

# LifeWay Bible Studies for Life Series for September 6: The Jesus people should know

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The lessons in this study, based on Mark 1-10, guide you to know Jesus as the unique Savior, Messiah and Son of God who alone provides eternal life and has authority to call people to follow him. Nearly everyone today knows about Jesus. Mark's Gospel teaches all people should come to know Christ by experience. Knowing—experiencing—Jesus as Savior, unique Lord, and adequate guide to living is the main goal. Jesus is the one and only Savior.

John Mark, a convert of and companion to Peter, wrote the earliest of the Gospels around 63-65 A.D., soon after Peter's death during Nero's persecution. Doubtless, Mark's material came both from his own eyewitness and also from Peter's teachings. Mark presents Jesus as the suffering servant who came not to be ministered to but to serve others even to the point of giving his life on the cross. The Gospel emphasizes what Jesus did not just what Jesus said.

This lesson seeks to bring you into relationship with the unique Savior, Jesus Christ. You will connect with the Jesus who has unique power and authority but also with the one who calls you to and empowers you for the unique life. People should come to know Jesus by experience.

## **Know—experience—the unique Son of God (Mark 1:1-3)**

Mark initiates his account of Jesus, pointing to the beginning of the gospel, or good news (*euganelion*) about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah. The term relates to the freshness and importance of the

message that offered hope to the oppressed and neglected.

This good news concerns Jesus. "Joshua" means "Yahweh" or "God saves." The term "Christ" equates with the Hebrew "Messiah," the anointed one, commissioned by God for a special task. The words "Son of God," had become a messianic term and doubtless referred to the unique relationship between Jesus and God.

These truths about Jesus had been written in prophecy. Mark quoted from Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1 and Exodus 23:20. These prophecies related to the custom of having a messenger go before a king's visit to prepare the way. The prophets and John the baptizer witnessed to the coming of Jesus, the Christ (Mark 1:4-8).

Mark used the two expressions, Christ and Son of God, together to emphasize the uniqueness of Jesus. Mark wrote not about just any servant but about the very Son of God who came to die for the sins of the world. Jesus is the only way to reach right relationship with God.

### **Know—experience—the unequaled power of Jesus (Mark 1:7, 9-13)**

John the baptizer declared Jesus to be more powerful than he. The coming one would baptize them with the Holy Spirit rather than only with water. At his baptism, Jesus saw the heavens "torn apart" and the Spirit descending upon him. The voice from heaven (from the Father) and the visions gave the Father's approval of Jesus and the promise of his authority to reveal of God's plan.

Jesus did not, however, bask in this wonderful experience of the Father's approval but "at once" entered the desert to be tempted by Satan. The word for Satan "driving" Jesus into the place of temptation does not suggest unwillingness or fright on Jesus' part but only underlines the intensity of the experience. The victory of Jesus is clear.

The testimony of Jesus' greatness from John and his victory over Satan combine to show the infinite power of Jesus, the Christ. Believers today can trust the power of Jesus to enable them to overcome Satan's temptations. Jesus promises believers they will share in his power as they spread his message.

### **Know—experience—the authority of Jesus (Mark 1:21-28)**

Mark emphasizes the authority of Jesus; he has the right to command, to expect obedience, to call to the disciples (Mark 1:16-20). Jesus' group arrived in the village of Capernaum and Jesus taught in the synagogue. The people recognized a difference in Jesus' teaching because he taught directly rather than by quoting from the older teachers.

Jesus further demonstrated his authority by expelling a demon from a man. The New Testament does not use the term "possessed" but only the word demon as a participle, "demonized." In Mark 1:23, the spirit is described as an unclean spirit rather than evil spirit, but the meaning is the same. Christians today should remain mindful of the reality of Satan and demons and rest peacefully in Jesus' power over these evil beings.

The demon recognized the nature of Jesus as Messiah and Savior. Jesus commanded the demon to "be quiet" (or muzzled) and come out of the man. As usual, the Lord used the miracle to teach his authority and the power of God rather than simply a demonstration for notoriety. The people responded, declaring Jesus had power to command even the unclean spirits.

Jesus' teaching was by word and by deed and so must our service be today. We fear no evil spirit because our Lord has power over them. His power enables us to overcome all and share his message with confidence. Our confidence lies in his power not in our strength. Jesus' power demonstrates his uniqueness as the only Savior.

People today have difficulty acknowledging the uniqueness of Jesus and his absolute authority. Jesus Christ is God's Messiah, the Son of God, who alone can provide salvation and direction for the Christian's life and service. The Jesus of authority and power is the Jesus we all should know and experience today.