

14. **“Are you the Christ?”** Mark 14:53–65
// Matthew 26:57–68; Luke 22:54, 63–71; John 18:12–15, 19–24
- In more ways than one, this was a critical question. It was certainly so in the charged atmosphere of the council comprising “all the chief priest and the elders and the scribes” (14:53). And it ever remains a critical question. Was Jesus the one He claimed to be? Was He the promised Messiah? Was He the incarnate Son of God? Do we today acknowledge Him as such?

15. **“What shall I do with Jesus?”** (15:12) Mark 15:1–15
// Matthew 27:1–2, 11–26; Luke 23:1–25; John 18:28–19:16
- This was a troubling question, and a deeply personal question, for Herod. The crowds who had welcomed Jesus into the city with open arms, only days earlier, now wanted to be rid of Him. Doubtless they were stirred up by the enemies of Jesus – the important and powerful religious leaders of the day who were envious of Him (Matthew 27:18) – but Herod could find no fault in Jesus and said so publicly (Luke 23:4).
- Herod thought long and hard about the question, whilst the frenzied crowd dismissed it in a moment. How shall we respond to that question – as each of us is obliged, sooner or later, to do?

16. **Where is Jesus now?** Mark 16:1–8
// Matthew 28:1–8; Luke 24:1–8; John 20:1,2
- The angels at the tomb asked and answered a glorious question: “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” (Luke 24:5,6) The incontrovertible fact of the resurrection of Christ needs to be proclaimed time and again, for it is the historical bedrock on which the Christian faith is based: see Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, especially verses 14–17.

English, Donald (1992, repr.2010); *The Message of Mark*; Nottingham, IVP
Ferguson, Sinclair (1999, repr. 2009); *Let’s Study Mark*; Edinburgh, Banner of Truth
Hendriksen, William (1975, British edition 1976); *The Gospel of Mark*; Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust
Lenski, R.C.H. (1946, paperback edition 2008); *The Interpretation of Mark’s Gospel*;
Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress
Wilmshurt, Steve (2011); *A Ransom for Many*; Darlington, Evangelical Press

Read Mark and inwardly digest...

Jesus Questions

Each of the questions below was addressed to Jesus, was prompted by His ministry or is suggested by the passage given. One question has been chosen from each chapter of Mark’s gospel, which will be the focus for our Sunday-morning services and mid-week Bible Study groups during the spring term of 2020.

1. **“What have you to do with us, Jesus?”** (1:24, cf 5:7) Mark 1:21–28
// Luke 4:31–37

Heard in the synagogue, this challenging question was the cry of “a man with an unclean spirit” who recognised Jesus as “the Holy One of God.” In this incident, Jesus proved to everyone His unique authority (22,27; for more about Jesus’s authority, see Mark 11:27–33).

2. **“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”** (2:7) Mark 2:1–12
// Matthew 9:2–8; Luke 5:18–26

This very informed question was posed by “some of the scribes ... in their hearts”. They were right about the written word of God, but wrong about the living Word of God; they could see what God had said, but could not see that God had come; they failed to recognise Jesus as the Son of God.

3. **Mad, bad or God?** Mark 3:20–35
// Matthew 12:22–37, 46–50; Luke 11:14–23; Luke 8:19–21

This is a key question about Jesus. Even many of those who knew Him best failed to recognise who He was (3:21; cf 6:1–6). But if not mad or bad, He had to be God – a fact that has profound implications for us all!

4. **“Teacher, do you not care...?”** (4:38b) Mark 4:35–41
// Matthew 8:18–27; Luke 8:22–25

This frightened question was addressed to Jesus at the height of an evening storm at sea. He had taught “many things in parables” (4:2) and, to His apostles, had explained both the reason for using parables and the meaning of what has become one of His most famous stories (4:10–20). But the fearful twelve still had much to learn about faith...

5. **“Why trouble the Teacher any further?”** (5:35b) Mark 5:21–43
// Matthew 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56
This sad question was addressed to Jairus by someone from his household who had come to tell him that his twelve-year-old daughter, whose grave illness had prompted him urgently to seek Jesus’s help, had died.
6. **How can we do what Jesus commands?** Mark 6:32–44
// Matthew 14:13–21; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–13
This bemused question was surely in the minds of Jesus’s disciples – and, indeed, was spoken aloud by them on a later occasion: see Mark 8:4 in context. They simply could not think how Jesus expected them to follow His direction and feed the vast crowd of people – the count of five thousand included only the men present – who had followed Him.
Is there a lesson here for Christ’s followers today? Last term we studied Philippians, so some people should recall Philippians 4:13!
7. **Isn’t religion all about keeping rules?** Mark 7:1–23
// Matthew 15:1–28
This legalistic question lay behind the actual question posed by the Pharisees and scribes. Theirs was a religion of rules, many of them man-made, so it is unsurprising that they asked why Jesus’s disciples did “not walk according to the tradition of the elders” (7:5). This indicates the emphasis of religious people of all faiths: what man should do for God. The glory of the Christian gospel is that it concerns what God has done for man.
8. **Who is this Jesus?** Mark 8:27–30
// Matthew 16:13–20; Luke 9:18–21
This recurrent question emerged time and again in Jesus’s day, and has kept coming up ever since. The Pharisees “began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven” (8:11–13). There were, in fact, signs galore – His ministry was “attested ... with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him” – but the Pharisees still refused to believe in Him and condemned Him to death (Acts 2:22,23). Still today people ask for proof, even of the existence of God, yet ignore the solid testimonies of both creation and history. Note that the question of who Jesus is continues to be answered in Mark 8:31–9:7 and parallel passages.
9. **“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”** Mark 9:33–37
// Matthew 18:1–5; Luke 9:46–48; see also Mark 10:35–45 and John 13:1–20
A revealing question! What does it mean to be great? Is there a difference between greatness in human society and greatness in the kingdom of God? What does the example of Christ teach us? Does the believer’s closeness to Christ confer some preferment on him/her?
10. **“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”** Mark 10:13–31
// Matthew 19:16–30; Luke 18:18–30
This vital question was posed by a “young man ... [who] had great possessions” (Matthew 19:22), “a ruler ... [who] was extremely rich” (Luke 18:18,23). Jesus’s further explanation astonished His disciples.
11. **“What are you doing?”** Mark 11:1–11, 27–33
verses 1–11 // Matthew 21:1–11; Luke 19:29–44; John 12:12–19
verses 27–33 // Matthew 21:23–27; Luke 20:1–8
This somewhat accusatory question was asked of the disciples when they did what Jesus commanded them to do. The question hurled at Jesus by the chief priests and the scribes and the elders – “By what authority are you doing these things...?” (28) – is along similar lines. Still today God’s people are questioned accusingly about why they do what God commands.
12. **“Which commandment is the most important of all?”** Mark 12:28–34
// Matthew 22:34–40, 46
It’s a great question, and Jesus’s unequivocal answer silenced His hearers.
13. **“When will these things be?”** (13:4) Mark chapter 13
// Matthew 24; Luke 21:5–36
In His discourse on the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave a detailed answer to the obvious question that four of His apostles had asked Him privately concerning the fulfilment of the specific prophecies that He had given.
This is a difficult chapter. Ferguson suggests helpfully that the context of Jesus’s teaching is an important clue to its content, noting that “the destruction of the temple and the city [of Jerusalem] ... is the centrepiece of Jesus’s discussions.” Those events unfolded dramatically in AD 70.