

Portraits of Jesus

A Study of the Gospel of Mark

by Gary Fisher

Instructions:

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If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and ***study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<***. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and ***write down your answers on paper***. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at www.BibleStudyLessons.com and click on the link for the ***answer quiz*** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

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Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

Authority of Jesus

Lesson 1

Jesus lived almost 2000 years ago, but even today people all over the world serve Him. We know this man primarily through four Bible books: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. First-hand acquaintance with these writings will help us understand Jesus and His message.

This course surveys Mark's narrative of Jesus' life. As you study each lesson, please keep a Bible at your side so that you can verify what you are learning by the Scriptures. You will notice that Mark is divided into sixteen major sections (chapters), each of which contains small divisions (verses). When a notation like 5:12 is used in these lessons, you should look at the fifth chapter of Mark and the twelfth verse.

A couple of items before we get started: to profit most from these lessons, you need an open heart to receive what Jesus taught and did. Allow His words to direct you as you read. A prayer for God's

guidance at the beginning and end of each study is recommended. If you don't understand something mentioned in this course or in your reading of Mark, please feel free to write your question down and send it to us along with your completed lesson. We'll be happy to answer it if we can.

John Prepares the Way

>>> Read Mark 1:1–8. <<<

Please read Mark 1:1–8 in your Bible before continuing the lesson. In the very first verse, Mark announced that he would write about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is surprising, therefore, that he did not start out by telling about Jesus Himself; instead, he described the work of John the Baptist. This was because John was to prepare the way for Jesus. John fulfilled this mission by preaching to get people ready for the coming of the Lord.

John's message focused on two themes that will help us get ready to receive Christ. First, he preached about repentance. To repent means to decide to change. John was telling his hearers that they had to reverse their life's direction to get ready for Christ; those unwilling to change could not come to Him. Second, John declared the greatness of Jesus. He said Jesus was so great that he himself was not even worthy to stoop down and untie His shoes. This was an amazing declaration because one does not have to have much worth to untie somebody's shoes. In fact, in John's day, untying shoes was considered to be a slave's lowest duty – John wasn't worthy to be Jesus' humblest slave! So, for us to be ready to receive Jesus, we must repent (change our lives) and recognize His awesome greatness.

1 John came to prepare the way for whom? (a) Moses, (b) Mohammed, (c) Jesus, (d) Peter.
Answer: (put the letter of the correct answer in the blank) _____.

2 What word in our study means "to decide to change"? Answer: The word is (put the correct word[s] in the blank) _____.

3 John said he was unworthy to: a) untie Jesus' shoes; b) carry Jesus' bags; c) stand beside Jesus; d) talk to Jesus. Answer : _____.

Early Events in Jesus' Career

>>> Read Mark 1:9–15. <<<

Just like thousands of others, Jesus came to John to be baptized. But as He emerged from the water, something startling occurred: The Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God was showing His approval of Jesus in a dramatic way.

Then Jesus entered the wilderness where the devil tempted Him. While Matthew and Luke provide more specific information about the temptations (Matthew 4; Luke 4), Mark's brief account shows two things. First, Jesus experienced temptation as all men do. Second, doing what pleases God, as Jesus did when He was baptized, does not exempt one from temptation. Satan often intensifies his efforts when a person begins to serve God.

4&5 What two amazing things happened when Jesus was baptized? Answer: The _____ came on Him in a form like a dove, and a voice spoke from _____ saying, "This is my beloved Son."

6 Where was Jesus baptized (v9)? Answer: He was baptized in the _____ River.

7 For how many days was Jesus tempted by Satan in the wilderness (v13; cf. Luke 4:1,2)? Answer: _____ days (give a number).

8 What message did Jesus preach (v15)? Answer: He told people to repent and believe in the _____.

Jesus Calls Four Fishermen

>>> Read Mark 1:16–20. <<<

As Jesus walked along, He saw two of His friends, Peter and Andrew, who were professional fishermen. He asked them to follow Him and become fishers of men. At once, they quit their jobs and began following Christ. He next found James and John, and requested that they do the same. With no hesitation, they left not only their occupation but also their father, and began to accompany the Lord. Clearly, these men recognized Jesus' greatness. He was the one whose shoes John was unworthy to untie. God had specially acknowledged Him by His own voice from heaven. So when Jesus demanded radical action (to drop everything and follow Him), they responded immediately.

Note -- Characteristics of followers of Jesus: *These fishermen demonstrated the meaning of discipleship. When Jesus called, they: 1) acted immediately, 2) left both job and family, and 3) started following Him.*

Christ calls today through His Word. When we perceive His greatness, we too will: 1) obey immediately all He says, 2) put Him ahead of everything, including our job and family, and 3) follow Him, allowing His example to direct every step.

People who know that Jesus wants them to change, but put it off, are not like these four fishermen.

9 Which of these things did the disciples **not** do when Jesus called them? a) decide immediately; b) leave family and job; c) follow Jesus; d) go to school for training. Answer: _____.

10 What did Jesus say He would make these men (v17)? Answer: He would make them fishers of _____.

Jesus Amazes the Crowds

>>> Read Mark 1:21–28. <<<

Jesus' teaching astounded the multitude in the synagogue (a synagogue was like a church among the Jews). He taught with authority. He issued His commands as if He had the right to tell others exactly what to do!

Jesus' actions showed that He really had the authority that He claimed. In this paragraph, He cast out a demon. How? By His words! Nothing more. When Jesus merely said, "Be quiet and come out of him," the demon left the man. His words had authority even over demons. The calmness with which Jesus expelled demons reflected His power: He never argued or struggled or created a scene. He simply ordered the demons to leave and they left. No wonder people were amazed. He had demonstrated the credentials to prove His authority.

Note -- Need for authority: *In every area, authority is essential. To determine distance, it is necessary to have a yardstick or standard of measure by which to calculate length. Thus, if someone wishes to know how long a room is, he measures it. There is no other way to know for sure. God has*

provided a yardstick in religion: Jesus and His words. When we wish to know whether something is right or wrong, we should evaluate it by the standard of the Scriptures. This should be done with every teacher and teaching – even this correspondence course. Therefore, you need to have a Bible at your side while you are studying, and continually refer to it to be sure that what is taught in these lessons is true. The Bible is our yardstick.

11 What amazed the multitudes about Jesus? a) physical appearance; b) intelligence; c) wealth; d) authority in teaching. Answer: _____.

12 How did Jesus expel the demon? a) by conducting a seance; b) by a magical formula; c) by a simple command (rebuke); d) by taking up a collection. Answer: _____.

13 What purpose did Jesus' miracles serve? a) they made Him rich, b) they demonstrated His authority and proved He was from God, c) they proved people today can do miracles, d) they served no purpose whatever. Answer: _____.

Jesus Heals Many

>>> Read Mark 1:29–34. <<<

Jesus came into Simon Peter's house and found his mother-in-law sick in bed with a high fever (see Luke 4:38). He spoke to her, raised her up, and the fever left her. She then began waiting on Jesus and the disciples. He also healed many others who were brought to Him.

Several features of Jesus' healings are noteworthy:

* He healed immediately, with no delay.

* He healed everyone who came to Him regardless of their disease. (Compare Matt. 8:16,17; Luke 4:40,41.)

* He healed so completely that Simon's mother-in-law was able to get up and start waiting on them. After a fever breaks, it normally takes a few days for a person to recover his strength. Jesus' healings put people back as if they had never had their maladies in the first place!

* Jesus sought to avoid publicity. He ordered the demons not to announce who He was.

14 Whom did Jesus heal in this story? Answer: He healed Simon Peter's _____.

(Thought question: If Peter had a mother-in-law, what does this tell you about Peter? Note that "Simon" is just another name for Peter -- Matt. 4:18; 8:14,15.)

15 Which is **not** characteristic of Jesus' healings? a) He healed many (i.e., all of the many who came); b) He healed completely; c) He healed immediately; d) He healed so He could become rich and popular. Answer: _____.

Jesus Continues His Journeys

>>> Read Mark 1:35–39. <<<

Jesus frequently sought solitude for prayer. Prayer during the daytime was nearly impossible since the crowds continually pressed on Him, so He skipped sleep to be able to talk with His Father that He

missed so much. After finally finding Him that morning, the disciples reported that everybody in the town where He had been was seeking Him. Nevertheless, since He wanted to be able to get the message to as many people as possible, He insisted on moving on to other towns.

16 Jesus arose early in the morning for what purpose? Answer: He arose to _____.

Jesus Heals a Leper

>>> Read Mark 1:40–45. <<<

Painful open sores caused everyone to dread leprosy. Those who contracted it were quarantined because the disease was highly contagious. In this story, Jesus did what no one else dared do – He touched a leper. When He did so, the man was healed immediately. His sores were instantly transformed into smooth skin. The Lord then instructed the cleansed leper to report his healing to the priest (a requirement of the law of Moses – Leviticus 13–14), but to tell no one else. The man, however, went out and told everyone – the exact opposite of what Jesus had said. Undoubtedly he was thrilled that he had been healed and probably imagined that spreading the news about Jesus would honor Him. But the fact remains that he did just what Jesus had said not to do. As a result, the Lord was thronged by such large crowds that He could no longer publicly enter into cities, but had to remain in unpopulated areas. We should learn a lesson: All disobedience, even well-intentioned, hurts Jesus' work.

17 After Jesus spoke, how long was it till the leprosy was healed? a) several weeks, b) several days, c) immediate, d) the Bible does not say. Answer: _____.

18 After Jesus had healed the leper, He told the man to show himself to whom? Answer: He was to show himself to the _____.

19 What result occurred because the leper disobeyed Jesus' orders? a) he became a leper again; b) Jesus was thronged by crowds so large that He couldn't enter a town; c) Jesus praised his evangelism; d) he became an apostle. Answer: _____.

Summary: This chapter shows the greatness of Jesus: John was unworthy to untie His shoes; God spoke from heaven endorsing Him; He expelled demons by a mere word; He healed the sick immediately regardless of the nature of their infirmity. This chapter also indicates how we should respond to His greatness: immediately obey everything He says no matter what sacrifice is required; respect the authority of His message; and, obey Him even when His command seems unreasonable.

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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To contact the author, write to
Gary Fisher, 8980 Crawford Ct., New Salisbury, IN 47161

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