

## **Jesus in the Gospel of Mark Suffering for Us: Introduction**

Who is Jesus, and how shall we respond to him? That question faced the people of Jesus' day who came in contact with him or heard about him. Wherever Jesus went, people had to decide how to respond. Neutrality was impossible. Choices were made beside fishing boats, inside synagogues and private homes, and within the judgment halls of the chief priests and Pilate. Decisions about Jesus continued to confront people even after Jesus' death. His followers said he had risen from the dead. What could one make of that?

This same question—Who is Jesus, and how shall we respond to him?—confronted the first readers of 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, perhaps especially as Peter preached it.

Mark's first readers may 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 themselves had to know what kind of person and message could demand their devotion even to the point of giving their lives. 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 question continues to face people in our own day. Who is Jesus, and how shall we respond to him? In sixteen swiftly-moving chapters, the Gospel of Mark tells the story of Jesus in a way that calls for a decision by every person. Mark's message about Jesus also provides hope and assurance that commitment—the kind of commitment that means taking up our own cross and following him—is indeed worthwhile. Mark's account of Jesus also is such that reading and studying it can equip Christians to share the message with others.

Perhaps you will see Jesus in a new way as you study Mark's message about him. Perhaps you will even decide to follow Jesus more closely or for the first time when you learn more about him.

**Unit Three, Suffering for Us**, consists of five sessions from Mark 9—16 plus an extra session specifically on Mark 13. Session Nine shows Jesus' teaching his disciples about service as they move nearer to Jerusalem and the cross that awaited him there. In Session Ten, Jesus is in the temple itself, asserting his authority. Sessions Twelve, Thirteen, and Fourteen deal with Jesus' giving his life, being condemned, and dying and being resurrected.

**Session Eleven, the session on Mark 13, is included because of the importance of the teachings of this chapter and the need to help adults understand its meaning in context. Churches may choose to study Mark 13 in a special meeting apart from the usual Bible study sessions.**

Unit Three, Suffering for Us

Session 09	Jesus Teaches About Service	Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45
Session 10	Jesus Asserts His Authority	Mark 11:15-18,27—12:12
Session 11	Jesus Teaches About the Future	Mark 13:1-37
Session 12	Jesus Gives His Life	Mark 14:12-26,32-42
Session 13	Jesus Is Condemned	Mark 14:53—15:20
Session 14	Jesus Dies and Lives Again!	Mark 15:21-41; 16:1-8