



BEGINNING WITH JESUS

Four Bible Studies for
International Students and Scholars
from *Exploring Mark, Finding Jesus*

Terrell Smith, Sarah Boswell and Dean Waldenmaier

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ExploringMark.info



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Discover God's Message

Basic study questions for any Bible passage

Background: Who is the author? To whom and why was it written? (Often this information is found in the book itself.)

Read the text. Write down questions you may have about the text and answer the following questions:

Observe – What does it say?

- Look up unfamiliar words.
- Underline or circle words which seem to be a main point.
- Context: How does this fit into the text before and after?
- **Who** is this passage about?
- **What** is happening?
- **When** does it happen? (Draw a timeline.)
- **Where** does this take place? (Look at a map.)
- **How** do the events happen? (Look for cause and effect.)
- What does the text say about God, Jesus, or people?

Interpret – What does it mean?

- **Why** do you think these verses were written? (What does the author want us to know?)
- What is new or surprising to you?
- What do we learn about God, Jesus, or people?

Contextualize – What does it mean for us?

- How do we follow God's Word? Is there a command to obey or a promise to believe?
- How does God want us to change?

Share with others what you have learned and how this will impact your life and choices.

How to Use This Bible Study Guide

Beginning with Jesus has four Bible studies taken from a larger work called *Exploring Mark, Finding Jesus*, which we hope to publish in 2020. To receive notification when it becomes available, sign up at <https://exploringmark.info>

As we work through these four studies, we will be introduced to Jesus as well as to Bible study methods.

The Gospel According to Mark introduces us to Jesus and lays a foundation for Christian life and action. As you get to know Jesus better, you are encouraged to trust him and follow him.

We use an English translation of the Bible called the New International Version (NIV). The NIV was translated from the original languages by an international team of more than one hundred scholars.

Since you may be studying the Bible for the first time – in English, which may be your second or third language – the Bible text is accompanied by help notes in the side margin to assist you with words and concepts which might be unfamiliar to you. These notes are not part of the Bible. Where the notes in the side margin are referenced by a small superscript letter in the Bible text, those notes come from translators of the NIV 2011 version. In all other cases, the notes in the side margin are from the authors to help you. The authors are not experts in the original Bible languages, but are familiar with the kinds of questions that international students and scholars have asked over many years during Bible discussions.

You don't need to bring anything to the study discussions other than this booklet and a pen or pencil.

We hope *Beginning with Jesus* will be a wonderful opportunity for you and your friends to discover Jesus and the Bible!

—The authors

Notes for Discussion Leaders

Thank you for your willingness to lead these studies.

The discussion leader's role is to keep the group on track and focused on what the Bible passages say, and to encourage everyone to feel comfortable and have a chance to participate in the discussion. The discussion leader may also be a new student of the Bible, and does not need to know all the answers to effectively lead the discussion. You can find many answers by letting the Bible be the teacher as you study it together.

Each study discussion takes about one hour. We recommend planning some time at the start or end of each discussion for connecting with others in the group. You could enjoy a snack or simple meal together.

There are Leader's Notes on page 37 of this booklet.

Introduction to Mark

The book we are going to read from the Bible is called The Gospel According to Mark. *Gospel* means good news.

Mark lived during the time of Jesus. Scholars believe that Mark spent a lot of time with Simon (who is also called Peter). Simon Peter was one of Jesus' disciples and closest friends. Mark may have spent time with Jesus as well. Mark wrote his book so that we also can meet and know Jesus.

Many scholars believe that Mark wrote his book before AD 70, at a time when many people who witnessed the events of Jesus' life on earth were still alive. In AD 70, Jerusalem and the Jewish temple were destroyed. If this had already happened when Mark wrote his book, he would have likely mentioned this major historical event. Such an early date gives more confidence that Mark's account of Jesus is accurate.

Mark wrote in Greek (the most widely used language of the Roman empire at that time) so that everyone would be able to understand this history.

You may like to spend some time outside of the Bible discussions reading the entire book of Mark in English or in your first language.

Study 1 – Mark 1:1-15

Who is Jesus?

Key Verse: *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"*
Mark 1:14-15

Themes to Explore

- Mark's book tells about the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God
- God prepared the way for Jesus by sending messengers
- God the Father spoke about Jesus his Son

Something to Talk About

Who is the most famous person you've met?

If an important leader such as your nation's president or prime minister were to visit your university department, what preparations would be made?

Discover God's Message

Read the entire Bible passage through on your own, or together with the group. Look for main ideas. You can refer to the *Discover God's Message* page at the front of this booklet. Then read the Bible text again as a group one page at a time, using the questions on the opposite pages for discussion.

Read the Bible: Mark 1:1-8

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

^{1:1} The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,^a the Son of God,^b ² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way”^c –

³ “a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”^d

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with^e water, but he will baptize you with^f the Holy Spirit.”

Note: John was called the *Baptist* because he baptized people (see verse 4).

^a Or *Jesus Christ. Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) both mean *Anointed One* (Chosen One).

^b Some manuscripts do not have *the Son of God*.

1:2 prophet - someone who speaks words from God
1:2 Isaiah lived 700 years before Jesus’ birth, wrote a book in the Bible and predicted the coming of Jesus.

^c Malachi 3:1

1:3 wilderness - desert

1:3 Lord - master; God

^d Isaiah 40:3

1:4 preaching - teaching God’s truth

1:4 baptism - a ceremony involving water, to show that a person has turned from their old life to following God

1:4 repentance - to turn around and go the other way; stop moving away from God and come to God

1:4 sins - doing what is not right in God’s eyes

1:5 Judean, Jerusalem, Jordan River - see map on page 47

1:6 locusts - a kind of insect

1:7 sandals - open-toed shoes

1:7 stoop down - bend

^e Or *in*

^f Or *in*

1:8 Holy Spirit - God’s Spirit

Take a look at the *Discover God's Message* page in the front of this booklet. Whenever we read a Bible passage, the first goal is to recognize the facts. **Observe** questions often take the form of reporter questions: **who, what, when, where, and how**. **Observe** questions can be answered directly by reading the text, so everyone should agree on the answers to most observation questions.

Observe: What does it say?

1. Look at verses 1-8. **Who** is this passage about? List or mark the names.
2. **Where** is this happening? (Find the locations on the map on page 47.)
3. **What** do we learn about Jesus in verse 1?
4. See the side notes for verse 2 for an introduction to Isaiah the prophet. What did Isaiah predict would happen?

Who is "I" in verse 2?

5. Who was the messenger? (Hint: see verse 4.)

What was his message?

How did he prepare the way for the Lord?

Interpret questions require us to use our factual observations to understand the motivations and meaning of the text as written by the author to the original readers. Good interpretation requires that we first pay attention to the facts, then use our minds to make reasonable conclusions.

Interpret: What does it mean?

6. What **main ideas** did you find? **What do you think** Mark wants us to know?

Read the Bible: Mark 1:9-15

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted^a by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Jesus Announces the Good News

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

1:10 Spirit - God's Spirit

1:10 dove - a kind of bird

^a The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*.

1:13 Satan - evil one, the devil

1:13 angels - powerful beings created by God to be servants and messengers

1:13 attended him - cared for his needs

1:14 prison - jail

1:14 proclaiming - announcing

Observe: What does it say?

7. Locate the **places** on the map (page 47).
8. In verses 9-14, what do we **observe** about Jesus?
9. **What** did the people do before they were baptized? (See verse 5.)

What happened when Jesus was baptized?

How was the baptism of Jesus different from the other people's baptisms?

What did the voice from heaven say when Jesus was baptized?

10. In verses 14-15, **what** is the message Jesus is proclaiming?

Interpret: What does it mean?

11. When you think of a kingdom, what comes to mind? What does a kingdom include?

What is the kingdom of God?

How should people respond to Jesus' message?

12. In verse 15, **what do you think** Jesus means when he says, "The kingdom of God has come near?"

13. In what ways is Jesus different from other people?

In what ways does Jesus identify with people? (How is Jesus choosing to be the same as people?)

14. **Why do you think** the Father in heaven is well pleased with Jesus?

15. From what we read today, what is new or surprising to you about Jesus?

Contextualize questions allow us to apply the text to our own lives in the context of our culture and family. To apply the text correctly, we first have to know what the passage says (**Observe**) and what it means (**Interpret**).

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

16. What do we need to do to prepare to meet Jesus?

How should we respond to the message Jesus is proclaiming in verses 14-15?

17. Tell about a time in your life when you experienced a change of heart that impacted your life direction.

Study 2 – Mark 1:40-2:17

Who did Jesus come to call?

Key Verse: *On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."* Mark 2:17

Themes to Explore

- What Jesus does when people come to him in faith
- Jesus shows compassion
- Jesus has authority to forgive sins
- Jesus calls sinners to follow him

Something to Talk About

How sick do you have to be before you are willing to go to the doctor?

Thinking Back to Our Last Discussion

In our last discussion, we read Mark 1:1-15. We learned that John the Baptist preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to prepare people for Jesus' coming. Jesus is the promised one, the Lord, and the Son of God.

Discover God's Message

Read the entire Bible passage through on your own. You can refer to the *Discover God's Message* page. Then read the Bible text again as a group one page at a time, using the questions on the opposite pages for discussion.

Read the Bible: Mark 1:40-45

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

⁴⁰ A man with leprosy^a came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

⁴¹ Jesus was indignant.^b He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

⁴³ Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

^a The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

1:40 begged - asked desperately

Background information:

Leprosy was considered highly contagious. People with leprosy were required by law to avoid contact with the public. See Leviticus 13:45-46.

1:41 indignant - angry about something unfair or wrong

^b Many manuscripts *Jesus was filled with compassion*

1:42 cleansed - in this context, healed of leprosy. (In Jewish culture, a person with leprosy was considered "unclean.")

1:44 priest - a man who worked in the temple, offering sacrifices

1:44 sacrifice - a gift offered to God, often an animal

1:44 Moses - the leader of Israel more than 1000 years before Jesus' birth. Moses led Israel out of slavery in Egypt and communicated God's laws to the people.

1:44 testimony - telling what someone saw or experienced

Observe: What does it say?

1. **Describe** Mark 1:40-45 in your own words.
2. In verse 40, what does the man believe about Jesus?

What question does the man have about Jesus? What is he not sure about?

3. **How** does Jesus react to the man's request? **What** does Jesus do?

Interpret: What does it mean?

4. In verse 41, **why do you think** Jesus is indignant?
5. **What do you think** the leper's relationship with other people was like before he met Jesus?

What is significant about Jesus touching the man?

6. Faith has two parts: believing something is true, and acting on it. What role does faith play in this account?
7. **Why do you think** Jesus tells the man to show himself to the priest?

What does Jesus want the priest to know?

8. What did the man do?

What was the result of the man's disobedience? (Read Mark 1:37-38.)

Read the Bible: Mark 2:1-12

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

^{2:1} A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?" ¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

2:1 Capernaum - a city in northern Israel; see map on page 47

2:2 the word - God's message

2:3 paralyzed - unable to use his arms or legs

2:5 faith - believing something is true and acting on it

2:6 teachers of the law - religious teachers of God's laws

2:7 fellow - an informal and general name for a man

2:7 blaspheming - taking credit that belongs to God

2:8 spirit - inner being

2:10 Son of Man - a title from the Old Testament of the Bible that Jesus often used to refer to himself. See Daniel 7:13-14.

Observe: What does it say?

9. **List** the people or groups of people in this passage. How would you describe them?

Choose one of them and describe how you would have felt if you had been there.

10. Describe the scene or draw a picture on page 20.

Interpret: What does it mean?

11. How do the man's friends show their faith?
12. What does Jesus call the man in verse 5? What does this teach us?
13. **What do you think** the man and his friends were expecting Jesus to do?

What surprising thing happens?

Why do you think Jesus does this?

14. What new thing do we learn about Jesus in verses 5-8?
15. What does Jesus want his listeners to understand? (See verse 10.)
16. What role does faith play in the forgiveness of sins?

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

17. How can our sins be forgiven?

Read the Bible: Mark 2:13-17

Jesus Calls Levi and Eats With Sinners

¹³ Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. ¹⁴ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

2:14 tax collector's booth - a table or small building for collecting taxes

Background information:

Tax collectors demanded taxes from the Jewish people for the occupying Roman government. Tax collectors were known for dishonesty, and were hated by the Jewish people.

2:15 disciples - followers of Jesus

2:16 Pharisees - members of a strict party of religious Jewish people

2:17 righteous - people who are right with God

2:17 sinners - people who have failed to meet God's perfect standard

Observe: What does it say?

18. What kind of person was Levi?

What did Levi leave behind in order to follow Jesus?

What did Levi not leave behind?

Interpret: What does it mean?

19. What kind of people do you like to eat with?

Why do you think the Pharisees were bothered that Jesus would eat with tax collectors and sinners?

20. Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?

21. Levi is not obviously sick. **Why do you think** Jesus refers to the sick in verse 17?

22. Look back at the accounts of the leper, the paralytic, and Levi. Make a list of what these three accounts have in common. (Use the space on page 20.)

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

23. What do we learn about Jesus in today's discussion?

24. Share about a time when you experienced Jesus' power.

25. Looking back at these three accounts, what is it about Jesus that might make you want to follow him?

If you wish, draw a picture of Mark 2:1-12.

List what the accounts of the leper, the paralytic, and Levi have in common.

Study 3 – Mark 4:35-5:20

How important are people to Jesus?

Key Verse: *“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”*
Mark 4:41b

Themes to Explore

- Jesus is powerful
- How far Jesus is willing to go to restore one broken person

Something to Talk About

What is the most terrifying storm you have personally encountered?
Who was with you? What did you experience and how did it make you feel?

Thinking Back to Our Last Discussion

Last time, we read Mark 1:40-2:17 and learned about three men who were healed by Jesus:

- The first man was obviously sick: leprosy is a skin disease that destroys nerves.
- The second man also obviously had a health need: a paralytic cannot walk. However, we are surprised that Jesus says to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven!” Jesus then demonstrates that he has authority to forgive sins, something only God can do, by healing the man so he can walk again.
- The third man is Levi, who seems healthy. But Jesus says Levi is sick and needs a doctor! Levi’s sickness is sin. Sin deadens our nerves, like leprosy. Sin also paralyzes us. Jesus has power and authority to forgive sins, make whole, and heal.

Discover God’s Message

Read the entire Bible text on your own. Refer to the *Discover God’s Message* page. As you read today’s text, note the areas of our lives over which Jesus has power and authority. Read it again as a group one page at a time and answer the discussion questions on the opposite page.

Read Mark 4:35-41 together as a drama. You will need a narrator, Jesus, and his disciples.

Read the Bible: Mark 4:35-41

Jesus Calms the Storm

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."

³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Background information:

Several of Jesus' disciples were experienced fishermen, so they were very familiar with the sea.

4:35 disciple - a student; follower

4:37 furious - angry; wild; strong

4:37 squall - a sudden violent storm of wind, often with rain

4:37 waves broke over - water came onto and into the boat

4:37 swamp - to sink by filling with water

4:38 stern - the back of a boat

4:38 cushion - a stuffed bag for sitting or lying down

4:38 drown - die by

inhaling water

4:39 rebuke - to correct; scold

4:39 died down - stopped

4:41 terrified - very scared

Locate the Sea of Galilee on the map (page 47). The Sea of Galilee is about 21 km (13 mi) long and 13 km (8.1 mi) wide. Violent storms often come up quickly when cool air from the Mediterranean Sea blows over the mountains and mixes with the hot air in the valley around the Sea of Galilee.

Observe: What does it say?

1. How would you **describe** the situation? **What** does the text say about the waves?

What feelings and emotions would you have had if you had been in the boat with them?

Interpret: What does it mean?

2. **How do you think** Jesus could sleep in the middle of a storm?
3. What do the disciples assume (or think) about Jesus when they ask, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

What might have been a better question for them to ask Jesus?

4. In verse 40, **why do you think** Jesus asks, “Do you still have no faith?”

Why does Jesus expect them to have faith? (Hint: What did Jesus say in verse 35?)

5. **Why do you think** the disciples were terrified *after* Jesus calmed the storm?
6. What does this event teach us about Jesus?

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

7. Tell about a time when you were in a desperate or dangerous situation and experienced Jesus’ help.
8. What did we learn about Jesus that might change how we respond in times of trouble?

Read the Bible: Mark 5:1-13

Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man

^{5:1} They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ^a ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

^a Some manuscripts *Gadarenes*; other manuscripts *Gergesenes*

5:1 Gerasenes - the region of Gergesa; see map on page 47
5:2 impure - unclean in thought and life

5:2 impure spirit - a demon; evil spirit

5:3 tomb - grave

5:3 bind - to tie up

5:4 irons - bands made of iron

5:4 subdue - to conquer; overcome

5:7 torture - to cause severe pain

5:9 legion - a Roman legion had several thousand men

5:11 herd - a group of animals

Background information:

Pigs are forbidden food for Jewish people, and considered unclean.

5:12 demons - evil spirits

Observe: What does it say?

9. Look at the map on page 47 to see where Jesus is. Based on what we read, what kind of people live in this region? (Hint: See verse 11 and the side note.)

10. How would you **describe** the man?

How does he respond when he sees Jesus?

Interpret: What does it mean?

11. **Why do you think** the man lives in the tombs and not in the town?

12. On the previous page, Mark 4:41, the disciples asked, "Who is this?" In verse 7, **how do you think** the man with the impure spirit knows who Jesus is?

13. If Jesus knows that the man has an impure spirit, **why do you think** Jesus asks the man what his name is?

14. What do we learn in this account about impure spirits?

Read the Bible: Mark 5:14-20

¹⁴ Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” ²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis^a how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

5:14 tending - taking care of; watching over

Idiom: *in his right mind* - sane; thinking clearly

5:16 demon-possessed - controlled by a demon, an impure, evil spirit

5:17 plead - to ask strongly; to beg

5:19 mercy - not getting the punishment we deserve

^a That is, the Ten Cities

5:20 Decapolis - a large territory east and south of the Sea of Galilee; see map on page 47

Observe: What does it say?

15. How would you **describe** the scene now? (If you wish, draw a picture.)

16. How was the man with the impure spirit different after Jesus set him free?

How did the man respond to Jesus?

17. How did the people from the town and countryside respond to Jesus?

Interpret: What does it mean?

18. **Why do you think** they responded this way?

Why were they afraid? (*When* were they afraid?)

19. In your culture, how much would 2,000 pigs be worth?

The people from the town lost 2,000 pigs. What did they gain?

20. **Why do you think** Jesus came to this one man?

21. **What do you think** the man who had been demon-possessed told his own people when he got home?

22. Make a list of how this account similar to the account about the storm on the lake.

23. What do verses 19-20 say about who Jesus is?

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

24. What does this account tell you about how much you are worth to God?

25. What have you learned about Jesus that is surprising or new?

What would you like to tell people about Jesus?

Study 4 – Mark 10:32-52

Why did Jesus come?

Key Verse: *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* Mark 10:45

Themes to Explore

- Jesus came to give his life for others
- Faith in Jesus brings new sight

Something to Talk About

How are people in service roles (such as restaurant staff, cleaners, or ticket vendors) treated in your country?

Thinking Back to Our Last Discussion

Last time, we read Mark 4:35-5:20. Jesus calmed a storm and healed a man with an impure spirit. We saw how important people are to Jesus, and his power over the natural world and the spiritual world. The next two accounts help us to understand why Jesus came.

Discover God’s Message

Read the entire Bible passage through on your own, identifying vocabulary words and main ideas. Then read the Bible text again as a group one page at a time, using the questions on the *Discover God’s Message* page as well as questions on the opposite pages for discussion.

Read the Bible: Mark 10:32-34

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³ "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

10:32 Jerusalem - see map on page 47

10:32 astonished - shocked with surprise

10:32 the Twelve - Jesus' twelve disciples

10:33 Son of Man - a title from the Old Testament of the Bible that Jesus often used to refer to himself

10:33 condemn - to judge as guilty

10:33 Gentiles - people who are not Jewish

10:34 mock - to make fun of in a cruel way

10:34 flog - to beat

10:34 rise - to get up

Observe: What does it say?

1. **Who** are the people in this section?

What is happening?

Where are they going?

What will happen there?

How are they feeling?

Interpret: What does it mean?

2. If you were one of the disciples, what might you be thinking when Jesus says this? (See verses 33-34.)

3. What do we learn about Jesus?

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

4. How do *you* react to what Jesus says?

Read the Bible: Mark 10:35-45

The Request of James and John

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

³⁶ "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

³⁷ They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

³⁸ "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

³⁹ "We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

10:37 glory - here, the honor and power of Jesus' kingdom

Idiom: *drink the cup I drink* - to share in my suffering

10:40 grant - give

10:41 indignant - angry about something unfair or wrong

Idiom: *lord it over* - to emphasize one's higher position; to make demands of others rather than serving

10:41 authority - power

10:45 ransom - the price paid for someone's freedom

Observe: What does it say?

5. **What** do James and John ask Jesus to do for them?

How do the other disciples respond? **How** does Jesus respond to their request?

6. **Why** did Jesus come? (In a Bible, see Mark 1:38 and Mark 2:17.)

Interpret: What does it mean?

7. In Mark 10:35, **how do you understand** what James and John ask Jesus? (Hint: Consider how the disciples and Jesus respond to their request.)

Look back at Mark 10:33-34. How does the request of James and John relate to what Jesus just told them about what will happen in the future?

8. In Mark 10:38-39, **what do you think** “the baptism” is?

What is going to happen to James and John?

According to Jesus, who will sit at Jesus’ right and left?

9. How are the disciples getting along with each other?

How does Jesus act as a peacemaker? (See verses 42-45.)

What does Jesus say about how we should relate to each other?

10. **What does it mean** that Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many? (verse 45)

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

11. What does it mean that Jesus gave his life as a ransom for us?

Read the Bible: Mark 10:46-52

Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging.

⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

⁵² “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Background information:

Son of David - In the Old Testament of the Bible, God promised King David that one of his descendants would be king forever.

10:48 rebuke - to scold; criticize sharply

10:48 all the more - even more

10:49 cheer up - be happy

10:49 on your feet - stand up

10:50 cloak - outer garment; coat

10:51 Rabbi - Jewish word for teacher

Observe: What does it say?

12. What do you notice as you read? As a group, discuss some of the **Observe** questions on the *Discover God's Message* page. Make sure to identify the **who, what, when, where,** and **how**. You can use the space on page 36 to make a list. Find the places on the map on page 47.

Interpret: What does it mean?

13. As a group, discuss some of the **Interpret** questions on the *Discover God's Message* page. What does Mark want the reader to know?

14. See verse 51. Where else did we have this same question? (See verse 36.)

How are the answers different? Why?

15. What might have hindered Bartimaeus from coming to Jesus?

What does Bartimaeus do about it?

What does Bartimaeus know about himself?

What does he know about Jesus?

Contextualize: What does it mean for us?

16. Discuss some of the **Contextualize** questions on the *Discover God's Message* page. How do we need to change?

17. Bartimaeus shouted to Jesus for help. How do you think Jesus will respond to us if we call out to Jesus for help?

Next Steps

- As you think back over the last four studies, how have your thoughts about Jesus changed?

- How would you like to respond to Jesus' invitation to follow him?

A prayer you could pray, if you would like to respond to God now:

Father God, I am spiritually sick. Jesus is the only doctor who can heal me. I have done shameful and selfish things against you and others. What I have done has broken relationship with you. I can't fix my life on my own. You sent Jesus to die in my place to ransom me. Your power brought Jesus back to life. I believe that Jesus has the authority to forgive my sin and to give me new life. I am calling out to Jesus for help. I turn away from my own ways and come to Jesus as my only Lord and King. Thank you for forgiving my sin and shame and making me clean. Thank you that your Spirit gives me new birth into your family as your own child to live with you forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You may like to compose a prayer to God in your own words:

- Study the rest of the book of Mark, following the same pattern of **Observe, Interpret, and Contextualize** on the *Discover God's Message* page.

Leader's Notes

Thank you for helping others learn how to study and apply God's Word. You are training future leaders who can help others discover the truth of God's Word.

As you prepare to lead each study, it is important to start by asking for God's wisdom in prayer. Read through the Bible passage two or three times yourself, looking for main ideas. You can use the *Discover God's Message* page as you think through the text. Write your answers to the questions in the booklet. Finally, check these Leader's Notes.

The goal is not only to help people start reading the Gospel of Mark, but also to provide tools to study any part of the Bible. A word of caution: you may be tempted to teach or lecture the people in your study, but we advise against this. Let them discover the truths of God's Word for themselves.

If members of your group have difficulty with English, you may wish to have Bibles in various languages, and ask members of the group to read the text out loud in their own languages.

Each study begins with a question which relates to the main focus of the study. For example, the first study asks, "Who is Jesus?"

The "Something to talk about" question at the start of each study is there to help you introduce the study, as well as to give group members an opportunity to talk and share.

The questions in each study are designed to focus on the text. Hopefully this will help your group members avoid speculation, which might make for an interesting discussion, but totally miss the main focus of what Mark is saying.

You may find it helpful to use a whiteboard or large easel paper to list findings from your group, especially from the **Observe** questions. This will help group members focus on observing the text.

It's tempting to jump quickly to **Contextualize** (What does it mean for us?), but we need to train ourselves to **Observe** first so we really understand what the text is saying.

Some questions in the **Contextualize** section provide opportunities to share from our lives. This is a good chance to listen and find out what people in your group are thinking. You might wish to invite a believer in your group to be prepared to share from his or her own faith journey. Sharing stories from our lives may help others better understand what following Jesus looks like.

Questions on all sorts of topics may come up during the study, or one group member may tend to dominate the discussion. As discussion leader, you may need to suggest that you get together afterwards or at another time to discuss these questions. This will free others in your group to participate, and help the group not to run out of time or miss the focus of the text before you.

Sometimes as leader, you will need to say, "That's a great question. I don't know the answer, but let's try to find out."

Study 1 – Mark 1:1-15

Who is Jesus? (Note: This should be the focus of this study.)

Pray for the internationals who come to your first study discussion, especially for those who are very unfamiliar with the Bible. As you introduce Mark for the first time and explain a little of the background of his book, pray that your group might begin to understand that these are true historical events. Pray that they receive the good news about Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God. God prepared the way for Jesus and spoke about his coming some 700 years earlier through his prophets. Pray for open hearts as they join you on the adventure of studying these four passages of Mark together!

You may wish to find someone from your group (or yourself) who can be prepared ahead of time to share an answer to question 17.

Themes to Explore

- Mark's book tells about the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God
- God prepared the way for Jesus by sending messengers
- God the Father spoke about Jesus his Son

Something to Talk About: Encourage group participation. Depending on the country, considerations for a leader's visit may include a private plane, smooth entry through customs, police protection, food, accommodations, posting signs and slogans, beautifying the city, and interpretation services. The purpose of this question is to be able to relate with the preparation made for Jesus' coming.

Questions:

Mark 1:1-8

1. Jesus, Isaiah the prophet, John the Baptist, the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem.
2. You can find the region of Judea, the city of Jerusalem, and the Jordan River on the map. Looking at the map (page 47) might help your group understand that the events recorded in Mark took place in a real location.
3. He brings good news. He is the Messiah. He is the Son of God. Note that *Christ* is not the family name of Jesus, but his title — see side note for the definition of *Messiah* and *Christ*.
4. Isaiah prophesied that God would send a messenger to prepare for the arrival of the Lord. In verse 2, "I" refers to God, because a prophet is someone who speaks for God. The "you" in verse 2 refers to Jesus, but we don't find this out until verses 9-11.
5. The messenger was John the Baptist. See verses 4 and 7. John the Baptist baptized people who were willing to repent (stop moving away from God, make a U-turn, and come back to God). When people fail to meet God's standard for what is right, it is called sin. Sin is not only crime like robbery and murder, but sin includes all the big and small ways that people disobey

God. For example, when we tell lies, hate others, act in a greedy and selfish way, or dishonor our parents, we sin. John's message was that people need to repent (turn around), confess sins and be baptized to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Note: Verse 8 says, "he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." The Bible teaches that all believers receive the Holy Spirit when they put their trust in Jesus Christ. For further study at another time, see Romans 8:9, I Corinthians 12:3, and I John 4:13-15.

6. Answers may vary. This is a beginning, it's good news about Jesus, he is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Lord. John is preparing people to meet Jesus, and Jesus will give the Holy Spirit.

Note: Interpret questions often start with "What (or Why) do you think." The answers are not directly found in the text, but are based on the facts from the text. Good interpretation requires that we first **Observe** carefully, then use our minds to make reasonable conclusions.

Mark 1:9-15

- 8 and 9. Jesus came from Nazareth. He was baptized by John. When people were baptized, they confessed their sins. Jesus had no sin to confess. He saw heaven torn open. The Spirit descended on him. A voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (verse 11). The Spirit sent him into the wilderness. He was tempted by Satan. Angels served him. He proclaimed the good news of God. This is the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus' identity is announced to others.

Note on Jesus' Sonship (verse 11): Jesus did not *become* God's Son, nor learn that he is God's Son at his baptism. He always is God's Son (see John 1:1, 1:14, and 17:24).

Note on verse 14: Later, in Mark 6, we learn about the circumstances of John's imprisonment. John told King Herod that he could not marry his brother's wife, so Herod put John into prison.

10. Jesus is proclaiming the good news of God (see verse 15).
11. A kingdom includes a king, people, authority, and land. (If you have Chinese people in your group, ask them to draw the character for Kingdom and tell you what the different components mean.) God's kingdom: King Jesus has arrived. His authority is here and everywhere. People should repent (turn around and come to God) and believe.
12. King Jesus has come with authority and power. His kingdom is within reach.
13. Jesus has no sin to confess, but he obeys the word of God's prophet John and is baptized like other people. Jesus identifies with us and understands what we go through. He is tempted like we are.
14. He is obedient to the Father and to the Spirit.
15. Be a good listener and encourage sharing. If the answers are not biblically correct, ask them what they have learned about Jesus *from this text*.
16. Repent (turn around) and believe the good news that Jesus the Lord has come, as God promised through the prophets long ago.
17. "Change of heart" is an idiom meaning a change of thinking or feeling which affects our life choices. Encourage believers or not-yet-believers to share their journey.

Study 2 – Mark 1:40-2:17

Who did Jesus come to call?

Pray that your group will be touched by Jesus' compassion for people. Pray that they will begin to understand that faith is important. Ask the Lord that they would recognize their disease of sin and need for forgiveness, and know that Jesus has the authority to forgive our sins!

You may wish to find someone from your group (or yourself) who can be prepared ahead of time to share an answer to question 22.

Notes: This study is a bit longer, so you'll need to watch the time. It includes accounts of three men who met Jesus. These accounts belong together because they all deal with healing from sin.

The first man was obviously sick: leprosy is a disease that kills the nerves. The second man also obviously had a health need: a paralytic is unable to walk, but we are surprised that Jesus responds to the paralyzed man by saying, "Son, your sins are forgiven!" Jesus then says he has the authority to forgive sins, something only God can do. Jesus shows his authority and power by healing the man.

The third man, Levi, seems to be healthy. But Jesus says he's sick and needs a doctor! Levi's sickness is sin. Sin deadens our nerves. Sin cripples us.

All three events go together. They are all about sin, which is the worst disease of all. Jesus is the one who heals us from the disease of sin. The middle account is a turning point – the paralytic has an obvious physical need, but Jesus forgives his sins first.

What is common in all three parts? Faith and the power and authority of Jesus to forgive sins, make whole, and heal.

Themes to Explore

- What Jesus does when people come to him in faith
- Jesus shows compassion
- Jesus has authority to forgive sins
- Jesus calls sinners to follow him

Something to Talk About: Encourage group participation.

Questions:

Mark 1:40-45

2. The man believes that Jesus has the power to make him clean, but he is not sure if Jesus is willing.
3. See Mark 1:41.
4. It seems unlikely that Jesus took offense at the man's request. See how kindly Jesus treated the man. Jesus may have been indignant about the tragedy of evil and suffering in life. Note: "indignant" is probably the original word in the text.

5. See background information on leprosy in the side notes. Perhaps no one has touched the man since the time he began to suffer from leprosy. Human touch is important. Jesus is not afraid that the man would make him unclean. The one Jesus touches becomes clean.
6. The man's words and actions show that he has faith that Jesus can make him clean from his disease. Jesus responds to his faith by healing the man.
7. The law in the Bible specifically instructed a person who was healed of an infectious skin disease to show himself to the priest, so Jesus is telling the man to do what is required by the law (see Leviticus 14). The priest is the one who has authority to restore the man to the community. In the entire history of Israel recorded in the Bible up to the time of Jesus, only two people were healed of leprosy (see 2 Kings 5 and Numbers 12). The report of this healing would be an amazing sign to the priests of Jesus' great power.
8. In Mark 1:38, Jesus stated that he came to preach in the nearby villages. In Mark 1:45, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly because of the man's disobedience. Also, the priests missed out on hearing about the power of Jesus.

Mark 2:1-12

11. They believe Jesus can and will heal their friend, and they go to a lot of trouble to carry him to Jesus, go up onto the roof, then dig a hole through it so that they can get their friend to Jesus.
12. Jesus calls the man "son." A son is part of the family. When sins are forgiven, you can be part of Jesus' family.
13. The man is obviously in need of healing. Jesus doesn't immediately heal the man, but first forgives his sins. Jesus is teaching that sin is a disease worse than paralysis.

14 and 15. Jesus knows thoughts and forgives sins. See Mark 2:5-8, 10.

Note about "their faith" (verse 5): The question may come up, "Whose faith is included in verse 5?" If Jesus can know thoughts, then he can know the paralyzed man's thoughts and heart.

16 and 17. Our sins can be forgiven by coming to Jesus in faith.

Mark 2:13-17

Note on Pharisees (verse 16): If there are Chinese in your group, you could ask them to find the word "Pharisee" in a Chinese Bible. What is the meaning of the first character of the Chinese for Pharisee? This may help us understand what kind of people the Pharisees were. (The first character is "law.")

18. See the side note. He left his job. At this time, Levi still had his house and his friends. Note: Levi was Jewish, and he collected taxes to support the oppressive Roman government.
19. The Pharisees looked down on tax collectors and sinners, so they couldn't understand why Jesus, a religious teacher, would associate with them.
20. They are sick with sin and Jesus is the doctor.
21. Sin is a sickness worse than physical sickness.
22. You may want to use a whiteboard or easel pad to make a list together. See the notes for this discussion on page 40.
23. Jesus shows compassion. Faith in Jesus is important. Jesus has authority to forgive sins.

24. Be prepared to share from your own experience.
25. Depending on where people in your group are on their faith journey, you might ask them to just think about this question.

Study 3 – Mark 4:35-5:20

How important are people to Jesus?

Pray that as your group members learn more about Jesus, they will begin to understand that Jesus has power and authority over the physical world as well as the spiritual world. Pray that they will understand how valuable all people are to Jesus.

Questions may come up in this study about hell and demons. This might be an interesting discussion for later. For this study, try to help your group stay focused on the main themes.

You may wish to find someone from your group (or yourself) who can be prepared ahead of time to share an answer to question 7.

Themes to Explore

- Jesus is powerful
- How far Jesus is willing to go to restore one broken person

Something to Talk About: Encourage group participation.

Questions:

Mark 4:35-41

1. Encourage participation.
2. He may have been very tired from his time with the crowds. But he had everything under control, and knew where they were going – to the other side – as he said in verse 35.
3. The disciples assume that Jesus doesn't care, and that they are going to drown (several of them are experienced fishermen, and familiar with the Sea of Galilee). It might have been better just to ask Jesus for help. In spite of their doubtful request, Jesus does help them.
4. By now, the disciples have seen Jesus demonstrate his power by healing many people and driving out evil spirits. In Mark 1:11, a voice from heaven even spoke to announce that Jesus is God's Son. In Mark 4:35, Jesus told his disciples that they were going to the other side, so his disciples should have had faith that they would arrive as Jesus had said.
5. They were afraid of Jesus' great power, a power greater than the storm's power.
6. Jesus has power over nature. Jesus wants his disciples to have faith in him.
7. As a leader, be prepared to share from your own experience, and encourage others to share as well.

8. Encourage participation.

Mark 5:1-13

9. The people who live here are not from Israel. Jews consider pigs unclean and would not raise pigs.
10. He has an impure spirit, lives where the dead are, is very strong, out of control, alone, crying out, and hurting himself. See verse 6-7 for his response when he sees Jesus.

Note on impure spirits: Group members may have many questions about impure (evil) spirits, because they are a reality in the world (perhaps more strongly seen in some cultures). In this text, it is clear that Jesus is in control. The impure spirit is controlling and speaking through the man, and destroying him, but Jesus came to set him free.

11. The man is out of control, destructive and dangerous, and an outsider because of the evil spirits. No one wants him near them. He lives among the dead.
12. Evil spirits are part of the spiritual world. They know who Jesus is and recognize his authority.
13. Names are personal and important. Perhaps Jesus is teaching his disciples.
14. Evil spirits can control people and animals. Evil spirits try to destroy people. Evil spirits are more powerful than people, but evil spirits are not more powerful than Jesus. Evil spirits know who Jesus is, are afraid of Jesus, and must obey him. Those who belong to Jesus are protected from evil spirits.

Mark 5:14-20

16. The man was wearing clothes (apparently he was naked before), in control of himself, thinking clearly, able to be with people again, and very thankful to Jesus. He wants to stay with Jesus.
- 17 and 18. They asked Jesus to leave. They were afraid of his power. Before, they were afraid of the man with the impure spirit. Now, they are afraid of Jesus and his great power. Note all who are pleading and begging Jesus – the man, the demons, the people – they recognize Jesus is very powerful.
19. Answers may vary. The average weight of a market pig in the USA varies, but it is about 284 pounds. At around \$44 per hundredweight (according to *USDA Livestock, Poultry & Grain Market News for February 6, 2019*), these pigs were worth roughly about \$250,000. The people gained a man in his right mind who could tell them about the power of Jesus. One individual is worth far more than 2,000 pigs. Note how much Jesus cares for one individual.
20. Some may think it was a waste of Jesus' time to cross the sea, heal one man who might be considered worthless, then leave. But this shows us the great compassion of Jesus, and how much one individual is worth to God – even if that individual is a broken, crazy person. After Jesus healed and restored the man, the man told many others (in the Ten Cities) about Jesus.
21. Encourage participation.
22. Both situations were desperate, out of control, and have to do with death (the disciples feared they would drown; the man lived in the tombs). Both events show Jesus' great power and compassion. You may wish to make a list on a whiteboard.

23. Jesus is the Lord and powerful over the natural world as well as the spiritual world. Jesus is merciful. Jesus cares about families (he sent the man home to his own people). Jesus rescues broken people and uses them to share his message.
- 24 and 25. Give people a chance to consider truth about Jesus and perhaps take a small step of faith by answering.

Study 4 – Mark 10:32-52

Why did Jesus come?

Pray that your group members understand more about Jesus, why he came, and what he did for us by giving his life. Pray for responses of faith in Jesus.

Note on Next Steps (at the end of the study): People often need more than four Bible studies before making a decision to follow Christ. Ask them questions to discern where they are in their spiritual journey, and encourage them to take the next step. Some may pray because they respect you and wish to be polite, but they may need time to grow in understanding. Allow people to make their own decision without pressure. Ask why they want to follow Jesus. Help with any misconceptions. Encourage them to pray in their own language. Trust the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts.

Themes to Explore

- Jesus came to give his life for others
- Faith in Jesus brings new sight

Something to Talk About: Encourage group participation.

Questions:

Mark 10:32-45

1. Jesus and his disciples are going up to Jerusalem where Jesus will be delivered to the religious leaders and condemned to death. They will hand him over to the government leaders who will mock him and kill him. Three days later, he will rise from the dead. Those following Jesus are astonished and afraid.

Note on verse 33 “Gentiles”: For Jewish people, there were only two kinds of people in the world: Jews, and Gentiles (foreigners).

2. Encourage participation. We will lose our leader and friend; why are we going to a place where this will happen?
3. Jesus is fearless, very focused and has a purpose. He knows the future (in great detail), what will happen to him and that he will rise. He focuses on the Twelve. He calls himself the “Son of Man.”
4. Encourage participation.
5. See verse 35. The other disciples are angry with James and John. Jesus

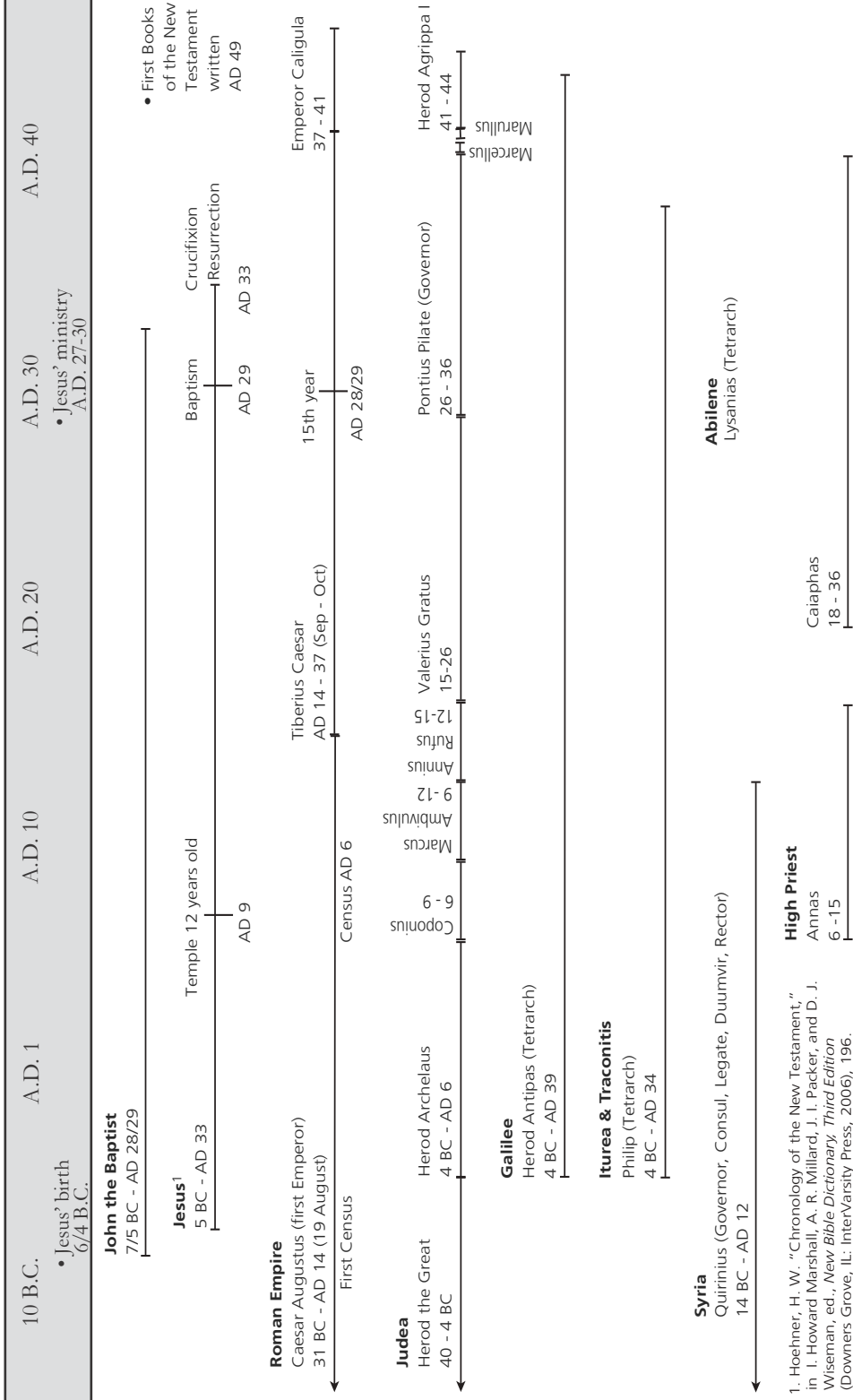
responds with a question, and tells them they don't know what they are asking. These places have been reserved.

6. See verse 45.
7. They are asking Jesus to do whatever they ask him to do. In other words, they are thinking that they are the ones in charge of Jesus. They want the places of honor in Jesus' glory. It shows they are not really listening to what Jesus is telling them will happen to him.
8. Baptism is a symbol of dying to yourself. Water baptism is a picture of being buried with Christ, and raised to a new life (Romans 6:4). Jesus is talking about submitting to the Father's will for him, even to death. James and John will also suffer and die. The places at Jesus' right and left already belong to those for whom they have been prepared. Could this be a reference to the criminals crucified with Jesus on his right and his left?
9. Perhaps some of the disciples feel jealous that James and John asked this question before they did. Perhaps they felt the request was more than anyone should ask. In any case, they are not happy with James and John. Jesus calls them all together (perhaps in their anger, they had separated from each other) and explains that greatness comes from serving others, not from lording it over them (bossing others).
- 10 and 11. Jesus came to serve us and to give his life as a ransom (see side note) for us as well as for others. We should receive Jesus' gift to buy us back from our slavery to sin and bring us freedom. We should also serve others.

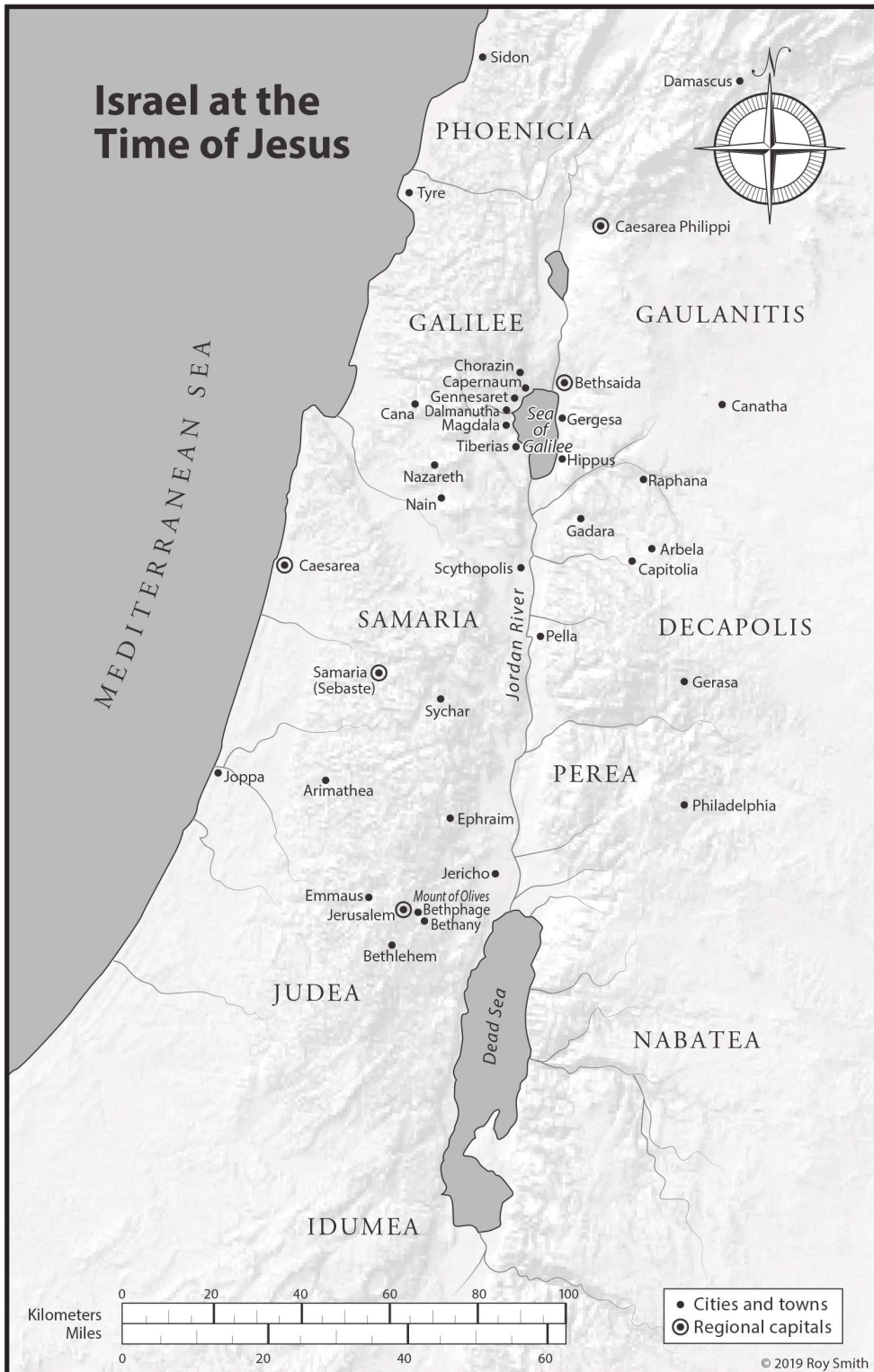
Mark 10:46-52

- 12 and 13. One of our goals is to help people learn to study the Bible on their own. So give your group time to choose and work on questions from the *Discover God's Message* page in the front of this booklet.
 14. Note that Jesus asks the same question in verses 36 and 51. James and John wanted power and position for themselves. They wanted Jesus to serve them. Bartimaeus humbly recognized his own blindness and need, and that Jesus could help him. The blind man sees, but the disciples are "blind."
 15. His blindness would have been somewhat of a hindrance, but more importantly, many people rebuked him and told him to be quiet. Bartimaeus did not let the other people stop him – he shouted all the more until Jesus stopped, called him, and asked Bartimaeus what he wanted him to do for him. (Jesus is serving.)
- Note on verse 50:** Perhaps blind Bartimaeus shows his faith that Jesus can and will heal him when he throws his cloak aside. If he had stayed blind, he may have needed help finding it again.
16. Use the *Discover God's Message* page and choose some **Contextualize** questions. Be sure to talk about how important it is to come to Jesus in faith. Jesus is ready and willing to heal us, especially from our sins. He came to give himself for us (see Mark 10:45).
 17. If people in your group don't respond now, encourage them to think about this and perhaps have a conversation with you or someone else later.

New Testament and Roman World Timeline



1. Hoehner, H. W. "Chronology of the New Testament," in I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, and D. J. Wiseman, ed., *New Bible Dictionary, Third Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 196.



References for Further Study

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***Beginning with Jesus* is a four-study guide for international students and scholars. This guide includes Bible text, discussion questions, vocabulary helps, background information, a map, and leader's notes.**

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