

The Gospel According to St. Mark
Bible Study Curriculum
High School Ministry







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I. Introduction

The 4 Gospels comparison				
	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
To whom it was written	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Christians
Subject	The Messiah the king	The Messiah the conqueror of Satan	Christ the lover of mankind	Christ the Incarnate Word
Main message of Jesus	Fulfills the Law	Performs wonders	Saves mankind	Dwells among us
Gospel content	Focuses on prophecies	Focuses on deeds	Focused on history	Focused on theology
Symbol	The human face	The lion	The Ox	The Eagle

Symbols of the Four Gospels			
			
Matthew Winged Man	Mark Winged Lion	Luke Winged Ox	John Winged Eagle

An 8 minutes illustrative video that could be used by servants to prepare or to show kids part at the beginning of each unit. Use only till the minute 8:20, as the last part is not verified.

<https://youtu.be/HGHqu9-DtXk>

Servant's preparation:

A link for the whole series of 22 sermons covering the whole book of St. Mark's gospel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibq9HrbU1b8&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy>

An introduction sermon to Gospel of St. Mark by Abouna Daoud Lamei in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibq9HrbU1b8&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy>

A BIOGRAPHY OF SAINT MARK*

HIS UPBRINGING

- ❖ St. Mark was born in 'Cyrene,' one of the cities of Pentapolis in Libya, in a town called 'Ebryatolis,' from Jewish parents related to the tribe of Levi. His father's name is 'Aristopolis,' and his mother
- ❖ 'Mary' was a pious woman, of some stature among the early Christians of Jerusalem.
- ❖ Mark had two names (Act 12:12, 25; 15:37): **John**, a Hebrew name which means "the kingdom of God," and **Mark** a Latin name which means "Hammer."

- ❖ St. Mark was a relative of Barnabas, the Apostle. (nephew or Cousin Col. 4:10). His father was also a cousin of St. Peter's wife.
- ❖ He learned and mastered both Greek and Latin.
- ❖ After the barbarians attacked their home, they left Cyrene to Palestine, where he and his mother enjoyed the company of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark's mother, Mary, was one of the women who ministered to the Lord with their resources. She offered her house to the Lord to eat the Passover with His disciples in the upper room. There, He washed their feet and gave them the Sacrament of the Eucharist. By that, her house became the first church in the world, consecrated by the Lord Himself through His holy presence and His practicing of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In that same upper room, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples (Act 2:1-4), and in it the disciples assembled.
- ❖ St. Mark was one of the seventy apostles chosen by the Lord for ministry, as testified by **Origen** and by St. Epiphanius.
- ❖ St. Mark attended the wedding of Cana of Galilee; and he was the man carrying the pitcher of water who met the two disciples sent by Lord Jesus to prepare the Passover (Mk. 14:13,14; Lk. 22:11). He was also the young man who left his linen cloth and fled naked during the incident of the arrest of the Lord (Mk. 14:52)

*Much of the information above is from Holy Tradition which other denominations do not often acknowledge. We have got to appreciating and valuing the wealth we have in our tradition.

Why do we see a lion in his icon?

- ❖ St. Mark attracted his own father to Christianity when he struck two hungry lions dead by the sign of the cross.
- ❖ He started writing his gospel by describing John the Baptist as a lion roaring in the wilderness and he also portrayed Jesus as the Divine Master serving the power of a lion.

HIS MISSIONARY WORK:

- ❖ He began his preaching with Saint Peter in Jerusalem then joined St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but he left them and return to Jerusalem. Later he traveled with St. Barnabas to Cyprus from which he proceeded to Lybia his homeland.
- ❖ In 61 A.D. he went to Egypt and established the church of Alexandria which we all belong to. History tells us the story of how Anianus accepted the Christian Faith, as the first Egyptian to do so. When Mark's footwear needed repair, he approached Anianus the shoemaker, who, as the needle pierced his finger, he uttered the words "O God the One." St. Mark healed him in the name of Lord Christ, and began talking to him of "God, the One." Anianus and his household accepted faith. As Christian faith quickly spread in Alexandria, St. Mark ordained Anianus a bishop, and with him three priests and seven deacons.

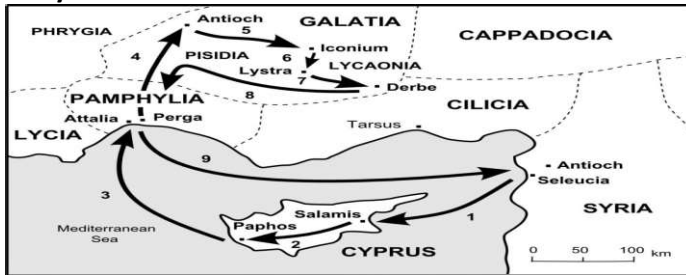
- ❖ The pagan mob rose in anger, which compelled St. Mark to leave Alexandria to Perga (Lybia), and from there he headed to Rome, where he joined St. Peter and St. Paul, to remain with them until their martyrdom in the year 64 A.D.
- ❖ When St. Mark returned to Alexandria in the year 65 A.D. to find out how the Christian faith had flourished, he decided to visit Pentapolis before getting back to Alexandria to be martyred at the district of 'Bokalia.'

The message and features of the Gospel:

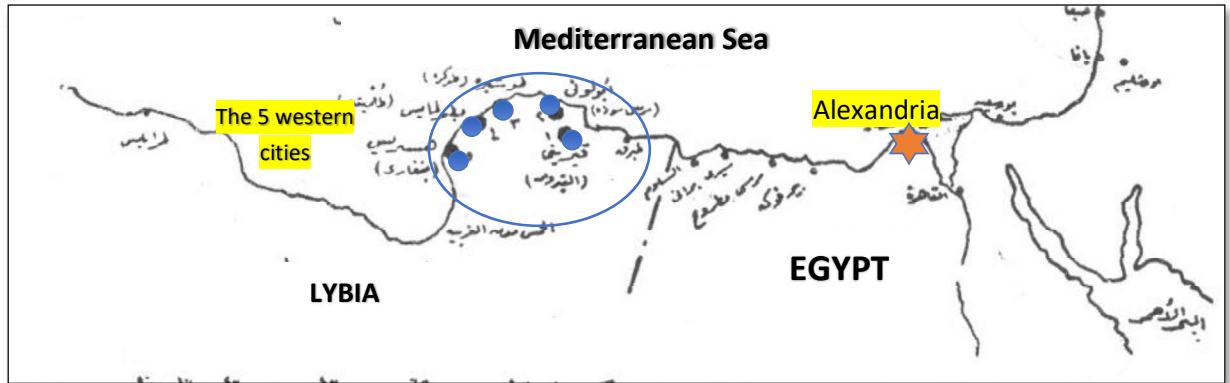
- ❖ It is believed to be the oldest of the four Gospels written between the years 65 to 70 A.D.
- ❖ While in Rome, the people asked him to write a summary of what they had received by word of mouth, so he wrote it to the Romans after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul.
- ❖ Writing his gospel to the Romans, explains why he may have not included many prophecies from the Old Testament like the gospel of Saint Matthew which was addressed to the Jews and why he had to explain many popular Jewish words and traditions.
- ❖ The Romans believed in authority and influence through war and violence, so he offered to them Jesus Christ as the true ruler over devils 1:27, disease 1:42, nature 4:41, plants 11:12-20, and the temple 11:33. Angels minister to him 1:13, He is Lord of the Sabbath 2:28, knows what's in the heart and mind of people 2:8, speaks with authority 1:12, feeds the multitude 6:33, the destroyer of death 5:35. His authority is evident through love, kindness, service, humility, and through pain.
- ❖ The Romans believed in authority through violence, pride, and oppression, but St. Mark the Evangelist proclaimed the authority of the Lord through humility and ministry to others (9:33; 10:35, 45).

I. St Mark Proclamation Maps

First Journey with St Paul



The Mediterranean Missionary- Egypt and the Five Western Cities



1- Unit 1: (Chapter 1-6)

Getting to Know Christ: Chapter 1:1-11

His Ministry in Galilee: Chapters 1:12-6:30

- 1) In chapter 1, St. Mark begins by describing Christ as a servant to mankind, sacrificing Himself, aiming to deliver us. That is why he does not detail the birth of Christ, but rather focuses on His ministry.
- 2) John the Baptist prepares the road for Christ the servant (Chapter 1)
- 3) Jesus served in Galilee, prayed for us in the desert, healed many on the Sabbath, in the house, by the sea, and wherever He went.
- 4) Jesus called others to preach with Him (the disciples)
- 5) His service is resisted (Chapter 2)
- 6) Jesus continued His preaching (Chapter 3)
- 7) His parables were marveled at by the people despite the resistance by the scribes (Chapter 4).
- 8) He commanded the evil spirits, death, and disease (Chapter 5).
- 9) Strange behavior towards this Servant who is unique in His love and work (Chapter 6)

2-Unit 2:

His retreat from Galilee (Chapters 7 to 9)

- 1) Jesus left Galilee not to avoid the trouble but to prepare the minds to accept the cross. He fed the multitude, healed whoever touched Him, and comforted even the Gentiles.
- 2) St. Mark recorded many conversations and questions that revealed Jesus's person and mission in chapters 8 to 10.
- 3) Through His transfiguration, He acknowledged His kingdom.

3-Unit 3:

His service in Judea chapter 10:

In this chapter, he provides us with life examples for the path of the cross.

- A. The difficult commandment (no divorce)
- B. Accepting children with love
- C. Wealth
- D. Leaving all to take up the cross
- E. Discarding the love of higher positions.

4- Unit 4:

Crucifixion and resurrection chapters 11 to 16

- 1) The events of the passion week,
- 2) His entry to Jerusalem (Chapter 11).
- 3) Resisting Him in Jerusalem (Chapter 12).
- 4) The cross and the signs of the end (Chapter 13).
- 5) The preparation of the cross (Chapter 14).
- 6) The events of the crucifixion (Chapter 15).
- 7) His resurrection declared the glory of this unique Servant, who is capable of rising from the dead.
- 8) The One who rose from the dead is still serving us, as He sent His disciples to preach and He is still serving His church.
- 9) He ascended to heaven so that our hearts may ascend with Him also



V. 4- Unit 4:

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- 9) He ascended to heaven so that our hearts may ascend with Him also

A. Chapter 11

Servant's preparation:

A sermon about Chapter 11 explaining the Gospel of St. Mark by Abona Doud Lamei in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV3F33RNpfg&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=13>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdu2vwOA_Oo&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=14

Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson, please review book overview questions.

- ✓ Who is St. Mark? He was one of the 70 apostles whose house was the 1st church Jesus used and who later preached in many countries including Egypt where our Coptic church originated.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Romans
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? To show the great power of Jesus Christ who through His amazing actions, He demonstrated His Divine power.

Remember:

Last lesson, we learned from Jesus how our families should look like and how He loved children. We also saw how impossible things could be possible with God. We can change many wrong things when we ask for God's help. However, if we try alone, it would seem impossible.

Main points in the Chapter:

1. The Triumphal Entry "Palm Sunday" 1-10
2. The Fig Tree Withered & The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree 11-14 &20-26
3. Jesus Cleanses the Temple 12-19
4. Jesus' Authority Questioned 27-31

Lesson overview:

In this chapter, Jesus entered Jerusalem in a great celebration after thousands of people heard of the miracle of raising Lazarus, they were all thinking of Jesus as the king who would save them from the Romans. Jesus cursed the fig tree that only had leaves with no fruits to remind us that God does not like people showing they are good but their hearts are not with Him and they are not producing any fruits but just showing leaves. Jesus also reminds us to forgive each other as we are forgiven by our heavenly father.

Meditation:

1. The Triumphal Entry “Palm Sunday” 1-10

- Zechariah has prophesied, that, “He will come riding on a donkey, and a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).
- Who were these two disciples sent by the Lord to untie humanity [colt], but the preachers of salvation all along the New and Old Testaments? The Lord granted His people His word, to let us enjoy reconciliation: in the Old Testament, through shadows and symbols, and in the New Testament through the truth.
- St. Ambrose says: [The spreading of personal garments by the disciples, under the Lord’s feet, is a reference to the illumination in their preaching the Gospel. Garments, in divine Scriptures, often refer to virtues.]
- It is as if the Psalmist saw that procession, as he sang the same liturgical outcries, saying, “This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

2. The Fig Tree Withered & The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree 11-14 & 20-26

- The cause of the curse of withering, is the loss of true wisdom. That is why the readings of the Holy Monday, dealing with the withered fig tree, draw our attention to the necessity of acquiring wisdom.
- Some may question: Why did the Lord Christ demand fruit out of season; and when He did not find, He cursed the tree?! Some explain that by saying, that Palestine was known to have two kinds of fig trees. Thus, although it was not, as a whole, the right season, yet, the presence of leaves on that tree, would indicate that it was of the kind, that should have already carried fruits.
- It was fitting for the Jewish nation, having preceded the pagan world in knowing God, and in receiving the Law and prophecies, to produce fruit, but it produced leaves without fruit. That is why it was worthy of withering, to be replaced by the fruitful fig tree of the New Testament.
- Scholars believe that the moving mountain refers to everything difficult; the Jewish Rabbis used to call whoever interpret a difficult Scripture text, ‘a mountain-mover.
- In other words, the prayer to be received, has to come out of a heart, with practical faith; the sign of that practical faith is the forgiveness of the trespasses of others, in order to get the forgiveness of our Father, and the purification of our hearts... The Lord intended, to let the response to prayers be in our hands; namely, if we listen to others, He will listen to us; and whatever is our verdict on them, will be the verdict on us

3. Jesus Cleanses the Temple 12-19

St. Ambrose comments on driving out the sellers from the temple, saying: [God does not want His temple, to turn into a marketplace, but a place for sanctification; teaching that positions of clergy

should not be given for money, but for free. Meditate in God's planning for that effect: He began by driving out those who buy and sell, and the moneychangers who used to seek wealth, without discerning between good and evil. The wealth of God is the Divine Scriptures.

4. Jesus' Authority Questioned 27-31

St. Cyril the Great believes that the Lord Christ presented them with a question concerning John the Baptist, as the Jews used to accuse the true prophets of being false ones... The Pharisees got confused, and were afraid to accuse John of being false; so, they refrained from answering the Lord's question, proclaiming that they were not seeking the truth, and were not worthy of recognizing it

Application:

In this chapter, you can focus on how to be fruitful trees not hypocrites who show they are good, but they aren't. Jesus warns us against pretending we are something we are not. If we are indeed going to call ourselves 'Christians', followers of Christ, then we should live our lives as such. Jesus was teaching His disciples that through faith, they can accomplish what appears to be impossible

Observe the actions and attitudes of Jesus:

After entering Jerusalem in a great celebration, what did Jesus do? What did He say?

The Bible tells us that Jesus was hungry and saw a fig tree with leaves. When He reached for figs, he found that there were none. St. Mark tells us it was not the season for figs.

Ask: If it was not fig season, why do you think Jesus cursed the tree?

Understand the culture:

"St. Mark informs his readers that it was not the season for figs. Passover always comes in March or April, and fig season is not until May or June. However, fig trees generally produce several buds in March, leaves in April, and ripe fruit later on. Jesus was looking for the edible buds, the lack of which indicated that the tree would be fruitless that year."

Consider now how in Scripture, the fig tree is often symbolic for the nation of Israel. Jesus never wasted an opportunity to teach something spiritually while acting physically. If this fig tree represents the nation of Israel, what spiritual lesson can we draw from it?

The nation of Israel had the leaves of 'profession'; they had the pretention of being fruitful when in fact they were not producing any real spiritual fruit. In other words, they were doing and saying the 'religious' things, but in their heart, they did not believe in Jesus. They refused to accept that Jesus was the Saviour.

Observe the response of the Disciples:

Peter sounded almost surprised when he says: "*Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!*" What was Jesus response to Peter?

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered." This was a lesson for the disciples in the importance of faith.

Remember, Jesus knew His time on earth was coming to an end and that He only had a few more days with His disciples. The point Jesus was trying to get across was that dependent trust in God can accomplish humanly impossible things through prayer. It means that their faith should grow by prayer so they can do all the things that seem impossible.

Dig deeper:

Read Verse 23-25 Discuss what Jesus might have meant in these verses.

God is the source of all change. Moving a mountain is sometimes symbolic of doing something humanly impossible. Jesus was teaching His disciples that with faith, they can accomplish what appears to be impossible (see [Philippians 4:13](#)). Does this mean if we ask for **anything**, God will give it to us? What do you think? Ask yourself: "Is what I am praying for part of God's will for my life?" If so, then you can be confident that God will answer your prayers. God does not desire to withhold from us, quite the contrary. Yet He knows what is best for us thus when He withholds anything from us, it is always for our own good. We can trust Him with that!

Your Response:

What can we learn from today's passage?

1. Jesus wants us to have faith in God. He wants us to trust Him for all our needs and to believe He has our best interests at heart. He wants us to boldly ask for what we need in prayer knowing that God will answer us and meet our needs.
2. Jesus also warns us against pretending we are something we are not. If we are indeed going to call ourselves 'Christians', followers of Christ, then we should live our lives as such.

Think:

1. Is there something in your life that you are not trusting God with? Confess your lack of faith to God and ask Him to grow your faith. Then turn your needs over to God and watch for Him as He works out His will in your life.
2. Are you calling yourself a Christian? Are you living like one? Calling yourself a Christian and not living like one brings disgrace to Jesus. Surely you do not desire to defame the name of Christ. If you struggle with behavior that might not be honoring to God, find help. Ask God for the strength and courage to live your life in a way that honors Him.
 - Thank God for the gift of His word (the Bible) from which we can learn more about Him and about His expectations for us.
 - Ask God to help you as you seek to grow your faith in Him.

Memory Verse:

24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." or

25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.