



GENESIS

INTRODUCTION

Author

THOUGH THE BOOK OF GENESIS is anonymous (no author is listed), ancient Jewish and Christian traditions held that Moses authored the first five books of the Bible—referred to as the *Pentateuch* (“five vessels”) or the *Torah* (a Hebrew word for “law” or “instruction”). That Moses stood behind these five books is attested to in both the Old and the New Testaments (see Neh 8:1; Mark 12:26).

Assuming Mosaic authorship does not prevent us from accepting that others would have provided some editorial additions later—for example, the details of Moses’s death in Deuteronomy 34:5-12 and the mention of the city “Dan” in Genesis 14:14, which would not have been named until the time of the judges (see Judg 18:29). Thus, though many critical scholars today reject Mosaic authorship, we have good reason to accept the biblical tradition that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. For Genesis in particular, Moses probably used written sources and put them together to form this book.

Historical Background

Genesis covers the lengthy period from the creation of the heavens and the earth (1:1) to the death of Joseph, the son of Jacob, in Egypt (50:26). It includes an account of the origin of humankind and another of the origin of the nation of Israel. The rest of the Bible is dependent on the history and theology of Genesis. It is foundational for all that follows. Here we have the creation of the universe, man and woman made in the image of God, the mandate for humans to rule the earth, the first marriage, Satan’s opposition to humanity, the fall of humanity into sin, God’s promise to defeat Satan through the seed of the woman, Noah and the flood, the tower of Babylon, God’s covenant with Abraham, the faith of Abraham, the sacrifice of Isaac, the introduction to the twelve sons of Jacob (that is, Israel), the story of Joseph, and more.

Message and Purpose

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It is critical because it sets the stage for the rest of Scripture. The best way to understand Genesis is through its personalities, beginning with the first couple: Adam and Eve. God gave his dominion covenant to humankind, to rule on his behalf on earth as a reflection of his dominion over all. This set the stage for the fall, when Adam and Eve sinned against God, bringing earth under the temporary control of Satan. But the episode recording the entrance of sin is also embedded with the prophecy of a Redeemer (3:15)—Jesus Christ—who will defeat Satan and restore God’s kingdom rule over all.

In the meantime Genesis records the angelic conflict now being waged on earth to such an extent that God destroyed the earth with a flood and began again with Noah to establish his kingdom rule—for Genesis introduces us to a kingdom concept. The world after the flood also rebelled against God at Babylon, and God judged the people for trying to establish unity without him.

Then God called one man, Abraham, through whom he would reestablish his kingdom regime. Beginning with chapter 12, Genesis traces the history of Abraham and his family as God lays the foundation of his kingdom through the nation of Israel.



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Outline

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THE CREATION

^a 1:1 Ps 90:2; 102:12; Is 40:21; Jn 1:1-3; Eph 3:21
^b Neh 9:6; Is 40:12-14; 43:7; Jr 10:12-16; Am 4:13; Rm 1:25; 1Co 11:9; Col 1:16; Rv 4:11
^c 1:2 Jr 4:23
^d Jb 26:13; 33:4; Ps 33:6; 104:30
^e 1:3 2Co 4:6
^f 1:6 Is 44:24; Jr 10:12
^g 1:7 Ps 148:4
^h 1:9 Jb 38:8-11; Ps 33:7; 136:6; Jr 5:22; 2Pt 3:5
ⁱ 1:11 Ps 65:9-13; 104:14
^j 1:14 Jr 10:2
^k Ps 104:19
^l 1:16 Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7-9; Is 40:26
^m 1:18 Jr 31:35
ⁿ 1:21 Ps 104:25-28
^o 1:22 Gn 8:17; 9:1

In the beginning^a God created the heavens and the earth.^{a,b}

² Now the earth was formless and empty,^c darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.^d

³ Then God said, "Let there be light,"^e and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

⁶ Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water."^f ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse.^g And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky."^h Evening came and then morning: the second day.

⁹ Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place,ⁱ and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds."^j And it was so. ¹² The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ Evening came and then morning: the third day.

¹⁴ Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs^k for seasons^l and for days and years.^k ¹⁵ They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars.^l ¹⁷ God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth,¹⁸ to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness.^m And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the water swarm withⁿ living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."²¹ So God created the large sea-creatures^e and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water,ⁿ according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."²³ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

^a 1:1 Or *created the universe* ^b 1:8 Or *"heavens."* ^c 1:14 Or *for the appointed times* ^d 1:20 Lit *with swarms of* ^e 1:21 Or *created sea monsters*

1:1 Most ancient creation accounts chronicle a struggle between good and evil, with earth popping up as an accidental by-product of struggle. In these accounts, the gods who created the world did so out of prior material. They could not truly create. Scripture's story is different: **In the beginning God (Elohim, the Supreme One) created** out of nothing. With a mere word he made the entire universe of time, space, and matter—negating any possibility of atheistic evolution.

1:2 Formless and empty connotes a desolate, uninhabitable place. This suggests something happened between verses 1 and 2. Satan arrived on the scene. We get few details of Satan's fall here (Ezek 28 and Isa 14 provide more), but it appears his rebellion plunged earth into darkness (see Luke 10:18). Nevertheless, **the Spirit of God was hovering**, ready to bring order out of chaos.

1:3-5 God made the light, but he also **named it: God called the light "day"** (1:5). By naming the parts of his creation, God expresses sovereign rule over them. Even the concept of light, which is fundamental to our world, only exists because God sustains it.

1:6-8 God placed some **water above the expanse** (1:7); this is the basis of our earthly water cycle. God created the atmosphere so that life here is possible.

1:9-13 God **gathered into one place** (1:9) all the water, essentially pulling the land up to create continents. He then created vegetation, **according to . . . kinds** (1:12). God gave names to these new creations too. He also recognized that these things were **good** (1:10, 12).

1:14-19 God creates the **lights in the expanse of the sky** (1:14)—but just a few verses earlier, God had created light and darkness. So

what was emanating light for the first three days? God himself was (see Rev 22:5). On day four, God handed over that responsibility to celestial representatives, so that they would **provide light on the earth** (Gen 1:17) and **serve as signs** (1:14).

1:20-23 As he had populated the ground with plants (1:11-13), God made birds and fish (1:21). What is unique here is that he blesses them with a commission to **be fruitful . . . and fill the . . . earth** (1:22). God created a built-in capacity for his creation to reproduce and spread.

1:24-25 The threefold taxonomy of animals reflects the Jewish way of categorizing: **creatures that crawl** (1:24), or the tiny things we would call insects, rodents, and lizards; **livestock** (1:24), domesticated animals like cows, sheep, and goats; and the rest are **wildlife of the earth** (1:24). This would include the dinosaurs.

KINGDOM LIVING
FAMILY

A Photograph of God

Looking at Genesis 1, we read that God created the heavens and the earth in such a way that they are functional, vibrant, and pulsating with life. On the fifth day, God started forming the creatures that would live on the earth. Then, on the sixth day, he reached the pinnacle of his creative purposes with the creation of humankind.

Important truths arise from this account in Genesis 1:26-28. First, we see the word “us” referring to the triune God: Father, Son, and Spirit. The Trinity consists of three individual and unique persons who make up the unified reality of the Godhead. Second, we see the commission of humankind—which is to bear this Trinitarian image of God. God created humanity (body, soul, and spirit) to mirror him, and then he established them in the divine institution called family to reproduce his image. Therefore, the goal of people in general—and the family in particular—is to mirror God in the visible realm predicated on his reality in the invisible realm. The family unit is to serve as a visible photograph of God himself.

Simply put, the family’s mission is the replication of the image of God in history and to carry out his divinely mandated dominion (Gen 1:26, 28). Personal and familial happiness is to be a benefit of a strong family, but it’s not the mission. The mission is the reflection of God through the advancement of his kingdom and rule on earth. Happiness becomes the natural benefit when this goal is being actualized.

FOR THE NEXT FAMILY
KINGDOM LIVING LESSON SEE PAGE 5.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

READ GENESIS 1:26-27

- What do these verses teach about family?
- How have you experienced God’s provision in your efforts to manage your family and your other spheres of life?

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us^a make man^a in^b our image, according to our likeness.^b They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth,^c and the creatures that crawl^d on the earth.”^c

²⁷ So God created man in his own image; he created him in^e the image of God; he created them male and female.^d

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth,^e and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls^f on the earth.” ²⁹ God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you,^f ³⁰ for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it—I have given^g every green plant for food.”^g And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed.^h Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.ⁱ ² On the seventh^h day God had completed his work that he had done, and he restedⁱ on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.^j ³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested^k from all his work of creation.^{j,l}

^a 1:26 Gn 3:22; 11:7
^b Gn 5:1,3; 9:6; Rm 8:29; 1Co 11:7; 15:49; 2Co 3:18; 4:4; Eph 4:24; Col 1:15; Jms 3:9
^c Gn 9:2; Ps 8:6-8; Jms 3:7
^d 1:27 Gn 5:2; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6
^e 1:28 Gn 9:17
^f 1:29 Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14-15; 136:25; 145:15-16
^g 1:30 Ps 147:9
^h 1:31 1Tim 4:4
ⁱ 2:1 Neh 9:6; Ps 33:6; Is 34:4; 45:12
^j 2:2 Ex 20:8-11; 31:17; Dt 5:12-14; Heb 4:4
^k 2:3 Ex 31:17
^l Ex 20:11; 31:17; Ps 121:2

^a1:26 Or human beings; Hb 'adam, also in v. 27 ^b1:26 Or as ^c1:26 Syr reads sky, and over every animal of the land ^d1:26 Or scurry
^e1:27 Or man as his own image; he created him as ^f1:28 Or and all scurrying animals ^g1:30 I have given added for clarity ^h2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read sixth ⁱ2:2 Or ceased, also in v. 3 ^j2:3 Lit work that God created to make

1:26-30 God made his crowning achievement: **Let us make man in our image, visibly mirroring God’s spiritual nature, according to our likeness visibly mirroring God’s functional actions** (1:26). “Let us” is a hint at the Trinity: God the Father, Son, and the Spirit agreed to make the first human family, and that family was supposed to reflect truths about God. Every human reflects the unity of God. But he also **created them male and female** (1:27), so our differences reflect the diversity of the Trinity too. We humans are to rule on God’s behalf, and we are to reproduce for his glory (1:28). Just

as God handed over responsibility to the sun, so that it would shine *for God*, God handed over responsibility to us, so that we would govern and steward his world *for him*. This is the dominion covenant that is at the heart of the expansion of God’s kingdom program in history through the rule of man (Ps 8:4-6; Heb 2:4-8). **1:31** Here God declared his world **very good indeed**. Humanity reflected the beauty and complexity of God like no other part of creation. **2:1-3** God **rested on the seventh day** (2:2) because he wanted to provide us a model.

If even God, who “does not slumber or sleep” (Ps 121:4), took an entire day off to enjoy the fruit of his labors, we too should pause. **2:4-7** “Adam,” in Hebrew, refers to that which comes from the ground, because **the LORD God formed the man out of . . . the ground** (2:7). With the introduction of the name “Lord” (Yahweh), God introduced himself relationally. God also breathed into Adam **the breath of life** (2:7). God made us out of the most mundane material, but God also infused us with his Spirit, which gives us tremendous value and enables us to communicate with God.

MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN

^a2:4 Gn 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2
^b2:5 Gn 1:11-12
^c2:7 Gn 3:19,23; 18:27; Ps 103:14; Ec 12:7; 1Co 15:47
^dGn 7:22; Jb 33:4; Is 2:22
^e1Co 15:45
^f2:8 Gn 13:10; Is 51:3; Ezk 28:13; 31:8; Jl 2:3
^g2:9 Gn 3:22; Rv 2:7; 22:2,14
^hPr 3:18
ⁱ2:11 Gn 10:7,29; 25:18; 1Sm 15:7
^j2:14 Dn 10:4
^kGn 15:18
^l2:16 Gn 3:1-2
^m2:17 Gn 3:5; Dt 30:15,19-20; Rm 6:23; 1Tm 5:6; Jms 1:15
ⁿ2:18 Pr 31:11-12; 1Co 11:9; 1Tm 2:13
^o2:19 Ps 8:6
^p2:21 Gn 15:12
^q2:22 1Co 11:8,12

⁴These are the records^a of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time^A that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵no shrub of the field^b had yet grown on the land, ⁶and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground. ⁷But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground^c and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils,^d and the man became a living being.^e

⁸The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east,^f and there he placed the man he had formed. ⁹The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden,^g as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.^h

¹⁰A river wentⁱ out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers.^j ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,^k where there is gold. ¹²Gold from that land is pure;^l bdellium^m and onyxⁿ are also there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris,^o which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.^k

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,^o but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."^m ¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper correspondingⁿ to him."^o ¹⁹The LORD God formed out of the

2:8-15 Adam was to work the garden and watch over it (2:15). He was also to guard and protect that which was under his responsibility. Since the only threat in existence was Satan, this introduces the angelic conflict and the fact that man was created to demonstrate God's greater glory to the angelic realm (see Ps 8:4-6; Eph 3:10; 6:10-12).

2:16-17 The LORD God commanded the man and expected him to obey (2:16). The commandment was simple: you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17). Biblical freedom is the responsibility and opportunity to choose to maximize

one's calling under God. God gave Adam a tremendous amount of freedom, allowing him to enjoy whatever God provided. But biblical freedom has healthy limits. When we misuse that freedom, the consequences are severe. Just as the rules in a football game help the players and fans enjoy the game, boundaries in our spiritual walk help us live the way God intended. Ignoring God's boundaries always ends in death.

2:18 When God saw Adam by himself, he responded this way: It is not good for the man to be alone. So he promises to make a helper corresponding to him. A wife is there

Questions & Answers

Q You have called *The Kingdom Agenda* your "magnum opus." Why do you view this book and philosophy of life as so critical and central to your life's work?

A *The Kingdom Agenda* is my life's work because of its comprehensive nature. When I saw that the whole Bible is the summary of God's kingdom program and plan—and saw how all the pieces fit together—it made the Bible come alive to me. I began to see that things people often view as irrelevant are actually terribly relevant to our decision-making, our relationships, and every aspect of our lives. When I saw how comprehensive this is and how it knits together all the questions that I had, it became a driving force for everything I did. It became clear to me that God had given me a worldview based on his Word that, if understood by God's people, could be as transforming for their lives as it was for mine.

FOR THE NEXT Q&A, SEE PAGE 7.

ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it.^o And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man^o no helper was found corresponding to him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man,^p and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. ²²Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.^q ²³And the man said:

^A2:4 Lit creation on the day ^B2:5 Or earth ^C2:10 Or goes ^D2:10 Lit became four heads ^E2:11 Or of the Havilah ^F2:12 Lit good ^G2:12 A yellowish, transparent gum resin ^H2:12 Identity of this precious stone uncertain ^I2:20 Or for Adam

to be a man's counterpart, equal to him and adding what he lacks. It would be the man's responsibility to provide, protect, and proclaim God's truth in the home. The woman is an essential contributor to the marriage—not a secondary servant to her mate.

2:21-22 God lovingly addressed Adam's need, creating a woman out of one of Adam's ribs. God formed Adam; he fashioned Eve. God then brought her to the man (2:22). Just like Adam, then, Eve had a relationship with God before she had a relationship with her spouse.

2:23-25 Adam—*ish* in Hebrew—gives his wife his name. This one will be called "woman"

KINGDOM LIVING
FAMILY
The Role of Helper

^a 2:23 Eph 5:28-30
^b 2:24 Mal 2:15; Mt 19:5;
Mk 10:7-8; 1Co 6:16;
Eph 5:31
^c 3:1 Mt 10:16; 2Co 11:3; Rv
12:9; 20:2

^d 3:3 Gn 2:17
^e 3:4 Jn 8:44
^f 3:6 1Tm 2:14; Jms 1:14-15;
1Jn 2:16

An unfortunate, yet common, belief in Christian circles is that since God made Eve as a “helper” for Adam, women are somehow less valuable than men. People frequently compare women to the Holy Spirit in his role of “helper” because he’s the member of the Trinity who does a substantial amount of work but gets very little recognition. Yet a deeper examination of the word used for “helper” in the original language is eye-opening.

The Hebrew words translated “helper . . . corresponding to him” (Gen 2:20) in the creation story are important to examine because they are uniquely powerful. The words are *ezer* and *kenegdo*. The word *ezer* occurs twenty-one times in the Old Testament, with only two of those occurrences relating to a woman. In all the other instances, the word is used to refer directly to God the Father.

The term *kenegdo* was added to *ezer* in order to distinguish it from every other time in the Old Testament that it was used to refer to a strong help from God. The addition of *kenegdo* draws from its literal definition which is, “before your face, within your view or purpose.” It can also be translated as a “counterpart to.”

Through a careful look at the original language, it is easy to determine that Eve’s role was not one of subservience, maid service, or even that of simply playing a support role. In the original language of Scripture, hers is a strong, visible help comparable to that provided by God the Father.

FOR THE NEXT FAMILY
KINGDOM LIVING LESSON SEE PAGE 9.

This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called “woman,” for she was taken from man.^a

²⁴This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.^b ²⁵Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL

3 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’”^c

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. ³But about the fruit of the tree in the

middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’”^d

⁴“No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman.^e ⁵“In fact, God knows that when^a you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God,^b knowing good and evil.” ⁶The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.^f ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

SIN’S CONSEQUENCES

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze,^c

^a3:5 Lit on the day ^b3:5 Or gods, or divine beings ^c3:8 Lit at the wind of the day

(2:23), he says, the Hebrew word for “woman” being *isha*. Together, **they become one flesh** (2:24), which is to say they share a unity of purpose while retaining their uniqueness as individuals. This is a pattern for all married couples. This also establishes the fact that marriage is only between a man and a woman (Matt 19:4-6).

3:1 The serpent that showed up is the devil in disguise. He approached **the woman** on purpose. Adam was supposed to lead his family by making sure that both he and Eve knew God’s commands and walked in them. The serpent sought to reverse the divinely

ordained roles in the family by bypassing the man and appealing to the woman. Satan also ignored the name *Lord* while retaining the name *God*, thus retaining religion while removing relationship.

Notice Satan’s tactics. He intentionally misrepresented God, implying that God had commanded, **You can’t eat from any tree in the garden**. One of Satan’s oldest lies, as alluring today as then, is this: *God is holding out on you*.

3:4-5 Satan reveals two more classic lies. The first is that sin carries no consequences: **You will not die** (3:4). The second is that humans

can become equal to God (3:5). The irony is that God intended for us to be like him, sharing in his reign and ruling over his world. But Satan tempted Adam and Eve to try to *take God’s place*.

3:6 Eve sized up the fruit and concluded **that the tree was good for food**, and so she took a bite. Notice that Adam **was with her** this whole time. He became the responder instead of the leader, and literally all hell broke loose as a result.

3:7-8 The manifestation of death was emotional, spiritual, relational, environmental, and ultimately physical. Adam and Eve **sewed fig leaves together** for clothing (3:7). Awareness



» KINGDOM LIVING «

KINGDOM

Keeping “Lord” with God

^a 3:8 Jb 34:22-23
^b 3:12 Jb 31:33; Pr 28:13
^c 3:13 Rm 7:11; 2Co 11:3; 1Tm 2:14

^d 3:14 Is 65:25; Mc 7:17
^e 3:15 Heb 2:14; 1Jn 3:8
^f 3:16 Jn 16:21; 1Tm 2:15
^g Gn 4:7

The first conversation between the devil and a human was also about God. Not only that, but it was also about God’s word. Satan asked Eve, “Did God really say . . . ?” (Gen 3:1). And Satan did this because he knew that in order to get rid of God’s rule, he had to get rid of the authority of his word.

A very important part of Satan’s strategy is that he did not seek to get rid of religion. The whole conversation was about God. In fact, he even went so far as to tell Eve that she could “be like God” (3:5). Satan doesn’t mind religion. You can go to church all day long if you want. What he does mind, though, is when you acknowledge God as ruler over your life. This is evidenced through a clever maneuver Satan pulled on Eve.

Prior to the conversation between the woman and the snake, the Creator is referenced in Scripture as “LORD God.” This means “ruler, absolute authority.” Yet when Satan talked with Eve, he removed the name “LORD.” He purposefully left out the fundamental principle that God is the rightful King over his kingdom. The issue in the garden was really about whose word would be final.

Will God be “LORD God” to you? Or will you just say that he is “God” while making your own decisions? Whenever you allow the evil one to cause you to question the ultimate authority of God in your life, you jeopardize your influence in God’s kingdom. That is why so many Christians never fully live out their destinies.

In the garden, Satan also challenged God’s authority by trying to persuade Eve to think that God was being jealous about the matter of deity. But Satan knew no one could be like God. How did he know? Because he had tried it already himself and gotten thrown out of heaven for his efforts. Nevertheless, Satan attempted to sell Eve the same exact lie he had once sold himself.

God created you for his glory. So whenever you try to take glory for yourself and live independently of him, you are living outside of your intended purpose.

FOR THE NEXT KINGDOM
 KINGDOM LIVING LESSON SEE PAGE 783.

and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.^a ⁹ So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ And he said, “I heard you^a in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”

¹¹ Then he asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹² The man replied,^b “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate.”

¹³ So the LORD God asked the woman, “What is this you have done?”

And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”^c

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent:
 Because you have done this,
 you are cursed more than any livestock

and more than
 any wild animal.
 You will move on your belly
 and eat dust all the days
 of your life.^d

¹⁵ I will put hostility between you
 and the woman,
 and between your offspring
 and her offspring.
 He will strike your head,
 and you will strike his heel.^e

¹⁶ He said to the woman:
 I will intensify
 your labor pains;
 you will bear children
 with painful effort.^f
 Your desire^g will be
 for your husband,
 yet he will rule over you.

^a 3:10 Lit the sound of you

of their nakedness was a mark of emotional death, rather than life. When they heard God approaching, they hid from the LORD God (3:8). The spiritual relationship that nourished them and should have brought them their greatest joy had become a terror to them.

3:9-13 When God called to Adam, **Where are you?** (3:9), he was calling Adam to task

because Adam was the leader and had failed. To those men abandoning their families or failing to lead spiritually, God also says, “Where are you? Step up to be the men I created you to be.”

3:14-19 The seeds of death spread. Adam and Eve’s rebellion led to relational death, as God promised that the relationship between men

and women would become a battle (3:16). It caused economic death as God promised that work would become painful because Adam valued the word of his wife more than the word of God (3:17). And while Adam and Eve would not drop dead on the spot, their coming biological deaths were now guaranteed (3:19). They were like flowers cut off from the plant.



MARK

INTRODUCTION

Author

LIKE THE OTHER GOSPELS, THE Gospel of Mark is anonymous; it names no author. Nevertheless, the earliest existing copies (dating perhaps to the late first century BC) include the name “Mark” in the title. Moreover, the early church father Papias claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel based on Peter’s preaching. Indeed, Peter mentions Mark as his companion (see 1 Pet 5:12–13), and this is the same “John Mark” from the book of Acts who also traveled with Paul on his missionary journeys (see Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:36–39; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11). This early evidence gives us good reason to believe that John Mark was the author of the Gospel bearing his name and that the apostle Peter provided him with eyewitness testimony of Jesus. Some interpreters have suggested that the unidentified young man who fled the night Jesus was betrayed (see Mark 14:50–52) was John Mark himself.

Historical Background

Many Bible scholars believe Mark’s Gospel was written first, most likely during the AD 50s, and was used as a source by Matthew and Luke when they wrote their Gospels. It seems likely that Mark wrote primarily for a Gentile audience because he often explains Hebrew/Aramaic words and Jewish customs (e.g., 3:17; 5:41; 7:3–4, 11, 34; 15:34, 42). According to early church tradition, Mark wrote in Rome; therefore, his audience may have been Gentile churches in that city.

Message and Purpose

The book of Mark is written to disciples. It blends the two main topics of leadership and service. Mark unfolds what it means to serve as a kingdom leader and to lead as a servant, because both of these elements are included in what it means to be a follower of Jesus

Christ. Discipleship, in fact, is that process whereby we progressively learn what it means to bring every area of life under his lordship. The Gospel of Mark takes us on a pilgrimage as Jesus teaches his first disciples who he is, what he is about, and what it means to follow him.

The disciples had much to learn: they actually argued about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus had to turn their thinking upside down, so he showed them that leadership comes through service. He demonstrated this himself, for indeed he had come “to serve” (10:45). He is called both Son of God and Son of Man because Jesus is both divine and human. He serves the purposes of God, yet he does so by meeting the needs of people. Our challenge in studying Mark is to learn from Jesus’s example how to lead and how to serve.



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Outline

- I. Preparation for Ministry (1:1–13)
- II. Initial Ministry in Galilee (1:14–3:6)
- III. Ministry around the Sea of Galilee (3:7–6:6)
- IV. Ministry in Galilee and Beyond (6:7–8:30)
- V. Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem (8:31–10:52)
- VI. Ministry in Jerusalem (11:1–13:37)
- VII. Betrayal, Suffering, Death, and Resurrection (14:1–16:20)

THE MESSIAH'S HERALD

1 The beginning^a of the gospel^b of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.^c **2** As it is written in Isaiah^d the prophet:^e
 See, I am sending my messenger^f ahead of you;
 he will prepare your way.^{c,d,g}
3 A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:^h
 Prepare the way for the Lord;ⁱ
 make his paths straight!^{e,j}
4 John came baptizing^{f,k} in the wilderness^l and proclaiming a baptism of repentance^m for the forgivenessⁿ of sins.^o **5** The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem^p were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan^q River, confessing^r their sins.^s **6** John wore a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts^t and wild honey.^u
7 He proclaimed, "One who is more powerful^v than I am is coming after me.^w I am not worthy^x to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals.^y **8** I baptize you with^z water,^z but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."^{aa}

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
9 In^{ab} those days Jesus came from Nazareth^{ac} in Galilee^{ad} and was baptized in the Jordan by John. **10** As soon as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens^{ae} being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. **11** And a voice^{af} came from heaven:^{ag} "You are my beloved^{ah} Son;^{ai} with you I am well-pleased."^{aj}

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS
12 Immediately^{ak} the Spirit^{al} drove^{am} him into the wilderness.^{an} **13** He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted^{ao} by Satan.^{ap} He was with the wild animals,^{aq} and the angels^{ar} were serving him.

^a 1:1 Jn 1:1; Php 4:15
^b 1:1-8 Mt 3:1-12; Lk 3:1-18
^c 1:1 Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2
^d 1:2 Mt 3:3; 4:14; 12:17
^e Lk 16:29
^f Mt 13:49
^g Mal 3:1
^h 1:3 Jn 1:23
ⁱ Lk 10:1; 17:5
^j Is 40:3
^k 1:4 Lk 7:29; Ac 22:16
^l Rv 12:6
^m Lk 3:3; Ac 13:24; 19:4; 26:20
ⁿ Mt 9:2; Lk 24:47
^o Jn 15:22; Ac 26:18
^p 1:5 Mt 23:37; Jn 11:36
^q Gn 13:10; Ps 114:3; Lk 3:3
^r Ac 19:18
^s Jn 15:22; Rm 6:23; 1Pt 4:1
^t 1:6 Rv 9:3,7
^u Rv 10:9-10
^v 1:7 Rv 18:8
^w Jn 1:15
^x Mt 3:11
^y Lk 3:16; Ac 13:23-25
^z 1:8 Jn 1:26,31,33; Ac 1:5; 8:36; 11:16
^{aa} Jn 1:33
^{ab} 1:9-11 Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-23
^{ac} 1:9 Mt 2:23; 4:13; 21:11; Lk 1:26; 2:4,39,51; 4:16; Jn 1:45-46
^{ad} Mt 17:22
^{ae} 1:10 Mt 24:35; Lk 12:33; Ac 17:24; Eph 6:9; Rv 21:10
^{af} 1:11 Jn 5:37
^{ag} Rv 14:13
^{ah} Lk 20:13; Eph 1:6; Phm 1
^{ai} Ps 2:7
^{aj} Is 42:1
^{ak} 1:12-13 Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13
^{al} 1:12 Jn 1:33
^{am} 3:10
^{an} Mt 3:1; Rv 12:6
^{ao} 1:13 Jms 1:13
^{ap} Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10
^{aq} Rv 6:8
^{ar} Mt 13:49; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6

KINGDOM LIVING
 KINGDOM
 Advancing God's Kingdom

If you are an American, it's likely because you were born here. But if you are a part of the kingdom of God, it is only because you have been born again into his kingdom. The reason why this is so important to know is that this foundational truth not only affects you greatly, but it is also the key to grasping the truths of the Bible.

The unifying, central themes running throughout the Bible are the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom. The threads that run from Genesis to Revelation—from beginning to end—are focused on one thing: God's glory spreads through advancing God's kingdom.

When you do not focus on that, the Bible presents itself as disconnected stories that may be great for inspiration but seem to be unrelated in purpose and direction. The Bible exists to share God's movement in history toward the establishment and expansion of his kingdom. It highlights the connectivity of the kingdom. Understanding this principle increases the relevancy of this ancient manuscript to your everyday life because the kingdom is not only then, it is now.

In the same way that our culture and our country want us to be regularly reminded about our citizenship in this kingdom called America, there is another kingdom—a greater and more perfect one—of which we are a part. It is the kingdom of God.

FOR THE NEXT KINGDOM
 KINGDOM LIVING LESSON SEE PAGE 1409.

^A 1:1 Some mss omit the Son of God ^B 1:2 Other mss read in the prophets ^C 1:2 Other mss add before you ^D 1:2 Mal 3:1 ^E 1:3 Is 40:3
^F 1:4 Or John the Baptist came ^G 1:8 Or in

1:1 Jesus is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, which means, "the Lord saves." **Christ** is the Greek word for the Hebrew "Messiah," which means, "Anointed One." This was the title of the promised King, the descendant of David who would rule the kingdom and deliver his people. The title **Son of God** tells us Jesus is more than a mere man. He's fully divine; he's the God-Man.
1:2 Typically, kings would send envoys ahead of them to prepare their way. Christ's ambassador was a man named John whose mission was foretold many years before by Isaiah (see Isa 40:3).

1:4-5 By confessing their sins, the people were agreeing with heaven's evaluation of their sins (1:5). By repenting they were adopting heaven's perspective on their sins, turning from them (1:4).
1:6-7 John's plain lifestyle was reflected in his clothing and his food (**locusts and wild honey**); (1:6). He was a simple, unworthy man pointing to someone **more powerful than** he (1:7).
1:8 That the coming one would baptize his followers **with the Holy Spirit** had been promised long ago (see Joel 2:28). In time, Jesus would deliver (see John 14:16-17; Acts 2:1-4).

1:9 Jesus was baptized to identify with sinners, whom he'd come to save (see the note on Matt 3:13-15), and so that he might be distinguished as the Messiah, the Son of God (see John 1:29-34).
1:10-11 We see the Trinity at work at this crucial kingdom moment: the ministry of God the **Son** begins with the loving affirmation of God the Father and the empowering presence of God the **Spirit** (1:10).
1:13 As Israel had spent forty years in the wilderness, so Jesus spent **forty days** identifying with God's people. And whereas Israel repeatedly failed to obey God during their time in the wilderness, Jesus would prove victorious.

MINISTRY IN GALILEE

14 After^a John was arrested,^b Jesus went to Galilee,^c proclaiming^d the good news^{A,B,E} of God:^f “The time^g is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God^h has comeⁱ near.^j Repent^k and believe^l the good news!”

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

READ MARK 1:15

- What ideas or images come to mind when you read the phrase “kingdom of God”?

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

16 As^m he passed alongside the Sea of Galilee,ⁿ he saw Simon^o and Andrew,^p Simon’s brother, casting a net into the sea^q — for they were fishermen. 17 “Follow me,^r” Jesus told them, “and I will make you fish for^s people.”^t 18 Immediately they left their nets and followed^u him.^v 19 Going on a little farther, he saw James^w the son of Zebedee^x and his brother John^y in a boat putting their nets in order. 20 Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.^z

DRIVING OUT AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

21 They^{aa} went into Capernaum,^{ab} and right away he entered the synagogue^{ac} on the Sabbath^{ad} and began to teach.^{ae} 22 They were astonished^{af} at his teaching^{ag} because he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like the scribes.

23 Just then a man with an unclean^{ah} spirit^{ai} was in their synagogue.^{aj} He cried out, 24 “What do you have to do with us,

Jesus of Nazareth?^{ak} Have you come to destroy^{al} us? I know who you are — the Holy^{am} One of God!^{an}

25 Jesus rebuked^{ao} him saying, “Be silent,^{ap} and come out of him!” 26 And the unclean spirit threw him into convulsions,^{aq} shouted with a loud voice, and came out of him.

27 They were all amazed,^{ar} and so they began to ask^{as} each other: “What is this? A new teaching^{at} with authority!^{au} He commands even the unclean^{av} spirits,^{aw} and they obey him.” 28 At once the news about him spread throughout the entire vicinity of Galilee.^{ax}

HEALINGS AT CAPERNAUM

29 As^{ay} soon as they left the synagogue,^{az} they went into Simon^{ba} and Andrew’s^{bb} house^{bc} with James^{bd} and John.^{be} 30 Simon’s mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. 31 So he went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up.^{bf} The fever^{bg} left her,^e and she began to serve^{bh} them.^{bi}

32 When^{bj} evening came, after the sun had set, they brought to him all those who were sick^{bk} and demon-possessed.^{bl}

33 The whole town was assembled at the door,³⁴ and he healed^{bm} many who were sick with various diseases^{bn} and drove out^{bo} many demons.^{bp} And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.^{bq}

PREACHING IN GALILEE

35 Very^{br} early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place,^{bs} and there he was praying.^{bt} 36 Simon^{bu} and his companions

^a 1:14-15 Mt 4:17; Jn 4:45^b 1:14 Mt 3:12; Lk 3:20;^c 9:7-9; Jn 3:24^d Mt 17:22^e Mk 13:10^f Mk 1:1^g Rm 15:16; 1Th 2:2,8-9^h 1:15 Ps 37:39; Lk 20:10;ⁱ Jn 7:8^j Mt 3:2; 6:33; 12:28; 19:24;^k 21:31,43; Mk 4:11; 9:1;^l 10:14; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43^m Mk 9:1ⁿ Rm 13:11; 1Pt 4:7^o Ac 3:19; 26:20^p Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac^q 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10^r 1:16-20 Mt 4:18-22;^s Lk 5:1-11^t 1:16 Mt 4:18; 15:29; Jn 6:1^u Mt 16:17^v Jn 6:8^w Mk 7:31^x 1:17 Mt 4:19^y Mt 4:18-19; Lk 5:2^z Mt 4:19^{aa} 1:18 Lk 5:11; Jn 8:12^{ab} Lk 18:28^{ac} 1:19 Ac 12:2^{ad} Jn 21:2^{ae} Jn 21:7^{af} 1:20 Lk 18:28^{ag} 1:21-26 Lk 4:31-35^{ah} 1:21 Lk 10:15^{ai} Mk 3:1; Jms 2:2^{aj} Mk 2:23; Lk 13:10^{ak} Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2;^{al} 2Tm 4:11^{am} 1:22 Mk 6:2^{an} Mt 7:28; 22:33;^{ao} Mk 11:18; Lk 4:32;^{ap} Ac 2:42; 17:19^{aq} 1:23 2Co 6:17^{ar} Lk 11:24^{as} Jms 2:2^{at} 1:24 Mk 14:67^{au} Jn 6:27^{av} 1Co 7:14^{aw} Lk 4:34; Jn 6:69;^{ax} Eph 4:30^{ay} 1:25 2Tm 4:2^{az} Mt 22:12^{ba} 1:26 Mk 9:26; Lk 9:39^{bb} 1:27 Mk 10:24,32^{bc} Mk 8:11^{bd} Mk 11:18; Ac 2:42^{be} Jd 25^{bf} 2Co 6:17^{bg} Lk 11:24^{bh} 1:28 Mt 17:22^{ay} 1:29-31 Mt 8:14-15; Lk 4:38-39 ^{az} 1:29 Jms 2:2 ^{ba} Mt 16:17 ^{bb} Jn 6:8 ^{bc} Mk 9:33 ^{bd} Ac 12:2 ^{be} Jn 21:7 ^{bf} 1:31 Mk 5:41 ^{bg} Lk 4:38 ^{bh} Pm 13 ^{bi} Rm 12:13^{bj} 1:32-34 Mt 8:16-17; Lk 4:40-41 ^{bk} 1:32 Lk 5:31 ^{bl} Mt 9:32 ^{bm} 1:34 Ac 8:7 ^{bn} Ac 19:12 ^{bo} 3Jn 10 ^{bp} Rv 9:20; 18:2 ^{bq} Mk 3:11-12; 5:7 ^{br} 1:35-38 Mt^{bs} 1:35 Mt 14:13; Mk 6:31-32; Lk 4:42; 9:12; Rv 12:6 ^{bt} Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 ^{bu} 1:36 Mt 16:17^A 1:14 Other mss add of the kingdom ^B 1:14 Or gospel ^C 1:17 Or you to become fishers of ^D 1:27 Other mss read “What is this? What is this new teaching? For with authority ^E 1:31 Other mss add at once

1:14-15 The **kingdom of God** is the visible manifestation of the comprehensive rule of God over every area of life. How should people respond to this message? We should **repent** (change our minds about sin) and **believe** the saving message of Christ so the promise of the kingdom can come (1:15).

1:16-17 Jesus used the occupation of **Simon** (Peter) and **Andrew** to challenge them to follow him: **I will make you fish for people** (1:17). God will often do something similar when he calls us to become disciples; he’ll link our backgrounds and experiences to his purposes for our lives.

1:21 **Capernaum** was a village on the north side of the Sea of Galilee.

1:22 The **scribes** who normally taught them were nothing like Jesus. He taught with **authority**, making God’s Word powerfully clear.

1:23-24 An **unclean spirit** is a demon (1:23). What this one said about Jesus tells us that demons have the insight to know who Jesus is even as they’re unwilling to worship him (1:24). As James says, it’s possible to believe in God yet be unwilling to follow him (Jas 2:18-20).

1:25-28 Jesus had no intention of letting a follower of Satan be his spokesman to fuel the accusation that he was in league with the devil (see Matt 9:32-34).

1:31 It was equally important to Mark to point out that **she began to serve** Jesus as a result of what he did for her. The only appropriate

response to God’s goodness in your life, in fact, is gratitude and service.

1:32 **After the sun had set** the Sabbath was over (see 1:21), so people had the freedom to carry burdens such as stretchers.

1:35 Jesus sought the fellowship of his heavenly Father—away from the distractions of the world. If the Son of God considered uninterrupted prayer such a priority, why do so many Christians consider it an afterthought? 1:36-38 The disciples’ words in 1:37 suggest that they thought he wasn’t capitalizing on the opportunities his popularity afforded him. Jesus, though, had not come merely to please the masses with miracles. He came to **preach** the good news and prepare people for God’s kingdom (1:38).

^a1:38 Mk 1:4
^b1:39 Mt 17:22
 Mk 3:1
^d1:40-44 Mt 8:2-4; Lk
 5:12-14
^e1:40 Mt 11:5
 Mt 17:14
 Jn 1:7
^h1:41 Lk 15:20
 Jn 20:17
^j1:42 Lk 5:12
^k1:43 Mt 9:30; Mk 14:5;
 Jn 11:33,38
 Jn 10
^m1:44 Mk 5:43; 7:36;
 8:26,30; 9:9; 16:8; Lk 5:14
 Rv 1:1
ⁿAc 4:1
^oHeb 5:1; 8:3
^pLv 13-14; Heb 1:3
^qMk 6:11; 1Tm 2:6
^r1:45 Mk 1:4; Jn 18:32
^sMk 4:14
^t1:41 Mt 9:1-8; Lk 5:17-26
^u2:1-12 Mt 9:1-8; Lk 10:15
^v2:1 Lk 10:15
^w2:2 Mk 4:14; Jn 18:32
^x2:3 Mt 4:24; 8:6; 9:2,6;
 Mk 2:3-10
^y2:5 Mt 8:10; Ac 3:16; Rm
 1:8; 1Co 2:5; Gl 2:16; 1Tm
 1:2; Heb 4:2
 Jn 15:22
^{aa}Mt 9:2,5; Lk 5:20,23; 7:48
^{ab}2:6 Mt 2:4
^{ac}Mk 9:33
^{ad}2:7 Ex 22:28; Mk 3:29;
 Rv 13:6
^{ae}Ps 25:11; Mt 9:2
^{af}Jn 15:22
^{ag}Ex 34:6-7; Is 43:25; 44:2
^{ah}2:8 Mk 10:52
^{ai}Lk 5:22; 16:15; Jn 2:25
^{aj}2:9 Lk 16:17; 18:25
^{ak}Mk 2:3
^{al}Mt 11:5
^{am}2:10 Ps 8:4; Lk 5:24; Ac 7:56
^{an}Mt 28:18; Mk 1:22
^{ao}Jn 15:22
^{ap}2:11 Mk 5:41
^{aq}2:12 Ac 10:45
^{ar}Jn 11:4; 17:1; 1Pt 2:12
^{as}Lk 2:14
^{at}Mt 9:33
^{au}2:13-17 Mt 9:13; Lk 5:27-32
^{av}2:13 Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2;
 2Tm 4:11
^{aw}2:14 Lk 5:27,29
^{ax}Lk 5:27
^{ay}Lk 5:27
^{az}Lk 5:11; Jn 8:12
^{ba}2:15 Lk 3:12; 18:13
^{bb}Mt 9:10; 1Tm 1:15
^{bc}2:16 Mt 2:4

searched for him,³⁷ and when they found him they said, "Everyone is looking for you."

³⁸ And he said to them, "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach^a there too. This is why I have come."

A MAN CLEANSED

³⁹ He went into all of Galilee,^b preaching in their synagogues^c and driving out demons. ⁴⁰ Then^d a man with leprosy^{a,e} came to him and, on his knees,^{b,f} begged him: "If you are willing, you can make me clean."^g ⁴¹ Moved with compassion,^{c,h} Jesus reached out his hand and touchedⁱ him. "I am willing," he told him. "Be made clean."⁴² Immediately the leprosy^j left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³ Then he sternly warned^k him and sent him away^l at once, ⁴⁴ telling him, "See that you say nothing to anyone,^m but go and showⁿ yourself to the priest,^o and offer^b what Moses commanded for your cleansing,^q as a testimony^r to them."⁴⁵ Yet he went out and began to proclaim^s it widely and to spread the news,^t with the result that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. But he was out in deserted places, and they came to him from everywhere.

THE SON OF MAN FORGIVES AND HEALS

2 When^u he entered Capernaum^v again after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ² So many people gathered together that there was no more room, not even in the doorway, and he was speaking the word^w to them. ³ They came to him bringing a paralytic,^x carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they were not able to bring

him to^e Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after digging through it, they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵ Seeing their faith,^y Jesus told the paralytic, "Son, your sins^z are forgiven."^{aa}

⁶ But some of the scribes^{ab} were sitting there, questioning^{ac} in their hearts: ⁷ "Why does he speak like this? He's blaspheming!^{ad} Who can forgive^{ae} sins^{af} but God alone?"^{ag}

⁸ Right away^{ah} Jesus perceived in his spirit^{ai} that they were thinking like this within themselves and said to them, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier:^{aj} to say to the paralytic,^{ak} 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat, and walk'?"^{al} ¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of Man^{am} has authority^{an} on earth to forgive sins^{ao} — he told the paralytic — ¹¹ "I tell you: get up,^{ap} take your mat, and go home."

¹² Immediately he got up, took the mat, and went out in front of everyone. As a result, they were all astounded^{aq} and gave glory^{ar} to God,^{as} saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"^{at}

THE CALL OF LEVI

¹³ Jesus^{au} went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching^{av} them. ¹⁴ Then, passing by, he saw Levi^{aw} the son of Alphaeus sitting at the toll booth,^{ax} and he said to him, "Follow me,"^{ay} and he got up and followed^{az} him.

¹⁵ While he was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors^{ba} and sinners^{bb} were eating^c with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following him. ¹⁶ When the scribes^{bc} who

^A1:40 Gk leprosy; a term for various skin diseases, also in v. 42; see Lv 13-14 ^B1:40 Other mss omit on his knees ^C1:41 Other mss Moved with indignation ^D1:44 Or against them ^E2:4 Other mss read able to get near ^F2:15 Lit reclining together

1:40-41 With this scene Mark wants his readers to know that Jesus's healing ministry wasn't perfunctory. When he heard and saw the man, he was **moved with compassion**. The sinless Son of God is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. Notice too the manner in which he healed him: **Jesus . . . touched him** (1:41). Understand: no one touched a leper. Doing so risked infection and made Jews unclean according to the Mosaic law. But the Son of God cannot be contaminated; he can only purify. **1:43-45** As a result of the man's disobedience, he hindered Jesus's ministry (1:45). **2:3-4** Some Christians will invite friends to church but not invite them to Jesus. They'll invite them to hear sermons, choir concerts, and to see special programs, but they won't tell them about the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. These four men knew that get-

ting their friend to a building wasn't the goal. Getting him to the Master was. **2:5** No matter how poor your physical condition, your spiritual condition must take priority. Unforgiven **sins** are more detrimental than unhealed limbs. Spiritual sickness is worse than broken circumstances. And spiritual healing can reverse sin's physical consequences. **2:7** While they were right that **God alone** could **forgive sins**, they had Jesus all wrong. He possessed divine authority because of his divine nature. **2:8** This is a reminder that there isn't a moment that goes by that Jesus doesn't know exactly what you're **thinking**. **2:9-11** Jesus's ability to accomplish a visible miracle would confirm his ability to accomplish an invisible spiritual one. Don't go to

Jesus for help with your physical circumstances unless you're willing for him to deal with your spiritual circumstances. **2:14** **Levi** is also known as Matthew (see Matt 9:9). Jews like him who served as tax collectors were considered unclean because they worked for Gentiles. Moreover, they typically charged extra taxes to keep for themselves (see Luke 19:1-10). Having a thiefing tax collector as a disciple wouldn't improve Jesus's reputation among the religious elite. **2:16** These religious men couldn't understand why a holy man would hang out with such people. When was the last time you spent time with a sinner—not so you could share in sin but so you could point him to your Savior? If engaging with the lost is repulsive to you, you've lost sight of Jesus's mission and the calling on the church.

were Pharisees^{a,a} saw that he was eating^b with sinners^c and tax collectors,^d they asked his disciples, “Why does he eat^e with tax collectors and sinners?”

¹⁷ When Jesus heard this, he told them, “It is not those who are well who need^e a doctor,^f but those who are sick.^g I didn’t come to call the righteous,^h but sinners.”ⁱ

A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

¹⁸ Now^j John’s^k disciples^l and the Pharisees^{c,m} were fasting.ⁿ People came and asked him, “Why do John’s disciples and the Pharisees’ disciples fast, but your disciples do not fast?”

¹⁹ Jesus said to them, “The wedding guests cannot fast while the groom^o is with them, can they? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰ But the time^p will come^q when the groom will be taken away from them,^q and then they will fast^r on that day. ²¹ No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new patch pulls away from the old cloth,^s and a worse tear is made. ²² And no one puts new wine^t into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst^u the skins, and the wine is lost as well as the skins. No, new wine is put into fresh wineskins.”

LORD OF THE SABBATH

²³ On^v the Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and his disciples^w began to make their way, picking some heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees^x said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful^y on the Sabbath?”

²⁵ He said to them, “Have you never read what David^z and those who were with him did when he was in need^{aa} and hungry^{ab} — ²⁶ how he entered the house of God in

the time of Abiathar^{ac} the high priest^{ad} and ate the bread of the Presence^{ae} — which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests^{af} — and also gave some to his companions?” ²⁷ Then he told them, “The Sabbath was made for^e man and not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So then, the Son of Man^{ah} is Lord^{aj} even of the Sabbath.”^{aj}

3 Jesus^{ak} entered the synagogue^{al} again, and a man was there who had a shriveled^{am} hand. ² In order to accuse^{an} him, they were watching him closely^{ao} to see whether he would heal^{ap} him on the Sabbath. ³ He told the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand before us.” ⁴ Then he said to them, “Is it lawful^{ar} to do good^{as} on the Sabbath or to do evil,^{at} to save life^{au} or to kill?”^{av} But they were silent. ⁵ After looking around at them with anger,^{ax} he was grieved at the hardness^{ay} of their hearts and told the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶ Immediately the Pharisees^{ba} went out and started plotting^{bb} with the Herodians^{bc} against him, how they might kill^{bd} him.

MINISTERING TO THE MULTITUDE

⁷ Jesus^{be} departed with his disciples to the sea, and a large crowd followed from Galilee,^{bf} and a large crowd followed from Judea,^{bg} ⁸ Jerusalem,^{bh} Idumea, beyond the Jordan,^{bi} and around Tyre^{bj} and Sidon.^{bk} The large crowd came to him because they heard about everything he was doing. ⁹ Then he told his disciples to have a small boat^{bl} ready for him, so that the crowd wouldn’t crush him. ¹⁰ Since he had healed^{bm} many, all who had diseases were pressing toward him to touch^{bn}

^a 2:16 Mk 7:3
^b Mt 11:18
^c 1Tm 1:15
^d Lk 3:12
^e 2:17 Mt 6:8
^f Col 4:14
^g Lk 5:31
^h Mt 13:17; Rm 1:17
ⁱ Lk 5:32
^j 2:18-22 Mt 9:14-17; Lk 5:33-39
^k 2:18 Mk 1:4
^l Jn 3:25
^m Mk 7:3
ⁿ Lk 18:12; Ac 13:2
^o 2:19 Jn 2:9
^p 2:20 Mk 13:24
^q Lk 17:22; Jn 16:16-20
^r Lk 18:12
^s 2:21 Lk 19:36
^t 2:22 Lk 5:37
^u Jn 6:27
^v 2:23-28 Mt 12:1-8; Lk 6:1-5
^w 2:23 Mk 10:10
^x 2:24 Mk 7:3
^y Lk 6:2
^z 2:25 Lk 1:27
^{aa} Ac 2:45
^{ab} Rv 7:16

^{ac} 2:26 1Sm 21:1-6

^{ad} Lv 16:32

^{ae} Ex 25:30

^{af} Ac 4:1

^{ag} 2:27 Col 2:16

^{ah} 2:28 Mk 2:10

^{ai} Rm 7:25; 1Co 8:6;

Col 3:22

^{aj} Lk 6:5

^{ak} 3:1-6 Mt 12:9-14;

Lk 6:6-11

^{al} 3:1 Mk 1:21,39;

Jms 2:2

^{am} Mk 4:6; 5:29; 9:18;

11:20-21

^{an} 3:2 Rv 12:10

^{ao} Lk 6:7; 14:1; 20:20

^{ap} Ac 8:7

^{aq} Mk 2:23; Lk 13:10; 14:3

^{ar} 3:4 Jn 18:31

^{as} Ps 34:14; Lk 18:18

^{at} Ps 34:12-16; 1Pt 3:17

^{au} Php 2:12; Jms 5:20

^{av} Lk 20:15

^{aw} Lk 1:20; 19:40

^{ax} 3:5 Jms 1:19

^{ay} Ex 7:13; Rm 11:25

^{az} Mk 8:25

^{ba} 3:6 Mk 7:3

^{bb} Mt 12:14; Mk 15:1

^{bc} 3:6 Mt 22:16; Mk 12:13

^{bd} Mk 11:18; Jn 5:18; 6:27

^{be} 3:7-12 Mt 4:24-25; 12:15-16; Lk 6:17-19

^{bf} 3:7 Mt 17:22

^{bg} Lk 1:5

^{bh} 3:8 Mt 23:37

^{bi} Lk 3:3

^{bj} Lk 3:3

^{bk} Gn 49:13

^a 2:16 Other mss read *scribes and Pharisees* ^b 2:16 Other mss add *and drink* ^c 2:18 Other mss read *The disciples of John and of the Pharisees*

^d 2:20 *Or the days* ^e 2:27 *Or because of*

2:17 It’s the bad who need good news (see 1:15). Jesus **didn’t come to call the righteous** to enter into fellowship with God, nor the self-righteous (like the scribes and Pharisees) who didn’t perceive a need for spiritual help. Rather, he came to call **sinners**, those who are spiritually bankrupt and know it.

2:18-20 The Old Testament certainly expected God’s people to fast periodically, but the presence of the Messiah signaled a time for rejoicing and celebration. It would be no more appropriate for his followers to fast in his presence than for friends of a **groom to fast at his wedding** (2:19). Fasting would come later—when the groom was **taken away** (2:20). After Jesus’s death, resurrection, and ascension, the legitimacy of fasting would resume.

2:23-24 The Jewish religious leaders accused Jesus of violating the Mosaic law. In their view, picking grain was tantamount to harvesting, harvesting was work, and work was forbidden **on the Sabbath** (2:24).

2:25-26 If **David**, the Lord’s anointed, could eat the sacred bread when in need and be innocent, how much more could the Anointed One do the same?

2:27-28 **The Sabbath was made** to meet people’s needs and benefit them. It was not to be a mere religious observance, absent of all compassion (2:27). As God, Jesus had established the day of rest; therefore, he knew its proper function (2:28).

3:4 The answer to Jesus’s question was obvious. Failure **to do good and save life** would

actually be a violation of the law. The men opposed to Jesus were zealous for religious tradition but remained insensitive to the poor man’s need.

3:5 Don’t miss that here again Jesus healed by commanding a person to do what he was incapable of doing without divine help (see 2:10-12).

3:6 The **Herodians** were political supporters of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. Thus, religion and politics joined forces against the true King.

3:7-8 People from **Judea** and **Jerusalem** followed Jesus, but they also traveled from the outskirts: **Idumea** to the south, **beyond the Jordan** to the east, and **around Tyre and Sidon** in the northwest.

^a 3:11 2Co 6:17
^b Lk 11:24
^c Lk 8:47
^d Lk 4:34,41
^e 3:12 2Tm 4:2
^f Mk 1:34
^g 3:13-19 Mt 10:2-4; Lk 6:12-16
^h 3:13 Mt 4:8
ⁱ 3:14 Ac 1:2; Jd 17
^j Mk 1:4
^k 3:16 Mk 11:11; Jn 1:35-51
^l Mt 16:17
^m Ac 10:32
ⁿ 3:17 Ac 12:2
^o Jn 21:2
^p Jn 21:7
^q Rv 6:1
^r 3:18 Jn 6:8
^s Jn 1:43-48; 6:5,7; 12:21-22; 14:8-9
^t Ac 1:13
^u Jn 11:16; 14:5; 20:24,26-28; 21:2
^v 3:19 Mk 14:10,43; Ac 1:16,25
^w 3:21 Jn 7:3
^x Lk 2:48; Jn 2:3-4; 7:3-5
^y 3:22 Mt 2:4
^z Mt 10:25; 12:24,27; Lk 11:15-19
^{aa} 3Jn 10
^{ab} Rv 9:20; 18:2
^{ac} Lk 12:58
^{ad} Mt 9:34; 12:24; Lk 11:15
^{ae} 3:23 Lk 18:16
^{af} Mk 12:1
^{ag} Mk 1:13; 4:15; 8:33
^{ah} 3:23-27 Mt 12:25-29; Lk 11:17-22
^{ai} 3:24 Lk 4:5
^{aj} 3:27 Mk 15:1
^{ak} 3:28-30 Mt 12:31-32; Lk 12:10
^{al} 3:29 Ac 7:51
^{am} Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-29; 1Jn 5:16
^{an} Mk 14:64
^{ao} 1Jn 5:16
^{ap} 3:30 Lk 11:24
^{aq} 3:31-35 Mt 12:46-50; Lk 8:19-21
^{ar} 3:31 Mt 1:16
^{as} Jn 2:12
^{at} 3:32 Mk 6:3
^{au} 3:34 Ac 9:30
^{av} 3:35 Rm 8:27; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17

him. ¹¹ Whenever the unclean ^a spirits ^b saw him, they fell down ^c before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God!" ¹² And he would strongly warn ^e them not to make him known.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

¹³ Jesus ^g went up the mountain ^h and summoned those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, ^{aj} to be with him, to send them out to preach, ¹⁵ and to have authority to ^b drive out demons. ¹⁶ He appointed the Twelve: ^{ck} To Simon, ^l he gave the name Peter; ^m ¹⁷ and to James ⁿ the son of Zebedee, ^o and to his brother John, ^p he gave the name "Boanerges" (that is, "Sons of Thunder" ^q); ¹⁸ Andrew; ^r Philip ^s and Bartholomew; Matthew ^t and Thomas; ^u James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, ^v who also betrayed him.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

²⁰ Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family ^w heard this, they set out to restrain him, because they said, "He's out of his mind." ^x

²² The scribes ^y who had come down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," ^z and, "He drives out ^{aa} demons ^{ab} by the ruler ^{ac} of the demons." ^{ad}

²³ So he summoned ^{ae} them and spoke to them in parables: ^{af} "How can Satan ^{ag} drive out Satan? ^{ah} ²⁴ If a kingdom ^{ai} is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that

house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand but is finished. ²⁷ But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up ^{aj} the strong man. Then he can plunder his house.

²⁸ "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies ^{ak} they utter. ²⁹ But whoever blasphemes ^{al} against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, ^{am} but is guilty ^{an} of an eternal sin" ^{ae,ao} — ³⁰ because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit." ^{ap}

TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

³¹ His ^{aq} mother ^{ar} and his brothers ^{as} came, and standing outside, they sent word to him and called him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him and told him, "Look, your mother, your brothers, ^{at} and your sisters ^f are outside asking for you."

³³ He replied to them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴ Looking at those sitting in a circle around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ^{au} ³⁵ Whoever does the will of God ^{av} is my brother and sister and mother."

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

4 Again ^{aw} he began to teach ^{ax} by the sea, and a very large crowd gathered around him. So he got into a boat on the sea and sat down, while the whole crowd was by the sea on the shore. ² He taught them many things in parables, ^{ay} and in his teaching ^{az} he said to them: ³ "Listen! Consider the sower who went out to sow. ^{ba}

^A 3:14 Other mss omit *he also named them apostles* ^B 3:15 Other mss add *heal diseases, and to* ^C 3:16 Other mss omit *He appointed the Twelve*
^D 3:20 Or *eat a meal*; lit *eat bread* ^E 3:29 Other mss read *is subject to eternal judgment* ^F 3:32 Other mss omit *and your sisters*

3:13-15 The role of the **apostles** was to be **with him** (to have a relationship to Jesus), to **preach** (to proclaim the message of Jesus; 3:14), and to **drive out demons** (to exercise the authority of Jesus; 3:15).

3:16-17 **Peter** functioned as something of a leader among the apostles (3:16). **James and John**, called the **Sons of Thunder** because of their intense personalities (3:17; see 10:35-45; Luke 9:51-56), were also fishermen. These three—Peter, James, and John—made up Jesus's inner circle and were often with him apart from the other apostles (see Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33).

3:19 Mark identifies **Judas Iscariot** as the apostle who **betrayed him** as a hint to the reader that the opposition to Jesus arose even among his companions. Judas was the only non-Galilean among the Twelve.

3:21 In light of everything he was doing, Jesus's biological family thought he'd gone crazy. His

brothers didn't believe in him during his ministry (see John 7:3-5), and even from an early age his parents misunderstood him (see Luke 2:41-50). After Jesus's resurrection, however, his mother and brothers would be counted among the first Christians in the early church (see Acts 1:14). His brothers James and Jude, in fact, would even write the Holy Spirit-inspired New Testament books now bearing their names.

3:22 In other words, they claimed the devil was the source of Christ's power.

3:25-26 **Satan** is the enemy of God, but he's not stupid (3:26). He's cunning like a serpent (see Gen 3:1) and prowls "like a roaring lion" (1 Pet 5:8). To attack his own kingdom would be to topple it without God's interference.

3:27 **No one** could render Satan (**the strong man** in view) helpless unless he was stronger—in this case, unless his power was divine.

3:28-30 To claim that the authority and power behind Jesus is actually the authority and power of the devil is to reject God's salvation in light of clear revelation. The one who rejects what the Holy Spirit makes clear, then, is **guilty of an eternal sin** (3:29). If you receive King Jesus as your Savior, he promises to forgive all. But if you spurn the King, call him the devil, and reject the Holy Spirit's testimony, you have no other option for salvation. As Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6).

3:35 Jesus prioritized his relationship with those who submit themselves to God's will. If you want to experience more of Jesus and have a deeper relationship with him, respond to God's agenda for your life.

4:3-8 The parable of the sower shows what it looks like when different kinds of hearts encounter God's Word.