

FURTHER STUDY GUIDE

The Beginning of the Gospel | Mark 1:1-13

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Gospel of Mark was likely written to believers in Rome during a time of persecution, presenting Jesus as the suffering yet victorious Son of God. Mark writes with urgency and purpose, opening his Gospel not with a birth narrative but with action—God is moving now. The word “gospel” (*euangelion*) was commonly used for announcements about Caesar; Mark intentionally reclaims it to declare that Jesus, not Rome, is the true King. The opening verses draw heavily on Old Testament imagery, especially the Exodus, prophetic promises of restoration, and expectations of a coming Messiah. John the Baptist serves as the final prophetic voice preparing Israel for God’s arrival, while Jesus’ baptism and temptation establish His identity, mission, and authority before public ministry begins.

ICEBREAKER QUESTION

Think about a time when you were preparing for something important (a move, a new job, a wedding, a major decision). What did preparation look like, and why did it matter?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Mark begins by declaring this as “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (v.1).

Why do you think Mark starts with identity rather than teaching or miracles? How does this shape how we read the rest of the Gospel?

John’s message centered on repentance and preparation (vv.4–5).

How would you define repentance based on this passage? How is biblical repentance different from simply feeling sorry for sin?

John emphasizes that someone greater is coming (vv.7–8).

What does John’s humility teach us about our role in pointing others to Jesus? In what ways can pride hinder spiritual preparation?

Jesus submits to baptism and identifies with sinners (vv.9–11).

What does this reveal about the heart and mission of Jesus? How does this affect the way we approach Him in our own brokenness?

The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted (vv.12–13).

Why do you think Mark places temptation immediately after Jesus' affirmation as God's Son? How does this speak to our own seasons of testing?

Throughout this passage, God is active—speaking, sending, empowering.

What does this tell us about the nature of the gospel? Is it something we achieve, or something we respond to?

PERSONAL DEVOTION

Take time this week to slowly read Mark 1:1–13 each day. As you read, ask yourself these questions in prayer:

- Preparation: What might God be calling me to repent of or realign so that my heart is prepared for His work?
- Identity: Do I relate to Jesus primarily as a teacher, a helper, or as the Son of God and King? How does that shape my obedience?
- Trust in Testing: Where am I currently experiencing wilderness or testing? How does Jesus' faithfulness encourage me to trust God's purposes?

Close your devotion by thanking God that the heavens have been opened through Jesus. You are not striving to reach God, but responding to a God who has come near. Ask the Holy Spirit to deepen not just your knowledge of Jesus, but your relationship with Him.

QUESTIONS | REFLECTIONS | OBSERVATIONS