

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.

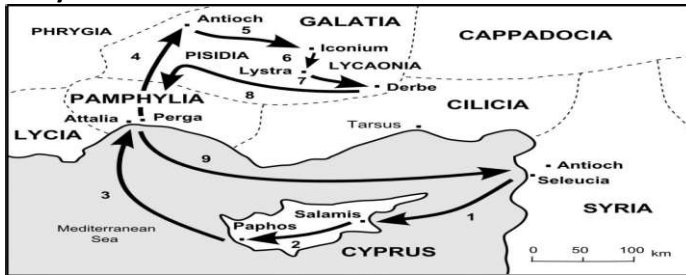
- ❖ The pagan mob rose in anger, which compelled St. Mark to leave Alexandria to Perga (Lybia), and from there he headed to Rome, where he joined St. Peter and St. Paul, to remain with them until their martyrdom in the year 64 A.D.
- ❖ When St. Mark returned to Alexandria in the year 65 A.D. to find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

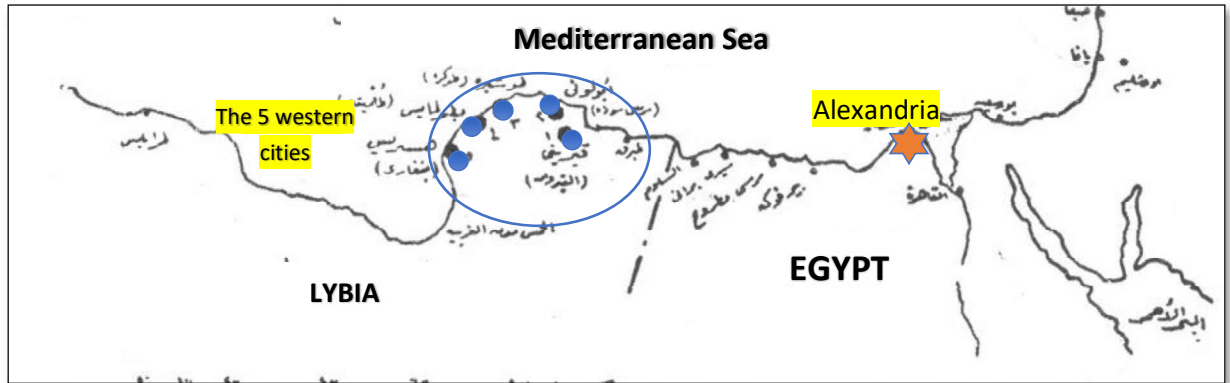
- ❖ It is believed to be the oldest of the four Gospels written between the years 65 to 70 A.D.
- ❖ While in Rome, the people asked him to write a summary of what they had received by word of mouth, so he wrote it to the Romans after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul.
- ❖ Writing his gospel to the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



D. Chapter 4

Servant's preparation:

A sermon about Chapter 4 explaining the Gospel of St. Mark by Abona Doud Lamei in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5lFsqXlDul&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=5>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5lFsqXlDul&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=5>

Brief introduction:

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

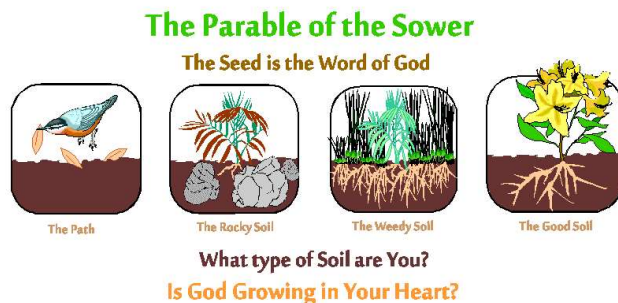
- ✓ Who is St. Mark? He was one of the 70 apostles whose house was the 1st church Jesus used and who later preached in many countries including Egypt where our Coptic church originated.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Romans
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? To show the great power of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

Remember:

Last lesson we talked about how Jesus Christ healed the man with the stiff hand on Saturday explaining to the Jews that He is the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus also was blamed for having a demon, but He answered them that a divided kingdom cannot stand. He told them that the only unforgiven sin is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because it is like the candle in our hearts leading us to repentance. We explained how to keep our flame [Holy Spirit] alive by daily prayers and studying the bible. Neglect leads to turning off the flame which is so dangerous as it is the unforgiven sin.

Main points in the Chapter:

- 1) The Parable of the Sower and its explanation 1-20
- 2) Light Under a Basket 11-25
- 3) The Parable of the Growing Seed 26-29
- 4) The Parable of the Mustard Seed 30-34
- 5) Wind and Wave Obey Jesus 35-41



Lesson overview:

In this chapter, Jesus tells the parable of the sower which we will explain in a few minutes, then He resembled the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed that starts tiny then grows to a big tree. When the disciples were in the boat with Jesus and a strong storm came, they were scared and woke Him up and He silenced the wind, telling the disciples that they lack faith.

Meditation:

1) The Parable of the Sower and its explanation 1-20

- ❖ Those that fell by the wayside, were trampled on; what fell on the rocks, immediately sprang up, then withered away; what fell among the thorns grew up, and were choked; while those that fell on the good soil, increased and produced a rich crop, estimated to be hundredfold...
- ❖ Why were the seeds on the wayside wasted? Because of the hardness of earth, being solid earth was unsuitable for agriculture. Such is the case with “hardheaded” people, characterized by arrogance and stubbornness. When the divine words of God fall on them, they will go nowhere, and will not give fruits of God’s fear, or of heavenly virtues.
- ❖ I wish the people, whose hearts are barren, would wake up, and open their minds to the holy seed of truth, to produce in them the fruits of pure life! Be sure to watch over your thoughts, and to close your doors firmly, to keep out thieves and robbers.
- ❖ Let us now contemplate on the seeds that fell on the stony ground, or rather the people who, when they hear the word, immediately accept it with gladness, but stumble when tribulation or persecution arise. Such people do not enter into the crucible of temptations, interested only in empty words, but are distance themselves from meditating on secrets of heaven. They cheat the Church, by showing gladness in what they hear from the preacher, pouring on him a flood of compliment, without any comprehension. Once they leave the threshold of the Church, they forget altogether what they heard, Let us be steadfast and daring, so that, if the storms of temptation blow against us, we will be able to overcome difficulties by graceful patience and perseverance.
- ❖ Let us rejoice in confronting afflictions and tribulations, for in them there is the chance of revealing goodness by our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Now, let us contemplate on the truth of that parable, as far as the thorns that choke the divine seeds; The Redeemer sows the seeds, and they fall on hearts that seem to be strong and fruitful; Yet, after a while, they get choked by the cares and deceitfulness of life.
- ❖ Didn’t you notice that, in circumstances of evil, we get choked by greed, drunkenness, foul play, pride, The good ground is that one that produce a hundredfold; People usually compliment their ground when it gives them a rich crop.
- ❖ Someone may ask, why did the Lord sow the seeds on the wayside, on the stony ground and on the thorny places, and did not sow them all on the good ground?
Acknowledging human freedom, God offers His word to all. Thus, although there are three kinds of ground, that do not produce fruit, though there is a fourth one that produces an amazingly rich

crop: a hundredfold, a sixty-, and a thirty-fold. This refers to the exalted glory to be enjoyed by the believers in inheritance.

2) Light Under a Basket 11-25

Whatever we sow here, we shall reap. So if we sow the heavenly things, we shall enjoy their glories, with much more added, and if we collect dust, we get double corruption... Eternity is, an extension of a life, chosen by man for himself, and lived in the depth of his heart.

3) The Parable of the Growing Seed 26-29

The second is the parable of the sower who does not know how the seed grows; God is the One who labors, even though the missionary work seems like a seed in the middle of the ground, surrounded by darkness.

4) The Parable of the Mustard Seed 30-34

As the mustard seed is very tiny in its size compared to the seeds of other plants, it grows much higher than other normal herbs, to become a shelter for many birds. So it is with the kingdom of heaven, whose message started by being presented to few people, to grow rapidly to become a shelter to nations and peoples to nest under its shade, considered as birds, as the human affairs are reckoned small, when compared to God's.

Likewise, the analogy of the kingdom of God to a little yeast, is very fitting; the yeast is little in its quantity, yet, it holds the whole dough, quickly reacting to give it its own characters. In the same way, the word of God works in us; it acts within us to turn us into blameless saints; infiltrating our minds and our hearts, to make spiritual people out of us

5) Wind and Wave Obey Jesus 35-41

Application:

- 1) God knows we have a lot to learn and that we may not understand everything in the Bible. God wants us to make the effort to learn more about Him by reading our Bibles and by praying. God will gladly give us knowledge and understanding if we seek Him. There are some people that have no desire to learn more about God, these people are like the seeds that fall on the path.
- 2) Some people hear the Good News about Jesus and happily accept it. As soon as someone laughs at them or makes fun of their faith, they deny everything Jesus stands for. If things get tough, they give up. When trouble comes, they quickly abandon their relationship with Jesus. They worry more about men than they do about God. Their hearts become hard, like the rocky places some of the sower's seeds fell.
- 3) Many people hear the Good News, which is the gift of salvation, but they are more worried about their day to day activities. They spent a lot of their time trying to get more money. They think that the more money they have, the happier they'll be. Sadly, this just isn't true. Seeking the things of this world is like the seed that fell among thorns. People can only be happy when they have a genuine relationship with God, through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ
- 4) Those who hear the Good News and take it to heart, can accept the free gift of salvation from Jesus Christ. We should live a productive life for our Lord. Please note that we cannot work our way into heaven, but if Jesus is the Lord of our lives, we will want to live for Him. We will follow His rules and

tell other people about Him. We won't be perfect, and we will still make mistakes, but we will try our best to live a life that is pleasing to God.

[Science experiment]

You get 3 jars: Fill the 1st with some water and salt, fill the 2nd with water, salt and baking soda, and the 3rd with water and baking soda. [salt represents Satan and baking soda represents our hearts]

Add to the 1st cup some vinegar [vinegar represents the word of God], nothing will happen

Add to the 2nd cup some vinegar, you will notice a slight chemical reaction

Add to the 3rd cup some vinegar, a huge amount of foam is formed.

When we hear the word of God and don't accept it, we are like the first cup, Satan took it away and no reaction occurred. When we hear the word but get distracted with this world, a slight reaction occurs because we don't give full attention to it. But when we hear it and act on it, we are like the 3rd cup where a huge chemical reaction took place since no Satan [salt] was allowed

Memory Verse:

24 "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given."