

Lesson One (Sunday)***Mark 1*****Preface (1:1–13); including:****Title (1–3)****Ministry of John the Baptist (4–8)****Baptism of Jesus (9–11)****Temptation of Jesus (12–13)**

1a. What do the verses following verse 1 set forth as the “beginning” of the gospel of Jesus Christ? (2–8).

1b. If that is the “beginning” of the gospel, what is suggested about the subject of the book of Mark as a whole?

2a. What function is served by the quotations in verses 2 & 3?

2b. To what do they connect the appearance of John?

3. What was John’s preaching? (4).

4a. Describe John’s lifestyle (6).

4b. What Old Testament character does he resemble?²

4c. Does his lifestyle match his message?

5a. What was John’s testimony about one to follow him? (7–8).

5b. How does the last part of it relate to Old Testament expectation?³

6a. What was the testimony to Jesus given from heaven? (9–11).

6b. Again Mark is brief compared with Matthew 3:13–17. He

² See Second Kings 1:7–8 and compare Luke 1:13–17.

³ See Isaiah 42:1; 44:3; Joel 2:28–32 (compared with Acts 2:16–21). Observe the brevity of verses 4–8 compared with the much fuller accounts in Matthew 3:1–12 & Luke 3:1–17. Mark omits a lot in order to focus on certain points which he wants to stand out in the forefront of his book. See further below.

leaves out all except what is directly related to his purposes. What does he want to stand out at the beginning of his book?

7a. Again in verses 12–13 Mark is brief. Compare Matthew 4:1–11 & Luke 4:1–13. Only the fact of the temptation is mentioned; nothing about the nature of it or even the outcome. Does this serve to define the relation between Jesus and Satan right at the outset of the book?

7b. Judging from verse 24 & 3:22–27, do verses 12–13 introduce a main theme of the book? Explain.

8a. Now think back over verses 1–13, which serves as a kind of preface to the book. What is the effect of the preface, omitting what it does, containing what it does?

8b. Explain how the points on which Mark focuses (while omitting others) serve to identify the person who is to be the subject of his book right at the beginning.

8c. In what character is Jesus' immediately put before us?

Beginning of Jesus' Preaching in Galilee (1:14–15)

1a. What region is the center of Jesus' activity?

1b. Locate it on the map and describe it in relation to Jerusalem.

2. What is the principal activity of Jesus?⁴

3a. What was the message of Jesus?

3b. How is it related to Daniel 2:44?

Calling of Four Fishermen (1:16–20)

1. What statement indicates why Jesus called the men of verses 16–20?

2. Translate the figure into reality. What is indicated about Jesus' work?

⁴ Watch for other evidence on this point.

Casting Out of Unclean Spirit in Synagogue at Capernaum (1:21–28)

1. In what two ways does the Son of God reveal himself to the people?
2. Describe the reaction of the people to the teaching of Jesus (v. 22). What in particular about Jesus impressed the people?
 - 3a. What did the unclean spirit (or demon, v. 34) know about Jesus that others did not know? (vv. 23–24).
 - 3b. What does that tell you about what is necessary to the recognition of Jesus?
4. Why would Jesus not want demons to testify about him? (25, 34; cf. 3:22).
- 5a. What impression does Jesus make upon the people by the casting out of the unclean spirit? (27).
- 5b. What does such an act reveal about Jesus?

Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (1:29–31)

1. Who is healed after Jesus and his followers came from the synagogue? (29–31).
2. What does this incident reveal about Peter (= surname of Simon, 3:16)?

Miracles After Sunset (1:32–34)

Can you suggest a possible reason the people waited till sundown to bring their sick? (32 compared with 21).

Departure from Capernaum and Preaching Through Galilee (1:35–39)

1. How much does verse 35 tell you about Jesus?

2. What does verse 38 reveal about the mission of Jesus?⁵

Cleansing of a Leper (1:40–45)

1a. What does verse 40 reveal about the faith of the leper?

1b. How did he come to have such faith? (Any indication in this chapter?)

1c. What is indicated about the way Jesus revealed himself to people?

2. What insight does verse 41 provide into the heart of Jesus?

3. How does verse 42 characterize the miracle?

4. Does the text provide any indication of the reason Jesus prohibited the man from telling about his cleansing? (43–45).⁶

5. See Leviticus 14:1–32 with regard to the offerings mentioned in verse 44.⁷

6a. What was the consequence of the man's disobedience? (45).

6b. No doubt he intended to honor Jesus. But in what way does one honor Jesus?

⁵ ASV is a better translation than RSV: *for to this end came I forth*. See parallel in Luke 4:43. Compare Question 2 under 1:14–15 above.

⁶ For other isolated instances of such prohibitions see 5:43, 7:36, 8:26, 30 & 9:9; contrast 5:19–20.

⁷ Leviticus 13 describes the test of leprosy and how it may be distinguished from other infections.

Lesson Two (Wednesday)**Mark 2 & 3*****Conflict and Controversy***

We have seen the Son of God as he began to reveal himself to the people in word and in work. His ministry is met by immediate and tremendous popularity. In chapters 2 & 3 he continues as before. But look for the introduction of two new elements. One relates to the reaction with which his work is met; the other further defines his purpose and mission in the world. When you find these new elements make a note of them.

Healing of Paralyzed Man (2:1–12)

1a. A period of conflict begins. A charge is made against Jesus. Who makes the charge?

1b. What is the charge?

1c. Explain the charge?

2a. Observe how Jesus continues to manifest himself to the people. This passage contains a claim and a miracle. What is the claim?

2b. How is the miracle related to the claim?⁸

2c. Describe the impact of this miracle on the people.

3. Two passages shed light on the title “Son of man” (10): Daniel 7:13–14 (with Mark 14:62) and Mark 2:27–28. List two points about Jesus involved in this title.

Call of Levi (2:13–14)

What is the other name of the man Levi? (14; cf. Matt. 9:9).

⁸ Give some thought to the relation of Jesus’ miracles to his teaching and claims generally.

Feast in Levi's House (2:15–17)

1. What significance, if any, do you see in the pairing of tax collectors with sinners? (15–16).
2. What is the second charge Mark records against Jesus? (16).
- 3a. What is Jesus' answer? (17).
- 3b. Explain his answer. What is revealed about his mission?

Question About Fasting (2:18–22)

1. What is the third question raised about Jesus? (18).
2. In his answer (19–20), for the first time in Mark, Jesus drops a hint about a certain coming event. What event?
- 3a. Are verses 21 & 22 further illustrations of the point found in verses 19 & 20, or do they contain additional points?
- 3b. If the latter, what is the teaching?
- 3c. These verses have often been applied to the contrast between the old tradition and the new teaching of Jesus. But in the light of the parallel in Luke 5:33–39, and especially the addition in verse 39, is that the correct application?
4. What do these verses teach about fasting?

Sabbath Controversy: The Grainfield Incident (2:23–28)

1. What was the accusation made by the Pharisees against Jesus' disciples?
2. How does Jesus answer this accusation? (24–26).⁹
- 3a. Summarize the teaching of Jesus about the real meaning and intention of the sabbath as over against Pharisaic tradition (27–28).
- 3b. What claim does he make in this connection?

⁹ The reference is to First Samuel 21:1–6. See further Exodus 25:30 and Leviticus 24:5–9 on this bread.

Sabbath Controversy Continued: The Man With a Withered Hand (3:1–6)

1a. Are Jesus' opponents able to make an accusation against him in the matter of the healing?

1b. Why?¹⁰

2a. Describe the dilemma Jesus poses and explain how it fits the present case (4).

2b. Hint: With the lame man before Jesus, and with Jesus having the power to do something about the lameness, it was not a question of doing or not doing. What was the question in such a case?

3a. Describe the emotions of Jesus on this occasion (5).

3b. Why was he angry?

4. Observe the increasing intensity of the conflict between Jesus and his opponents (2:6–7, 16, 18, 24; 3:2, 6), and describe the climax at 3:6.

Withdrawal to the Sea (3:7–12)

1. How, according to Matthew 12:15, does the withdrawal of Jesus (7) relate to what precedes?

2a. Describe the increasing popularity of Jesus with the masses as contrasted with the conflict with opponents (7–10).

2b. Why did people come to him?

2c. What was the purpose of the boat? (cf. 4:1).

3. Thought Question: Why does Jesus charge the unclean spirits not to make him known? (11–12).

¹⁰ Consider: How much work does the lame man do on the sabbath? How much does Jesus do?

Appointment of the Twelve (3:13–19a)

1. This action taken at this point would seem to be connected with two points in the context—one at verse 6, the other at verses 7–10. Explain and discuss.

2. What purposes are given for the appointment of the twelve? (vv. 14–15).

Charge of an Alliance with Satan (3:13b–30)

1. What two opinions are expressed about Jesus? (21–22).

2. How does the charge against Jesus by his enemies actually provide evidence in his favor? What do they admit about him?

3. How does Jesus refute the charge? (23–26).

4. What does the casting out of demons really show about Jesus? (27).

5. Why does Jesus speak the strong language about blaspheming the Spirit? (28–30).

6. The emphasis of this lesson has been on controversy. Somewhere along the way, perhaps here, the subjects of conflict between Jesus and his opponents should be gathered up into a summary. The increasing hostility toward Jesus and the way in which the cross casts its shadow back over the entire life of Jesus should be pointed out.

Lesson on Spiritual Kinship (3:31–35)

1a. What information is given about Jesus' family? (31f; cf. 6:3).

1b. Why do they come? (See verse 21.)

2. We have seen how Jesus met with a hostile element in his audiences. But toward others he felt a kinship even deeper than fleshly ties. Who were these kindred of Jesus? (33–35).

2b. In what way do they show kinship to Jesus?