

Lesson 9: Introduction to the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. The book was written anonymously. It may have been written by a man named Mark who was a son or companion of **St. Peter**. Some suggest it was written by **John Mark** who was mentioned in Acts or a man named Mark mentioned in three of **Paul's** letters as a "fellow worker" or a cousin of Barnabas. Many biblical scholars believe that it was written before the other Gospels, sometime in the 60's AD. It appears to have been written outside of Israel for a mostly Gentile community. There are many similarities between the Gospels of Mathew, Mark and Luke, and many verses are identical. Matthew, Mark and Luke may have used each other as sources for their Gospels. The fact that Mark's Gospel is the shortest has led many biblical scholars to believe that Mark was a source used by Matthew and Luke and that they each had their own sources as well. These three Gospels are called the **Synoptic Gospels**. The word "synoptic" comes from the Greek word roots "syn" meaning similar and "optic" which means seeing or eye. The Synoptic Gospels portray a similar vision of Jesus. Throughout our study of Mark, we will look at some of these shared verses and stories.

- 1. Read the introduction to the Gospel of Mark in your Bible. Share any helpful or interesting information you find there with your group.**
- 2. Read Mark 1:1-13 and footnotes. Share any footnotes with your group.**
 - a. With what event does Mark *begin* his Gospel?**
 - b. What is *different* about the Baptism John offers the people, *before* the mission of Jesus began? (See Mark 1:8)**
 - c. Why was it important for Jesus to be baptized?**
 - d. What do we learn about Jesus through his Baptism?**
 - e. Read Mark 1:12 -13 and compare it to Luke 4:1-13 below. How do these two accounts differ?**

Luke 4:1-13 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" ⁹ And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,'¹¹ and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" ¹² And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

3. Read Matthew 1:1-17.
 - a. Where does Matthew begin?
 - b. Why do you think Matthew began his Gospel in this manner?
 - c. What do we learn about Jesus with these verses?

4. Read Luke 1:1-25.
 - a. How does Luke begin his Gospel?
 - b. How does this “set the stage” for what comes next in Luke’s Gospel?

5. Read John 1:1-14.
 - a. Where does John begin his Gospel? (John 1:1-5)
 - b. What does John tell us about Jesus in these verses?
 - c. What do verses John 1:6-9 tell us about John the Baptist?
 - d. Who is “the true light?” in John 1:1-9?
 - e. What do verses John 1:10-14 reveal about Jesus Christ?
John 1:10 -
John 1:11 -
John 1:12 -
John 1:14 –

6. Reflection- Imagine someone were going to write a biography about you.
 - a. What would the book include if your Mom or Dad wrote the story? What do you think would *be missing from your story*?
 - b. What would the book include if your children or a neighbor wrote the book?
 - c. Would the book be different from the above books if your best friend wrote your story?