

## Lesson 3 – John Mark and Mark 1

### Introduction

In this week's lesson you will finish with the overview looking at the life of John Mark, the author of *The Gospel According to Mark* and Scripture's record of the spread of the gospel in the early church. You will look at the life of John Mark from every New Testament reference where he is mentioned. My prayer is that by looking into the record of this man's life you will be encouraged. At the end of the week, you begin the observation of Mark 1 with the Comprehensive Chapter Study.

I am in awe of how God's word has been protected over the centuries. What a privilege that we can spend time focusing on our Father God and our Savior through God's carefully recorded message. What a blessing that we have been given the Holy Spirit to counsel and guide us into God's truth.

If you were to go for a walk in the woods or along the seashore, would you be able to spend time meditating on God's word that you have hidden in your heart? What a blessing it is to be able to quiet your spirit and commune with the Lord God through His holy and eternal word. Join with the psalmist David who said in Psalm 119:11 that he treasured God's word in his heart that he might not sin against his God.

### Days 1, 2, and 3 – John Mark and the Early Church

1. Have you read the phrases, "tradition tells us..." or "according to tradition..."? In regard to the Christian church this word "tradition" came to mean the information that was gathered and recorded by the early church fathers, in the time immediately following the record of the book of Acts. This "tradition" is also called the "patristic tradition or testimony." In these writings the leaders in the early church wrote their comments on the New Testament Scriptures, as well as in response to the commentaries of other leaders. Through these writings we also learn about how the message of the gospel was spread.

"Tradition" teaches us that Mark was the scribe for the apostle Peter. When Peter preached, Mark "took notes" on a scroll. "Tradition" also teaches us that Mark compiled his notes into what came to be known as *The Gospel According to Mark*, for the church in Rome.

Mark was written about in Scripture with the name John Mark as well as Mark. Mark was known as John Mark in the Hebrew community. John was a very common Hebrew name at the time of Christ, and Mark (Marcus) was a common Latin name. The Roman Empire had several leaders with the name Marcus. Others of the Jewish community had their names changed as they served among the Gentiles. The apostle Paul was named Saul as a child. Paulus was a common Latin name and Saul was the first king of Israel. Jesus changed Simon's Hebrew name to Peter, which in Greek means the rock.

In the next two days you will focus on Mark and his ministry. Remember to open each day of your study with a **prayer**, asking for guidance, knowing that God wants you to understand His word. You might consider committing a verse of this week's lesson to memory. Memorizing Scripture will equip you and strengthen your own relationship with the Lord as well as provide a means to help you minister to others in the future.

What do you learn about Mark from other Scripture? Begin with these **observation questions**.

- What do you learn about Mark in Acts 12:12? This is the account of the church's response to God's intervention. Look at the entire paragraph to see the setting of this event. What do you learn about Mark's family and their role in the early church?

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- Most biblical scholars agree that the individual mentioned in Mark 14:51,52 was Mark himself. What is your response to this information in Mark 14:43-52?
  
- A very significant event took place in the early church while Paul was on his first missionary journey. Please summarize these verses that tell of this event.
  - a. Acts 12:25 (Mark these Acts' references to be used for Question 3.)
  
  - b. Acts 13:5
  
  - c. Acts 13:13
  
  - d. Acts 15:36-41
  
- Now please read these Scriptures to gain insight into Mark's life. What do these Scriptures tell you about Mark?
  - a. Colossians 4:10
  
  - b. Acts 4:32-37

2. Please examine these word studies for two of the **key words** in this lesson.

Strong's # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong's Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i> :	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
4904 sunergos sunergoi Philemon 1:24	<b>Fellow worker</b> , a co-laborer, companion in labour, (fellow), helper, (laborer, -worker), laborer together, with, workfellow	Romans 16:3,9,21
5257 huperetes hupereten Acts 13:5	<b>Helper</b> , an under oarsman, i.e. generally subordinate (assistant, sexton, constable): minister, officer, servant	Acts 26:16

3. It is worthwhile to have an understanding of the early church and the spread of the gospel as recorded in *The Acts of the Apostles*. You already looked at several verses in Acts to see the mention of Mark. Christ told His disciples to take the gospel to Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. In the next two days, please read Luke's account of the disciple's obedience to the commission of their Lord and Savior. As you read look for the evidence of the spread of the Gospel and look at a map of the Mediterranean to see where the gospel was preached.

Inductive study involves reading with a purpose. Please take the time to read portions in the book of Acts and think about the early church. Acts records the initial teaching of several apostles and then the first, second, and third missionary journeys.

- a. How did the gospel message go out according to Acts 2?
- b. How did this impact the spread of Christianity?

- c. What was Saul's interaction with the church according to Acts 7:54-8:1-4?
- d. How did this impact the spread of Christianity?

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e. The disciples gathered in Antioch and the Holy Spirit sent out Barnabas and Saul. Read Acts 12:24-Acts 13:13 and briefly summarize this passage by using the “5Ws and an H” questions.

f. How did this impact the spread of Christianity?

g. Now please read Acts 15:30-41 to see the ministry of those who were to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. What do you learn about these men here?

h. How did this impact the spread of Christianity?

4. What took place following the ascension of Christ and the writing of the Gospels? During this time Jesus was recognized as Lord, the gospel was preached, and Christianity spread throughout the Mediterranean world. Christian theology matured through extensive missionary efforts, and the epistles were written to answer questions and define Christianity.

Continued on the next page.

Most biblical scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was written for the church in Rome. Stop and imagine that you are a part of the early Christian church in Rome in the 50's. It is a little over 20 years after Christ's ascension when the church receives Paul's letter that was later named, *The Epistle to the Romans*. Paul wrote his letter to clarify God's righteousness and His plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

The apostles were all closely associated with Jesus, and as they were becoming elderly, the church leaders were concerned about passing along the message of the gospel to the next generation. The three Synoptic Gospels were the first written, probably between 70 and 85 A.D. and each had a specific audience in mind as they wrote. *The Gospel According to John* was the last Gospel written, probably between 85 and 90 A.D., during a time of the persecution of the church by the Roman officials. Each Gospel writer wrote with the needs of a specific audience in the early church in mind. Each writer knew that they needed to make Jesus understandable to others.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul had been a persecutor of the early Christian church and then he was converted on his way to Damascus. Read the Lord's words to Ananias in Acts 9:15,16 and Paul's sharing with Agrippa in Acts 26:13-20. What do these accounts tell you about the message of salvation?

Keep Paul and Mark's pasts in mind as you read what Paul said about Mark in Philemon 1:24. What does this tell you about Paul?

The apostle Peter denied Christ three times and John 21 records Peter's re-commissioning by Jesus for ministry. John 21:15-17 was written as an encouragement for someone who struggles with forgiving themselves. How did Jesus model forgiveness? What did Jesus entrust to Peter and how was Peter to accomplish this?

Now look at what Peter said about Mark in 1 Peter 5:13. What does this tell you about Peter and Mark's relationship?

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<sup>1</sup> Melick, Ibid.

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In the first century, it was very important to the Gentile people that their leaders demonstrate power, authority, and success. The Roman Emperors demanded allegiance, some were even called savior. The Romans brought peace to the world and safety to travel on the seas and roadways. The Roman government provided food for its people.

Look at 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 to see Paul's teaching to the Gentile church in Corinth concerning God's plan. What does Paul say about the cross? Notice also the contrast that Paul made in this passage. You have already read Mark's Gospel through, so as you answer these questions think about how this issue of the cross relates to Mark's writing to the church in Rome.

After Barnabas and Mark went out to spread the message of the gospel, the early Christian church called Mark, Mark the Evangelist. I thought of the Christian song "I Love to Tell the Story" as I was thinking about that. If you know this song, you might close by singing these words while asking yourself if this testimony is true of your own life.

"I Love to Tell the Story"

I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love; I love to tell the story because I know 'tis true, it satisfies my longing as nothing else can do.

Refrain: I love to tell the story! 'Twill be my theme in glory – to tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

By A. Catherine Hankey and William G. Fischer

## Days 4 and 5 – Mark 1, Comprehensive Chapter Study

1. Every time you begin a chapter you will spend time going through a process called the Comprehensive Chapter Study. Generally this will be done in one day, but for the first chapter, two days will be allowed for this part of the study. The pattern for inductive study is to observe a chapter and then study the chapter to determine the themes or emphasis of the chapter. In the next two days you will **observe** the Scripture Worksheets for Mark 1. Open in **prayer** asking God to make His word living to you so that this part of the lesson will not become an academic exercise.

- Now read Mark 1 paying attention to the **key words**. You can refer to the Inductive Study Methodology in the Appendix for help with this **observation** process. As you read through the chapter, mark the **key words**. Now is the time to list what is being taught concerning the **key words** of Mark 1, by writing a list of what is being stated about the **key word** when the author used the word. You can place these lists directly on the Scripture Worksheets in the right-hand margin under the heading of the **key word**, or place your lists on a separate sheet of paper. After marking the **key words** in Mark 1, list these words here.

- As you read Mark 1, you can also look for the **contrasts and comparisons** that were used. Write the **contrasts and comparisons** here in the space provided, or mark your Scripture Worksheets in some way to show these.

**Contrasts (to show differences/opposites)**

**Comparisons (to show similarities and connections, using the words as or like)**

2. One way to see the message of Scripture is to look at how the Scripture communicates truth. In some verses, the first phrase in the verse could be an **instruction**, the second phrase a **declarative statement**, and the verse might end with a **warning**. In this case, the verse would be divided into part “a,” part “b,” and part “c.”

In the Gospels, the author is telling the events of Christ’s life on earth and verses of historical narrative are **declarative statements**. **Declarative statements** also teach doctrinal truth that would inform and equip those who follow after Christ. Most of the verses in Mark 1 are sentences of declaration.

The Bible also communicates with **instructions** and these can be found with the help of several clues. **Instructions** were generally written as commands, where the author tells the recipient or recipients to “do something.” Sometimes in a narrative passage of Scripture someone is given an **instruction**.

Some of the verbs or words that express action were written in the imperative mood, which means that they are statements written as commands to be followed by those hearing the words or receiving the book or letter. These imperatives were generally written in the second person, addressing the recipients as “you or your” or sometimes the “you” is understood but not actually stated in the sentence. In the Koine Greek that was used for the New Testament, the verbs written in the imperative mood are easy to differentiate, because the imperative mood has a different ending than other verb forms. However, even when you do not know the Greek word that was used, you can tell when a verb is in the imperative form by the intent of the sentence. Some **instructions** are written with the word “let” introducing the command as in Mark 1:38.

Read the following verses to see the **instructions** in Mark 1: Mark 1:3b,c,17,25,38, 41c,44. Mark these verses or phrases in some way.

The word **exhortation** comes from the word exhort which was used in the New Testament to mean coming alongside of someone, reminding them of God’s truth, and perhaps urging them to be obedient to the word of God. **Exhortations** might also be stated in the form of something that is promised from God. While Mark 1:15 could be considered an **instruction**, but because of the message of this verse, it would be considered as an **exhortation**. Read this verse and think about why it could be considered an **exhortation**. You will see more **exhortations** as you move through Mark’s Gospel.

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Another important means of communication from God, Christ, the prophets, or apostles was the issuing of **warnings**, which were usually followed by a recompense or consequence for the sin that would follow someone's sinful attitude or actions. **Warning** statements addressed a behavior that would lead to a problem or consequence. Mark 1:43 is a **warning** statement as the word warn is even in the text. Mark that verse in some way as a **warning**.

3. Look for **terms of expression** that help you understand time, with words like “now, then, later,” etc. and mark these in a consistent way.

Another means of understanding language is to examine the way verbs are used in writing. A simple explanation of verbs is that they are words that express action or the state of being, and they relate the words communicated within a framework of time. Verbs communicate that something *is happening* at the moment, or *has happened* in the past, or *will happen* in the future. (The verbs in the preceding sentence are in *italics*.) Verbs can also announce that an event has already taken place and the results of that event are continuing at the present time.

Please take the time to read Mark 1 looking for the different verb tenses that were used, noting in the left hand margin references to the future, the present, or the past. This can add another dimension to your study, not because you will be studying verbs, but this will help you see what God has done in the past, what He is doing in your life today, as well as show you what the future holds.

4. Mark words that express **conclusion** or show **results or purpose** with words like “for,” “for this reason,” “so that,” and “because.” Words that express **conclusion** are important to note because they show why the author wrote what he wrote and help you see the promises or consequences that will come.

5. What truth from Mark 1 does the Lord want you to focus upon? What caused you to think about your own life and lifestyle? How has this portion of Scripture ministered to you today?

Please close by praying through a verse that was meaningful to you and make it very personal to yourself and where you are in your life today. My verse is Mark 1:35, “Father God, I thank You that You have given me a desire to rise early in the morning and that You have provided me with the place to sit in quiet and seek after You. Thank You that Jesus my Savior modeled this and that Your holy word records this choice. I pray that You will strengthen me to be faithful to Your will for my life. This I pray in Jesus’ precious name, Amen.”

