



## Bible Reading Guide February 2015

### Mark's gospel

The gospel of Mark is the shortest and earliest of the four gospels.

The author is probably John Mark, the son of Mary named in Acts 12:12. He was a companion of the apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:13). Peter being the primary source of his material.

Visitors to St Mark's Square in Venice know that the symbol of this gospel is the lion. Mark's gospel is all about action. It goes for the jugular of discipleship. The word "immediately" is used over 40 times. There are fewer of the parables of Jesus here.

The late Ray Stedman wrote two books on Mark, their titles sum up the contents of the gospel well:

Mark 1 to 8 "The servant who rules" – how God's servant rules in every domain

Mark 9 to 16 "The ruler who serves" - how God's ruler lays down his life for his people.

<b>Day 1</b>	Read Mark 1:1-15 Gospel means big, momentous news. Observe how God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all active in these events. Verse 15 is a good summary of this big news. Can you put this verse in your own words?
<b>Day 2</b>	Read Mark 1:16 – 2:12 In these verses, Jesus exercises his authority as God's King in six different ways. Can you find them? Why do you think Jesus forgives the paralysed man before healing his body?
<b>Day 3</b>	Read Mark 2:13 – 3:6 How does Jesus show his authority here? What principles govern Jesus' behavior on the Sabbath?
<b>Day 4</b>	Read Mark 3:7-35 Mark often sandwiches his narrative ie he starts with the family of Jesus (v20 - 21), the filling is the interruption by the teachers of the law (v22 -30). The filling of such sandwiches is usually the interpretative key. And then the second slice of bread is the family again (v31 -34). Who is the real family of Jesus? How many responses to Jesus can you recognize here?

<b>Day 5</b>	<p>Read Mark 4:1 – 34          Notice this first parable of Jesus is a sandwich too.          v1 – 9, 10 – 12, v13 – 20 are the three parts.          What does the parable teach as to why the teaching of the Kingdom is accepted or rejected?          What does it mean to be good soil?          What do the other parables here teach about the importance of hearing and the way God's Kingdom grows?</p>
<b>Day 6</b>	<p>Read Mark 4:35 – 5:43          How does Jesus demonstrate his authority here?          What characteristics does the demon-possessed man display?          5:21-43 is another sandwich          Why is the bleeding woman such a model of response to Jesus?</p>
<b>Day 7</b>	<p>Read Mark 6          How did his own neighbor respond to Jesus and what was the result?          What was Jesus' model of preparing his disciples for the work he had for them to do?          How would you sum up Herod's character?          What can you learn about being Jesus' disciples from v 45 – 56?</p>
<b>Day 8</b>	<p>Read Mark 7:8- 13          Why does Jesus use such strong language against the Pharisees?          Why does Jesus use harsh words in verse 27 and what can we learn from the woman's response?          Miraculous feeding is a sign of what (see Exodus 16:14-15, 18:21, 25, Numbers 27:17 and Ezekiel 34). Moses and David are fulfilled in what Jesus came to do.</p>
<b>Day 9</b>	<p>Read Mark 8:14 -9:1          Review all the areas in which Jesus exercises authority up to this point in Mark.          How does the experience of the blind man coming to physical sight parallel with Peter's growing spiritual sight?          What does Peter say about Jesus which is true and how is his misunderstanding about Jesus corrected?</p>
<b>Day 10</b>	<p>Read Mark 9:2 – 32          In view of what is about to happen, why would the appearance of Moses and Elijah and the voice of God be such an encouragement to Peter, James and John?          What does the incident about the healing of the boy teach us about the chief causes of failure in our Christian witness and service (see verses 23 and 29)?</p>
<b>Day 11</b>	<p>Read Mark 9:33 – 10:31          What is the way to spiritual greatness (v33 – 37)?          What spiritual truth is Jesus conveying in verses 43 – 48?          What does Jesus teach about divorce and on what grounds is that teaching based?          What does verse 15 mean? (See Matthew 18:2 -4)          What held the rich young ruler back?</p>
<b>Day 12</b>	<p>Read Mark 10:32 – 52          Jesus repeats the same question in verses 36 and 51?          What is the context of each?          Why is this so significant given what Jesus has said in verses 32 -34?          What is true greatness and how does the disciples' attitude stand in contrast to it?</p>

<b>Day 13</b>	<p>Read Mark 11</p> <p>Jesus' Messiahship is now clear.</p> <p>Verses 12 -25 is another sandwich. What is the key principle being taught by this section?</p> <p>In what way does the fig tree described here typify Israel as a nation?</p> <p>What are the essentials for effective prayer in verses 20 -25?</p>
<b>Day 14</b>	<p>Read Mark 12</p> <p>One of the few parables in Mark. What is the key idea of this one?</p> <p>The Sadducees were trying to show the folly of belief in resurrection. Why is Jesus certain of the resurrection?</p> <p>A man not far from the Kingdom (v 28 – 34), how could he enter the Kingdom?</p> <p>How does God measure giving (v41 – 44)</p>
<b>Day 15</b>	<p>Read Mark 13</p> <p>In these last days, what does Jesus warn the disciples to be on guard about?</p> <p>What facts here can we be certain about?</p> <p>How then are we to live (see 2 Peter 3:10, 11, 14)?</p>
<b>Day 16</b>	<p>Read Mark 14:1 – 42</p> <p>What does this section teach about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus' death?</li> <li>• Jesus' knowledge of all things?</li> <li>• Peter's immaturity?</li> <li>• The unreadiness of the disciples?</li> </ul>
<b>Day 17</b>	<p>Read Mark 14:43 – 72</p> <p>Notice how vividly Mark paints Peter's downfall. Remember Mark is recording Peter's recollection.</p> <p>Can you identify the factors which led to Peter's three-fold denial?</p> <p>How did the others stand by Jesus?</p>
<b>Day 18</b>	<p>Read Mark 15:1 – 32</p> <p>Note the activity of Pilate, the crowd, the soldiers and the priest.</p> <p>The crowd and priests make the same mistake in verses 30-31. What is it?</p> <p>Jesus is silent – a pattern for us according to 1 Peter 2:20 -24 esp v 21.</p>
<b>Day 19</b>	<p>Read Mark 15:33 -47</p> <p>What does Jesus say and why?</p> <p>Mark wrote, probably for a Roman audience.</p> <p>Why is verse 39 such a fitting testimony?</p> <p>Why is the action of Joseph so impressive?</p> <p>Note that Pilate, the centurion and Joseph all agree that Jesus is dead.</p>
<b>Day 20</b>	<p>Read Mark 16:1-8</p> <p>What evidence for the resurrection does Mark give in these verses</p> <p>Verses 9 – 20 are not in some major manuscripts. These verses were probably added later to round off the gospel. They were known to Irenaeus in the second century. What evidence do they add to the resurrection of Jesus?</p>
<p>Jesus is the servant who rules and the ruler who serves</p>	

**Next month: Galatians**