

Training Today's Twelve

Online Course / Workshop / Seminar



Scriptural Study Center

"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:13).

Introduction

to the *Gospel of Mark*
(originally known as *The Memoirs of Peter*),
and the author of this earliest Gospel

“And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).

Jesus chose *twelve* to be his close students and companions. He instructed them with care, showed them how to express their own God-given Christliness in healing and teaching, and prepared them to carry on the work our Father gave him to save mankind and uplift consciousness to a purer spirituality.



In Hebrew literature, *twelve* is the number of holy completeness, or perfection of government. Reverend James Stalker¹ notes that Jesus gave the chosen twelve a "more thorough instruction than to the crowd ... [explaining] to them in private whatever was obscure in his public teaching" (77).

In this course, as the present day "twelve," we will take special care to assimilate Jesus' private teachings.

¹ Rev. James Stalker, M.A., author of *Life of Christ*.

The word disciple comes from *mathetes* (student; pupil), or *mathetria*, female student. Just as a student of mathematics requires precision in calculations, the pupil of Christ Jesus requires exactness in learning and applying the divine rules and laws he elucidates. “Christians, like students in mathematics,” writes Mary Baker Eddy², “should be working up to those higher rules of Life which Jesus taught and proved” (Mis. 29).

The purpose of this course is to bring us together under the wing of the Master, Christ Jesus, as his close, every day disciples (students), to companion with him in Spirit, and actively obey his command, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). We are to “lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (18). Our aim is to allow the Christ to be stamped upon our very being — to be like him — and gratefully fulfill our mission as faithful apostles (*ones sent*) to continue his work in accord with God’s will.



CALLED and CHOSEN

Serious students of the Gospels are *called* and *chosen*. Jesus explains, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you ... that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you (John 15:16). Take a moment and ponder the fact that you are chosen and ordained. Write this in your Journal. Reflect on

² Mary Baker Eddy, author of *Miscellaneous Writings (Mis.)* and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (S&H)*.

what this means. Feel the gravity of it. Conform your life and identity around this, as there is nothing higher or more true about you than this.

When the prophet, Jeremiah, was called, he at first felt unready and unprepared. God, divine Mind, had told him, “ I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:4). Jeremiah thought he could not do it; he says, “I am a child” — newly learning God’s Word (v.6). But God, divine Love, replies, “Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak” (v. 7).

When you are chosen, there is no mistake — and no choice. The Holy Spirit takes over. Everything in your life adjusts. Just give your consent. Jonah tried to resist his calling; he sailed in an opposite direction from God’s direction, suffered for it, and finally returned to do God’s will — saving many in Nineveh from sin and its negative or devastating effects. Just give your consent. You are chosen and blessed. Listen for God’s direction and then actively follow.

This course places us in the pupillage of Christ Jesus who said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (*Matthew 28:20*). The Christ and the Holy Spirit interpret the Word of these Gospels directly to our understanding and centers us in universal Truth. Jesus’ disciples (students) observed and studied him every day. They were taught by him every day for several years. How he impressed himself upon these twelve! Let him impress himself upon you and change you forever for good. Let us stand in relation to Christ in that same way — following, observing, listening, learning, and practicing actively in emulation of Jesus.

Our Motto for Mark:

“...whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein,
he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work,
this man shall be blessed in his deed” (*James 1:25*).

Those chosen are “doers.” Be a doer. What will you do tonight? What will you do today? What will you do purposefully to be like him whom you are following. Whatever that is receives his blessing and has the power of the Christ in it. What you could do may range from giving a helping hand to someone, or just a smile. to consecrated healing prayer for someone, or some massive situation, where there is a need.

The world today is in great need of highly trained and active disciples/apostles. Stalker explains that the twelve “were at first only ordinary disciples like many others,” but then he “called them to give up their ordinary employments and be with him constantly. He “multiplied himself” through them ... commissioned them to teach” and gave them the Holy Spirit (77-8). God is Good; He is “light in whom there is no darkness at all” (*1 John* 1:5). God is infinite good in whom is no evil at all. Healing, purification, and harmonious adjustments demonstrate this spiritual fact.

Rev. Stalker writes the following beautiful inferences gleaned from the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ relationship to his students: “He educated them with the most affectionate patience ... Never forgetting for a moment the part they were to play in the future, he made their training his most constant work ... The most important part of their training was the silent and constant influence of his character on theirs” (79-80).

You reflect the goodness of God, His pure Being. The Spirit is upon you now, a gift freely given by divine Love.

ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Date: between AD 63 and 70 (earliest of the Gospels, and the shortest)

Location: Rome

Target Audience: Gentiles

Original Language: Greek

Author: John Marcus

Early Christian Greek-philosopher-apologist, Justin Martyr (AD 100-165), quotes from the *Gospel of Mark*, and calls it “the Memoirs of Peter” (G. F. Maclear 13)³.

Irenaeus⁴ (AD 120-203) writes that “after the decease of [Peter and Paul], Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself also handed down to us in writing the things which are preached by Peter” (Eusebius v.8)⁵. So Peter’s teaching is the basis of Mark’s Gospel.

Eusebius (l.c.) further records a quote from Papias⁶ (AD 70-163): “And John the presbyter also said this, Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but, as before said, was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give a history of our Lord's discourses. Wherefore Mark has not erred in any thing.”

St. Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215) writes of those in Rome who heard Peter speak who “urged Mark, as one who had followed him from a distant time and remembered what he said, to record what he stated; and that he, having made his Gospel, gave it to those who made the request of him” (Maclear 13-14).

Origin writes, “Mark made his Gospel as Peter guided him” (Eusebius VI 25).

Tertullian (AD 190-220) affirms that “the Gospel of Mark is maintained to be Peter’s,” while Jerome (AD 346-420) tells us that the “Gospel of Mark was composed, Peter relating, and he writing” (Maclear 14).

Maclear notes that it is “the keen memory of the Apostle [Peter] recalling scenes in which he had often borne a prominent part, and of which he was an eye-witness, we owe the graphic colouring, the picturesque touches, the minuteness of detail, which his

³ The Rev. G. F. Maclear, D.D., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. 1897

⁴ Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon. Leading Christian theologian of second century.

⁵ Eusebius. *The History of the Church*. Eusebius is a 3d century historian-bishop

⁶ Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, Hearer of John, companion of Polykarp, author of *An Interpretation of the Sayings of the Lord*, AD 130.

‘interpreter’ reverently preserved, and faithfully enshrined in the pages of his Gospel” (14). Peter is mentioned in Mark’s Gospel in ways not seen in the others (*Mark* 1:36; 11:21; 13:3; 16:7).

Mark is the shortest Gospel. It has a sense of quickness, supported by Mark’s consistent use of present tense — everything is immediate. The phrase, “and straightway,” is used 27 times.

Westcott’s Introduction to *Mark* points out that in “substance, style, and treatment, the Greek of Mark is essentially a transcript from life. The details which were originally addressed to the vigorous intelligence of Roman hearers are still pregnant with instruction for us” (Maclear 20).

Maclear points out that Mark conveys Peter’s remembrance of Jesus’ human characteristics seen in grieving (7:34; 8:12), in love (10:21), in compassion (6:34), in wonder (6:6), in righteous indignation (3:5; 8:12; 1:14), in hunger (11:12), in desire for rest (6:31), and sleep (4:38).

MARK’S AUDIENCE. There are only two references to the Old Testament in Mark’s Gospel: *Malachi* 3:1 and *Isaiah* 40:3. Jewish words are explained to his intended audience (Greek readers) such as *Corban* (7:11), and *Abba* (14:36). On the other hand, Mark uses Latin terms not found in the other Gospels, such as *quadrants* which is a farthing (12:22); *satisfacere*, to content, and more. This is textual evidence that he was writing for a Gentile audience.

When you write, determine your intended audience. Craft God’s message as He gives it to you, with audience in mind. Look at Jesus’ words recorded in the Gospels, and see how his message and tone fits the audience and occasion. The one constant in his communication (and in ours) is to speak what the Father gives us to say.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Last name: Marcus “Mark”

First name: John

Mother: Jewish / **Father:** Greek

Cousin: Barnabas — friend and companion of Paul

Birthplace: Jerusalem

The Gospels of *Matthew* and *John* were written by Jesus’ immediate disciples, but the Gospels of *Mark* and *Luke* were not. Mark is believed to have seen Jesus momentarily as he made his way to the place of crucifixion. The text that alludes to this fact reads: “And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him:” (*Mark* 14:51). A closer relationship is likely in that which is recorded in the “Secret Gospel of Mark,” where this “young man” is raised from the dead and instructed to be baptized by our Master. See details in “Secret Gospel of Mark” lecture in this course.

Mark was the son of a Jewish woman named Mary, “of some position” (Maclear), who lived in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). Peter went to Mark’s mother’s home for refuge after being delivered by the angel from the depths of a prison (Acts 12:12). Peter calls Mark “his son” (*1 Peter* 5:13). As we come closer and closer to bringing the essence and spiritual sense of this Gospel to our heart and life, we come closer to Jesus through that which was imparted to Peter whose ultimate mission was “feed my lambs ... feed my sheep.” Therefore, a study of Mark should be accompanied by immediate application to life situations for ourselves and others, to feeding the Word to those who are new to it (lambs), and to those who have studied a long time (sheep). The lambs and sheep will listen, recognize the voice of Truth, and follow. Your mission with the study of Mark is to feed His sheep — feed them in some way each day.

Maclear tells us that *Marcus* was Mark's Latin surname (last name). The first mention of Mark is in Acts 12 (12:12 and 25). It reads, "John, whose surname was Mark." John is Mark's *first* name. His name becomes "Mark" in Acts 15:39 and thereafter (Col. 4:10, Philemon 24, II Tim. 4:11). Mark was a "relative of Barnabas, comfort to Paul, and profitable for the ministry" (11). Mark is with Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome (AD 61-63). Paul acknowledges Mark as one of his "fellow-laborers unto the kingdom of God," who had been a "comfort" to him in prison (Col. 4:10-11). In AD 68, Paul charges Timothy to bring Mark with him to Rome, during Paul's second imprisonment.

Eusebius writes that upon the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Mark went to Egypt and founded the church of Alexandria. Mark was also martyred. The true sense of martyrdom is the elevation of thought above the material and personal — it is a joyful giving up of the unreal, the evil that is so unlike God, Good, for the real, the harmony and science of Being.