



CEDAR VALLEY

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, March 1, 2026

Teaching Title: Who is this Jesus?

Key Scripture: Mark 1:1–15

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Mark 1:1–15

Tuesday: Mark 1:16–28

Wednesday: Mark 1:29–45

Thursday: Mark 2:1–17

Friday: Mark 2:18–28

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 1:15 NLT

"The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

Who is Jesus? This simple question has received complex answers throughout history. Jesus asked this question of His disciples in the Gospel accounts of His life. Without exaggeration, this is the most important question of your entire life: How will you answer—Who is Jesus? In the Gospel according to Mark, Mark begins with a bold declaration about Jesus: He is the Messiah, the Son of God. This claim demands a response. Through this series on Mark's Gospel, we will encounter who Jesus is and what He requires of His followers. You cannot follow Jesus until you see who He really is. If He is merely a teacher, He can be admired; but if He is the Son of God, He must be trusted, obeyed, and followed with a surrendered life. Jesus isn't just someone to admire—He's someone to follow.

Introduction to the Gospel According to Mark: The Gospel of Mark is one of the four Gospels in the Bible. The word gospel means "Good News" and can also mean "great announcement" or "proclamation." These Gospels proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. They are essentially biographies of Jesus, revealing His identity and mighty works. Most people believe Mark was the earliest Gospel written, likely with the aid of Peter, a close companion of Jesus. Mark is the shortest Gospel and was probably written in the mid-to-late 60s AD. It is a fast-paced, dramatic, and carefully organized book. Like a pool of clear, pure water, Mark's Gospel is deeper than it appears. As you read the Gospel of Mark over the next seven weeks, pay attention to the action words Mark uses, and prepare your heart to see Jesus with fresh eyes.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: What's something you grew up believing was the "best" (brand, sports team, restaurant, etc.) simply because your family believed it? Do you still agree?

1. Read Mark 1:1–15 together as a group. Mark begins with a declaration: “Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.” What does each title—*Messiah* and *Son of God*—mean? (See Digging Deeper)
2. If Jesus truly is the Messiah and Son of God, what kind of response would that logically require from people?
3. Read Mark 1:4–6 and 2 Kings 1:8. What do we learn about who John the Baptist is?
4. In Mark 1:4–8 John the Baptist calls the people to repent. What is the difference between feeling sorry and true repentance? How would you define repentance in your own words?
5. Why do you think Jesus chose to be baptized, even though He had no sin to repent of? What does this moment communicate about His mission? (See Note)
6. In Mark 1:12–13, immediately after His baptism, Jesus is driven into the wilderness and tempted. What does this tell us about the nature of following God? What stands out to you about Jesus facing temptation?
7. Jesus’ first recorded message in Mark is: “Repent and believe the Good News.” What does it mean to *believe* in a biblical sense? How is that different from simply agreeing with facts?
8. Is your view of Jesus something you personally examined? Or something you simply inherited? Did you ever investigate Jesus? or did you just absorb a narrative about Him?
9. What would it look like for you to more fully orient your life around Him this week?

NOTES

Why would Jesus be baptized?

1. Jesus here is affirming John's ministry and validating the requirement for repentance, even though He was sinless.
2. Jesus is establishing a model His followers to repent and follow God's commands through baptism. He's leading by example.
3. Jesus is endorsing John. When a respected leader publicly endorses a successor, it stabilizes everything.

DIGGING DEEPER

Question 1—

Here are definitions of “Messiah” and “Son of God” by New Testament scholar, NT (Tom) Wright:

Messiah | “The Hebrew word means literally ‘anointed one’, hence in theory either a prophet, priest, or king. In Greek this translates as *Christos*; ‘Christ’ in early Christianity was a title, and only gradually became an alternative proper name for Jesus. In practice ‘Messiah’ is mostly restricted to the notion, which took various forms in ancient Judaism, of the coming king who would be David’s true heir, through whom YHWH would rescue Israel from pagan enemies. There was no single template of expectations. Scriptural stories and promises contributed to different ideals and movements, often focused on (a) decisive military defeat of Israel’s enemies and (b) rebuilding or cleansing the Temple. The Dead Sea Scrolls speak of two ‘Messiahs’, one a priest and the other a king. The universal early Christian belief that Jesus was Messiah is only explicable, granted His crucifixion by the Romans (which would have been seen as a clear sign that He was not the Messiah), by their belief that God had raised Him from the dead, so vindicating the implicit messianic claims of His earlier ministry.”

Son of God | “Originally a title for Israel (Exodus 4:22) and the Davidic King (Psalm 2:7); also used of ancient angelic figures (Genesis 6:2). By the New Testament period it was already used as a messianic title, for example, in the Dead Sea Scrolls. There, and when used of Jesus in the Gospels, 9e.g. Matthew 16:16), it means, or reinforces, ‘Messiah’, without the later significance of ‘divine’. However, already in Paul the transition to the fuller meaning (one who was already equal with God and was sent by Him to become human and to become Messiah) is apparent, without loss of the meaning ‘Messiah’ itself (e.g. Galatians 4:4).”

—Wright, Tom. *Mark for Everyone*. Westminster Press: London, 2004.