

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.

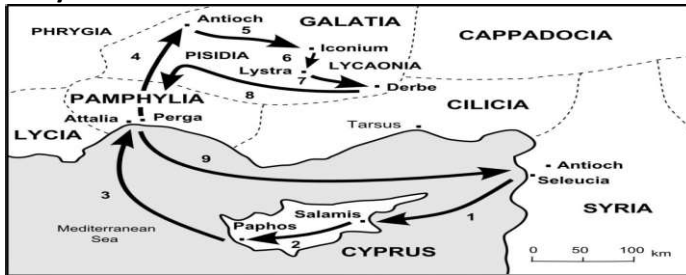
- ❖ The pagan mob rose in anger, which compelled St. Mark to leave Alexandria to Perga (Lybia), and from there he headed to Rome, where he joined St. Peter and St. Paul, to remain with them until their martyrdom in the year 64 A.D.
- ❖ When St. Mark returned to Alexandria in the year 65 A.D. to find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

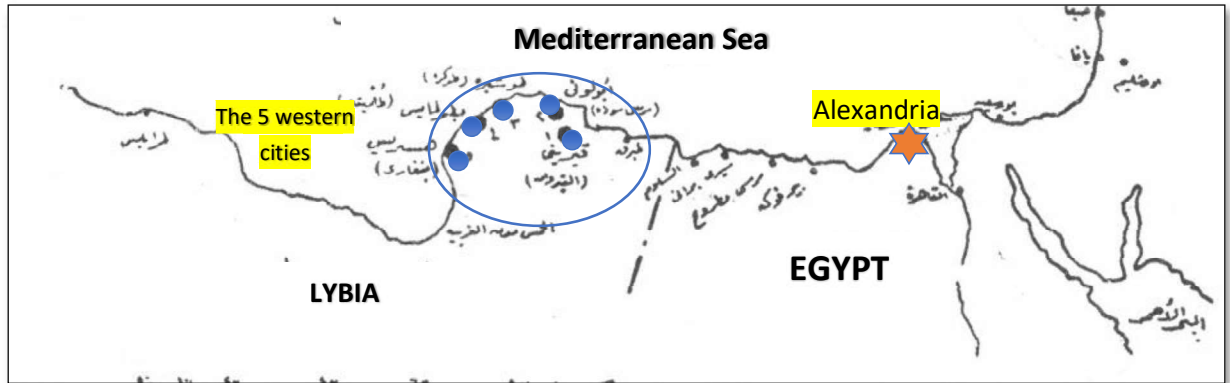
- ❖ It is believed to be the oldest of the four Gospels written between the years 65 to 70 A.D.
- ❖ While in Rome, the people asked him to write a summary of what they had received by word of mouth, so he wrote it to the Romans after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul.
- ❖ Writing his gospel to the 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 Medetirraian 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 9

### **Servant's preparation:**

A sermon about Chapter 9 explaining the Gospel of St. Mark by Abona Doud Lamei in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16vxV0frr0k&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=9>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_xaXhCFsBs&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_xaXhCFsBs&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=10)

### **Brief introduction:**

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

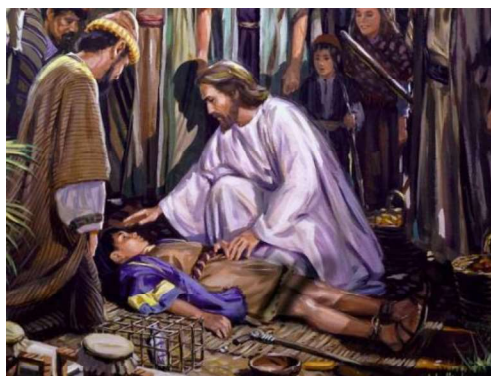
- ✓ Who is St. Mark? He was one of the 70 apostles whose house was the 1<sup>st</sup> church Jesus used and who later preached in many countries including Egypt where our Coptic church originated.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Romans
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? To show the great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

### **Remember:**

Last lesson we focused on " <sup>36</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Jesus fed 4000 men with few loaves. He always carries about our earthly needs but wants us to worry about our heavenly life. Shall we leave things for Him and set God as the top priority in our lives, carry the cross and follow Him? If we do that, then we would be glorified with Him in heaven.

### **Main points in the Chapter:**

1. The Transfiguration of Christ 1-13
2. A Boy Is Healed 14-29
3. Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection 30-32
4. Who Is the Greatest? 33-37
5. Jesus Warns of Offenses 38-48
6. Tasteless Salt Is Worthless 49-50





## Lesson overview:

In this chapter, Jesus was transfigured in the presence of Peter, James, and John. Later, He taught them about the role of John the Baptist as an Elijah who was to prepare the way for the Messiah. After Jesus returned to His other disciples, a man pleaded with Him to cast an evil spirit out of his son. Jesus cast out the evil spirit and taught His disciples about the need for prayer and fasting. Jesus answered an important question about “ who is the greatest?”. We will talk about this in details. He also mentioned how terrible it is to cause someone to stumble. If our hand, eye, or ear cause us to stumble, we should treat it firmly. By this, He means if watching something makes you sin, then do not watch, if going to a place or being with a person, leads you to sin, then prevent yourself from going or being with that friend because eternal life is more valuable than anything.

## Meditation:

### **1. The Transfiguration of Christ 1-13**

- ❖ Verse 1: Ambrose says: [Peter, James, and John beheld the glory of resurrection; so, they did not know death .]
- ❖ St. John Chrysostom said” it was claimed that the features of the Lord Christ, during His transfiguration, remained the same; yet the splendor of His glory was proclaimed. The Lord Christ, though remaining in body, yet His body, carried a new nature full of splendor and glory. We also, in the general resurrection, will still carry the body, that shared our strife; having the same features, but marked with the mark of the exalted glory, granted by God, to fit the eternal heavenly life”
- ❖ The appearance of Moses and Elijah: Jesus was accused of being a breaker of the Law, and a blasphemer, taking on Himself the glory of the Father, He intended to bring with Him Moses the receiver of the Law, and Elijah, the zealous for the glory of God, to proclaim the slander of His accusers.

### **2. A Boy Is Healed 14-29**

The Lord responded, telling him that the key to healing is in the hands of man, if he believes, saying to him: “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” (verse 23) In faith with humility, the father cried out and said in tears: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.” (verse 24) Thus, the Lord Christ, allowed the son to suffer for a little while, to reveal his father’s belief, to motivate him further to humility, to ask God to help his unbelief; and also to proclaim the authority of man through belief

### **3. Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection 30-32**

### **4. Who Is the Greatest? 33-37**

St. Jerome: “The disciples, on the road, disputed among themselves, who would be the greatest? But the Lord Christ, Himself has come to teach us humility. Haughtiness brings about trouble, but in humility is comfort!”

St. John Chrysostom: “He exhorted them to acquire humility and simplicity, as demonstrated in a child, namely pure from jealousy, from vain glory, and from love of authority” .

### **5. Jesus Warns of Offenses 38-48**

As much as we should have a spacious heart with love, and avoid causing these little ones to stumble, we should also wisely, escape from those who could cause us to stumble, yet, without judging them.

St. John Chrysostom: [He is not talking here of our body members, but of our intimate friends, whom we consider indispensable to us, as our own body members; nothing could harm us like a corrupt and evil friendship .]

## 6. Tasteless Salt Is Worthless 49-50

As the salt, loses its identity, if it loses its capability to season food, so also a Christian would lose his identity as a Christian, if he loses his love to, and peace with others.

### Application 1: “ Who is the greatest?”

In this chapter, you can focus on “ Who is the greatest?” idea that Jesus explained to His disciples. Everyone thinks of the greatest as the one who does the best and becomes the first, but Jesus thinks of it differently.

#### **General Discussion: Read Mark 9:33-35**

- What causes us to consider someone greater than another person? (*Bigger, faster, stronger, richer, more experienced, etc.*)
- When we say someone is the greatest, at what are they generally “great”? (*Sports, school, winning, etc.*)
- Have you ever been considered the greatest at anything? What was it? (*Won a science fair, a race, or aced a test...anything goes.*)

#### ❖ **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is Jesus’ question in verse 33? (*“What were you arguing about?”*)
2. What is the answer to that question according to verse 34? (*about who was the greatest*)
3. About what were they arguing? (*Who was the greatest at healing, casting out demons, faithfulness, etc.*)
4. In what way do you think the disciples wanted to be the greatest? (*perhaps some sort of hierarchy among themselves*)
5. What is Jesus’ response to their desire to be great? See verse 35. (*Anyone who wants to be first must be last; and servant of all*)
6. How does that seem to contradict the idea of greatness to you?

#### ❖ Jesus then performs a little object lesson in **Mark 9:36-37**

- Who does Jesus use as an example for the disciples? (*a child*)
- What characteristics do children have that communicate what Jesus says? (*trusting, humility, unconcerned with social status, etc.*)

#### ❖ Jesus uses the example of a child to illustrate greatness.

- How does the world tell us to be the greatest? (*achieve, earn, grow*)
- How does that philosophy fly in the face of the example Jesus gives? (*it is the exact opposite*)
- What does it mean in your world for the “first to be last”? (*to be humble, not to strive for achievement but goodness, etc.*)
- How did Jesus model this idea with His own life? (*he didn’t own a home, he didn’t have an income, he was always serving others, etc.*)

- ❖ Jesus' message of being great was by becoming a servant. He displayed this with His whole life as He sacrificed His own life for other people and gave us an example of service by washing feet. It is our duty to make ourselves the lowest--in our minds and in reality, to serve the master.
- ❖ Often, we think of “acting childish” as a bad thing. Interestingly, the word for “child” and “servant” are the same in Aramaic. The challenge for you today is to be childish. To help you remember, let’s play a little game.  
(Pick a childish game to play--Heads Up 7 Up, Duck Duck Goose, or something else similar. Take some time. Play for a while. Just let the childish-ness of it sink in. Then reflect on the experience together.)

### **Application 2: [How can we grow in faith?]**

We can also focus on the faith of the father of the mute boy saying to Jesus humbly “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” How can our faith grow? The power of combining fasting and prayer.

#### **Mark 9:1–29. Obtaining blessings**

Read the following scenarios aloud and invite students to think about what the scenarios have in common:

1. A young woman is critically injured in a car accident. Doctors give her a small chance of survival.
  2. A young man wants to excel in school, but he has always struggled with reading.
  3. A woman is constantly negative. She wants to think and speak more positively but struggles to do so.
- What do each of these scenarios have in common?

Invite students to think about any blessings they or someone they know are seeking that seem impossible to obtain. Invite them to look for a principle in [Mark 9:1–29](#) that can help them obtain these blessings.

“When facing the challenge of faith, the father asserts his strength first and only then acknowledges his limitation. His initial declaration is affirmative and without hesitation: ‘Lord, I believe.’ I would say to all who wish for more faith, remember this man!

- What can we learn from this father about what we can do in times of unbelief? (After students respond, write the following incomplete statement on the board: *If we hold on to what we believe ...*)
- What can we learn about dealing with unbelief from the other part of this father’s statement in [verse 24](#)? (After students respond, add the following phrase to the statement on the board: *and seek the Lord’s assistance, ...*)

Invite a student to read [Mark 9:25–27](#) aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the Savior did in response to the father’s pleas.

- What did the Savior do in response to the father’s pleas?
- How would you complete the statement on the board, based on what you have learned from this account? (After students respond, complete the sentence on the board so it conveys the following principle: **If we hold on to what we believe and seek the Lord’s assistance, He will help us strengthen our faith.**)

Refer to the situations listed on the board, which you discussed at the beginning of the lesson.

- How can this principle be used in such situations?

Encourage students to apply this principle during times of unbelief. Remind students that this father initially brought his son to some of Jesus’s disciples to be healed. Invite students to imagine they are these disciples.

- What question did the disciples ask Jesus?
- What did the Savior teach His disciples?
- How can prayer and fasting influence a person’s faith? (After students respond, help them understand the following truth: **We can increase our faith in Jesus Christ through prayer and fasting.**)

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement from the booklet *True to the Faith*. Ask the class to listen for different situations in which this truth could apply:

“This account [of Jesus casting out an evil spirit from a man’s son] teaches that prayer and fasting can give added strength to those giving and receiving blessings. The account can also be applied to your personal efforts to live the gospel. If you have a weakness or sin that you have struggled to overcome, you may need to fast and pray in order to receive the help or forgiveness you desire. Like the demon that Christ cast out, your difficulty may be the kind that will go out only through prayer and fasting”

- According to this statement, what are some situations in which this truth could apply?
- When has prayer and fasting helped increase your faith in Christ and allowed you to receive the righteous blessings you sought?

Ask students to reflect on blessings they seek for themselves or others that might be obtained by increasing their faith in Jesus Christ through prayer and fasting. Invite them to write down a goal to pray and fast for these blessings on the next fast Sunday.

### **Mark 9:28–29. Fasting combined with prayer**

*“We observe that in the scriptures, fasting almost always is linked with prayer. Without prayer, fasting is not complete fasting; it’s simply going hungry. If we want our fasting to be more than just going without eating, we must lift our hearts, our minds, and our voices to our Heavenly Father. Fasting, coupled with mighty prayer, is powerful”*

**Memory Verse:**

**36 "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Or use**

**23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."**