

Week 3

<p>January 15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 3</p>	<p>* This week, we will read the Gospel of Mark. Mark was written to demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of God (Mk 1:1; 15:39). This Gospel is addressed to a Roman audience and focuses on the healings and activities that would demonstrate divine power to a Gentile reader. Mark asks, “What did Jesus <i>do</i> that shows he is the Son of God?”</p> <p>? What signs of Jesus’ power do you see in these first three chapters? Which signs are most impressive to you as a reader in the 21st century?</p> <p>? Mark shows Jesus’ relationship to people considered “unclean” by the Jews – a leper (1:40-45), a man with an evil spirit (1:21-27), and tax collectors (2:13-17). Why is this important for Mark’s purpose?</p>
<p>January 16</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 6</p>	<p>* In Mark 1-3, the “unclean” people followed Jesus. In Mark 6, the people in his hometown reject Jesus. Mark shows that people will respond to the gospel in different ways. It isn’t enough to hear the gospel, we must respond to the gospel.</p> <p>? The parable in Mark 4:1-25 teaches the importance of responding to truth in the right way. Each of the soils receives the same seed (the Word of God), but each responds differently. As you read, ask yourself, “Which of these soils am I?”</p>
<p>January 17</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 7</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 8</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 9</p>	<p>* The Pharisees were another group that rejected Jesus’ teaching. They were considered the “best” of the Jewish people, but they resented Jesus’ demands for true discipleship. Although they were careful about external laws, Jesus insisted that sin starts in the heart and that true discipleship requires a change of the heart.</p> <p>? Why did people like the Gentile woman in Mark 7:24-30 trust Jesus while religious leaders rejected him (Mk 8:11-13)? Why do you think he was so attractive to the poor, the sinful, and the needy?</p> <p>? In Mark 8:34-37, Jesus shows the cost of discipleship. To be Jesus’ disciple, we must take up our “cross.” A cross was more than discomfort; a cross meant death. To be a disciple means that we must die to our own desires and ambitions. Paul will later write to Christians, “Put to death anything sinful in you.” As you read Mark 8, ask, “What is my cross? What will it cost me to be a disciple of Jesus?” Then compare the cost of discipleship to the incredible value of your eternal soul.</p>
<p>January 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 11</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 12</p>	<p>* Mark 10:45 is the key verse of Mark. Jesus came to accomplish two goals: to serve and to give his life as a ransom. Mark 1-10 looks at Jesus’ service to the people around him. Mark 11-16 looks at his sacrifice for all mankind at Calvary.</p> <p>? In Mark 10, Jesus required a rich man to sell everything and give it to the poor. But in other places, Jesus does not require this. Why did Jesus demand this sacrifice of this rich young man? (The answer is found in Mark 8:34-37.)</p> <p>? Compare the rich man in Mark 10 to the poor widow in Mark 12:41-44. What does it cost to be a disciple? It costs <u>anything</u> that we value more than Christ.</p>

<p>January 19</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 13</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 14</p>	<p>* Throughout the Gospel of Mark, we have seen how much it costs us to be a disciple of Jesus. In Mark 14, we see how much it cost Jesus to provide salvation for us. In Mark 14:36, Jesus prayed, “Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” Discipleship requires that we obey God without reservation. Providing for our salvation required Jesus to submit fully to the Father’s will.</p> <p>? In Mark 13, Jesus is responding to a question about the end of time (13:4). Jesus responds with an answer that gives signs of the end of time <i>but</i> is not very clear. Why do you think Jesus’ answer is so vague? Do you think it is related to 13:33? We are always supposed to be “awake” and “on guard” to remain prepared for Jesus’ return.</p> <p>? Jesus prayed to his Father, “Not what I will, but what you will.” Do you pray the same prayer? Are you living in daily surrender to the Father’s will?</p>
<p>January 20</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mark 16</p>	<p>* The other gospels give much more detail about Jesus’ trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. The Gospel of Mark is much briefer. Because he is writing to a Roman audience, Mark gives fewer details that would not interest a non-Jewish audience. However, the climax of his Gospel comes from a Roman centurion (a witness with great authority for Roman readers), “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39)</p> <p>? Pilate crucified Jesus not because he believed Jesus was guilty but to “satisfy the crowd” (15:15). Which matters more to you – truth or the approval of the people around you?</p> <p>? At the end of Mark, the Roman centurion said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” As you review this week’s reading, what is the greatest evidence you have seen for Jesus’ deity? What is the greatest proof that Jesus was truly the Son of God?</p>
<p>Weekly Summary</p>	<p>Write down one “big lesson” that you have learned from this week’s readings. Each day next week, review this lesson and ask God to help you to apply the lesson in your daily life.</p>

Week 4

<p>January 22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 5 	<p>* Exodus continues the story of God’s people that started in Genesis. Genesis ended with God’s chosen people in Egypt instead of Canaan, the land of promise. Exodus tells how God protected His people in Egypt and then led them out of captivity. Exodus begins 400 years after Genesis 50. The Pharaoh who honored Joseph is dead and now the people of Israel are treated as slaves.</p> <p>? As you read the early life of Moses, notice how God protected and prepared His servant. At birth, God protected Moses from Pharaoh’s order to kill all male infants. God provided a way for Moses to grow up in Pharaoh’s house. This prepared Moses to be a leader who understood Egyptian law. How has God prepared you to serve Him?</p> <p>? In Exodus 2:23-25, God heard the cry of His people. When you see the suffering of Christians around the world, do you believe that God still hears the cries of His people?</p>
<p>January 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 9 	<p>* The plagues were a sign of God’s sovereignty – both to Egypt and to Israel. The plagues showed that Jehovah was stronger than the false Egyptian gods. The people of Israel needed to see God’s sovereignty to know that they could trust Him to lead them out of Egypt and into the land of promise, Canaan.</p> <p>? In spite of miraculous signs and terrible plagues, Pharaoh continued to reject God’s warnings. This seems to be human nature; we continue a sinful path in spite of repeated warnings. Why? Are there areas of your life where you are ignoring God’s warning?</p>
<p>January 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 13 	<p>* For the rest of Israel’s history, the Passover supper was an important memorial. This supper looked back to God’s deliverance from Egypt. It also looked forward to the promise of a Messiah who would fulfill completely the promises of deliverance. At the Last Supper, Jesus testified that He was the fulfillment of the promises made in the Passover. His blood became the eternal sacrifice for our sin. His blood delivers us from bondage to sin.</p> <p>? Each of the plagues was an attack on the false gods of Egypt. (For instance, the Egyptians worshiped Heket, a goddess represented by a frog. Moses covered the land with frogs. The God of Moses was more powerful than Heket.) What false gods do we worship in our world today (money, education, prestige)? Are Christians tempted to put these gods before the true God?</p> <p>? As the plagues increased, Pharaoh tried to bargain with God (Ex 9:27-28; 10:7-11; 10:24-27). Each time, Pharaoh gave up a bit more, but he refused full obedience? God requires complete obedience. Are there areas in your life in which you are trying to bargain with God rather than surrendering fully to His will?</p>
<p>January 25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 16 <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 17 	<p>* As soon as the people of Israel were delivered from Egypt, they began to show their lack of trust in God (Ex 14:10-12; 16: 2-3; 17:2-3). In spite of the miracles of the plagues and the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, they doubted that God would take care of them. Much of the time in the wilderness, God was teaching His people to trust Him.</p> <p>? Are you prone to grumbling like the people of Israel? What does today’s reading teach you about the danger of grumbling rather than trusting in God? Is it possible to both grumble <i>and</i> trust completely in God? Or does trust replace grumbling?</p> <p>? As you read these chapters, reflect on God’s continuing grace and mercy on Israel. Then take time to reflect on His amazing grace and mercy in your life.</p>

<p>January 26</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 19</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 20</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 21</p>	<p>* Exodus 1-19 shows how God rescued Israel from Egypt. The rest of Exodus shows how God built a relationship with His people. When they left Egypt, the people of Israel still knew little about Jehovah. Through the Law, through His provision in the wilderness, and through the teaching of Moses, God revealed Himself to Israel and established a relationship with His people.</p> <p>? In Exodus 18, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came to see Moses. He warned Moses that he was trying to do too much and would soon tire from the heavy burden. He taught Moses how to delegate responsibility to other people. Do you have someone in your life who is able to speak openly to warn you of dangers in your life and ministry? Do you listen to their warnings?</p> <p>* As you read the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17), notice how each command is based on love. Jesus will later say that "All the law is summed up in two commands: Love God and love your neighbor." The first four commandments (20:3-11) are an expression of our love for God. The last six commandments (20:12-17) are an expression of our love for other people. Love fulfills the law.</p>
<p>January 27</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 22</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 23</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 24</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 25</p>	<p>* Exodus 23:20-33 is an important preparation for the later story of Israel entering the land of Canaan. God tells Israel how he will drive out the Canaanites and He warns them against worshipping the gods of the Canaanites. When Israel later ignored this warning, it brought trouble for the people of Israel.</p> <p>? As you read the laws of restitution (Ex 21:33-22:15), notice how just God's law is. Rather than seeking vengeance (the goal of most ancient laws), God sought justice. The system of restitution allowed a person to be restored to relationship with the victim of his crime. When someone wrongs you, do you seek restoration or vengeance?</p> <p>? As you read the laws of social justice (Ex 22:21-27), think about the role of mercy in our legal system and our world. In your life, what do you do to serve the widow and the fatherless? How do you meet the needs of the poor? The law of Moses provided a model for showing love to the needy.</p>
<p>Weekly Summary</p>	<p>Write down one "big lesson" that you have learned from this week's readings. Each day next week, review this lesson and ask God to help you to apply the lesson in your daily life.</p>