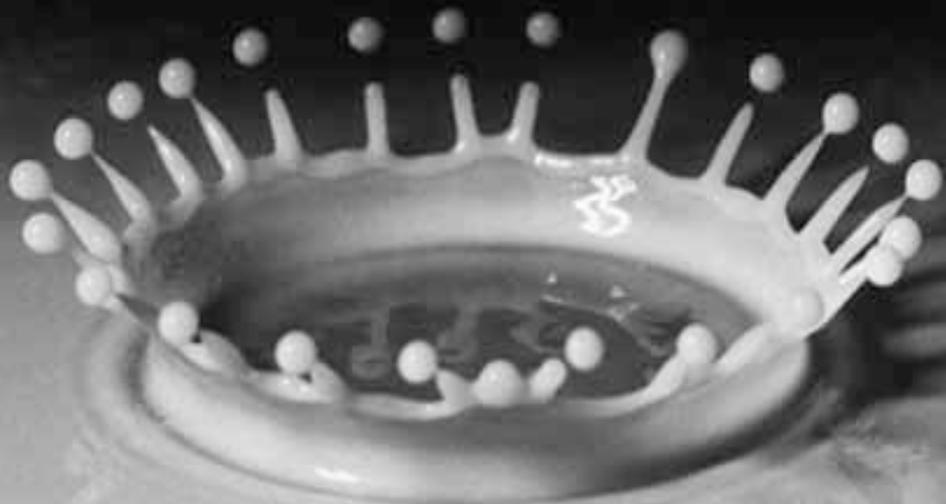


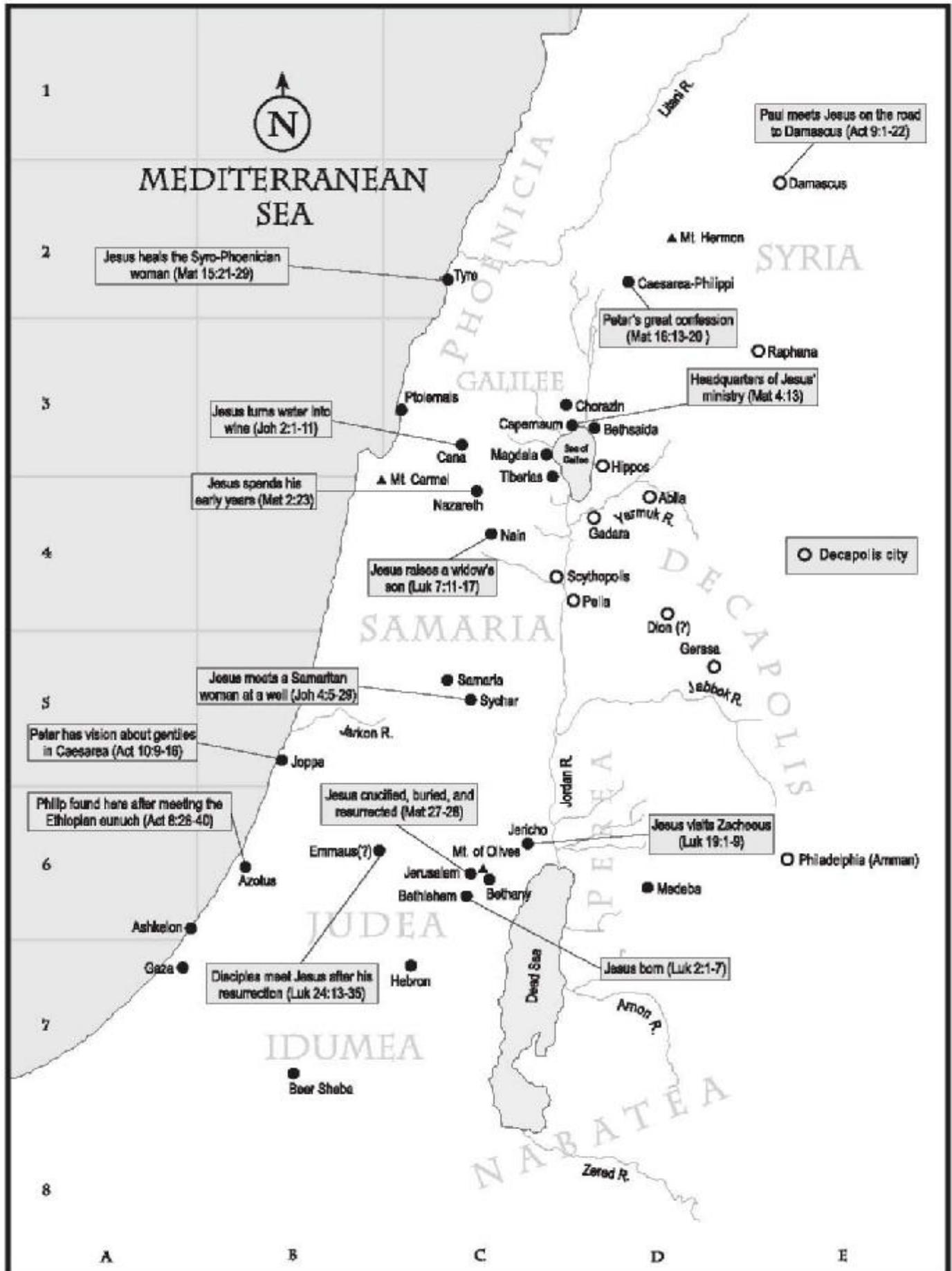
# THE KING IS COMING



MARK 1:1-9:13



# ISRAEL IN THE TIME OF JESUS



# INTRODUCTION

What are we reading as we read Mark's Gospel? Does that seem like an obvious question? Obviously, we're reading about the life of Jesus. But we're reading about his life from **the point of view of the author**.

What we're NOT reading is a blow-by-blow historical account of the life of Jesus from the day he was born until the day he returned to heaven. Mark **CHOOSES** what he wants to write about, and he **ORDERS** these events according to his purpose.

Above all, Mark is writing a **STORY**. Now, don't get me wrong. I don't mean that Mark is writing **FICTION**. But his story has a plot, and characters, and all the other things that a story has.

We need to read Mark's gospel like we would read a good book. How do the characters develop? What is the plot? What are the themes? What movement is there in location? What movement is there in attitudes of people?

What does all of this tell us about Jesus, the centre of the story?

This means that we perhaps need to read the book differently to the way we've read it before. Rather than just read one small section, we need to read whole chapters, or more, and ask ourselves how the parts fit together.

How does the plot develop over the whole passage? How does this section fit with those before and after it? Is there a coherent theme in the section?

Sometimes these aren't easy questions to answer, and mostly there's no way of knowing for sure whether we're right. But as we think about these questions, we often find that we are discovering exciting new things about Jesus!

## Mk 1:1-20: READY FOR ROYALTY:

### **Mk 1:1-8: John the Baptist prepares the way**

1. Who is the book of Mark about (v1)? What do the titles mean?
2. Isaiah wrote about 700 years before Jesus. God told him that he would send someone who would rescue his people. He would be the Messiah (or Christ). He also said that he would send a messenger before the Messiah came. Read v 2-3. What was the job of the messenger?

3. John the Baptist was that messenger. Read v3-8. What did he do?
  
4. How did the people react to John? Why?
  
5. What does repentance mean? What is sin? Does everyone need to repent?
  
6. What does it mean to be baptised with the Holy Spirit?
  
7. If John the Baptist came to town today, how do you think he would be received?

**Mk 1:9-20: Jesus arrives**

8. **Read v9-13.** How do you think Jesus' arrival compared with what the people were expecting?
  
9. What did the voice from heaven, and the dove mean?
  
10. How might "the voice" and "the dove" have helped him in the desert?
  
11. What temptations might Jesus have experienced?

What temptations do you find hard to resist?

Look up Heb 4:14-15. What is the difference between Jesus and us?

Why is it important that Jesus didn't sin?

12. **Read v14-20.** What was Jesus' message?

13. What did Jesus mean when he said, "I will make you fishers of men"?

14. What was their response to Jesus? Would this have been a hard decision to make?

15. What would this "kingdom" have looked like to his disciples?

16. Are you following Jesus? Why, or why not?

**Prayer Points:**

## Mk 1:14-2:12: PRIORITY ONE:

### **Mk 1:21-45: Jesus has authority of demons and sickness**

1. **Read 1:21-28.** Why were the people amazed?

How was he different from the other teachers? Why?

2. Who cried out to Jesus? What did they know about Jesus?

3. What two sorts of authority, or power, did Jesus show that day?

4. Imagine you were sitting in the synagogue that day. What would you say to your family when you got home? How did the people respond?

5. **Read 1:29-34.** What happened after synagogue? What sort of authority, or power, does Jesus demonstrate here?

6. Why did so many people gather?

7. **Read 1:35-39.** How would you have felt after such a long day? How did Jesus feel? What did he do? What might he have prayed about?

8. Why did he want to leave the area when so many people still needed healing? Why was this his main priority?

9. **Read 1:40-45.** Jesus heals another person. Why might Mark have told this story in detail? What new information do we learn?

10. Why is it important that Jesus touched the man?

11. Jesus has authority to teach, authority to heal, and authority over demons. Why does he have this authority?

Does he have authority over you? Do you recognise his authority?

### **Mk 2:1-12: Jesus heals a paralytic**

12. Why were there so many people around Jesus?

13. How would you have felt if you were the paralytic in this situation? What about if you were the owner of the house?

14. What was Jesus doing before he was interrupted by the men (v2)?

How does this compare with what he did in Ch 1 (see especially 1:14 and 1:38-39)?

What is the connection between preaching and healing people?

15. Why didn't Jesus just heal the man?

16. What did the paralysed man need most? What does Jesus do? Why?

17. How did the teachers react? Why?

18. What do we learn about Jesus that's new from this story?

19. What do you need most in life?

### **Prayer Points:**

## MK 2:13-3:6: SOMETHING NEW AND FRESH:

1. **Read 2:13-17.** All sorts of people were attracted to Jesus – good and bad. Some were socially acceptable, while others were rejected by most people. Identify each person in this section as either “good” or “bad”.

2. Why might tax collectors and “sinners” have been attracted to Jesus?

Why did the Pharisees have a problem with Jesus’ dinner guests?

3. How does Jesus answer them? What does he mean?

4. Do you see yourself as in need of a “doctor”, or as basically “healthy”? What can you do about being “sick”?

5. **Read 2:18-3:6.** What is the point of Jesus’ sayings about cloth and wineskins (2:21-22)?

How is Jesus doing things in new ways?

6. The Jews were very careful about what they did on the Sabbath. It was a day of rest. But Jesus says that God made the Sabbath to help them (2:27-28). What two things happen on the Sabbath which show what Jesus meant?

7. Review the five conflicts in 2:1-3:6. How does the opposition to Jesus grow?

8. Why did the Pharisees want to kill Jesus?

Prayer Points:

## MK 3:7-35: THE FAMILY BUSINESS:

1. **Read Mk 3:7-35.** List the four groups of people who interact with Jesus in this section. How does each group respond to Jesus?

Which group best represents his true family?

2. How does the previous section finish? What caused this response to Jesus?
3. Why was there such a large crowd?
4. Why does Jesus order the evil spirits not to speak?
5. What contrasts can you find between v7-12 and v13-19?
6. Why does Jesus choose the twelve apostles? How did he prepare them, and for what purpose? (3:13-14 cf 6:7, 12)

What might the combination of TWELVE apostles and going up on a mountainside, signify? Do you think it's Jesus' idea, or Mark's?

7. Jesus answers the Pharisee's accusation with a question. How do the two parables (24-26 & 27) help to explain his position?
8. What prompts Jesus' warning against blaspheming the Holy Spirit? Do we need to fear committing the unforgivable sin?
9. The two mentions about Jesus' family bracket the section on blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Why might Mark have written things this way?

Prayer Points:

## MK 4:1-34: SECRETS, SOWERS, SEED & SOIL:

1. How does the Parable of the Sower connect with the previous section (3:7-35)?
2. Is Jesus deliberately clouding his message so that people won't understand? (4:10-12)
3. In what way is the Parable of the Sower the key to understanding the other parables (4:13)?
4. How do the two parables (the lamp (21-23) and the measures(24-25)) connect with the Parable of the Sower? Who are they directed to?
5. How are hearers to respond to the parable of the sower (4:3-9)?

the lamp (4:21-23)?

and the measures (4:24-25)?

6. How are hearers to respond to the parable of the growing seed (4:26-29)?

the mustard seed (4:30-32)?

### **Prayer Points:**

## MK 4:35-5:43: STORMS, SATAN, SICKNESS & SLEEP:

1. The location for this large section (3:7-5:43) is the lake (see 3:7; 4:1; 4:35-41; 5:1; 5:21). Can you think of any reason why Mark might be linking these sections together in this way?
2. The previous section has distinguished between the disciples and the crowd. How does this idea continue in this section? (see 4:35-36).

What things does Jesus reveal to the disciples in this section? (cf 4:21-23)

3. How does the response of the disciples (5:41) compare to that of the teachers (3:22)?
4. Imagine you were the disciples. How would you feel as the episode with Legion unfolded?

Was it only the man who needed Jesus' help?

5. Any thoughts about why the demons didn't want to leave the area?

How do the townspeople respond to the events?

How does this contrast with the man?

6. What is significant about pigs being in the area?

How does Jesus' command to this healed Gentile man differ from his command to other healed Jews and demons? (5:18-20 cf 1:34; 1:44; 3:12; 5:43) Why? (see also 7:31-37)

7. What similarities are there between the two sick females?

What are the differences?

What literary features does Mark use to link the two stories?

8. What is being said about faith and unbelief in this section? (4:40; 5:34,36)

### **Prayer Points:**

## MK 6: TWO KINGDOMS, TWO FEASTS:

1. **Read Mark 6.** How does the amazement of the people at Jesus differ from the amazement of Jesus at the people? (6:2 cf 6:6)

2. How are we to understand “he could not do any miracles there”?

Does this mean God is limited by our lack of faith?

3. What tasks does Jesus give the Twelve to do on their “field experience” trip?

How does this compare with Jesus’ own mission? (cf 1:14-15, 39)

4. Try reading the narrative jumping from 6:13 straight to 6:30. Why might Mark have added the flashback about John’s death?

How does Mark link this flashback in (6:14)?

5. What are the characteristics of Herod’s kingship, and of his feast?

How do these compare with the characteristics of Jesus’ kingship, and his feast?

6. How does Mark link the Twelve’s mission with the Feeding episode (6:30-33)?

Where did all the people come from? Why? (6:33)

7. Look at the background behind Jesus' exclamation that the people were like shepherd-less sheep. See Numbers 25:15-17 and Ezekiel 34:22-23. What was Jesus saying about the people?

their leaders?

about himself?

8. Do you see any significance in the "green grass" (39)? Perhaps Psalm 23?
9. That the crowds, and even the Twelve, saw him as a political leader might explain his rapid dismissal of everyone (see also Jn 6:15). (Note also 6:51-52). How does his walking on the water and calming the storm point to his true identity?
10. Compare Jesus' words with those of God in Isaiah 41:13; 43:1-5; 44:2-6; 51:12; Psalm 115:9-11; 118:5-7. What do they tell us about his identity?

Prayer Points:

# MK 7: WHEN CLEANLINESS ISN'T NEXT TO GODLINESS!

1. **Read Mark 7.** What does the explanatory comment in 7:3-4 suggest about Mark's intended audience?

2. What is the complaint of the Pharisees (7:5)?

How does this reflect their priority?

How does Jesus respond? (7:6-8)

3. Some Christians believe that the Old Testament law is no longer valid. What is Jesus attitude to the Old Testament law? (7:10-13; 21-23)

4. What is the misunderstanding of the Pharisees that Jesus is correcting in 7:14-23?

5. What are the momentous consequences of Mark's passing comment in v19; "In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean"?

What does that mean for you and I living as Christians today?

6. What is significant about where Jesus goes next? (7:24 see also 26)

How does the attitude of this "unclean dog" compare with the attitude of the "clean children" in the previous section (7:1-23)?

7. Why might Jesus have chosen such a method for healing the deaf and mute man (7:33-37)?

How has the theme of spiritual hearing developed so far? (4:12; cf 8:18)

How is the "spiritual sight" of these Gentiles better than the Jews who should have known better? (7:37 cf Is 35:5)

## Prayer Points:

## MK 8-9:13: BELIEVING IS SEEING!

1. **Read Mark 8:1-9:13.** Critics argue that this account of feeding four thousand describes the same event as 6:30-44. What evidence can you find in this account that it describes another miracle?

2. Why might Mark have included both episodes?

Have the disciples learned anything (8:4)? See also 8:17-21.

3. Can you see any connection between the disciples who STILL don't understand, and the blind man? (See 8:18).

With these things in mind, why might Jesus have chosen to heal the blind man the way he does?

4. In what ways is Jesus' question (8:27) like an eye test?

How well is Peter "seeing"?

Any significance in the location of this test of allegiance (8:27)?

5. Why does Jesus warn them not to tell anyone about him?

6. How well does Peter really "see"? (See 8:32-33)

How does Jesus "clear things up" for Peter (8:34-9:1)?

How does this correct ways we misunderstand Christianity today?

7. When does the kingdom of God come with power (9:1)? (Consider the verses before it.)

8. In what ways is the Transfiguration a corrective, or an addition, to the teaching of 8:31-9:1?

What is the significance of Elijah and Moses appearing with Jesus?

Does the identification of John the Baptist with Elijah in 9:11-13 help to explain their significance?

### Prayer Points: