

THE SAVIOUR KING

STUDIES IN MARK 1-8

Mark's Gospel proclaims the staggering news that the long awaited King of Israel, the Christ, has finally arrived. But the Christ turns out to be *very* different to what Israel were expecting. Thank God for that!

In this set of studies on the first half of Mark's Gospel, we'll begin delving into what makes King Jesus so extraordinary, what makes His Kingdom so wonderful and what makes His people so blessed.

As with any Bible study, these are best done in advance when doing them in a group context.

Mark 1:1-2:12

In this study we'll quickly review what we've discovered about Jesus in our first two Sunday Bible talks from Mark (on 11th and 18th April).

Read Mark 1:1-13

1) How does Mark's first sentence differ from the opening of the other three Gospels? What might this tell us about Mark's distinctive style and emphasis?

2) What expectations do these verses raise about Jesus?

3) What questions do these verses raise about Jesus?

4) How would you summarise Mark's "gospel about Jesus" (v1), so far?

Read Mark 1:14-20

5) What are Jesus' first words? What does He mean by them?

6) What are your first impressions of Jesus?

Read Mark 1:21-28

7) How do evil spirits react to Jesus?

8) How are people reacting to Him?

Read Mark 1:29-45

9) List all the miracles that Jesus does in these verses.

10) What is it that most people seem to want from Jesus here?

11) How are Jesus' own priorities different?

Read Mark 2:1-12

12) Why does Jesus heal this paralytic?

13) What impact does this have on people?

Think it over

- In this section Jesus seems to be operating on a different priority system to everyone else. Do you ever wish that His priority system was different? If so, how so?
- What aspects of Jesus' personality are on display in this passage? What aspects do you find reassuring? Are there any aspects that you find unsettling?
- If Jesus *didn't* have all the authority that Mark shows us He does, what good things would we miss out on?
- Mark clearly thinks that Jesus is a very important person. What things and/ or people can push Jesus to the side of our lives? What practical things can we be doing to help ourselves (and each other) stay focussed on Jesus?

Mark 2:13-3:35

So far Jesus has been pulling quite a crowd in Galilee. Not everyone's happy about that.

Read Mark 2:13-17

1) What criticism is made of Jesus here?

2) What does Jesus' response teach us about Him?

Read Mark 2:18-22

3) What criticism is made of Jesus here?

4) What does Jesus' response teach us about Him?

Read Mark 2:23-28

5) What criticism is made of Jesus here?

6) What does Jesus' response teach us about Him?

Read Mark 3:1-6

7) What criticism is made of Jesus here?

8) What does Jesus' response teach us about Him?

Read Mark 3:7-19

9) Why do you think Jesus keeps forbidding evil spirits from telling people who He is?

10) Why is it significant that Jesus picks out *twelve* apostles in a chapter all about the Jewish leaders being critical of Him?

Read Mark 3:20-34

11) Who are critical of Jesus in this section and what is their criticism?

12) What does Jesus' response teach us about Him?

Think it over

- The claims of Jesus do seem to polarise people. What are helpful ways of dealing with people who criticise Christianity.

- If you were making a movie of Mark's gospel, who would you get to play the role of Jesus? Why?

- In what ways are you tempted to reject, ignore or be embarrassed of Jesus' teaching?

7) What is the main point of the parable of the measures?

8) What do we learn about Jesus' ministry from these parables?

Read Mark 4:26-29

9) What is the main lesson about the Kingdom of God in these parables?

10) What do we learn about Jesus' ministry from these parables?

Think it over

- What is the most comforting thing you've discovered about the Kingdom in these parables?

- What is the most challenging thing you've discovered about the Kingdom in these parables?

- What might keep you from the kingdom? What specific things can you do to ensure that you're "good soil"?

- What specific things can we do to ensure that we "have ears to hear"?

Mark 4:35-5:43

Mark likes to record Jesus' miracles in clusters. We studied the first cluster in Study 2. We've now reached a second cluster.

Read MARK 4:35-43

1) Fill in the following table as best you can.

	Mark 4:35-41	Mark 5:1-20	Mark 5:21-24, 35-43	Mark 5:25-34
<i>What miracle does Jesus perform?</i>				
<i>How is the powerlessness of the people involved emphasised?</i>				
<i>Does anything happen which confuses you?</i>				
<i>What reactions do we see towards Jesus?</i>				
<i>What do we learn about Jesus' authority and power?</i>				

2) After healing the demon possessed man Jesus tells him to go and tell others about his healing. This is quite different from other incidents (eg 1:40-46). Why do you think Jesus does this?

3) Why do you think Mark splits the incident of the sick girl with the incident of the sick woman?

4) What new things do we learn about Jesus from these miracles?

Think it over

- Glance back over all the miracles. Has any one miracle particularly impacted you? Why?

- What is the most comforting thing you've discovered about Jesus in these miracles?

- Skim back through the passage and notice all the times that fear and faith are mentioned. In what ways should our faith in Jesus remove our fears? (cf 4:40)

- Do you have specific fears which are helped by this passage?

Mark 6:1-8:21

In this study we'll be looking at quite a big passage so rather than focus too much at any single event we'll be considering the overall pattern of events

Read MARK 6:1-29

1) List all the different types of opposition to Jesus that occur in this section?

2) How would you describe Herod? Why do you think Mark tells us about the incident between Herod and John the Baptist at this stage of his gospel?

Read MARK 6:30-56

3) The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle (apart from the resurrection) recorded in all 4 gospels. What do you think is so special about it?

4) Read Psalm 65:7 and Psalm 77:19. How do these add extra significance to Jesus' walking on the water?

5) What do you think the connection is between the two miracles? (cf 6:51-52)

Read MARK 7:1-23

6) What do we learn here about -

Jesus

the Pharisees

ourselves

Read MARK 7:24-8:10

7) Jesus is now in Gentile territory (cf v24). What different miracles does He perform?

8) What is your impression of the disciples during this second miraculous feeding? Do you think they've learnt anything since the first one?

9) What new things are we learning about Jesus and the Kingdom of God in this fourth cluster of miracles?

Read MARK 7:11-21

10) What do you think Jesus means when he says that "no sign will be given"? Especially when Jesus has now performed four clusters of extraordinary miracles.

11) What was the "yeast" of the Pharisees and Herod? (8:15)

12) What exactly do the disciples "still not understand"?

Think it over

- What is the proper response to Jesus? Why don't people give Him that response?
- Glance back over all the sections. In what ways does this section show Jesus to be worth following?
- Why is it so difficult to follow Jesus sometimes? How can we help each other?

Mark 8:22-9:1

After 8 chapters of Jesus doing amazing things we have now reached a turning point in Mark's Gospel as Jesus explains something that no one saw coming!

Read MARK 8:22-26

1) How does Jesus heal this man? In what ways is this unusual?

2) What reasons might Jesus have for deliberately healing the blind man this way?

3) Why do you think Jesus doesn't want the man to go back into the village?

Read MARK 8:27-9:1

4) What sorts of opinion did different people have about Jesus? What do you think is prompting all these opinions?

5) What does Peter now see?

6) What doesn't Peter now see?

7) What does Jesus see clearly about himself?

8) Why would this have been such a surprise to the disciples?

9) What does Jesus want from His followers?

10) What things could possibly make Jesus' disciples ashamed of Him?

11) There seems a real urgency in Jesus' words. Why?

Think it over

- What do you think it means for us to "take up our cross" and follow Jesus?

- Like Peter here, could there be things about Jesus that you don't see yet? How would you know?

- How would you summarise what it means to be a Christian from this part of Mark's Gospel?

- What is the most important thing about Jesus that you've personally discovered (or been reminded of) in the first half of Mark's Gospel?