracle until first the man had appeared before the priest and had made the required offering (Leviticus 13:49; 14:2ff). This was a test, first of all, of the man’s obedience. Would he do as he was told? He did not; he publicized his case, and as a result, he hindered the work of the Lord (v. 45). It was also a test of the priest’s discernment. Would he perceive that the long-awaited Messiah had come, performing wonderful miracles of healing? If he was typical of the nation of Israel, he did not.

Again we find that Jesus withdrew from the crowds and ministered in desert places. He did not measure success by numbers.

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EXAM BOOKLET
AK '11 (2 UNITS) MK

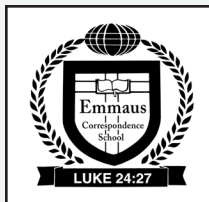
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COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



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A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM**THE SERVANT BEGINS HIS WORK****EXAM GRADE**

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The baptism of Jesus
 - A. symbolized repentance towards God
 - B. was the first New Testament example of Christian baptism
 - C. symbolized His eventual baptism into death and subsequent resurrection
 - D. publically incorporated Him into the Jewish nation _____

2. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Lord Jesus at His baptism signified
 - A. that the dispensation of Law was over
 - B. the filling of the Lord Jesus with the Spirit
 - C. the anointing of Jesus with power for service
 - D. that Jesus was “the Lord from heaven” _____

3. The purpose of the Lord’s temptation in the wilderness was to
 - A. see if He would sin
 - B. prove He could not sin
 - C. defeat the Devil once and for all
 - D. demonstrate the Lord’s power over evil beasts _____

4. Mark 1:14-9:50 covers a period of one year and nine months and deals with
 - A. the Lord’s Judean ministry
 - B. the Lord’s Perea ministry
 - C. the Lord’s Galilean ministry
 - D. the Lord’s ministry in Galilee and in Perea _____

5. Which of the following was **not** a part of the gospel of God as preached by the Lord Jesus in the early days of His ministry?
- A. the kingdom of God was at hand
 - B. believers in the Lord Jesus must be baptized
 - C. men must repent and believe the gospel
 - D. the time had come for God’s King to be publicly revealed _____
6. Demon possession
- A. is restricted to Bible times, especially to the days when Jesus was on earth
 - B. ought, strictly speaking, to be classified as insanity
 - C. often makes a person violent or blasphemous when confronted with the Person and work of Christ
 - D. never manifests itself in verbal acknowledgment of Jesus for Who He really is _____
7. A characteristic word of Mark’s Gospel is
- A. “afterwards” C. “whosoever”
 - B. “nevertheless” D. “immediately” _____
8. The healing miracles of Jesus and cases of conversion have this in common—
- A. both take place without the consent of the individual
 - B. no two cases are alike
 - C. the event always takes place at a public gathering
 - D. both are psychologically explained _____
9. One reason why Jesus left Capernaum was because
- A. popular sentiment was against Him there
 - B. it was impossible to do many mighty works there because of the unbelief of the people
 - C. the people there kept Him too busy to pray
 - D. He knew the peril of popularity and wished to warn His disciples against it _____
10. The leper who came to Jesus was sent by the Lord to the priest
- A. in order to be healed by the priest
 - B. as a testimony to the priest
 - C. because the Lord wished to demonstrate the impossibility of a man being saved by mere religion
 - D. because the Lord did not wish to offend the religious leaders of His day _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What did you learn from the prayer of the Leper? Is there anything that you will utilize in your own prayer life?
