

# INTRODUCED!

## MARK 1:1-13

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. How would you define the word "charisma"?

(Charisma is defined as a compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others. A second definition: a divinely conferred power or talent. Another: Charisma is the ability to attract, charm, and influence the people around you.)

2. Who do you know that has "charisma?"

Today we begin a 13-week study of the book of Mark. The most charismatic person to ever live was Jesus Christ. His very presence commanded attention.

This Gospel that **bears his name**, although we do not find Mark identified as the writer, was attributed to him early in the second century AD. It is also widely accepted that Mark simply wrote the **memoirs of the Apostle Peter**. Although we can't know the precise date of the writing it is generally thought to have been written prior to **AD70** when Jerusalem along with the Temple was destroyed by the emperor Nero, although it could have been as late as AD 90.

It was most likely written for a Greek audience because several Jewish customs are explained for the reader.

**The events** recorded in this gospel are not always in chronological order. When compared to the other Gospels the events may not be in the same sequence but none the less accurate.

**The main theme:** Mark 10:45— "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark focuses on action and the superiority of Jesus as the Son of God.

3. What do we know about Mark? (John Mark became famous when he deserted Paul and Barnabus on their first church-planting trip. He was the subject of a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabus that brought about two teams going out to share the gospel. Later, Paul said Mark was an asset and should be brought to Paul—2 Tim. 4:11.)

4. Why are the first lines of a book important? (Because it gets your attention; and it may set the course for the rest of the book.)

Let's see how Mark begins his Gospel.

### PROPHECY! Read Mark 1:1-3

1. What strikes you in verse 1? (It is brief, to the point. It does tell us what this book is going to be about: Jesus, the Son of God. That's "typical Mark".)

2. In what way was the coming of Jesus a "beginning"? (This was the start of the plan the Father had to redeem mankind that was envisioned before the foundation of the world was laid. This was the starting point for Jesus' mission on earth.)

3. Why does verse two begin "as it is written"? (Depending on your source there are at least 300 Old Testament Scriptures pointing to Jesus as the Messiah.)

The scriptural foundation for the coming of Jesus is immense. Jesus did not just appear out of nowhere. So many Old Testament passages prophesied Him: from Genesis 3:15, which theologians call the Protoevangelium, the "first gospel," that One is coming whose heel the snake shall bruise, but He shall crush his head, to Malachi 3:1, which promises that the Lord whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple.

This is important: because a guy could not just up and say, "Hey, I'm the Messiah!" NO! All these specific prophecies had to be fulfilled by Him. —Born in Bethlehem; pray as Jesus did in the Garden; have His hands and feet pierced; they divided His garments; etc.

4. How did John fit in with the fulfillment of prophecy? (He was the one to prepare the way as prophesied by Isaiah.)

In Jesus' day when a king came to visit a city there went before him workers who made sure the road was cleared of any obstructions and holes were filled in to make the way smooth and straight. John was the one to do that for the Messiah, the King!

5. If Mark's audience was primarily Gentile, why did he refer to an Old Testament prophecy to introduce John the Baptist? (While Mark's original readers weren't Jewish, seeing Jesus as the promised Messiah could bolster their faith and help them embrace Him as the Messiah, the Savior of the world.)
6. How did you come to accept Jesus as the Messiah?
7. Who can you share that message with?

### **PREPARED! Read Mark 1:4-8**

John dressed like Elijah dressed in his day. Also, the Nomads in the area would dress like John as well. His diet consisted of locust and wild honey. Locust would be eaten raw, boiled, or roasted. They are an excellent source of protein.

1. What was the focus of John's message? (John emphasized repentance and forgiveness of sins in preparation for the coming Messiah. His focus was on Jesus.)
2. How did John's message set the stage for the earthly ministry of Jesus? (John's ministry was one of preparation. His preaching attracted large numbers, but it was no feel-good message. Rather, it was a message of repentance and confession.)

The Gospel is a message of grace through faith in Jesus. Jesus also calls for confession and repentance. John's message drew people to confession and repentance but not saving faith—Jesus brought that message and provided the sacrifice of atonement.

John was a charismatic figure, and people could have fixated on him, not the Messiah. So, he took pains to ensure that the spotlight would be directed toward Jesus.

3. How did John demonstrate humility? (Taking off a person's sandals was the task of the lowest slave, so he thought of himself as lower than the lowest slave.)
4. Why are people drawn to humility? (It does not seek recognition but prefers others above themselves.)
5. How do our lifestyle choices point people toward the message of Christ or away from the message of Christ? (Are we being obedient to Christ or are we living a life of sin?)

**One of the most important preparations we can make for the work of God is to purify our lives from sin!**

6. Is there anything in my life right now—words, a habit, attitudes, thoughts, unforgiveness, anything left undone that God has told me to do—that might be hindering me from being used by God in a more powerful way?

### **BAPTIZED! Read Mark 1:9-13**

1. What details did John share about Jesus? (Came from Nazareth in Galilee, baptized in the Jordan by John, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove came to Him, The Father spoke to Him, He was driven into the wilderness, tempted by Satan, etc.)
2. What was different about Jesus' baptism than John's other baptisms? (Jesus' baptism was not a demonstration of repentance but obedience to the Father. His baptism was an example for us to demonstrate our commitment to Christ after we have placed our faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior.)

**Jesus humbled Himself, obeyed the Father, and identified with us!**

3. Why is that important for us to understand? (Jesus lived a perfect life and had no need for confession and repentance.)

Notice Jesus "came up out of the water." Baptism is by immersion!

4. We have all three members of the Trinity present here. What was the Father's response to Jesus' baptism?

This is yet another way Mark validated Jesus as the Messiah.

5. Do you believe that God delights in you?
6. What happened immediately after Jesus was baptized and the Father spoke His words of approval? (The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for 40 days of testing and temptation by Satan.)
7. In what ways does your belief in Jesus as the Son of God bring joy to your life? (My faith in Him is secure. The indwelling Holy Spirit communes with me.)
8. Are you growing old as a Christian without growing up in Christ-like maturity? Too many Christians grow old without growing up. It is possible to attend church your entire life and never grow into Christ-like maturity.

### **CHALLENGE!**

1. What are some reasons you have confidence in Jesus and His sufficiency for your life? (Past experience.)
2. What are some traditions we can establish in our small group that would nurture and grow our confidence? (Encourage each other. Pray consistently for each other. Express our Christian love for each other. Minister to each other. Etc.)
3. What are some characteristics from John's life that would help us point others to Jesus? (Boldness in witnessing.)