

## A Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark

## A \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus

1. Who was Jesus? What did Jesus \_\_\_\_\_? What did he \_\_\_\_\_?
2. As believers, we are on a \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus each day.
3. We want to live in \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus and not just follow \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The purpose of our study is to gain an authentic picture of Jesus so that we can better understand and communicate Jesus to those who live in this time of growing biblical illiteracy.
  - Is your internalized portrait of Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ accurate?
  - How does your portrait affect the way you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the message of Christ?
  - What would \_\_\_\_\_ say and do through you, a \_\_\_\_\_ called to walk in and with him daily?
  - How does our shared portrait of Jesus affect our \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_ in today's world?

## What is a \_\_\_\_\_?

1. Four basic genres or types of New Testament material: \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Things to remember as we \_\_\_\_\_ the gospels.
  - a. Jesus did not \_\_\_\_\_ any of the gospel accounts.
  - b. The gospels are not \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. The gospels did not record \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus did or said.
  - d. The four gospels have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. There have been many efforts to \_\_\_\_\_ the gospels.
  - f. There are two main types of material in each gospel.
    - 1) \_\_\_\_\_ teachings by Jesus
    - 2) \_\_\_\_\_ about Jesus
  - g. Each gospel was written to \_\_\_\_\_ people into a relationship with Jesus Christ.
    - 1) Mark was trying to persuade \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 2) Matthew was trying to persuade \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 3) Luke was trying to persuade \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 4) John was trying to persuade \_\_\_\_\_.

## **The Portrait of Jesus in \_\_\_\_\_.**

1. **Images of Jesus** (Borchert, pp 19-26)
  - a. **Jesus is an awesome \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - b. **Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ people with both his actions and his words.**
  - c. **Jesus is a \_\_\_\_\_ of mysteries about God and his kingdom.**
  - d. **Jesus is a powerful \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - e. **Jesus is a great \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - f. **Jesus is the self-sacrificing \_\_\_\_\_ of humanity.**
2. **Questions for Reflection** (Borchert, p 26)
  - a. **In what ways does Mark's portrait of Jesus catch your attention?**
  - b. **What feelings do you have when you think about Jesus as Mark reveals him?**
  - c. **How can you help your faith community discover a more living portrait of Jesus?**

## **Homework**

1. **Read 1 Peter at least once and in one-sitting, if possible.**
2. **Read Borchert chapter 2, pp 26-34.**
3. **Think about your response to the *Questions for Reflection* on p 31.**
  - a. **How do you think the message of 1 Peter compares with what is usually taught and preached in our churches today? How would you summarize the differences?**
  - b. **In what ways does Peter's message carry us beyond mere verbal statements of faith?**
  - c. **Have you considered the possibility that you might someday be called to endure a period of intense suffering for Christ? How well would your commitment stand in the face of persecution?**

# Portraits of Jesus

## A Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark

### A. A Portrait of Jesus

1. **Who was Jesus? What did Jesus do? What did he teach?**
2. **As believers, we are on a walk (Hb., *halak*; Gk. *peripateo*) with Jesus each day.**
3. **We want to live in relationship with Jesus and not just follow a set of rules.**
4. **The purpose of our study is to gain an authentic picture of Jesus so that we can better understand and communicate Jesus to those who live in this time of growing biblical illiteracy.**
  - **Is your internalized portrait of Jesus biblically accurate?**
  - **How does your portrait affect the way you live and communicate the message of Christ?**
  - **What would Jesus say and do through you, a disciple called to walk in and with him daily?**
  - **How does our shared portrait of Jesus affect our actions as a church in today's world?**

### B. What is a Gospel?

1. **Four basic genres or types of New Testament material: Gospels (narrative); Acts (history); Epistles (letters); Revelation (apocalyptic)**
  - a. We will examine all four types of NT literature as we form our portrait of Jesus.
  - b. We will examine all four gospels during our study.
  - c. We will examine Acts in conjunction with our study of the Gospel of Luke
  - d. The largest body of NT material is the epistles.
    - 1) We will examine 1 Peter in parallel with the Gospel of Mark.
    - 2) Some scholars put Hebrews into a special category, but most of them classify it as an epistle. We will look at this book in conjunction with the Gospel of Matthew.
    - 3) We will look at Paul's epistles to the Galatians, Colossians, and his first letter to the Corinthians.
  - e. We will examine Revelation in parallel with our study of John's gospel.
2. **Things to remember as we interpret the gospels.**
  - a. **Jesus did not write any of the gospel accounts.**
  - b. **The gospels are not biographies.** They are narratives of certain teachings and actions of Jesus focused primarily on his three years of earthly ministry.
  - c. **The gospels did not record everything that Jesus did or said.**

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (Jn 21:25)
  - d. **The four gospels have similarities and dissimilarities.**
    - 1) It is good when they all agree, but it appears problematic when they do not.
    - 2) For example, several of the parables are given only in the Gospel of Luke.
    - 3) Another example is the resurrection accounts of Matthew and Mark who say there was one angel/man at the tomb while Luke says there were two men.
    - 4) Only two gospels (i.e., Matthew and Luke) give a birth narrative.
    - 5) All four gospels record the resurrection.
    - 6) There is no contradiction in these differences only evidence of the different viewpoints and observations of the gospel writers.

- e. **There have been many efforts to harmonize the gospels.**
  - 1) Many scholars believe that Mark was the earliest writer and that the others borrowed from his version. Some writers included certain material and left out other parts, based on what they intended to emphasize. Taken together, this gives richer, fuller context and perspectives.
  - 2) Most scholars harmonize only the ‘synoptics’ (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke) because John is so different from the other three.
  - 3) A.T. Robertson’s harmony of all four gospels is the classic work.
- f. **There are two main types of material in each gospel.**
  - 1) **Direct teachings by Jesus**
    - a) These are denoted in some versions by red letters.
    - b) Scholars debate whether or not these are exactly the specific words of Jesus since the earliest gospel accounts were written no earlier than 20 years afterward (c. 50 CE). Many scholars think Mark was the earliest (about 45-50 CE) which leads to questions about the accuracy of the direct quotations.
    - c) Some scholars say there was a lost disciple’s notebook known as “Q” (Q = *quelle* in German, which means ‘source’) which contained the direct teachings and which was later edited into the first gospel account.
  - 2) **Narratives about Jesus**
    - a) If Mark was the first gospel, where did he get his information? Mark was not a disciple but may have had some knowledge of him (cf., Mk 14:51-52).
      - i. Many scholars believe Mark’s primary source was Peter.
      - ii. This raises questions about the accuracy of transmission of the information.
    - b) Luke also was not an apostle with Jesus.
      - i. Where did he get his information?
      - ii. He was an educated man—a doctor, who says that he did research.
      - iii. He probably gathered information from direct eye-witnesses, such as Mary or others who were actually with Jesus.
- g. **Each gospel was written to persuade people into a relationship with Jesus Christ.**
  - 1) **Mark was trying to persuade Romans.** He did not include any genealogies since the Romans were not interested in pedigree. He emphasized the miracles and power, which did carry weight with Romans.
  - 2) **Matthew was trying to persuade Jews.** He traced Jesus’ genealogy back through David to Abraham. He referred to the kingdom of heaven rather than the kingdom of God out of respect for Jewish reverence of the divine name.
  - 3) **Luke was trying to persuade Gentiles/Greeks.** He traced Jesus’ genealogy back to Adam—the progenitor of all mankind.
  - 4) **John was trying to persuade Greco-Romans.** He traced the incarnate Christ back to the pre-incarnate Word.

## C. The Portrait of Jesus in Mark

### 1. Images of Jesus (Borchert, pp 19-26)

#### a. **Jesus is an awesome superhero.**

- 1) “I love to reflect on how Mark must have pictured Jesus as his superhero!” (p 19)
- 2) What are some images of Jesus as a superhero in Mark?
- 3) For example, Jesus faced temptation by Satan, a superhuman foe, and overcame him at the beginning of his ministry (cf., Mk 1:9-13).
  - a) “At once (Gk., *euthys*) . . .” (Mk 1:12) pictures Jesus as a man ready for immediate action.
  - b) As Mark spoke to his Roman audience, they must have pictured Jesus as the undefeated gladiator facing not only “the wild animals” of the arena but also the wild forces of demonic spirits.

#### b. **Jesus irritates people with both his actions and his words.**

- 1) “But he is more than an activist. He is also a man who irritates people and takes them by surprise” (p 20).
- 2) What are some of the actions of Jesus that irritated others?
  - a) Calling lowly people of the land as his disciples (cf., Mk 1:16-20; 2:13-14) instead of the powerful Pharisees and other Jewish leaders.
  - b) Healing the sick on the Sabbath (cf., Mk 1:21-28; Mk 3:1-6) and allowing his disciples to “work” on the Sabbath (cf., Mk 2:23-28).
- 3) What are some of the words of Jesus that irritated others?
  - a) Forgiving sins (cf., Mk 2:1-12).
  - b) His teaching about fasting (cf., Mk 2:18-22) and the Sabbath (cf., Mk 2:23-28).
  - c) His teaching even irritated his family (cf., Mk 3:20-22).

#### c. **Jesus is a revealer of mysteries about God and his kingdom.**

- 1) Mark 4 includes “. . . a number of parables that point to the hidden or mysterious nature of the kingdom of God. . . . Yet even though God’s realm is hidden, its secret pattern of growth means that it will ultimately become evident . . .” (p 21).
  - a) Parable of the Sower (Mk 4:1-20) – God’s good news will be received by some and lost or rejected by others.
  - b) Parable of A Lamp on a Stand (Mk 4:21-25) – God’s kingdom is a light that will shine forth into the darkness of this world.
  - c) Parable of the Growing Seed (Mk 4:26-29) – God’s kingdom grows by the miraculous power that God provides and will bear fruit to his glory.
  - d) Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mk 4:30-34) – God’s kingdom starts small but will grow into a large, benevolent kingdom.
- 2) Jesus came to reveal the mystery of God’s kingdom to humanity.

#### d. **Jesus is a powerful miracle worker.**

- 1) What are some of the miracle stories shared in Mark’s gospel?
  - a) Calming the storm (Mk 4:35-41)
  - b) Casting out demons (Mk 5:1-20)
  - c) Raising Jairus’ dead daughter and healing a sick woman (Mk 5:21-44)
- 2) The Markan sandwich
  - a) Jairus – 5:21-24 and 5:35-43
  - b) Healing a sick woman – 5:25-34
  - c) “The point of course is that being religious does not necessarily mean having faith and trusting God” (p 23).

- e. **Jesus is a great prophet.** What are some of Jesus' prophecies in Mark?
    - 1) He predicted his own death (cf., Mk 8:31; 9:30-32; 10:32-34).
    - 2) He predicted the end of the temple era (cf., Mk 13:1-2ff).
    - 3) He predicted his disciples would suffer for the sake of the gospel (cf., Mk 13:9).
    - 4) He predicted that the gospel would be preached to "all nations" (Mk 13:10).
    - 5) He predicted his return at the end of time in "power and glory" (Mk 13:26).
  - f. **Jesus is the self-sacrificing Savior of humanity.**
    - 1) Jesus secretly declared himself to be the Messiah (cf., Mk 8:27-30).
      - a) The Messianic Secret: Jesus wanted to keep the fact that he was the Messiah a secret until the right time.
      - b) Throughout Mark's gospel humans and demons are commanded to keep his true identity a secret.
      - c) Only one person is allowed to share this information openly—the Gerasene demoniac who was sent to preach Jesus among the Gentiles (cf., Mk 5:1-20, focal 19-20). Why do you think he was allowed to speak openly of Jesus?
    - 2) Jesus was to be a Messiah unlike the one that the Jews expected. He was the suffering servant who would give himself for the salvation of humanity (cf., Mk 10:45).
    - 3) "But the story also reveals the incredible significance of Jesus' self-giving death. The Roman centurion at the cross summarizes Mark's stellar portrait of Jesus by identifying him as 'truly' the 'Son of God!' (15:39)" (p 25).
  - g. These are the six images that I found in reading Borchert and reflection on Mark's gospel. What other images of Jesus did you see in the portrait painted by Mark?
2. **Questions for Reflection** (Borchert, p 26)
- a. **In what ways does Mark's portrait of Jesus catch your attention?**
  - b. **What feelings do you have when you think about Jesus as Mark reveals him?**
  - c. **How can you help your faith community discover a more living portrait of Jesus?**

#### D. Homework

1. **Read 1 Peter at least once and in one-sitting, if possible.**
2. **Read Borchert chapter 2, pp 26-34.**
3. **Think about your response to the Questions for Reflection on p 31.**
  - a. **How do you think the message<sup>3</sup> of 1 Peter compares with what is usually taught and preached in our churches today? How would you summarize the differences?**
  - b. **In what ways does Peter's message carry us beyond mere verbal statements of faith?**
  - c. **Have you considered the possibility that you might someday be called to endure a period of intense suffering for Christ? How well would your commitment stand in the face of persecution?**
  - d. **In three sentences, how would you describe Peter's portrait of Jesus and his disciples? How do you think your description compares to one you would do for Mark?**