

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.

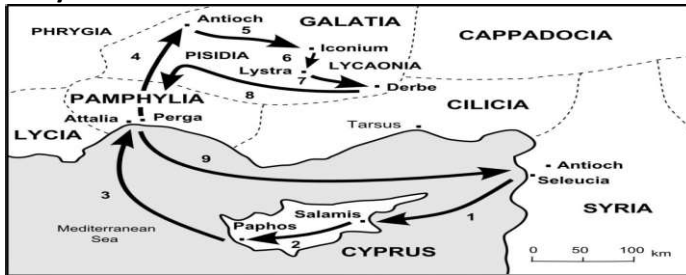
- ❖ The pagan mob rose in anger, which compelled St. Mark to leave Alexandria to Perga (Lybia), and from there he headed to Rome, where he joined St. Peter and St. Paul, to remain with them until their martyrdom in the year 64 A.D.
- ❖ When St. Mark returned to Alexandria in the year 65 A.D. to find 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:

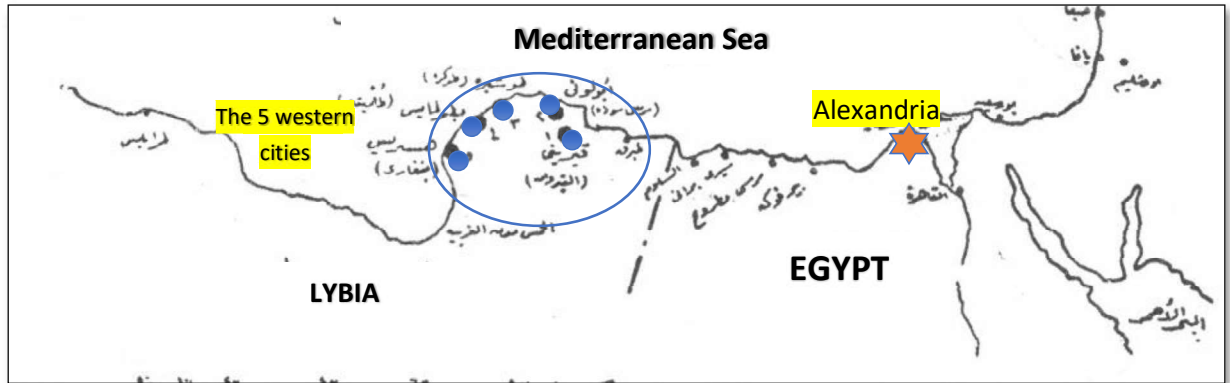
- ❖ It is believed to be the oldest of the four Gospels written between the years 65 to 70 A.D.
- ❖ While in Rome, the people asked him to write a summary of what they had received by word of mouth, so he wrote it to the Romans after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul.
- ❖ Writing his gospel to the 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



C. Chapter 3

Servant's preparation:

A sermon about Chapter 3 explaining the Gospel of St. Mark by Abona Doud Lamei in English
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=an85JaFlwg&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=4>

Brief introduction:

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

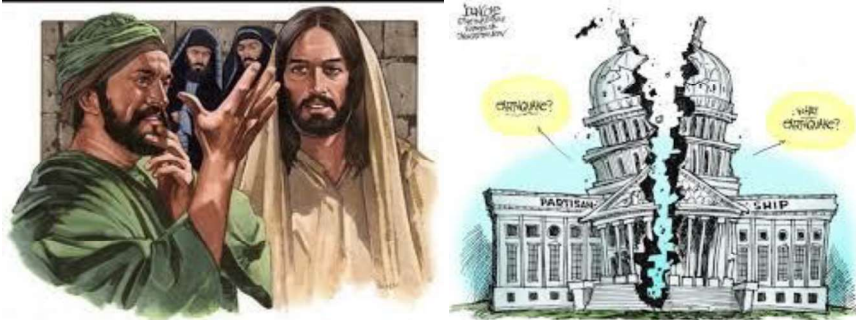
- ✓ Who is St. Mark? He was one of the 70 apostles whose house was the 1st church Jesus used and who later preached in many countries including Egypt where our Coptic church originated.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Romans
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? To show the great power of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

Remember:

Last lesson we watched Jesus heal the paralytic man who was dropped from the ceiling and Jesus gave him way more than he asked, He forgave all his sins and healed him as well. There is nothing too great for God.

Main points in the Chapter:

- 1) Healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath 1-6
- 2) A Great Multitude Follows Jesus. 7-11
- 3) Sending the Twelve Apostles 12-19
- 4) A House Divided Cannot Stand 20-27
- 5) The Unpardonable Sin 28-30
- 6) Jesus' Mother and Brothers Send for Him 31-35



Lesson overview:

In this chapter, Jesus continues His ministry in Galilee, which is on the other side away from Jerusalem. One Saturday, He healed a man with a stiff hand, the Jewish leaders were angry because He did that on Saturday. One of the most important laws to the Pharisees was keeping the Sabbath. They would refrain from doing any work, even if the work was to help others. Jesus came to correct this concept. On the Sabbath, He would enter the synagogue and read the scriptures, interpret them, and heal the sick. By doing so, He taught us that the way to keep God's day is to worship Him by loving Him and loving our brethren, especially the sick, the needy and sorrowful.

Some accused Him of having a demon, but Jesus explained why this does not make sense. A divided kingdom cannot stand. Then He sent His 12 disciples to various cities to preach.

Meditation:

1) Healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath 1-6:

He presented them with a question that silenced them, as they would be unable to say, that it is lawful to do evil on the Sabbath, but to do good. So, it would be more fitting for Christ to show mercy, and to save a soul, in order to be able to enjoy the grace of life.

By His talk with them, the Lord probably wished to heal them from the withering of their literally minds concerning the Law, before he heals the withering of the man's hand

2) A Great Multitude Follows Jesus. 7-11

3) Sending the Twelve Apostles 12-19

His choice of the disciples came after two things:

- a- He forbade the unclean spirits from bearing testimony for Him (verses 11-12), even though they were telling the truth, at the time; so as not to let people trust in them and fall under their influence.
- b- St. Luke, the evangelist, stated that the Lord, before He started calling His disciples, "Went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Lk. 6:12) As representing us, He wanted to proclaim that His ministers working in truth, are chosen, not according to human mind, but to divine will.

4) A House Divided Cannot Stand 20-27

- a- According to everyday knowledge, it is impossible to accept the claim, which Satan casts out Satan, lest his kingdom would not stand
- b- Satan has taken over man and considered him his house, plundering all his energies, capabilities, and gifts, to work for the kingdom of evil. That strong enemy would not get out, nor the goods he plundered would be regained, unless we first bind him. The Lord Christ came to proclaim His authority as a destroyer of that strong (man), to regain what he plundered.

5) The Unpardonable Sin 28-30

The Son of Man is ready to forgive these accusations, despite their bitterness, if these people retract from their evil ways. But if they persist on not repenting, they would be considered as blasphemers against the Holy Spirit, that is to say, as rejecters of His work, that is repentance. So, they would be denied forgiveness, and would be condemned.

St. Augustine says, [Indeed every sin and blasphemy are forgiven to mankind, not only what is said against the Son of Man. As long as there is no sin of unrepentant, which is addressed to the Holy Spirit, by whom the Church forgives all sins, all sins are otherwise forgiven.]

6) Jesus' Mother and Brothers Send for Him 31-35

Application:

In this chapter, you can focus on the sin which is never forgiven.

Why would Jesus say there is a sin that couldn't be forgiven? As we know, we can always repent and confess our sins and God will surely forgive us. However, the first thing that triggers our repentance is an alarming signal from the Holy Spirit, making us feel guilty for upsetting God and pushing us to repent. If we turn off this trigger, who will start the process? Nothing, that is why, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit [i.e. turning it off from your life] is the only unforgiven sin as the person won't be encouraged to repent.

Lesson illustration idea

A great illustration for this lesson is the candle experiment.

Glass and Candle Experiment

Objective: To explain that fire needs oxygen from the air.

Requirements:

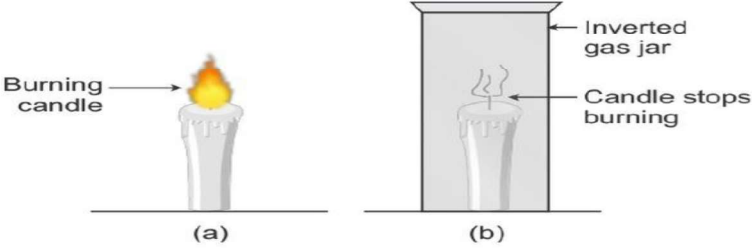
- A candle
- Kitchen lighter/matchbox
- A Glass

Procedure:

1. Light the candle. Take the help of an adult to do so.
2. Place it on the flat plate.
3. Cover the candle with the glass.
4. The candle goes out.
5. Repeat the experiment for better understanding

WHY THIS HAPPENS?

A lit candle needs to draw oxygen from the air in order to continue burning. If you limit the amount of air available, the candle's flame eventually goes out once it uses up all the oxygen. The glass prevents the fire from consuming any more oxygen. Once the fire in the glass has consumed all the oxygen inside the glass, the flame goes out.



Conclusion:
Running out of oxygen makes the flame go out.

What does the candlelight represent? The Holy Spirit burning inside our hearts, asking us to repent every time we sin.

What happens when we invert a glass jar over the candle? It can not breathe so it dies, similarly, if we do not keep our Holy Spirit awake inside our hearts by continuous prayers, bible reading and communion, It cannot continue burning inside our hearts and It would eventually die.

Then who would push us to repent and go back to God?

To keep the fire going, we have to be attentive. We are required to put wood on it daily and ensure it did not go out. The same kind of constant attention is required to keep the light of God's Holy Spirit alive in your own heart and mind. A fire left to itself will eventually go out. One of the surest ways to quench the Holy Spirit is through simple neglect! Neglect of prayer and study. Neglect the Holy Spirit, and it will become dormant. Given time, it will simply go out altogether.

To keep God's Holy Spirit alive and active, you must work at it.

Following are two of the most important keys to keeping the fire of the Holy Spirit alive.

The first key is prayer. Often, those who doubt whether they have the Holy Spirit are lacking regular, heartfelt, fervent prayer. Prayer needs to be a daily constant effort. Prayer develops your close personal relationship with God! That gives you His Spirit of power in your life.

It is in daily prayer that we repent before God, and true repentance is a prerequisite to having and maintaining the gift of God's Spirit (Proverbs 1:23; Psalm 51:2-3, 10-11).

The second key is study. God's apostle has continually reminded us of the vital need to pray and to study.

We must approach Bible study as a teacher of the truth. Remember, Jesus said that he who seeks shall find (Matthew 7:7-11).

Just as it takes effort to build a fire and to keep it going, it does truly take effort to ourselves close to God. However, it takes no effort at all to become deceived. All it takes is neglect!

There is great danger in neglecting prayer and Bible study. These tools are vital to stoking God's Holy Spirit in our lives and keeping its flames hot and bright. Paul warned Timothy, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you" (1 Timothy 4:14); and "stir up the gift of God" (2 Timothy 1:6).

As Christians, we need to remember that conversion does not occur all at once. We must "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). That truly means working day in and day out with daily prayer and study.

Below are four ways the Holy Spirit works in your life.

1. The Holy Spirit will guide you

The Holy Spirit will call you to believe in Jesus Christ. Now, don't mistake the Holy Spirit for a telephone operator working at a call center. The call he makes isn't the type you receive on the phone. His call is one that is internal (Rom. 11:29; Eph. 4:1).

If you have lived long enough, then you know there are times in life when things don't seem to make any sense. You'll feel as if the events in your life have no meaning or that you're wandering. But this isn't the case at all. God is directing your steps and guiding your life

2. The Holy Spirit will empower you

The Holy Spirit will empower you for service. In other words, the Holy Spirit will enable you to do what you've been called to do.

3. The Holy Spirit empowers evangelistic efforts

Jesus is alive, and he is building his church. His church isn't made through political engagement or military might. His church is established through the proclamation of the gospel.

4. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts

The Holy Spirit also works through us by giving us spiritual gifts

Memory Verse:

29 “but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation”