

LESSON 1

“The Kingdom Arrives”

Mark 1: 1-13

- John the Baptist Prepares the Way, Jesus is baptized
- Jesus is Tempted (Matthew 4:1-11)

Focus Scriptures:

“Here begins the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.” Mark 1:1

PREPARATION:

This first lesson sets the stage for the entire study. Our desire is to facilitate discussion around the subject, Jesus. We will avoid lecture or “teaching” techniques, rather allowing the Word to speak to each of us directly. Your job as facilitator will be to “get out of the Holy Spirit’s way” and seek to pull insights from your students’ interaction with the text.

Read the scripture with inflection as if reading a story to a child. This is how Mark wrote it, to be read aloud. Most listeners could not read.

Students should be encouraged to hear the text as if they were there with Jesus. Help set the stage. Talk about what Jesus’ listeners would be experiencing physically and emotionally in order to glean a greater understanding of Jesus’ words and actions.

Students may use their own preferred translations for the second reading.

Encourage your class to come to the Word as children, especially those with advanced Bible knowledge.

The lessons will consist of three readings of the scripture passages. During the first reading we will imagine we are in 1st century Palestine – which is our HEAD knowledge. The second reading will focus solely on Jesus' words and actions and try to forget 2000 years of post-resurrection history, ...and perhaps some bad Sunday school teaching - which is our HEART knowledge. And finally, the third reading will seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to help us individually hear Jesus' voice for own journey - which is our HANDS.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Of the four Gospel accounts, Mark's was the first written. He wrote it to be read aloud, as most people could not read. Mark's style is action based, and moves quickly so we will wander to the other Gospels for further details of Jesus. Mark also wrote in a style different from our Western mindset. He wove stories together to make points about Jesus' life and ministry. It is best to remember the book was written without chapter and verse, so ignore those marking while reading.

Enjoy discovering Jesus with us!

Suggested Ice-Breaker:

Think of a time in your life when you embarked on a new phase of life, i.e. began a new career, got married... What kind of preparations did you have to make ahead of time, and what success would you have had without preparation?

Notes: _____

BRIEF HISTORICAL AND/OR CULTURAL CONTEXT:

1st century Middle East: Palestine is occupied by Rome. Jews are heavily taxed, and have no rights. The practice of Judaism is allowed only so long as the religious Jewish leaders keep the Jewish people quiet and in line. Jewish expectations for a Messiah are intense. Several militant uprisings, with prophets claiming to be the Messiah have already been squelched, either by arrest, or outright massacre. The Messianic expectation is for a leader/prophet who will rise up against Rome and restore Israel to its former glory of an independent, powerful nation.

Notes: _____

Vocabulary Definitions:

Gospel – (Ευαγγέλιο, Evangélío): “Good News”

Repentance – (μετάνοια, Metanoia): “Changing one’s mind”

Prophecy – (προφητεία, profiteía): “Discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God”

Scripture – (ἱεὶς ᾠδὴ, miqrâ): “Announcement, declaration” (The English translation refers to writing – scribing – whereas the Hebrew word denotes reading and calling out.)

THE LESSON**Read Mark 1:1-11**

I. HEAD: (*Close your eyes while the scripture is read aloud. Imagine you are there.) Note words that describe the scene, and descriptive Mark 1:5 “the whole region” and “All the people of Jerusalem”

1. **YOU ARE THERE.** What are you hearing, smelling, seeing, feeling?

2. How does a dove descend? Was it a dove, or like a dove?

Notes: for instance, the atmosphere would be arid, even near the Jordan (it’s not a big river), words like “whole” and “all” would suggest there are crowds of 100+ people milling around, children and animal running around, noisy. Picture a scene like that for your second reading.

II. HEART: Read the passage to yourself

1. What is John's repentance about?

2. What does John say about Jesus?

3. What is God doing in this passage, and what might that tell you about God’s nature?

Notes: _____

Read Mark 1: 12-13 and Matthew 4:1-11

I. HEAD: (*)

1. According to Matthew, who leads Jesus into the wilderness?

2. **YOU ARE THERE:** What are your five senses experiencing alone in the wilderness?

3. How might “The Tempter” have approached Jesus? What does that look like to you?

Notes: _____

II. HEART: Read the passage to yourself

1. With what things is Jesus is being tempted?
2. How might these be real temptations for Jesus? (What is more tempting, and encounter with a tempter you can see, or if the tempter is in your head?)
3. What does Jesus rely on for strength during the temptation?

Notes: _____

III. HANDS: Look again over the scriptures for this lesson, ask God to reveal himself to you.

1. Is there anything compelling about Jesus' character that makes you want to know him more?
2. Other thoughts?

Notes: _____

A. Scriptures (Parallel Gospel Accounts)

John the Baptist:

Matt 3:1-12

Luke 3:1-18

John 1:19-23

Baptism of Jesus

Matt 3:13-17

Luke 3:21-22

John 1:29-34

Jesus' Temptation

Luke 4:1-13

B. Suggested Reference Materials

Beautiful Outlaw by John Eldredge

The Jesus I Never Knew by Philip Yancey.

Next Week:

Mark 1:21-45 “IT BEGINS” Jesus Makes a Name for Himself