

Theo 210, Week #06:
Questions about the Gospel of Mark (ANSWER KEY)
The University of St. Francis

According to Mark's Gospel...

True/False. If the answer is FALSE, please explain why.

1. True Although the Gospel of Mark was probably the first of the New Testament Gospels to be written, it was not the first New Testament book to be written.
2. False The term the Gospel of Mark uses most often to refer to Jesus is "Son of God."
3. True The Gospel of Mark portrays all of Jesus' companions as oblivious to his real nature and/or as obstacles to his work.
4. False The "Lord's Prayer" is found in Mark's Gospel.
5. True Once in Jerusalem, Jesus' words and deeds seem to revolve around the concept of the Temple.
6. True You can find a beatitude in Mark's Gospel? (Mk 11: 9-10)
7. False In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus ate his last supper with his disciples as an observance of the Jewish feast of Rosh Hashanah.
8. True In Chapter 13, Jesus delivers a long speech in which he predicts the coming destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.

9. False When Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus to die by crucifixion, Pilate released a prisoner named Silas to the crowd. (Mk 15: 15)

Multiple Choice

1. According to traditions in the early church, Mark was a disciple of the which apostle in Rome and based his Gospel accounts on the testimony of that apostle?
 - a. Paul
 - b. Peter
 - c. John
 - d. Thomas

2. Mark gives no definite autobiographical detail in his gospel. Which of the following, though, is often used to argue that he didn't come from Israel?
 - a. He was a cousin of the Roman emperor.
 - b. According to Acts he was born in Corinth.
 - c. He writes in Greek.
 - d. *He makes errors about the local geography.*
"Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis." (Mark 7: 31) The Sea of Galilee and the Decapolis lie to the south-east of Tyre yet Sidon is considerably to its north. While it's true that Mark did write substantially in Greek, this would not have precluded him from originating in Israel as many people there would have been versed in the language.

3. In the very first verse of his Gospel, Mark identifies Jesus by which two titles?
 - a. Savior and Son of Man.
 - b. The Resurrection and the Life.
 - c. Alpha and Omega.
 - d. *Christ and Son of God.*

4. The first part of the Gospel of Mark is set in what geographical location?
- a. Rome
 - b. Jerusalem
 - c. Antioch
 - d. Galilee
5. Why does Mark emphasize Jesus' exorcisms of demons so much?
- a. Because demon possession was more prevalent in Galilee than in other parts of Palestine.
 - b. Because Jesus wanted to be like Moses, and Moses cast out many demons.
 - c. Because John the Baptist demanded that Jesus cast out demons before he baptized Jesus.
 - d. *Because Mark wants to stress the apocalyptic dimensions of Jesus' ministry, and apocalyptic literature stressed God's victory over forces of supernatural evil.*
6. Why did Jesus probably chose twelve apostles (as opposed to some other number)?
- a. *Because they represented the twelve tribes of Israel in the Hebrew Bible.*
 - b. Because they represented the twelve minor prophets in the Hebrew Bible.
 - c. Because they represented the twelve children of Adam and Eve in the Hebrew Bible.
 - d. Because twelve is a holy number.
7. In skillfully weaving individual stories together to form his Gospel, the author of Mark employs what technique that involved the sandwiching of one story inside another story?
- a. Repetition
 - b. Parable
 - c. Form Criticism
 - d. *Intercalulation*

8. Mark portrays Jesus as a person who urgently preached about the coming of the eschaton, a term that refers to what?
- a. The Holy Spirit
 - b. The Virgin Mary
 - c. The Protestant Reformation
 - d. *The End of History*
9. What term below best describes the root meaning of the term “parable?”
- a. Mystery
 - b. Teaching
 - c. *Comparison*
 - d. Riddle
10. The phrase “Messianic Secret” was coined by scholars to describe which seemingly surprising tendency of Jesus as reported in Mark’s gospel? (Mk 1: 43-44)
- a. *He didn’t want people to know that he was the Messiah.*
 - b. He didn’t believe that God would send a messiah.
 - c. He believed he was preparing the way for a messiah.
 - d. He preferred the title, “Very Naughty Boy.”
- The term was first used by German theologian, W. Wrede, in 1901. It stems from the fact that, several times in Mark, Jesus forbids people to talk about him. One such example comes in the gospel’s opening chapter: “Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ‘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.’” (Mark 1: 43-44)*
11. In the opening scene in Mark, the reader is introduced to what divinely preacher below appointed a “voice crying in the wilderness?”
- a. *John the Baptist*
 - b. Simon Peter
 - c. Jeremiah
 - d. John Mark

12. “‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way’ – ‘a voice of one calling in the desert, “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”’” (Mark 1: 2-3) Mark begins his gospel by quoting these words from the prophet Isaiah. Whom does he see as being the fulfillment of this prophecy?

- a. Peter
- b. John the Baptist
- c. Paul
- d. James the Lesser

“And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mark 1: 4) Mark attributes both of these quotes to Isaiah but the first is actually taken from Malachi. The opening to Mark’s gospel is characteristically action-packed. Matthew and Luke choose to begin with the birth of Jesus. John has a reflective prologue. By the end of the first chapter of Mark, on the other hand, so much has happened. John the Baptist appears and is imprisoned. Jesus takes up John’s mantle of preaching repentance. He is baptized and tempted. He calls disciples and preaches in the synagogue where he impresses with his authority. He eats a meal. He exorcises, heals, plans for strategic expansion and still has time to pray on his own. All this in the first chapter!

13. Mark is keen to show his readers that Jesus is the Son of God. On several occasions, therefore, he records Jesus being recognized as such. Which of the following does NOT acknowledge Jesus in this way?

- a. God
- b. A Roman centurion
- c. Pontius Pilate
- d. Demons

We, the readers, are told in the very first verse that Jesus is the Son of God but, within the gospel, Mark uses an unfolding pattern of recognition. Firstly, at Jesus’ baptism, we hear God affirming him. Subsequently, he is recognized by the forces of evil and by his own disciples (although Peter uses the term Christ rather than Son of God - Mark 8). Finally, even the Gentile centurion acknowledges him:

“And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”’” (Mark 1: 11)

"He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was." (Mark 1: 34)

"And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15: 39)

14. What was the name of the demons in Chapter 5 who were possessing the man and causing him to cut himself?

- a. Lionel
- b. Legion
- c. Lazarus
- d. Levi

It says in Mark 5: 9, He asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "Legion is my name. There are many of us." In Roman history terms a legion could be between 4,500 and 6,000 soldiers. However, this man refers to many demons inside him when he says "we are many."

15. After Jesus had fed the five thousand with just two fish and five loaves of bread, how many baskets of food were left? (Mark 6: 43)

- a. Twelve
- b. None
- c. Seven
- d. Four

16. Jesus shows his mastery over water in Mark 6: 47-51. What did he do?

- a. He parted the water and walked on the bottom.
- b. He made the water bring the disciple's boat back to pick him up.
- c. He rode a wave to the disciple's boat.
- d. He walked on the water to the disciple's boat.

In verse 48, it says, "... and he intended to pass them by." The disciples were so frightened by Jesus' appearance that he got into the boat instead.

17. This is the first apostle in the Gospel of Mark to recognize that Jesus is the “Christ.” (Mk 8: 27-30)

- a. John the Apostle
- b. James
- c. John the Baptist
- d. Simon Peter

This passage is called “the hinge narrative,” or the symbolic and literal central point of the gospel.

18. The suffering of Jesus is another strong theme in Mark. Which of the disciples, at Caesarea Philippi, refused to acknowledge that Jesus “must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again” (Mark 8: 31)?

- a. John
- b. Philip
- c. Thomas
- d. Peter

It had all been going so well. Shortly before, Peter had acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, the Messiah, but he completely failed to understand why Jesus was speaking of the need to suffer. He tried to rebuke Jesus but only ended up being rebuked himself in the words, “Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (Mark 8: 33).

19. In Chapter 9 of Mark, the transfiguration of Jesus is described. Who appeared during that time? Why is that important?

- a. Elijah and Elisha
- b. Elijah and Moses
- c. Moses and Aaron
- d. Isaiah and Jeremiah

The scene is described in Mark 9: 2-8. It’s interesting that two of the most important men in the Old Testament appeared and deferred to him.

20. When one man asked Jesus what he can do to have eternal life, and that he had obeyed all the commandments since he was a young man Jesus said “there’s one thing you still need to do. Go sell everything you own, give the money to the poor and you will have riches in heaven. Then come with me” what did the man do? (Mark 10: 22)

- a. *He went away gloomy and sad*
- b. He said I am a poor man myself and I have nothing to give
- c. He sold everything he had and followed Jesus
- d. He was shocked

21. According to Mark 10: 27, what is possible with God?

- a. Some Things
- b. *All Things*
- c. Nothing
- d. Most Things

It says in Mark 10: 27, “And Jesus looking upon them said, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” Many people misunderstand this verse and other verses like it, thinking it says we can do whatever we want. Actually, what most Christians believe this verse to mean is that if it’s God’s will, we can do anything because He will give us what we need to succeed.

22. When Jesus arrives in the city of Jerusalem in Mark 11, he fulfills the prophecy of the Hebrew Bible Book of Zechariah by doing what?

- a. *Riding into town on a beast of burden.*
- b. Riding into town in a war chariot.
- c. Walking through the city gate carrying a copy of the Torah.
- d. Climbing up onto the pinnacle of the Temple and jumping off.

23. Of the synoptic gospel writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke), Mark gives greatest prominence to the final week of Jesus' life. How many of the sixteen chapters cover this short period?

- a. Two
- b. Four
- c. Six
- d. Eight

Chapters 11-16. The word synoptic, meaning "seeing together", is used of the first three gospels because of the amount of common material they share. The entry into Jerusalem on "Palm Sunday" comes at the beginning of chapter 11. By contrast, Matthew allocates 8 out of 28 chapters; Luke 5.5 out of 24. John has 10 of his 21 chapters set during this time. In Mark's mind is the idea that you cannot see Jesus for who he truly is except in the light of his passion and suffering.

24. Chapter 13 is devoted to the end times and second coming of Jesus. Which of the following, does Jesus say, knows the timing of this event?

- a. The Angels in Heaven
- b. The Father
- c. The Saints in Glory
- d. The Son

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13: 32) Many have speculated that Mark's gospel, in its present form, appeared soon after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD. They suggest that many Christians were disillusioned, having expected this to be a sign that the end was imminent. Mark uses his material to reassure his readers, encouraging them to stay expectant and vigilant but to realize that only God knows when it will happen.

25. What did Peter, James and John do when Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane the night prior to his death in Chapter 14?

- a. Star Gazed
- b. Played Golf
- c. Fell Asleep
- d. Talked with Each Other

It says in Mark 14: 37, "When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?"

26. According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' last audible words from the cross were "Eloi, eloi, lema sabachthani?" (taken from Psalm 22) which means what? (Mk 15: 34)
- "What does it profit persons to gain the whole world and to lose their life?"
 - "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*
 - "Am I my brother's keeper?"
 - "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I tell you?"
27. The earliest manuscripts of Mark do not have the present ending. At which point do they conclude the story?
- Women witnessing the resurrection but too afraid to pass on the news.*
 - The death of Judas Iscariot.
 - The death of Jesus.
 - The guards at Jesus' tomb being executed for dereliction of duty. *"Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid."* (Mark 16: 8) *The additional verses are a brief summary of some of the post-resurrection stories from the other gospels.*

Short Answer

1. After his baptism, how long did Jesus' ministry appear to last?
- The gospel does not say – maybe one year, based on the one and only time Jesus entered Jerusalem after his baptism.*
2. According to Mark's Gospel, where was Jesus born? (see Mk 1: 9, 1: 24, 6: 1 & 10: 47)
- Mark 1: 9, 1: 24 & 10: 47 (Jesus of Nazareth) or
 - Mark 6: 1 (native place)

3. What was the occupation of the first disciples? (Mk 1: 16)

Mark 1: 16 (fishermen)

4. Where did the disciples and Jesus first meet? (Mk 1: 16)

Mark 1: 16 (As Jesus passed the Sea of Galilee)

5. How many trips did Jesus make to Jerusalem?

Jesus first enters Jerusalem at 11: 1, though it appears that Jesus has entered Jerusalem before, based on his instruction in the text.

6. Where does the majority of Jesus' ministry take place?
(Seek Mk 1: 14-9: 50, 10: 1-52, 11: 1 – 16: 8)

a. Galilee (1: 14 – 9: 50)

b. Jericho (10: 1 – 52)

c. From 8: 27 – 11: 1 Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem.

d. Jerusalem (11: 1 – 16: 8)

7. With what types of people does Jesus associate?
(see Mk 1: 21, 1: 40-45, 8: 22 & 10: 46, 14: 53, and 9: 14 among others)

a. Demoniacs (Mark 1: 21, 5: 1 ff)

b. Lepers (Mark 1: 40-45)

c. Blind men (8: 22 ff.; 10: 46 ff.)

d. Peter's mother in law (1: 29-31)

e. The leaders of the Sanhedrin (14: 53)

f. The crowds (8: 1 ff.; 6: 34-44)

g. A Mute Spirit (9: 14)

8. What miracles take place in Mark's gospel?
(see Mk 1: 21, 5: 21-43, 8: 1, and 16: 1-8 among others)
- a. Healing (8: 1)
 - b. Exorcism (1: 21)
 - c. Nature miracle (8: 1)
 - d. Raising from the dead (5: 21-24)
 - e. Jairus' daughter (5: 35-43)
 - f. Jesus' rising from the dead (16: 1-8)
9. Name four passages from Mark's gospel where the person's faith preceded the miracle offered to him/her? (see Mk 2: 1 ff., 5: 34 ff., 9: 23 ff. and 10: 52)
- a. In Mark 2: 1 ff., The paralytic's faith was the reason Jesus forgave his sins and cured him.
 - b. Mark 5: 34 (Jairus' daughter)
 - c. Mark 9: 23-24 (the father's faith allowed Jesus to cure his son)
 - d. Mark 10: 52 (Bartimaeus)
10. Where, in Mark's Gospel, can you find the "cleansing in the temple" narrative? Where can you find it in John?
- a. The cleansing of the temple takes place late in the synoptic traditions (Mark 11: 15)
 - b. Early on in John (chap 2)
11. Where in Chapter 14 is the Eucharistic Institution Narrative found in Mark's Gospel?

The Eucharistic institution took place in Mark at 14: 22-26.

12. What types of accusations are levied against Jesus by the members of the Sanhedrin? (see Mk 2: 7 & 10, 3: 20, 7: 2, 11: 27 among others)

- a. *Mark 2: 7 (the scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy, for claiming to forgive sins)*

- b. *2: 10 (Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners)*

- c. *3: 20 (Scribes claim Jesus heals through Beelzebul)*

- d. *7: 2 (eating without washing first)*

- e. *11: 27 ff. (Questioning Jesus' authority)*

- f. *Claim to messiahship (14: 61 ff.)*

- g. *"King of the Jews" (15: 6 ff.)*

13. Besides Mark 1: 1, what three people or sets of people are practically the only ones who understood Jesus as the son of God in the Gospel of Mark?

- a. *St. Peter (Mk 8: 27-30)*

- b. *The Centurian at the Foot of the Cross (Mk 15: 39)*

- c. *The Demons Expelled by Jesus*

14. In Mark's Gospel, is Jesus' last supper a Passover meal?

From Gospel of Mt class: According to Jn, Jesus died on what is called "the 14th of Nisan," a date that precedes the Passover meal. The gospel of Mark (which Mt and Lk closely follow at this juncture) place the Passover meal on the 15th of Nisan, a day which was called "the first day of the Unleavened Bread."

15. In Mark's Gospel, on what day in relation to Passover did Jesus die?

In the Synoptic's chronology, Jesus dies during a period of time after the 15th of Nisan (which makes the Last Supper an actually Passover Meal), during a time when sacrifice was not permitted, thus making Jesus' death during this time unlikely (most scholars tend to favor Jn's chronology when dealing with the passion narratives).

Regardless of the chronological difficulties, one can understand why the Synoptics attempt to correlate the Last Supper with the Passover. For all the Synoptic gospels, the Jewish Feast of the Unleavened Bread (which Jewish tradition assigned to the first Day of Passover) becomes the “thread” that ties the five pericopes of the Last Supper together. As Daniel Harrington writes in his commentary on Mark, “The effect of Mark’s making the Last Supper a Passover meal was to draw Jesus’ death more closely into the great Passover themes of sacrifice and liberation.” As one can see, the theological importance that all the Synoptics place on the Last Supper as a Passover meal far out-ways the chronological problems that present themselves in the text.

16. Cite the three endings of Mark’s Gospel.

- a. 16: 1-8
- b. 16: 9-20
- c. “The Shorter Ending” (no verses)

Essay Questions (Found in Johnson)

1. In Mark’s Gospel, what role does apocalyptic symbolism play?

Apocalyptic refers both to a distinctive outlook and a particular literary genre produced by Jews and early Christians given to elaborate symbolism, esoteric interpretation and mystical vision, all designed as a sophisticated theodicy of the cultural and political crises of history in which the faith found itself. The symbolism of Mark’s Gospel is fundamentally that of apocalyptic. The greatest concentration of it is found in Jesus’ secret discourse to his closest followers (chap. 13) which is often called the “little apocalypse.” In this chapter, we find private revelation (13: 3 of things that are to happen (13: 4 portrayed in terms of cosmic upheaval and conflict (13: 7–8, 24–25) including persecution of the elect of God (13: 9–13 causing apostasy from the true way (13: 21–23). Those who persevere to the end will be saved (13: 13). The end will be signaled by the coming of the Son of man, “with great power and glory” (13: 26). These features are classically apocalyptic, with symbols that can be traced back to the Book of Daniel (see chap. 2, above, pp. 49–52). From Johnson, 166-167.

2. What roles do secrecy and irony play in Mark's Gospel?

... Mark puts a twist on this apocalyptic theme. The insiders (Peter, James, John, and Andrew) are informed that they really do not know when all this is to happen but that they are to "take heed and watch" (13: 32–33). More than that, Mark explicitly opens this "secret" discourse to all the readers. They are invited to overhear what Jesus says to the disciples and to understand it more clearly than his followers do: "Let the reader understand" (13: 14). The readers of the Gospel are also warned: "And what I say to you I say to all: Watch!" (13: 37). Apocalyptic is here. Apocalyptic aims at insiders and is understood by them, but here Mark works it into a literary irony. He warns his readers: "If you think you understand, if you think of yourself as an insider, beware, you may not be. If those insiders, the disciples, could find themselves on the outside, so could you."

3. How does the beginning of Mark's Gospel (1: 1–15) establish different perceptions than Luke 1–2?

We see at once that this is no biography or history. No account is given of John's origins or Jesus' childhood. The narrative is dense and deeply allusive. John's baptism fulfills Torah's promise of a forerunner (1: 2–3), but his message is reduced to a single announcement, "After me comes one stronger than I" (1: 7). As we read, the full implications of this designation for Jesus will become clearer. But now we see that the one who is to baptize with the Spirit (1: 8) is himself baptized and declared God's beloved Son (1: 11). The one who is to drive out demons is himself driven out (same Greek term is used in both instances) into the desert to grapple directly with Satan (1: 12–13).

When Jesus returns from that testing, therefore, he comes as one who has already bound the strong one in single combat (see 3: 27). There now remains for him only the emancipation of his captives. In Jesus' battle with cosmic forces, the outcome is not in doubt. Because the Stronger One has entered human history, the reign of evil is at an end. Jesus announces the effective rule of God – "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the good news" (1: 15) – which, in the rest of Mark's narrative, will be spelled out paradoxically.

In these opening verses, Mark's readers encounter the story of God's unique Son, who spins history on its axis and calls for conversion, a change of heart and mind. In the story of this man the mystery of God is at work.

4. In light of Paragraph 2173 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, explain Mark's interpretation of the Sabbath in regard to the Lord's miracles. Please give cite at least two references (by chapter and verse & the name of the story) in your answer.

#2173 of The Catechism: The Gospel reports many incidents when Jesus was accused of violating the Sabbath law. But Jesus never fails to respect the holiness of this day. He gives this law its authentic and authoritative interpretation: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." With compassion, Christ declares the Sabbath for doing good rather than harm, for saving life rather than killing. The Sabbath is the day of the Lord of mercies and a day to honor God. "The Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath." Cf. Mk 1: 21 ff. (Man with Unclean Spirit); 2: 23-27 (Eating Heads of Grain); 3: 4 (Man with Withered Hand)

5. Based on what we learned last week and Video #1 in the Online Lecture this week, provide a thorough summary of the "Synoptic Gospels," the "Triple Tradition" and the "Double Tradition." Please include time stamps from the video in your answer.