

connect 360

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

On Your Mark

The Gospel in Motion

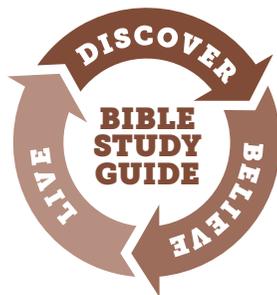
A STUDY OF THE
Gospel of Mark

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 **BaptistWayPress**
Dallas, Texas

*On Your Mark: The Gospel in Motion (A Study of the Gospel of Mark)—
Connect 360 Bible Study Guide*

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How to Make the Best Use of This Issue

Whether you're the teacher or a student—

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. Overview the study. Review the table of contents and read the study introduction. Try to see how each lesson relates to the overall study.
3. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. (You'll see that each writer has chosen a favorite translation for the lessons in this issue. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translation chosen for that unit, of course.)
4. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the writer's comments. The comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible.
5. Read the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application.
6. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and they can also be used in the class session itself.

If you're the teacher—

Do all of the things just mentioned, of course. As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. Here are some suggestions to guide your lesson preparation:

- A. In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents on page 9 and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date on which each lesson will be studied.
 - If all of your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
 - Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.baptistwaypress.org under the “Teacher Helps” menu.
 - Develop a sticker with the lesson dates, and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.
- B. Get a copy of the *Teaching Guide*, a companion piece to this *Study Guide*. The *Teaching Guide* contains additional Bible comments plus two teaching plans. The teaching plans in the *Teaching Guide* are intended to provide practical, easy-to-use teaching suggestions that will work in your class.
- C. After you’ve studied the Bible passage, the lesson comments, and other material, use the teaching suggestions in the *Teaching Guide* to help you develop your plan for leading your class in studying each lesson.
- D. Teaching resource items for use as handouts are available free at www.baptistwaypress.org under the “Teacher Helps” tab.
- E. Additional Bible study comments on the lessons are available online. Call 1-866-249-1799 or e-mail baptistway@texasbaptists.org to order the *Premium Commentary*. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website, www.baptistwaypress.org. The price of these comments for the entire study is \$5 per person. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Commentary* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see www.baptistwaypress.org to purchase or for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.

- F. Additional teaching plans are also available in electronic format (PDF) by calling 1-866-249-1799. The price of these additional teaching plans for the entire study is \$5 per person. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Teaching Plans* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see www.baptistwaypress.org for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.
- G. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.

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On Your Mark: The Gospel in Motion

A Study of the Gospel of Mark

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Introducing

ON YOUR MARK: The Gospel in Motion

A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Approaching This Study of the Gospel of Mark

Lights, camera, action! Do you enjoy action-packed movies? Stories that reveal incredible strength and uncompromising character? It's one thing when these movies are about fictional characters in imaginary places, but quite another when the story is about a real person overcoming incredible odds or displaying amazing courage and sacrifice in the real world.

If you like such films, you are in for a treat. The Gospel of Mark is an action-packed story of the ministry of Jesus. The Gospel covers the three-and-one-half years of Jesus' public ministry and reveals him as both a miracle worker and a supernatural servant. He is constantly on the move preaching, teaching, healing, and preparing his disciples to carry the gospel forward following his death and resurrection.

Mark focuses on Jesus' actions rather than his words. He records eighteen of Jesus' miracles while only mentioning four of his parables. These miracles revealed Jesus' divine identity and his supernatural power.

Perhaps you've heard the saying that some people watch things happen and some people make things happen. Jesus made things happen. He put the gospel in motion. Jesus moved to where the people were who needed him.

He healed people so they could move. He moved people physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually; and he still does.

And we will have to move to follow him.

This study of the Gospel of Mark will challenge us to get involved in keeping the gospel in motion as we view the ministry of Jesus through a biblical lens. Get ready for an incredible ride!

More on Mark

No matter how good our motivation is, we likely do not approach the Gospel of Mark with the same level of interest, and certainly not the same sense of urgency, that those who first read it did. For one thing, we likely think we already know much of the story of Jesus. So now we're just going over it one more time. It will be good to do that, we're sure, but we're really pretty familiar with it.

And, do we have a sense of urgency about our Christian faith? Probably not. Mark's first readers, though, lived in threatening and difficult days. They may have been facing persecution in Rome during the middle and latter part of the decade of the 60s. In such a situation, they needed to know what kind of person and message could demand their devotion even to the point of giving their lives. We—particularly North American Christians—though, tend to live more or less comfortable lives. Many seem to think they should get some sort of prize for discipleship just because they attend church fairly regularly.

If these are our thoughts, we're mistaken. We've likely not absorbed fully the challenging nature of who Jesus is. Likely, too, we've not caught up to Jesus' demands of those who would be his disciples and we've ignored Jesus' call to us to participate in his mission in our world.

The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as being radically different from what the people of his day expected. Once we get to know Jesus as the Gospel of Mark presents him, we may well think that that's still the case.

The first verse of Mark describes Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). The rest of the Gospel of Mark verifies and clarifies in many

ways what that means—not just theologically but personally. Be prepared to affirm or re-affirm what that means for you as you study these lessons.

Since the beginning of our BaptistWay Bible study series, we have focused on the Book of Mark three previous times (the last time was in 2012.)¹

We think studying Scriptures directly about Jesus on a regular basis is important, so we provide a study of a Gospel each year. Each study begins with a new emphasis and fresh outlines and lessons are created.

A Little Background on the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark likely is the first written Gospel, probably appearing some thirty-five or so years after Jesus' death and resurrection. The early Christian preachers had preached the gospel, and now Mark wrote down the message that had been proclaimed about Jesus through the decades. In fact, the Gospel of Mark may well reflect Peter's preaching, as many Bible commentators suggest.

Mark's first readers might have been facing persecution in Rome during the middle of the 60s. In such a situation, a decision had to be made about Jesus. Christians needed to know what kind of person and message could demand their devotion even to the point of calling for their lives. Prospective Christians needed this information, too, as they pondered whether committing their lives to Jesus was worth it. Moreover, as the eyewitnesses to Jesus' earthly life began to pass away, these early Christians also needed information they could share with others and so lead them to commitment to Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark in Our Day

How should the Gospel of Mark impact Jesus' followers today? A study of Mark gives us the opportunity to evaluate how involved we are in keeping the gospel in motion. Are we willing to take personal risks to bring the gospel to our relationships with acts of sacrifice and service? As Jesus said in correcting the disciples' notion of greatness,

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. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 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 10:42–45)

In addition, Jesus laid out the expectations of discipleship:

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels. (Mark 8:34–38)

Our prayer is that this study of the Gospel of Mark will motivate us all to be actively involved in propelling the gospel forward in the settings and relationships where God has placed us.

**ON YOUR MARK: THE GOSPEL IN MOTION
A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK**

Lesson 1	Exercising Spiritual Authority	Mark 1:21–39
Lesson 2	Healing and Forgiveness	Mark 2:1–12
Lesson 3	A Case of Mistaken Identity	Mark 3:20–35
Lesson 4	Invading the Darkness	Mark 5:1–20
Lesson 5	Rejection and Replication	Mark 6:1–13
Lesson 6	Outward Piety vs. Inward Purity	Mark 7:1–23
Lesson 7	A Correct Confession and a Scathing Correction	Mark 8:27–38; 9:1
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Lesson 9	Greatness Equals Sacrifice	Mark 10:32–45
Lesson 10	Symbolic Acts of Judgment	Mark 11:12–33
Lesson 11	Predictions, Promises, and Pride	Mark 14:12–31
Lesson 12	Betrayed, Arrested, and Tried	Mark 14:43–52; 15:1–15
Lesson 13	Death is Defeated!	Mark 15:33–41; 16:1–8
Christmas Lesson	God is with Us!	Matthew 1:1, 17–25

Additional Resources for Studying the Gospel of Mark²

- William Barclay. *The Gospel of Mark*. Revised edition. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975.
- Bruce Barton, Philip Comfort, Grant Osborne, Linda K. Taylor, and Dave Veerman. *Life Application New Testament Commentary*. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001.
- James A. Brooks. *Mark*. The New American Commentary. Volume 23. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1991.
- Sharyn Dowd. *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel*. Reading the New Testament Series. Macon, Georgia: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, 2000.
- David E. Garland. *Mark*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.
- Craig S. Keener. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- William L. Lane. *The Gospel According to Mark*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974.
- Tremper Longmann III and David E. Garland – General Editors. *Expositor's Bible Commentary – Revised Edition 9, Matthew-Mark*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, electronic edition.
- Lloyd J. Ogilvie. *Life Without Limits*. Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1975.
- PHEME PERKINS. "Mark." *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume VIII. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- A. T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Volume I. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1930.

Notes

1. See www.baptistwaypress.org.
2. Listing a book does not imply full agreement by the writers or BAPTISTWAY PRESS® with all of its comments.

lesson 1

Exercising Spiritual Authority

MAIN IDEA

Jesus displayed his spiritual authority by teaching those who listened, healing the afflicted, and defeating demons.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

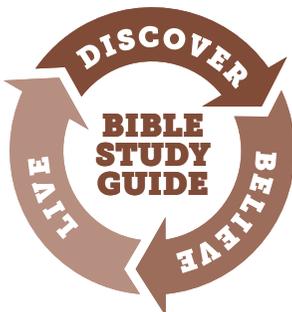
How can we recognize and respond to Jesus' spiritual authority in our lives?

STUDY AIM

To recognize and respond to Jesus' spiritual authority in my life

QUICK READ

Jesus exercised supernatural authority that generated practical results in the lives of those who listened to him, the people he healed, and those he set free from evil spirits. We, too, can experience the power of Jesus' authority in our lives.



Introduction

“This one looks good, Dad; it has car chases and explosions!” My daughter Kimberly was researching potential movies as we contemplated an afternoon of popcorn and Icees® at our local theater. I love movies filled with adventure, as Kimberly well knows. For me, nothing compares to the non-stop thrill ride of an action-packed film.

The Book of Mark could be considered the action-adventure Gospel. Focusing more on the miracles of Jesus than his parables, this disciple was clearly interested in the actions of Jesus. Given the opportunity to title his Gospel, Mark might have chosen a spin-off of the “Acts of the Apostles” and gone with “The Acts of the Divine.”

The significant difference between the action in a blockbuster film and the action described in the Gospel of Mark is simple and personal. I will probably never hang from a spinning helicopter in an attempt to bring down a rogue secret agent. I doubt I will ever maneuver a high-performance sports car on a wild chase through the hairpin turns of the Swiss Alps. However, I have experienced the powerful authority of Jesus. You can too. In fact, for the next several lessons, we will join Mark and experience the adventures of Jesus.

Like an action flick that opens with fast-paced scenes, pounding music, and special effects, the first chapter of Mark begins with eye-opening drama.¹

Mark 1:21–39

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. **22** The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. **23** Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, **24** “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” **26** The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” **28** News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. **30** Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. **31** So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

32 That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. **33** The whole town gathered at the door, **34** and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. **36** Simon and his companions went to look for him, **37** and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

38 Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” **39** So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Authority Speaks (1:21–22)

A typical Sunday morning in my home goes like this: Somebody oversleeps. A shoe is missing. Pants need ironing. Someone is eating breakfast in the church parking lot. When my crew finally makes it through the church doors, we find comfort in familiar heartfelt prayers, beautiful music, encouraging Scripture readings, and, of course, a powerful sermon.

The Jews who attended the synagogue on the Sabbath described in Mark 1 probably expected a familiar worship experience, including a religious leader delivering a customary teaching. However, on that Sabbath day, things were different. The teacher was a young and revolutionary rabbi named Jesus. As worshippers listened intently, they quickly realized the

teaching on that Sabbath day was dramatically different from any they had ever heard. The teacher was different. What he said was different. And how he said it was drastically different.

Mark tells us, “The people were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority” (1:22). The listeners in the synagogue experienced the power of spiritual authority in the truth and teachings of Jesus Christ. They were astonished at Jesus’ authority.

You and I should not be surprised by this power. Today, we know what those in Capernaum that Sabbath day did not realize. We know the truth Jesus declared before leaving earth: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). Jesus’ words on that Sabbath day reflected the authority he received from God the Father.

The Power of Evil Spirits

Jesus demonstrated his authority during the encounter with an “evil spirit” (Mark 1:23). Let’s examine a few passages in the Book of Mark to gain a better understanding of the type of power evil spirits exert.

Mark described evil spirits (demons) as visible and often destructive, able to:

- physically affect people (1:26)
- speak (1:24)
- cry out (1:26)
- inhabit animals (5:12)
- afflict both males (1:26) and females (7:26)

However, evil spirits are not invincible. Mark recorded that Jesus cast out demons (1:34, 6:13). Jesus also gave his disciples the power to cast out evil spirits (6:7). And, in his name, Jesus’ followers could also cast them out (16:17).

Additionally, the Book of Mark gives clear evidence that those afflicted by evil spirits can be:

- set free (1:39), even when afflicted by multiple spirits (16:9)
- returned to a right state of mind (5:15)
- become followers of Jesus (5:18)

No matter what havoc demons wreck, Jesus’ authority is superior.

Do you recognize the groundbreaking authority of Jesus' teachings? Have you comprehended that his words differ from the spiritual writings of others? Like the people whom Mark described, do the biblical truths of Jesus amaze you?

A financial analyst's assessment of a company can cause the value of its stock to rise or tank. A judge's ruling can curtail a man's freedom. The justices of the United States Supreme Court can change the law of the land. The inherent or perceived authority possessed by those in positions of power impact such declarations.

However, there is only one individual whose declarations are supported by "all authority in heaven and on earth." Because of that powerful link, Jesus' teachings are worthy of our attention and amazement. During this study of the Book of Mark, commit yourself to approach Jesus' teachings with a willing heart and an open mind. Prepare yourself to discover the truth that will "set you free" (John 8:32). Prepare yourself to be amazed!

Authority Prevails (1:23–24)

A good action movie always includes a dramatic clash between hero and villain. Such conflict is even more dramatic if the physical confrontation is set atop a moving train or on the pinnacle of a skyscraper. The setting depicted in Mark 1:23, a synagogue, did not lend itself to the dramatic. However, in that typically serene setting the authority of Jesus clashed with the demonic powers of hell. When two forces collide, the stronger one will rule. The result is the same during a confrontation of wills: a parent versus a strong-willed child; a teacher versus an unruly student; a citizen versus a bureaucracy. In Mark 1, Jesus boldly confronted an evil spirit, who cried, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? (1:24). Jesus' reply was stern but simple. "Be quiet!"

This two-word reply was not a request; it was a command. Jesus did not allow the lesser authority to speak. He totally negated the evil spirit's influence. Both the demon and those within earshot had to submit to a greater authority.

Embrace the Authority of Jesus

Do you have an area in your life that you need to submit to the authority of Jesus? Consider these steps to freedom.

- Clearly define the affliction or need. Is it relational? Emotional? Is it the consequence of others' actions, your decisions, or something else?
- Find biblical truths that are relevant and applicable. Use the concordance in your Bible or do an online search for "Bible verses on ____" and fill-in the topic.
- Ask a mature believer to help you apply the Bible passages you discover.
- Daily read the passages and pray the truths, promises, or principles they reveal.

We may not have such dramatic collisions with evil spirits, but lesser authorities are undoubtedly prevalent in our lives. Advertisements speak to us on a daily basis, telling us we need to purchase something that will make us better, smarter, slimmer, and happier. YouTube videos, Facebook posts, and other media leap from our smartphones, tablets, and laptops, clawing for our attention and allegiance. Lesser authorities speak into our lives and produce less than stellar results.

Can you identify the lesser authorities in your life? Have you allowed their influence to distract you from the authority of Jesus? How can you negate their influence? Is your will clashing with the authority of Christ? Remember, the greater authority will prevail.

Authority Produces Results (1:25–34)

Words have consequences. Proverbs 18:21 tells us, "The tongue has the power of life and death." Authoritative words are even more powerful. We know that Jesus' words were filled with power because they produced dramatic

results. Jesus spoke and affected the natural—listeners in the synagogue. He also spoke and impacted the supernatural—evil spirits.

Jesus' simple, but direct command to the evil spirit was "Come out of him!" (1:25). Unable to resist the overwhelming power that it faced, the evil spirit departed with a shriek.

Jesus' words evoked a miracle. His absolute authority over the evil spirit was readily recognized and verbalized by all who observed the encounter: "He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him!" (1:27). Jesus' authority was unique, and news about him spread quickly. In today's social media terms, we would say his authority went viral. The hashtag #Jesuspower was trending!

The authority of Jesus also produced freedom and service. The man held captive by the evil spirit experienced the direct power of the authority of Jesus when freed from bondage. Simon's mother-in-law, afflicted in a different sense, also experienced freedom. Acts of service followed her freedom: "The fever left her and she began to wait on them" (1:31).

When you personally engage the authority of Jesus, your life will experience the impact of that authority in practical and visible ways. Have you seen the words of Jesus at work in your life?

But just how far could the authority of Jesus go? On that Sabbath day long ago, the people soon found out. After bringing "all the sick and demon-possessed" to Jesus, the "whole town" gathered near him (1:32–33). The result? Jesus healed "many" and drove out "many" demons (1:34). Jesus' authority met the needs of the people.

Are you afflicted on one level or another? Trust in the authority of the words of Jesus and his work. Does doubt keep you up at night? He will give you peace "which transcends all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Is your body weary from illness? Jesus invites you, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Are financial challenges making you tense? He can "meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

Follow the example of the people who experienced the power of Jesus on that Sabbath day. Go to him. Experience his authority. It will produce dramatic results in your life.

Authority Serves and Transforms (1:35–39)

Authority can be intimidating. I remember an unexpected opportunity to eat breakfast with President Jimmy Carter. Unfortunately, I did not have much preparation time, and my phone did not have an application for presidential manners and procedures; however, I navigated that breakfast meeting without spilling coffee or offending the former leader of the free world.

Those with high authority may appear intimidating and less approachable. However, Jesus did not intimidate the people in the synagogue and the surrounding towns. Instead, they were drawn to him and his power. The disciples exclaimed, “Everyone is looking for you!” (1:37).

The people of Capernaum knew Jesus’ teaching was different. He taught with authority that contrasted sharply with that of self-serving, divisive religious leaders and the tyrannical, prejudicial Roman authorities. Jesus had supreme authority which he used for a different purpose. “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). Jesus was determined to share his life-changing authority with as many as would receive him.

Mark tells us that Jesus was ready to “go somewhere else” (Mark 1:38) and that he “traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons” (1:39). Jesus made it clear why he was fervent about doing this: “This is why I have come” (1:38).

The authority of Jesus is available to you for freedom and healing. Are you willing to accept the authority of Jesus? That is why he came.

Implications and Actions

While he was on earth, Jesus made his authority clear to those around him. In his teaching, Jesus was distinct from other teachers in that his truths and principles exuded authority. When he encountered those afflicted by dark powers, such as unclean spirits, Jesus had the authority to set people free. Many who suffered illnesses experienced healing through Jesus’ authority.

A natural tendency is to fear or flinch from authority. However, Jesus’ authority drew people to him because of the love he displayed and his desire to use his authority to bless and transform people.

