

GOD'S BIG PICTURE –

9. *The Gospel is ...* (Mark 10: 32-45)

Q1: Read Mark 1: 1. What is Mark's book all about? How does this divide Mark into two halves? (cf. Mark 8: 29; 15: 39)

Q2: Read Mark 1: 14-15. What was the content of the 'good news'? Put that into your own words. How should this impact how we live and how we evangelise?

Read **Mark 10: 32 – 45**

Q3: Compare the cross prediction of vs. 33-34 with those in 8: 31 and 9: 31. What does this final prediction add to our understanding? Why does Mark describe the reactions of the disciples and those following?

Q4: Why does Jesus say, in v 38, that James and John do not know what they are asking? How does their response to the question in v 36 demonstrate their lack of understanding?

Q5: What are the cup and baptism that Jesus talks about in v 38? Can they / will they drink the cup and undergo the baptism or not? In what sense? How does v 40 fit in?

Q6: What point is Jesus making in vs. 42-44? What are the contrasts? How does v 45 connect with this, and with the rest of Jesus' teaching? How does v 45 relate back to Isaiah 53, which we looked at last time? (If you have time see how Isaiah 35: 1-10 fits the context of Mark 10. Compare Isaiah 35: 10 with Mark 10: 45.)

Q7: What practical difference should this view of 'servant leadership' make to us? In our personal lives? In our church?



God's Big Picture Bible Overview



No. 9 (The Kingdom) Matthew - John

1. Why were they written?

Q: **READ: Luke 1: 1-4; John 20: 30-31** What reasons do Luke and John give for writing their Gospels? Do all four Gospels have exactly the same purpose? Explain your answer.

Matthew, Mark and Luke are collectively known as the 'Synoptic Gospels' (synopsis = 'an overall view'). They cover very similar material (e.g. **Matthew** contains 92% of **Mark**). Although they have slightly different target audiences – e.g. **Matthew** is primarily writing to Jews, hence he is constantly showing how Jesus fulfilled the OT; **Matthew** shows Jesus as 'King' (e.g. Matthew 2: 2; 27: 37) and as 'Teacher' (e.g. 5: 1-2 cf. Exodus 19-20). **Luke** is writing to Gentiles as well. Therefore he stresses the universality of the Gospel (e.g. Luke 7: 1-10 cf. Matthew 8: 5-13). **Mark** explains things to those living in Rome.

2. The Synoptics

Q: READ: Luke 14: 25-27; Matthew 10: 37-39 How does the passage in Matthew help us to interpret Luke? What do we gain in having the three synoptic Gospels?

3. The Case for the Prosecution

Q: READ: Matthew 28: 2-7; Mark 16: 4-7; Luke 24: 1-6 Is the evidence conflicting? How many men or angels were there?

Just as different views of a 3D object help us to build up the whole picture, so Matthew, Mark and Luke give us a 'synopsis' of the ministry of Jesus. We must remember that the Gospel writers are giving their *description* of events, they are not independent witnesses under *cross-examination*.

4. The Gospel Message

Q: READ: Mark 1: 15; 4: 11; 10: 14-15; 15: 43 What little phrase does Jesus keep using to sum up his message? What do you think he means by it?

Mark's Gospel is all about the Kingdom of God, and how Jesus is the King! The early chapters present examples of Jesus' kingly authority.

5. The Messiah (Old & New)

Q: READ: Psalm 110; Mark 12: 35-37 How does Jesus interpret Psalm 110? However, what overall picture of the Messiah does this Psalm paint? What kind of Messiah would the Jews be expecting?

6. The Messianic 'Secret'

Q: READ: Mark 8: 27-33 How had Peter got it so right and yet so wrong? Why should Jesus warn him to keep quiet, in verse 30?

The Kingdom was 'near' because the King was here! Jesus was the promised Messiah / King and so to enter the Kingdom means to receive Jesus as King. However, this King did not come to kick out the Romans, he came to die. A disproportionate amount of space is given, in each Gospel, to Jesus' teaching about his death and to his trial, crucifixion and resurrection.

His kingdom is to go out into all the world (Matthew 28: 18-20), spreading to all who accept him as King. However, there will not be a 'full' kingdom until the King returns in glory (Mark 8: 38). This helps to explain the '*now and not yet*' tension in the Gospels when Jesus talks about the kingdom (e.g. Matthew 12: 28; Mark 1: 15; 9: 1; Luke 17: 20-21; 22: 18). His kingdom is spreading, but one day all will submit to his rule.

7. What about John?

Q: READ: John 2: 12-22; Mark 11: 15-19 How do you account for the fact that John has the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, but the Synoptics have it almost at the end?

*All four of the Gospels are theological reflection on historical fact. None of them necessarily intend to be strictly chronological. All of them arrange their material in order to make theological points (e.g. Mark 11: 12-21 cf. Hosea 9: 10). However, it does appear that John was written later than the others, and intends to be even more of a theological reflection than the other three. Clement of Alexandria asserted: "Last of all John, perceiving that the bodily facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel." (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.14.7)*