

10 studies on  
**Mark's Gospel**

For 1 to 1 study with  
Chinese friends

Members' Version

**Prepared for the Return**

# Contents

1. Mark 1:1-15	3
2. Mark 1:16-39	5
3. Mark 2:1-12	7
4. Mark 7:1-23	9
5. Mark 8:22-9:1	11
6. Mark 10:13-31	13
7. Mark 10:32-45	16
8. Mark 12:1-12	18
9. Mark 15:1-39	20
10. Mark 15:40-16:8	23
Bible Timeline	25

# Study 1 Mark 1:1-15

**Starter Question:** If you asked people back in China to think of 3 words to describe Jesus, what might they say?

Read Mark 1:1-15.

**1. Who is Jesus, according to...**

Mark	The Prophets	John	God

**2. Why did Jesus come, according to...**

a) John?

b) Jesus?

**3. What does Jesus ask people to do?**

**4. What unanswered questions are you left with?**

Who is Jesus?

.....

Why did Jesus come?

.....

What does Jesus demand?

.....

**5. a) When thinking about kings, what ideas might people from China have in their head?**

**b) Why is a good king good news?**

**6. How would you describe the Jesus of this passage in 3 words?**

**7. How does this introduction make you want to continue reading Mark?**

# Study 2 Mark 1:16-39

**Starter Question:** What people can you think of who have authority? How do people respond to them?

**1. Fill in the table:**

	Who is involved?	How do the people respond?	What do we learn about Jesus?
16-20			
21-28			
29-34			

**2. Revisit these unanswered questions** from the previous study:

**a) What kind of king is Jesus?**

**b) What is the kingdom of God like?**

**Who is Jesus?**

The King, promised by God

.....

**3. Read v35-39. What is surprising in these verses?**  
(Why has Jesus come?)

**Why did Jesus come?**

To save his people  
To judge unrighteousness  
To cleanse from sin  
To proclaim good news .....

**4. How does this passage make you feel about Jesus?**

# Study 3 Mark 2:1-12

**Starter Question: What answers would your friends give if you did a survey asking “What is the biggest problem facing our world today?”**

**1. What do you think the paralysed man wanted Jesus to do for him?  
How much did he want this? (v1-4)**

**2. How do you think the paralysed man would feel when he heard Jesus’ words in v5? Why?**

**3. How do the scribes respond to this? Why do they respond in this way? (v6-7)**

**4. What do you think when you hear the word “sin”?**

**5. What is the answer to Jesus’ question in v9?**

**6. a) What does Jesus think is the man’s biggest problem?**

**b) How would Jesus answer “What is the biggest problem facing our world today?”**

## **Son of Man**

Jesus refers to himself as the ‘Son of Man’ in v10. This is a title used in Daniel 7:13-14 to refer to a man to whom God gives eternal dominion over all nations - this is a very powerful man! It’s a very meaningful title, and by calling himself the Son of Man, Jesus is claiming great authority.

**7. Look back at 1:38. How does this passage help us understand why Jesus' priority is to preach, not heal?**

**8. Why is it good news that sins can be forgiven?**

**Who is Jesus?**

The King, promised by God  
He has authority to.....

**Why did Jesus come?**

To save his people, by .....  
To judge unrighteousness  
To proclaim good news



# Study 4 Mark 7:1-23

**Starter Question: What sort of actions make a person very 'religious'?**

**1. How would you describe the Pharisees?**

**2. What is the Pharisees' attitude to God's commandments and human tradition? (fill in table)**

God's commandments	Human Tradition

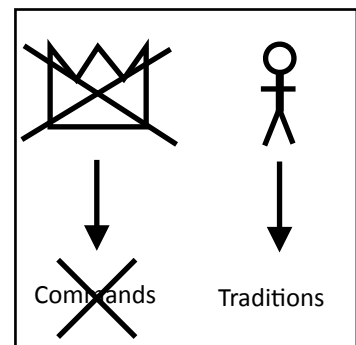
(How does the example in v10-13 illustrate this attitude?)

**3. According to the Pharisees, what makes a person clean?**

"Unclean/defiled" = Dirty in God's eyes. To be "unclean" was very serious, as this meant that one was not in a good relationship with God.

**4. What was the Pharisees' relationship with God like?**

**5. Read v14-23: According to Jesus, what makes a person unclean?**



**6. How does Jesus' description of the human heart make you feel?**

**7. Why were the Pharisees' religious traditions useless?**

**8. Think back to the religious actions we mentioned at the start.  
How much can they help us? Why?**

Imagine that you are on the bus going to work, when suddenly the person next to you is sick all over you! What would you do?  
... Would you pretend to ignore it, hoping that no one else will notice, and continue on your way to work? Of course not!  
... Would you take out some perfume, spray it all over you to cover the smell, and continue on your way to work? Of course not!  
... Rather, you would get off the bus, go home, have a shower (or two), change your clothes, and only then go to work.  
So what will we do with our dirty hearts? Ignore them? Try to cover them up with some religious activity? Or will we realise that we need a drastic solution - a new heart?

**9. How does Jesus' diagnosis of the human heart differ from what we tend to think?**

- Why can education not solve the problem of human evil?
- Do you think that Jesus would say people are born good or evil?

**10. Revisiting unanswered questions:**

**a) Study 1: What does it mean to repent?**

**b) Study 3: How does this help us understand why Jesus' priority was to forgive, not heal illness?**

**Why did Jesus come?**

To save his people by forgiving sin .....  
To judge unrighteousness  
To proclaim good news

**What does Jesus demand?**

Repent - this means .....  
Believe

# Study 5    Mark 8:22-9:1

**Starter Question:** When I say 'king' or 'emperor', what sort of person do you think of? What would it feel like to be one of his followers?

Read 8:22-26

**1. What is unusual about the healing miracle here?**

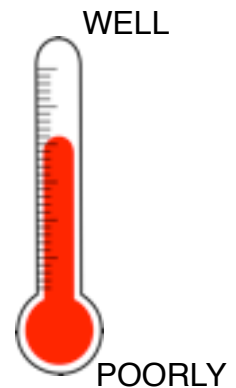
What's wrong? Is Jesus a little tired, needs an energy boost? No! He's shown himself capable of doing huge miracles already in Mark's Gospel... So why does he choose to heal this man in two stages? We will revisit this question at the end.

Read 8:27-30

**2. a) How good do you think Peter feels about himself at this point?**

**b) Why is what Peter says in v29 so significant?**

**c) Remember our answer to the Starter Question. What do you think Peter expects that life will be like for Jesus and his followers?**



**3. Read 8:31-9:1**

**a) How do you think Peter feels about himself now?**

**b) Fill in the table:**

	NOW	FUTURE
Not follow Jesus		
Follow Jesus		

c) What is life *really* like as Jesus' follower?

d) How does this passage help you understand what changes might happen in your life if you became a Christian?

**Why did Jesus come?**

To save his people by forgiving sin - this is something we all need because our hearts are sinful  
To judge unrighteousness  
To proclaim good news  
.....

4. a) Why do you think Peter found this so hard to accept?

b) Why do we also find it hard to accept?

c) How does this challenge what we often think about 'religion'?

d) Following Jesus sounds so hard - why would anyone choose to do it?!

**What does Jesus demand?**

Repent - this means to recognise our own sinfulness  
Believe that .....  
.....

Remember the healing of the blind man at the start... Just as Jesus gave him sight in two stages, so Jesus gives Peter faith in two stages. Peter now believes that Jesus is the Christ, but he cannot yet believe that the Christ must suffer and die. This emphasises that:

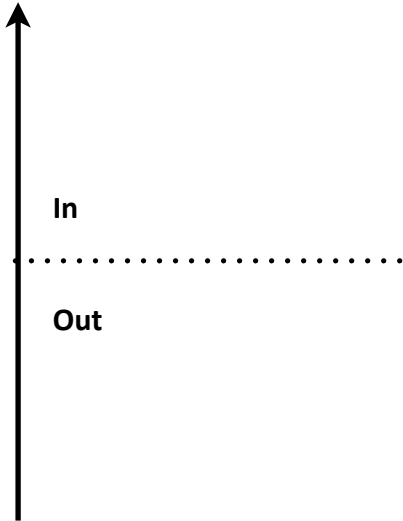
1. It's important to believe two key things about Jesus: he is the Christ, and he must die.
2. Like Peter, we often find the truth about Jesus hard to accept because we are spiritually blind. We *cannot* believe just by trying really hard.

Perhaps there are things you've learnt about Jesus that you find difficult to believe.

Why not ask Jesus to do a miracle in you and make you able to believe that Jesus is the Christ, who must die, and who demands his followers to suffer with him?

# Study 6 Mark 10:13-31

**Starter Question:** What might people in China say if you asked them: “If there is such a place as heaven, who is most likely to get in?”



Read verses 13-16

**1. a) Why do you think the disciples wanted to stop people bringing little children to Jesus?**

**b) Why does Jesus welcome the children?**

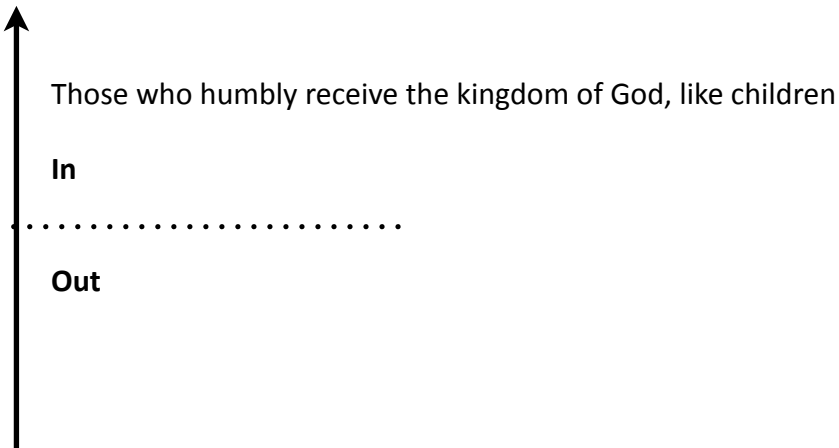
--> Look back to Study 2 and remember what we learnt there about the **kingdom of God**: it is a place where Jesus has complete authority and will end all illness and evil. It is similar to what we often describe as “heaven”.

Look at v15: *“Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”*

**c) Think of a child you know, and imagine you offered them a toy or some sweets. What would they do? How would they receive it?**

**d) So what does it mean to receive the kingdom of God like a child?**

Add this to the diagram:



Read 10:17-22

**2. a) What does the man want? (v17)**

**b) How good is he?**

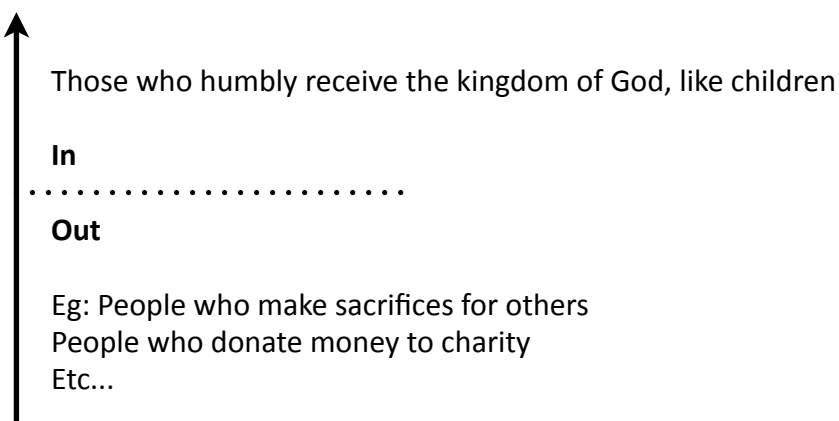
When Jesus refers to *“the commandments”* in v19, he is quoting from the 10 commandments that God gave the Jewish people 1500 years previously. However, he does not quote all of them - most significantly, he omits the first commandment: *“I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before me.”* (Exodus 20:2-3).

**c) Has the man kept this commandment? How do you know?**

Read 10:23-31

**3. a) Why are the disciples amazed in v24 and v26?**

**b) What is the answer to the disciples’ question in v26: “Who then can be saved?”**



You could compare this rich young man to the people who feature on the Chinese television show *People Who Move China* (感动中国), which recognises ten people each year who have made contributions to society and moved people by their sacrifices on behalf of others. However, according to Jesus' words even these outstanding men and women are not good enough to enter God's kingdom, because God's standard is 100%.

**4. a) What is the difference between the man's attitude, and the attitude of little children (v15)?**

b) **In v21** Jesus asked the man to give away all his wealth, to reveal that wealth was this man's god. He doesn't ask every Christian to give all their money away - but **what question might Jesus ask you to determine whether you deserve the kingdom?**

**5. What would Jesus say in response to these comments:**

a) "Christianity's just like Buddhism - they're both ways of living a good life."

b) "I'm embarrassed to receive so much from God; I want to rely on myself too."

This passage has not yet answered the question:

**How can people be saved?**

But we have seen hints already in Mark's Gospel: Jesus told us he has come to forgive sins, and that he must die and rise from the dead. Keep reading to learn how these things fit together!

**What does Jesus demand?**

Repent - this means to recognise our own sinfulness. Therefore .....

Believe that he is the Christ

To die and rise with him

# Study 7 Mark 10:32-45

1. Read verses 32-34: What do we learn about Jesus' death?

2. Read verses 35-45:

a) What do James and John want Jesus to do for them?

b) How do you feel about their request?

c) How do James and John form a contrast with Jesus?

3. a) What do we learn about Jesus' death from v35-45?

## Old Testament Background

In v38 Jesus refers to his death as a 'cup' that he will drink. In the Old Testament the imagery of drinking from a cup usually referred to being punished by God (for example, Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15-16). This suggests that his death will be a punishment from God.

b) From what you have read in Mark's Gospel so far, what do people need set free from?



4. Re-read Mark 10:26-27: Jesus says that with man it is impossible for anyone to be saved, but that God can do the impossible.

**From this passage, how will God do the impossible?**

5. **So why must Jesus die?** (unanswered question from ch8)

6. **How would you now answer the man's question in 10:17: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"**

**Why did Jesus come?**

To save his people by forgiving sin - this is something we all need because our hearts are sinful. He will do this by .....

To judge unrighteousness

To proclaim good news

**If you have time...** you could read verses 46-52.

Notice that v51 is the same as v36.

- How does Bartimaeus' request contrast with James and John's?

- How does this help us understand what it means to have 'faith'? (v52)

7. **What would you say to someone who said that Jesus' death was just a good example, to inspire us to be kind to others?**

# Study 8 Mark 12:1-12

In this incident Jesus is speaking to the Jewish religious leaders who challenge his authority. He tells them a story... **Read 12:1-12.**

**1. Would you say this story has a happy ending or a sad ending? Why?**

(At the end of v8 who seems to have won? What about end of v9?)

**2. What words would you use to describe:**

a) the tenants?

b) the owner?

Imagine a modern day equivalent: your father lives in the UK, but has a house in China which he lets out to a group of tenants - but after signing the contract and moving in they refuse to pay the rent! He texts them, emails them, phones them - but no reply. He contacts the letting agency and asks them to send someone round to collect the rent. Not only do the tenants refuse to pay up - they are incredibly rude to the agent. The agency sends someone else round - and this time the tenants beat him up. Wanting to give the tenants another chance before calling the police, your father finally sends round your older brother - surely the tenants will respect him?? But, thinking that once the landlord's son is out of the way the house will be theirs' to enjoy, they kill your brother.  
This is shocking behaviour!

**3. Look at verse 12: How do the religious leaders react to Jesus's story?**

**4. Who do the different people in the story represent?**

a) Tenants?

b) Owner?

c) Servants?

d) Son?

e) 'Others' (v9)?

This is a good summary of the Old Testament where God patiently sent messengers again and again to warn his disobedient people, the Jews. A vineyard was often used in the Old Testament to represent God's people, Israel - so we know that this story is about the Jewish people. If you want to read more about this you could look at Isaiah 5:1-7.

**5. a) What similarities do v10-11 have with v7-9?**

(v7-8 What is the tenants' attitude to the son?)

**b) How does this help us understand what will happen to Jesus in the end?**

Verses 10-11 assume that Jesus will rise from the dead - otherwise, he could not become the 'cornerstone'.

**6. What does Jesus' resurrection mean for the people who reject him?**

**7. a) This story was originally told about Jewish religious leaders. What does it teach us about their attitude to God?**

**b) In what ways are we like them? (Why did they kill the son?)**

**8. According to this passage, why is it so serious to reject Jesus?**

**What does Jesus demand?**

Repent - this means to recognise our own sinfulness and inability to earn our way into God's kingdom. Rather, we need Jesus to die in our place  
Believe that he is the Christ who died as our ransom  
To die and rise with him

.....

**Why did Jesus come?**

To save his people by forgiving sin - this is something we all need because our hearts are sinful. He will do this by dying as a ransom and rising  
To judge unrighteousness - particularly ...  
.....  
To proclaim good news

# Study 9 Mark 15:1-39

**Starter question:** If you asked friends back in China “what makes a person ‘great’”, what answers might they give?

## 1. Fill in the table:

Characters	Attitude to Jesus
Religious leaders (chief priests, elders, scribes, Council)	
Pilate	
Crowd/ passers-by	
Soldiers	
Centurion	

## 2. What titles are given to Jesus in this passage?

### Who is Jesus?

The King, promised by God

Has authority

The “Son of Man”

.....

--> Look back to Mark 1:1 ‘The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God’. Now, as Jesus dies, Mark wants to emphasise Jesus’ identity as the Christ and the Son of God. Remember our first study - both of these titles mean God’s Chosen King.

--> But if he is the great King, why does he die in this way? Why doesn’t he use his mighty authority to stop himself dying?

**3. a) What unusual things happen as Jesus dies?**

1. v33 Darkness over the whole land. The sixth hour is noon, and the ninth hour is 3pm - a strange time for darkness! In the Bible, darkness is often an indication that God is punishing someone.

**Who should be punished by God in this passage?**

2. v34 Jesus cries out 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' God has forsaken (= abandoned) Jesus!!

**So who is punished by God in this passage?**

3. v38 The curtain of the temple is torn in two. The temple was the place where God's people, the Jews, went to meet with God. It represented the old covenant/agreement between God and people, which said that people could have a good relationship with God if they kept his commandments. The curtain formed a barrier between people and the most special part of the temple - it represented a barrier between people and God. This barrier had to be there because people's hearts are too dirty to have a relationship with perfect God (see study 4).

**So what does it mean that the temple curtain is torn in two?**

**b) So why did Jesus die?**

**4. In what different ways would Jesus' death have been painful for him?**

--> This helps us to understand Jesus' love for us: he faced this pain so that we would not have to.

**7. Look back at the responses of the different characters in this incident.**

**a) How do people today respond to Jesus in a similar way?**

<b>Characters</b>	<b>Attitude to Jesus</b>	<b>How do people today respond to Jesus in a similar way?</b>
Religious leaders Soldiers		
Pilate		
Crowd/ passers-by		
Centurion		

**b) Think about your own attitude to Jesus.**

**Which character is your response to Jesus most like? Why?**

**c) Think about your answer to the Starter Question. How 'great' is Jesus in this passage?**

**What does Jesus demand?**

Repent - this means to recognise our own sinfulness

Believe - **that .....**

Honour Jesus as God's Son

# Study 10 Mark 15:40-16:8

1. Before reading the passage: **After the last study, what questions do you still have?**

2. a) **How does Mark show us that these events really happened?**

Main Claim	Evidence
Jesus really died	
Jesus really rose	

b) **Can you think of any alternative explanation of the facts?**

3. a) **How would you feel about Jesus if he had not risen from the dead?**

b) **How would Peter and the disciples feel when they heard this news?**

## Who is Jesus?

The King, promised by God

Has authority

The "Son of Man"

He is shown to be these things *even in his death* - and .....

4. a) How does Joseph respond to Jesus' death?  
(15:43-46)

b) How do the women respond to Jesus' resurrection? (16:5-8)

c) How do you feel about these different responses?

d) Why might it require courage to follow Jesus?

#### Why did Jesus come?

To save his people by dying as their substitute, so that they can be forgiven and cleansed from sin.

To judge unrighteousness - particularly, to judge those who reject him

To proclaim good news

--> Jesus' resurrection proves that his death really did achieve these things!

5. a) What things prevent you from believing that Jesus is the Son of God?

b) How has your view of Jesus changed through studying Mark's Gospel?

#### What does Jesus demand?

Repent - this means to recognise our own sinfulness

Believe - that Jesus' death shows him to be the Christ, the Son of God, and .....

Honour Jesus as God's Son



# Bible Timeline

