

## NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY IN MARK'S GOSPEL - CHAPTER ONE

**INTRODUCTION** Mark's gospel is short and to the point, with a strong emphasis on all that Jesus did and how He served us throughout His life. It is believed to have been written by John Mark who is described in the Acts of the Apostles as a companion of Paul and Barnabas.(Acts 12:25; 13:5) He was also Barnabas' cousin. After joining Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey he quickly gave up and went home.(Acts 13:13) Paul was inclined to give up on him but Barnabas persevered.(Acts 15:36-39) In later years both Peter and Paul would describe Mark in very warm, enthusiastic terms.(I Pet.5:13; Col.4:10; II Tim.4:11)

It may be that Mark is talking about himself in Mark 14:51,52 when he describes the young man who tried to follow Jesus at the time of His arrest, but ran away when they attempted to seize him. Altogether it seems like he was a young man who discovered that even though we fail when we try to do things in our own strength, when we really get to know Jesus and learn to trust Him as the one who lives in us, God still has great plans for us.

According to history, Mark wrote his gospel after listening to Peter teach. He would therefore have had the person closest to Jesus as his source of information but even then he relied, not on Peter, but on the Holy Spirit to make sure that when he wrote the story down he got it exactly right.

Read the first chapter through carefully and write down in your notebook what you think is the main idea in each of the following sections:-

verses 1-8; 9-11; 12,13; 14,15; 16-20; 21-28; 29-31; 32-34; 35-39; 40-45.

Now let us go back and look at each section more carefully. Read each part over several times before you answer the questions.

1:1-8 Q.1 'Gospel' means 'good news'. How has the story of Jesus become good news in your own life?

Q.2 Mark quotes from two Old Testament writers,(Mal.3:1 and Isa.40:3). What do they both tell us about why John the Baptist came before Jesus? How are we to be like John?

Q.3 Write down your picture of John's life-style.

Q.4 What did John teach about - sin, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

Q.5 What sort of response did he have from the people of his country?

1:9-11 Q.6 What two things happened when Jesus was baptised by John? Look up Acts 10:37,38 and write down the main points it makes about the results of Jesus' baptism.

Q.7 How would a dove be a good picture of the Holy Spirit? Can you think of another time in the Bible when a dove brought good news?(Gen.8:8-12)

Q.8 How would the Father's words from heaven be a tremendous encouragement to Jesus on future occasions when almost everyone else disapproved of Him? How can the same words be a help to us?

1:12,13 Q.9 What were the three temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness?(Matt.4; Lk.4)

Q.10 Why was it so important for us that Jesus went through the experience in the wilderness? Read Heb.2:18; 4:14,15 before you answer.

Q.11 How did God help Jesus through those forty days? How does He help us through temptation and hard times?

1:14,15 Q.12 How does Mark sum up Jesus' message? Put it into your own words.

Q.13 Why might it have been difficult for Jesus to start teaching about the kingdom of God when King Herod had just imprisoned John?

1:16-20 Q.14 What was the occupation of Jesus' first four disciples? What was to be their new occupation?

Q.15 What did they have to leave to follow Jesus? What do we have to do to follow Him?

1:21-28 Q.16 What surprised people most when Jesus began to teach in the synagogue at Capernaum? What do you suppose they noticed that was different from their scribes who would emphasise their qualifications and the experts they had read or heard?

Q.17 What surprised people about the way Jesus dealt with the demon?

Q.18 Do we have authority to teach?(Matt.28:18-20) How will it show when we do? Do we have authority over the devil?(I Jn.4:4 - 'He who is in the world' is a title used elsewhere for the devil)

1:29-31 Q.19 What was Simon's mother-in-law able to do when Jesus cured her fever?

Q.20 What does Jesus have in mind for us to do once He restores us to normal?

1:32-34 Q.21 For what different reasons do you think everyone in the city turned up outside Simon's house? What reasons do people have these days for seeking to know about Jesus?

Q.22 Why did He not want the demons to tell everyone He was the Holy One of God?

1:35-39 Q.23 Why did Jesus go away by Himself at the very time when everyone had become interested in Him?

Q.24 When His disciples found Him, what had He realised was His most important task?

1:40-45 Q.25 Leprosy is an infectious skin disease which particularly destroys the nerves with which we feel. It causes people to become horribly disfigured so that no-one would want them around. The Bible uses leprosy as a picture of sin. In what ways would it be a good picture?

Q.26 What did Jesus do for the leper? What is the first thing He wants to do for us? How does He do it?

Q.27 In the Old Testament people were told that if they thought their leprosy was cured, they should go to the priest for a check-up,(Lev.14:1-32) and if they were cured, to offer a sacrifice of thanks to God. Why do you suppose Jesus told this man to go to the priest? How would doing so help him to understand what Jesus had really done for him?

Q.28 What happened when he rushed straight out to tell everyone how his leprosy was cured without first doing what he was told?