

# THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

<sup>13</sup> "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. <sup>14</sup> BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.  
MATTHEW 7:13-14

**es-sen-tials** (ĭ-sĕn'shəlz) – *noun* – those things that are necessary and basic to life. In biochemistry essentials are substances that are required for normal functioning but cannot be synthesized by the body and therefore must be included in the diet. Essentials are those things that are fundamental to the spiritual health of the professing Christian.

## *The Gospel of Mark* A BIBLE STUDY

### *Setting the Agenda:*

The purpose of *The Gospel of Mark: A Bible Study* is

1. to aid us in developing a clearer understanding of *The Gospel of Mark* (clear, accurate exegesis of the scriptural passages),
2. to help us experience the true nature and meaning of the writing of *The Gospel of Mark* (God's truth),
3. to explain to us how *The Gospel of Mark* speaks to us as individual Christian believers and as Christ's body, the church (contemporary relevance and significance to life's issues), and
4. to illustrate to us how *The Gospel of Mark* shapes our lives and faith as twenty-first century Christians (to make the truth of God and the issues of life collide violently at the intersections of the consciousness)<sup>1</sup>.

The structure of the course will be *interactive* and *participatory*. Weekly assignments will include the students' answers to questions on prepared handouts. Students' answers will be based on the selected reading assignments for the week.

Students will need a good study Bible with references and notes. The leader will be using multiple translations, from *word-for-word* to *thought-for-thought*,

- the *NIV (New International Version 1978, 1984)* thought-for-thought/balanced,
- the *NKJV (New King James Version)*, word-for-word/more literal,
- the *ESV (English Standard Version)*, word-for-word/essentially literal,
- the *NASB (New American Standard Bible)*, word-for-word/literal, or
- other contemporary study versions are acceptable for this course (p. 9).

To honor the time of the students participating in this course, we will make every effort to limit our class time to between *sixty* and *seventy-five* minutes.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Andrews, Senior Pastor, Retired – Lake Bible Church – Lake Oswego, Oregon. 1991 - 2024.  
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## Outline of the Major Divisions

### SESSION ONE

- I. Introduction to *Mark*
  - A. *Mark's* Place in Biblical Studies
  - B. Probable Authorship of *The Gospel of Mark*
  - C. Origin, Audience, and Date of Composition
  - D. Theology and Purpose of the Second Gospel

### SESSION TWO

- II. Prologue (1:1-13)
  - A. Preparing the Way (1:1-8)
  - B. The Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)
  - C. The Temptation of Jesus (1:12-13)
- III. The Early Galilean Ministry (1:14-3:6)
  - A. Calling the First Disciples (1:14-20)
  - B. Driving Out an Evil Spirit (1:21-28)
  - C. Healing Peter's Mother-in-law (1:29-31)
  - D. Healing Many People (1:32-34)
  - E. Leaving Capernaum (1:35-39)
  - F. Healing a Leper (1:40-45)

### SESSION THREE

- G. Conflict With the Religious Leaders (2:1-3:6)
  - 1. Healing a Paralytic (2:1-12)
  - 2. Eating with Sinners (2:13-17)
  - 3. A Question about Fasting (2:18-22)
  - 4. The Lord of the Sabbath (2:23-3:6)
    - a. Picking Grain on the Sabbath (2:23-28)
    - b. Healing on the Sabbath (3:1-6)

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## SESSION FOUR

- IV. The Later Galilean Ministry (3:7-6:13)
  - A. Withdrawal to the Lake (3:7-12)
  - B. Selection of the Twelve (3:13-19)
  - C. Jesus, His Family, and the Beelzebub Controversy (3:20-35)
    - 1. Charged with Insanity (3:20-21)
    - 2. Charged with Demon Possession (3:22-30)
    - 3. Jesus' True Family (3:31-35)
  - D. Parables About the Kingdom of God (4:1-34)
    - 1. Parable of the Sower (4:1-9)
    - 2. Secret of the Kingdom of God (4:10-12)
    - 3. Interpretation of the Parable of the Power (4:13-20)
    - 4. Parables of the Lamp and the Measure (4:21-25)
    - 5. Parable of the Secretly Growing Seed (4:26-29)
    - 6. Parable of the Mustard Seed (4:30-32)
    - 7. Summary Statement on Parables (4:33-34)

## SESSION FIVE

- E. Triumph Over Hostile Powers (4:35-5:43)
  - 1. Calming the Storm (4:35-41)
  - 2. Healing the Demon Possessed Man (5:1-20)
  - 3. Jairus's Plea on Behalf of His Daughter (5:21-24)
  - 4. Healing a Woman with a Hemorrhage (5:25-34)
  - 5. Raising Jairus's Daughter (5:35-43)

## SESSION SIX

- F. Rejection at Nazareth (6:1-6a)
- G. Sending Out the Twelve (6:6b-13)
- V. Withdrawal From Galilee (6:14-8:30)
  - A. Popular Views of Jesus' Identity (6:14-16)
  - B. Death of John the Baptist (6:17-29)
  - C. Feeding the Five Thousand (6:30-44)
  - D. Walking on the Water (6:45-52)
  - E. Healings Near Gennesaret (6:53-56)

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## SESSION SEVEN

- F. Commands of God and Traditions of Men (7:1-13)
- G. True Defilement (7:14-23)
- H. The Faith of the Syrophenician Woman (7:24-30)
- I. Healing a Deaf and Mute Man (7:31-37)
- J. Feeding the Four Thousand (8:1-10)

## SESSION EIGHT

- K. Requesting a Sign From Heaven (8:11-13)
  - L. The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (8:14-21)
  - M. Healing a Blind Man at Bethsaida (8:22-26)
  - N. Recognizing Jesus as Messiah (8:27-30)
- VI. The Journey to Jerusalem (8:31-10:52)
- A. First Prediction of the Passion (8:31-33)
  - B. Requirements of Discipleship (8:34-9:1)
  - C. The Transfiguration (9:2-8)

## SESSION NINE

- D. The Coming of Elijah (9:9-13)
- E. Healing a Boy With an Evil Spirit (9:14-29)
- F. Second Prediction of the Passion (9:30-32)
- G. A Question About Greatness (9:33-37)
- H. Driving Out Demons in Jesus' Name (9:38-42)
- I. Demanding Requirements of Discipleship (9:43-50)
- J. Teaching on Divorce (10:1-12)

## SESSION TEN

- K. Blessing the Children (10:13-16)
- L. Riches and the Kingdom of God (10:17-31)
- M. Third Prediction of the Passion (10:32-34)
- N. The Request of James and John (10:35-45)
- O. Restoring Blind Bartimaeus's Sight (10:46-52)

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## SESSION ELEVEN

- VII. The Jerusalem Ministry (11:1-13:37)
  - A. The Triumphal Entry (11:1-11)
  - B. The Unfruitful Fig Tree (11:12-14)
  - C. The Cleansing of the Temple (11:15-19)
  - D. The Withered Fig Tree and Sayings on Faith and Prayer (11:20-25 [26])
  - E. The Question about Jesus' Authority (11:27-33)

## SESSION TWELVE

- F. The Parable of the Tenants (12:1-12)
- G. The Question about Paying Taxes to Caesar (12:13-17)
- H. The Question of Marriage at the Resurrection (12:18-27)
- I. The Question Concerning the Great Commandment (12:28-34)
- J. The Question about David's Son (12:35-37)
- K. The Warning about the Teachers of the Law (12:38-40)
- L. The Widow's Offering (12:41-44)

## SESSION THIRTEEN

- M. The Olivet Discourse (13:1-37)
  - 1. Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple (13:1-2)
  - 2. The Disciples' Twofold Question (13:3-4)
  - 3. Warnings Against Deceivers and False Signs of the End (13:5-8)
  - 4. Warnings of Persecution and Strife and a Call to Steadfastness (13:9-13)
  - 5. The Abomination that Causes Desolation and the Necessity of Flight (13:14-23)
  - 6. The Coming of the Son of Man (13:24-27)
  - 7. The Lesson of the Fig Tree (13:28-31)
  - 8. The Necessity of Watchfulness (13:32-37)

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## SESSION FOURTEEN

### VIII. The Passion and Resurrection Narrative (14:1-16:8 [16:9-20])

- A. The Plot to Arrest Jesus (14:1-2)
- B. The Anointing at Bethany (14:3-9)
- C. The Betrayal by Judas (14:10-11)
- D. The Lord's Supper (14:12-26)
  - 1. Preparation of the Meal (14:12-16)
  - 2. Announcement of the Betrayal (14:17-21)
  - 3. Institution of the Lord's Supper (14:22-26)
- E. The Prediction of Peter's Denial (14:27-31)
- F. The Agony of Gethsemane (14:32-42)
- G. The Betrayal and Arrest (14:43-52)

## SESSION FIFTEEN

- H. Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (14:53-65)
- I. Peter's Denial of Jesus (14:66-72)
- J. The Trial Before Pilate (15:1-15)
- K. The Mocking of Jesus (15:16-20)
- L. The Crucifixion (15:21-32)

## SESSION SIXTEEN

- M. The Death of Jesus (15:33-41)
- N. The Burial of Jesus (15:42-47)
- O. The Resurrection (16:1-8)
- P. The Longer Ending—The Appearances and Ascension of Jesus (16:9-20)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Walter W. Wessel, "Mark: Introduction, Text, and Exposition," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, and Luke – Volume 8*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984), 615-17.

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## Biblical Selections

*Apologetics Study Bible, The – Understanding What You Believe: Holman Christian Standard Bible*, edited by Ted Cabal. Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007.

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*Holy Bible: King James Version*. Lake Wylie, South Carolina: Christian Heritage Publishing Company, Inc., 1986.

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*Maxwell Leadership Bible, The: New King James Version*, edited by John Maxwell. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2002.

*Message, The: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, edited by Eugene Peterson. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress Publishing Group, 2002.

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## SESSION ONE

### *Introduction to Mark – General Statements*

*Mark*, the shortest of the gospel accounts, in addressing (1) the *ministry*, (2) the *suffering*, (3) the *death*, and (4) the *resurrection* of Jesus, comprises only sixteen books. It is succinct in its approach and powerful in its message.

*The Gospel of Mark* does not mention the early life of Jesus. *Mark* begins in the middle of John's ministry and by 1:7, John the Baptist foretells "one more powerful than I" and introduces Jesus at his baptism in v. 9.

With the beginning of *Mark*, we have the introduction of a new literary genre, the gospel. *Mark* 1:1, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

"Although he did not intend to call his literary work a 'gospel,' his work most likely served as a pattern for *Matthew* and *Luke* and contributed to the eventual use of 'gospel' as a literary designation in the early Church."<sup>3</sup>

### *Mark's Place in Biblical Studies*

"Mark dwells upon the credentials of Christ as the Servant or Slave. There is no birth record of Christ here. Who cares, anyhow, about the genealogy of a slave!"<sup>4</sup>

"Mark wrote for the Romans, whose watchword was *power*. The average, energetic Roman cared little for doctrine. Dynamic, he was for action. Thus, Mark is eloquent with, and exhibits the omnipotence of the mighty miracle-worker, and likewise the omnipotence of love is the crowning passion and resurrection of God's Servant.

"Miracles are prominent rather than parables or discourses. At least twenty of Christ's astonishing miracles are given in detail. Almost half the book is taken up with some comprehensive summing up of Christ's ministry of *power*."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary: Mark 1 – 8:26 – Volume 34A*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), ix.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *All the Books and Chapters of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 226.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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"Today *The Gospel of Mark* occupies a prominent place in biblical studies. It was not always so. Even though early tradition associated this gospel with the apostle Peter, it soon was relegated to a position inferior to that of the other gospels."<sup>6</sup>

"There are few quotations from *Mark* in the writings of either the apostolic fathers or the second-century apologists. Augustine thought it was an abridgement of Matthew's gospel, despite the fact that—though *Matthew* is longer—in almost every case where there are parallels."<sup>7</sup>

"The first commentary on *Mark* we have any record of is the one by Victor of Antioch in the fifth century. He sought in vain to find other commentaries on it and finally had to resort to gleaning incidental remarks on the text of *Mark* he found in commentaries on the other gospels. From the time of Victor till the rise of modern biblical criticism, little attention was paid to Mark's gospel.

"It is not difficult to explain this. *Mark* was not written by an apostle (as were *Matthew* and *John*); its language was rough and ungrammatical; and it was generally believed to be an abridgment of *Matthew*. So, for centuries *Mark* remained in the shadows.

"In the nineteenth century a dramatic change came. When, as a result of modern biblical studies, scholars concluded that *Mark* was the first gospel to be written and that both Matthew and Luke used *Mark* in some form as a major source for writing their gospels, interest in Mark's gospel skyrocketed. The theory of 'the priority of *Mark*' became one of the 'sure results' of nineteenth century biblical scholarship."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Walter W. Wessel, "Mark: Introduction, Text, and Exposition," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, and Luke – Volume 8*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984), 603.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 603-04.

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## *Probable Authorship of The Gospel of Mark*

We know very little of the writer of this gospel. We do know that he was not one of Jesus' disciples.

The author's "Hebrew name was John (Acts 12:12), and it is probable that he adopted a name better known or more familiar when he visited the Gentiles, a practice not uncommon in that age."<sup>9</sup>

It is widely agreed that the writer of the second gospel was a traveling companion of Paul and Barnabas, while later he was a traveling companion to Peter. Many scholars believe that he traveled to Rome and remained there while Paul was held captive.<sup>10</sup>

"The New Testament tells us a great deal about (Mark). He was the son of a well-to-do lady of Jerusalem whose name was Mary, and whose house was a rallying point and meeting place of the early Church (Acts 12:12). From the very beginning Mark was brought up in the very center of the Christian fellowship.

"Mark was also the nephew of Barnabas, and when Paul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey they took Mark with them to be their secretary and attendant (Acts 12:25)."<sup>11</sup>

The author was most familiar with the teachings and the events in the life of Jesus, not from having been there, but from his close association with Peter.

"Though he had not himself been with the Saviour in his ministry, yet, from his long acquaintance with Peter, he was familiar with the events of his life, and with his instructions.

"The uniform testimony of the (church) fathers is that he was the *interpreter* of Peter, and that he wrote this gospel under the eye of Peter and with his approbation. It has come down to us, therefore, with the sanction of Peter's authority. Its right to a place among the inspired books has never been questioned."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the New Testament: The Gospels*, ed. Robert Frew (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2005), 328.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> William Barclay, *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Mark* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Albert Barnes, 328.

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From the writings of “Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome we hear that Mark went from Rome to Alexandria, in Egypt, where he planted a church, and died in the eighth year of the reign of Nero, A.D. 64.”<sup>13</sup>

## *Origin, Audience, and Date of Composition*

“Early church tradition locates the writing of the gospel either ‘in the regions of Italy’ or in Rome. (The early) church fathers also closely associate Mark’s writing of the gospel with the apostle Peter. The above evidence is consistent with (1) the historical likelihood that Peter was in Rome toward the end of his life and probably was martyred there and (2) the biblical evidence that Mark too was in Rome about the same time and was closely associated with Peter...”<sup>14</sup>

The exact date of the composition of *The Gospel of Mark* is not known. Many scholars believe the date of composition to be in the first century between 56 and 63, prior to the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

A devastating fire broke out in Rome in 64, in which more than half the city was destroyed. Consistent with thinking regarding the early Christian persecutions in Rome, there were strong rumors that the emperor, Nero, had deliberately set the fires. For this reason alone, some think that *The Gospel of Mark* was written sometime during the period from 65 to 67. This was during a time when the Roman church was experiencing both strong persecution and martyrdom.

“By the mid-first century CE, Christians were distinguishable from Jews, so the Christians were singled out as scapegoats for the great fire during Nero’s reign. Mark refers to persecution as the cause for many to fall away (4:17) and for fraternal betrayal (13:9). These comments might easily refer to the type of betrayal experienced by the Roman Christians during this persecution, which would cost both Peter and Paul their lives.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Albert Barnes, 328.

<sup>14</sup> Walter W. Wessel, 608.

<sup>15</sup> PHEME PERKINS, “The Gospel of Mark: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes - Volume VIII – New Testament Articles, Matthew, and Mark*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1995), 515.

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# THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

<sup>13</sup> "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. <sup>14</sup> BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.  
MATTHEW 7:13-14

## *Theology and Purpose of the Second Gospel*

"We have two great reasons why *Mark* is a book of supreme importance. First it is the earliest of all the gospels; if it was written just shortly after Peter died, its date will be about A.D. 65. Second, it embodies the record of what Peter preached and taught about Jesus.

"We may put it this way: *Mark* is the nearest approach we will ever possess to an eyewitness account of the life of Jesus."<sup>16</sup>

We would be remiss if we did not discuss the "lost ending" of Mark's gospel. The second gospel is not meant to end at 16:8 with the women fleeing from the empty tomb. The *NIV* puts in a parenthetical phrase following 16:8 that says: (The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have *Mark* 16:9-20.)

Biblical scholars agree that the writer of *Mark* did not compose 16:9-20, and these verses were not found with any of the early manuscripts of *Mark*. There are many suppositions as to why *Mark* ended so abruptly in its original form. Some scholars believe that the author may have been martyred prior to his completion of this writing, while others think that possibly the end of the scroll might have been torn away.

With all we have already said about *Mark*, let us first and foremost read the second gospel for its transformational power in our lives here in the twenty-first century.

And lastly, let us read *Mark* as if we are reading it for the first time, and let us read it as if it were the only gospel. There will be time for comparisons later.

This is "the good news about God's salvation in and through Jesus' ministry according to the Scriptures..."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> William Barclay, 5

<sup>17</sup> Robert A. Guelich, xxi.

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## SESSION ONE

### *Introduction Notes and Outline*

#### *Questions for Session One*

1. Mark introduces a new literary genre. What is it called? What *four areas* does Mark cover in its sixteen chapters? Where does this gospel begin, and what is omitted?
2. The Gospel of Mark was most probably written prior to the other gospels. What are the names of the other two gospels that followed Mark and expanded the work found here?
3. Miracles are the primary vehicle Mark employs for getting his message out to his audience. For whom did John Mark write his gospel? What was his focus and how did this *show up* in his writing?
4. Mark occupies a primary spot in biblical literary work; however, this was not always the case. Describe what we know of Mark's rocky road to the forefront of biblical writing.
5. What happened to the Gospel of Mark in the nineteenth century? What is meant by *the priority* of Mark?

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6. It was commonly accepted for widely traveled persons to have additional names. What was Mark's Hebrew name? Mark was a nephew and traveling companion to whom? Mark later traveled with whom?
  
7. In later years Mark traveled with and acted as interpreter for whom? Since Mark was not one of the *called* disciples of Jesus, he knew much about the miracles through what experiences?
  
8. What are the generally accepted dates for the writing of Mark? Where do we think Mark was written, and what are the two most compelling pieces of evidence pointing toward this location?
  
9. Some historians think that Mark was written at a time of religious persecution of the Christians in Rome. What event occurred in Rome that might lead us to connect this writing to those persecutions and to a possible date of authorship?
  
10. What are the two reasons that Mark is of supreme importance as a gospel? Briefly discuss the mystery around the *lost ending* of Mark.

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