

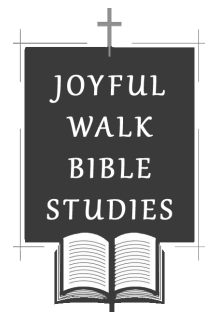


Heartbreak to Hope

Good news from Mark

Let your heartbreak, pain and uncertainty be overcome by Christ's hope, healing and love.

MELANIE NEWTON



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Using This Study Guide

This study guide consists of 11 Lessons covering the gospel of Mark. Since Mark consists of 16 chapters, we will need to cover more than one chapter in most of the lessons. If you cannot do the entire lesson one week, please read the Bible passage covered by the lesson.

THE BASIC STUDY

Each Lesson includes core questions covering the passage narrative. These core questions will take you through the process of inductive Bible study—observation, interpretation, and application. The Inductive process is the best way to study the Bible. The process is more easily understood in the context of answering these questions:

- ✓ What does the passage say? (*Observation: what's actually there*) **Discover the Facts** questions are the observation questions in this study.
- ✓ What does it mean? (*Interpretation: the author's intended meaning, leading to what it means for us today*)
- ✓ How does this apply to me today? (*Application: making it personal*) **Heartbreak to Hope** questions are the application questions in this study. These questions will lead you to introspection and application of a specific truth to your life.

STUDY ENHANCEMENTS

To aid in proper interpretation and application of the study, five additional study aids are located where appropriate in the Lesson:

- ✓ Historical Insights
- ✓ Scriptural Insights
- ✓ From the Greek/Hebrew (definitions of Greek or Hebrew words)
- ✓ Focus on the Meaning
- ✓ Think About It (thoughtful reflection)

Other useful study tools: Use online tools or apps (blueletterbible.org or “Blue Letter Bible app” is especially helpful) to find *cross references* (verses with similar content to what you are studying) and meanings of the *original Greek words or phrases* used (usually called “interlinear”). You can also look at any verse in *various Bible translations* to help with understanding what it is saying. Feel free to add your own study at the end of each lesson.

PODCASTS

Find podcasts coordinating with these lessons at melanienewton.com/podcasts and most other podcast channels. Follow along with the “Podcast Listener Guides” for each lesson.

BIBLE BASICS

The Bible is one book containing a collection of 66 books combined together for our benefit. It is divided into two main parts: Old Testament and New Testament.

The Old Testament tells the story of the beginning of the world and God's promises to mankind given through the nation of Israel. All the stories and messages in the Old Testament lead up to Jesus Christ's coming to the earth.

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus Christ, the early Christians, and God's promises to all those who believe in Jesus. You can think of the Old Testament as "before Christ" and the New Testament as "after Christ."

Each book of the Bible is divided into chapters and verses within those chapters to make it easier to study. Verses are like line numbers. Not in the original writings. Bible references include the book name, chapter number and verse number(s). For example, Mark 12:28 refers to the New Testament book of Mark, the 12th chapter, and verse 28 within that 12th chapter. Printed Bibles have a "Table of Contents" in the front to help you locate books by page number. Bible apps for your phone or tablet also have a contents list by book and chapter.

We will be mostly in the New Testament. It was originally written in Greek. We primarily used the NIV® (New International Version) in the preparation of these Lessons. I recommend that you use one of the more direct English translations of the Bible for your personal study (i.e., NIV, ESV, NAS, NET, NKJ). The NLT (New Living Translation) and the MSG (The Message) versions use modern everyday language to illustrate what a passage is saying and can help you to understand difficult passages. You can find all these translations in most Bible Apps or online at various websites such as biblegateway.com and Bible.com.

This study capitalizes certain pronouns referring to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit—He, Him, His, Himself—just to make the reading of the study information less confusing. Some Bible translations likewise capitalize those pronouns referring to God; others do not. It is simply a matter of preference, not a requirement.

NEW TESTAMENT SUMMARY

The New Testament opens with the births of John (the Baptist) and Jesus. About 30 years later, John challenged the Jews to indicate their repentance (turning from sin and toward God) by submitting to water baptism—a familiar Old Testament practice used for repentance as well as when a Gentile (non-Jew) converted to Judaism (to be washed clean of idolatry).

Jesus, God's incarnate Son, publicly showed the world what God is like and taught His perfect ways for 3 – 3½ years. After preparing 12 disciples to continue Christ's earthly work, He died voluntarily on a cross for mankind's sin, rose from the dead, and returned to heaven.

The account of Jesus' earthly life is recorded in 4 books known as the Gospels (the biblical books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John named after the compiler of each account).

After Jesus' return to heaven, the followers of Christ were then empowered by the Holy Spirit and spread God's salvation message among the Jews, a number of whom believed in Christ. The apostle Paul and others carried the good news to the Gentiles during 3 missionary journeys (much of this recorded in the book of Acts).

Paul wrote 13 New Testament letters to churches & individuals (Romans through Philemon). The section in our Bible from Hebrews to Jude contains 8 additional letters penned by five men,

including two apostles (Peter and John) and two of Jesus' half-brothers (James and Jude). The author of Hebrews is unknown.

The apostle John also recorded Revelation, a summary of God's final plan for our world. The Bible ends as it began with a new, sinless creation.

DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDELINES

1. **Attend consistently** whether your Lesson is done or not. You'll learn from the other women, and they want to get to know you.
2. **Set aside time** to work through the study questions. The goal of Bible study is to get to know Jesus. He will change your life.
3. **Share your insights** from your personal study time. As you spend time in the Bible, Jesus will teach you truth through His Spirit inside you.
4. **Respect each other's insights.** Listen thoughtfully. Encourage each other as you interact. Refrain from dominating the discussion if you have a tendency to be talkative. 😊
5. **Celebrate our unity** in Christ. Avoid bringing up controversial subjects such as politics, divisive issues, and denominational differences.
6. **Maintain confidentiality.** Remember that anything shared during the group time is not to leave the **group** (unless permission is granted by the one sharing).
7. **Pray for one another** as sisters in Christ.
8. **Get to know the women** in your group. Please do not use your small group members for solicitation purposes for home businesses, though.

Enjoy your Joyful Walk Bible Study!

Recommended: Listen to the podcast “God Works in the Background of Life” at melanienewton.com/podcasts as an introduction to the whole study.

God Works in the Background of Life

Before Jesus came, there had been 400 years of “silence” from God. No prophets had been speaking or writing anything from God to the people during that time. But, in that time, God was at work in the background to prepare the way for answering the prayers of His people for deliverance.

THE PRESENCE OF THE SYNAGOGUE

- In 586 BC, Israel found herself in exile in Babylon because of her idolatry. The Jews carried their scriptures with them, especially the Torah. They met together in community groups for worship and reading of their Scriptures in what we now know as synagogues.
- As a result, Judaism became a faith that could be practiced wherever the Torah scrolls could be carried. This helped to preserve Judaism and prepare the way for the Christian gospel. By Jesus’ time, Jews filled every land around the Mediterranean Sea.
- Synagogues were built all over the Greek and Roman world among the Gentile or non-Jewish people. The Jews shared the knowledge of the living and true God in their weekly worship times as God-fearing Gentiles would join them to worship God.
- The missionaries of the early church began their ministries among those dispersed Jews, using the weekly synagogue meetings as the platform for sharing the good news about Jesus to the Jews present as well as those God-fearing Gentiles.
- God was at work in the background to prepare the way for answering the prayers of the people for their Messiah to come to deliver them. And, part of His work included the dispersion of Jews in the Roman Empire and the development of the synagogue.

THE EASE OF A COMMON LANGUAGE

- After Alexander the Great’s conquests, Greek language and culture spread to all the conquered territories. Most people in the Mediterranean world learned to speak and write Greek. The Old Testament was translated into Greek (the Septuagint).
- Paul and other New Testament writers wrote in Greek which could be read everywhere in those countries influenced by the Greek culture.

ROMAN ROADS AND “PEACE”

- In the century before Jesus was born, Rome conquered Israel and the rest of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean.

- They brought “peace” to the whole region, although it was a forced peace. Law and order prevailed. Anyone who rebelled was quickly squashed by the powerful Roman army.
- The Romans built a system of roads so people could travel from the farthest reaches of the Empire back to mother Rome. Paul and the other missionaries of the first century utilized these roads for their travel as well available sea travel.

BABIES MUST BE BORN AND GROW UP.

- Thirty years before the Jewish people as a nation finally heard from God again, the angel Gabriel delivered the message to two people that their sons would be the ones through whom God would answer the prayers of His people for deliverance.
- But, before that happened, the babies had to be born, experience childhood, and grow up into men prepared to do their work. That took 30+ more years of waiting. Only a few people knew what was going on during this time. And, they didn’t really understand it. But, they did their part in the preparation.
- John the Baptist appeared on the scene at the appointed time in God’s plan. Jesus left his father’s carpentry shop a short time later and began His full-time ministry of teaching the people about getting ready for the Kingdom of God to come to them and healing their diseases.
- Through normal human birth and development, God was at work in the background to prepare the way for answering the prayers of all people for deliverance. He gets your need for hope.

THE NEED FOR HOPE

- God looked upon your life with compassion and provided a solution—His Son Jesus Christ. God in the flesh. God on earth. The God of hope and love.
- Jesus experienced human life for more than 30 years. He understands every single one of your heartaches because those were part of His life as well. When you go to Him in prayer, you can trust that He understands how you are feeling and what you are needing.

GOD IS STILL AT WORK IN THE BACKGROUND OF LIFE.

Can you look back now and recognize how God was at work on your behalf or for someone you love? Praise Him for that. Are you still waiting for God to answer a specific prayer of yours? Maybe our faithful God is preparing the background for answering your prayer tomorrow. Trust Him.

Let Jesus satisfy your heart with hope, healing, and love as you get to know Him and trust Him more each day.

Lesson 1: Silence Is Broken at Last!

DAY ONE STUDY

Ask the Lord Jesus to speak to you through His Word. Tell Him that you are listening.

The ABCs of Mark—Author, Background, and Context

Like any book you read, it always helps to know a bit about the author, the background setting for the story (i.e., past, present, future), and where the book fits into a series (that's the context). The same is true of Bible books.

AUTHOR — JOHN MARK

Since earliest times, John Mark was known to be the author of this gospel. It was common at the time for Jews to have two names. John was his Hebrew name; Mark was his Greek/Roman name. It is thought that he was from a wealthy family. In Mark 14:51-52, Mark may have written a veiled reference to himself since no other gospel writer mentions this incident. He describes a young man, likely a teenager, in a linen garment (his underwear, evidence of being wealthy) who followed Jesus out to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Mark was part of the Jerusalem church community, where he listened to the apostles' teaching. At times, the church would gather at his mother's house to pray. About 11 years after the resurrection, Mark left Jerusalem with his cousin Barnabas to go to Antioch in Syria. There, Barnabas and Paul headed up a growing church filled with non-Jews ("Gentiles").

Two years later, Mark traveled with Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey to Cyprus. A year later, when they got to what we know as southern Turkey, Mark left them and headed back to Jerusalem. We don't know the reasons behind his departure.

Three years later (as a 30-something), Barnabas and Paul were planning to head out on their second missionary trip. Barnabas wanted to take his cousin Mark. Paul said no, remembering how Mark had deserted them. Barnabas wanted to continue mentoring his cousin so he took Mark with him to Cyprus again. Paul took Silas and headed north to Turkey.

For the next 15-20 years, Mark traveled with Peter, listening to Peter's sermons and recording them. Peter probably had the greatest influence on Mark. When Mark was around 50, an aging Peter calls him "my son" in the letter we know as 1 Peter, written from Rome.

By this time, Mark's relationship with Paul was restored. Both times when Paul is in prison in Rome, Mark is there with him. Paul calls Mark his fellow worker and very useful to him. It is generally believed that Mark adapted Peter's preaching and teachings about Jesus into the book we now call "Mark," arranged and shaped as he was guided by the Holy Spirit. So, the young teen who knew Jesus as a youth had many experiences that shaped his life and led him to the work that God had in mind for him. (References to Mark in the New Testament are found in Acts 12:12; 13:4-5, 13; 15:36-41; Colossians 4:10-11; 2 Timothy 4:9-11 and 1 Peter 5:13)

BACKGROUND — WRITTEN FROM ROME TO ROMAN GENTILE CHRISTIANS

Since Mark was with both Peter and Paul in Rome, we can be confident that he wrote his book from there. Most of the Roman Christians were non-Jews (Gentiles) who were definitely not familiar with the Old Testament and spoke Latin, not Hebrew. So, Mark uses Latin terms, explains Jewish customs, and leaves out Old Testament quotes and genealogies. He also explains the Aramaic words that Jesus spoke (similar to Hebrew).

The Romans were designers, engineers, doers, slaveholders, soldiers, conquerors, and partiers. Because they were such action-oriented people, Mark writes in an action style. He frequently uses the words “immediately” and “right away”—7 times in chapter 1 alone. He writes mostly in the present tense when relating the stories of Christ so it feels like they are happening right now. He uses descriptive words and paints vivid word pictures so it feels like you are there in the crowd. In fact, because Mark briefly describes scenes and activities, he is called the photographer of the gospels. Each section of writing is like a snapshot from Jesus’ life. Think slideshow, Facebook or Instagram.

Mark was aware of the suffering that the Roman Christians were beginning to experience under the Roman Emperor named Nero—a cruel, crazy guy. This book was written when persecution against Christians was just starting in Nero’s reign. There are lots of references to suffering throughout Mark.

CONTEXT — WHERE IT FITS INTO THE BIBLE

When you look at your Bible’s table of contents, the first 4 books of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—are called the “Gospels” (meaning “good news,” referring to the good news about Jesus). The Gospels tell of the life of Jesus from different perspectives. Mark is thought to be the first gospel written though it’s not listed first in the New Testament. Matthew and Luke were written a couple of years after Mark and share a lot of the same content. John was written after all three.

The basic outline of Mark can be found in Peter’s sermon from Acts 10:36-43—John’s baptism, Jesus’ miracles and teaching, the crucifixion, the resurrection, then go and tell the good news.

Mark answers two significant questions in his writing: 1) Who is Jesus? 2) How can I follow Jesus even when it’s tough?

1. What grabbed your attention as you read the ABC’s of the book of Mark?

Heartbreak to Hope

This world is full of heartache and pain. Human distress is everywhere around us. Chronic illness. Persecution. Poverty. Unrealized dreams. Job struggles. Women and men are in bondage to guilt, fear, destructive behavior, and fatigue due to the burden of responsibilities. Broken relationships leave people with a sense of rejection, worthlessness and extreme loneliness. Add to those any feelings of uncertainty often revealed by the questions we ask about life. “When will I _____ (make a friend, find love, get married, have a baby, get a better job, etc.)?” “What will I do after _____ (graduation, my children grow up, this job ends, etc.)?” Where do you go for help?

Sadly, if you have been taught that God doesn’t care or is punishing you for something you’ve done wrong, you aren’t likely to trust Him for help. This may leave you feeling empty, confused, and without meaning and purpose. The Bible describes that as being “*without hope and without God in the world*” (Ephesians 2:12). Hopeless. Godless. A miserable existence characterized by heartbreak. But God looked upon your life with compassion and provided a solution—His Son Jesus Christ. God in the flesh. God on earth. The God of hope and love.

Jesus understands every single one of your heartaches. He experienced human life for more than 30 years. He gets your physical pain, rejection, strained relationships, abuse, grief, and impatience because those were part of His life as well. When you go to Him in prayer, you can trust that He understands, that He knows how you are feeling and what your needs are at that moment.

Jesus interacted with men and women everywhere He went. And, there were so many who had heartaches and pain, filled with uncertainty about their future. Jesus looked upon the crowds of people with compassion. He not only felt their need but also wanted to do something about it. Jesus Christ's plan to meet that need for every person was then, and is now, Himself.

Jesus is the light that gives you hope for every heartbreak that you experience.

All around us it is easy to see the darkness present in this world. Wickedness, greed, selfishness, cold-blooded violence... the darkness can quickly overwhelm a soul. But there is hope! Isaiah 9:2 predicted that those living in darkness would see a great light. Jesus was that light. And when you look at His life in the Gospel books you can see that He broke the darkness that was present in His land. He healed sick people, taught the curious how to live a life of purpose, and forgave the sins of those who were longing to be free from their guilt. He still does the same today. Our world is not completely dark. There is light that always dawns. (John Newton, *Advent for Restless Hearts*, p. 18)

Through this study of the gospel of Mark you will learn about Jesus' life on earth, how He related to people and why knowing Him brings hope to your life. Let your heartbreak, pain and uncertainty be overcome by Christ's hope, healing and love.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

2. What heartaches do you have right now? What is causing you pain? Where is your uncertainty?

Ask Jesus to overcome your heartbreak, pain and uncertainty with His hope, healing and love as you learn from the gospel of Mark.

Process of Bible Study

The inductive process is the best way to study the Bible. It includes 3 elements:

- *Observation*: What does it say? (What is in the biblical text as you read it) **Discover the Facts** questions in this study are observation questions.
- *Interpretation*: What does it mean? (The author's intended meaning to his audience, leading to what it means for us today)
- *Application*: What application can you make to life today? (What you learn personally) **Heartbreak to Hope** questions in this study are application questions.

We will spend a lot of our time on observation—seeing what’s actually there. Sometimes, we will seek understanding of the author’s intended meaning through additional study. You want to understand the passage before you try to apply it. It helps to have access to great resources to help with interpretation. Here are some online study resources that I use and can recommend.

- gotquestions.org (write out your question, follow “rabbit trails”)
- bible.org (search for more detail about subjects)
- blueletterbible.org or Blue Letter Bible app (translation comparisons, Greek word meanings, cross references)
- soniclight.com (check out Dr. Constable’s Study Notes on Mark)

Write a prayer to God in response to what He has shown you in this lesson.

DAY TWO STUDY

Ask the Lord Jesus to speak to you through His Word. Tell Him that you are listening.

3. Recall a time when you announced the good news that something, for which you had been waiting a long time, was finally going to take place. What was the news? Whom did you tell? How did you feel?

Setting the Stage

During the 600 years before the birth of Jesus, the Jewish people had gone through a lot of harsh experiences. After being sent by God to exile in Babylon for 70 years, they came back to their land only to be ruled by other nations—Persia, Greece, Egypt and Syria respectively. The last rulers were especially cruel. Some Jews revolted which led to about 100 years of independence. Then, Rome conquered the nation. By the time Jesus began His public ministry, Israel had been under Roman rule for 90 years. The people were impatient to get out of their bondage to Rome.

There had also been 400 years of “silence” from God. No prophets had been speaking or writing anything from God to the people during that time. But, the last Old Testament prophet Malachi had promised this:

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty...See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you.” (Malachi 3:1; 4:5).

As the New Testament opens, Israel's king was Herod the Great who was not of Jewish descent. The Jewish priesthood was politically appointed and no longer from the God-chosen line of Aaron. The overall mood of the people was one of despondency because they felt like they were still in captivity.

Yet, good things were happening to prepare the way for Jesus. Synagogues, community places of worship that developed during the Exile, had sprouted up all over the country making weekly worship accessible to all the people. The Old Testament scriptures were translated into Greek, the common language of the Roman Empire, so were more accessible to all communities of people where Jews met together. And God soon ended the 400 years of silence in a big way although only a few people knew what was happening.

4. Skim Luke 1 and 2. During the 30 years before the Jewish people as a nation finally heard from Him again, what was God at work doing?

Read Mark 1:1-13.

God breaks His silence by sending a prophet named John. We know him as John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way for Israel's Messiah to be revealed.

5. Right away in verse 1, how does Mark answer the question, "Who is Jesus?" [Note: We'll see it answered twice more in this Lesson.]

Scriptural Insight: *Messiah* comes from the Hebrew word *mashiach*, meaning "anointed one" or "chosen one." The Greek equivalent is the word *Christos* or, in English, *Christ*. The name "Jesus Christ" is the same as "Jesus the Messiah." In biblical times, anointing with oil was a sign that God was consecrating that person for a particular role. Thus, an "anointed one" was someone with a special, God-ordained purpose. The Jews of Jesus' day expected the Messiah to redeem Israel by overthrowing the rule of the Romans and establishing an earthly kingdom. It wasn't until after Jesus' resurrection that His disciples finally began to understand that the Messiah would first deliver His people *spiritually*; that is, to redeem them from sin. Later, Jesus the Messiah will deliver His people from their physical enemies, when He sets up His Kingdom on the earth. ("What does Messiah mean?" accessed at www.gotquestions.org)

6. **Discover the Facts:** Let's focus on vv. 1-8 today. The following questions will help you answer the observation question, "What does it say?"

What does God promise to send (v. 2)?

For whom is the messenger preparing the way (v. 3)?

Knowing this, who is John?

What is John doing in the wilderness (v. 4)?

Who is coming to the wilderness (v. 5)?

What did John wear and eat (v. 6)?

What was also his message (vv. 7-8)?

7. John is preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Let's define these words.
- What does the word *baptism* mean?
 - What does the word *repentance* mean?
 - What does the word *forgiveness* mean?

Focus on the Meaning: The word *baptism* carried with it the picture of both cleansing and identification. When Gentiles chose to become Jews, they were baptized to be cleansed of all pagan impurity and to identify with the Jews in being part of the Mosaic Covenant. Native Jews were not baptized before this time. Repentance represented changing one's mind about sin. Repentance was an act of mourning one's sin because it broke God's heart. The result of repentance was changing one's behavior to not do that sin any longer. Jews knew about repentance. But, the normal practice for receiving forgiveness of sins came from the shedding of blood through animal sacrifices (Hebrews 9:22).

DAY THREE STUDY

Ask the Lord Jesus to speak to you through His Word. Tell Him that you are listening.

Read Mark 1:1-13.

13. **Discover the Facts:** Focus on vv. 9-11. A lot of truth is packed into these three verses.

Where was Jesus (v. 9)?

What did Jesus see (v. 10)?

What did God the Father say to God the Son (v. 11)?

14. Jesus never did sin. Why did He come to be baptized? [Review the “Focus on the Meaning” in Day Two.]

15. Read John 1:32-34. What was one purpose for the Spirit descending on Jesus in a visible “dove” form?

Scriptural Insight: While confirming that there is only one true God, believers have worshiped Jesus Christ and have spoken of Him in terms appropriate only of deity from the earliest days of Christianity (first century A.D.). The Holy Spirit is also known as deity. So, the only conclusion is that the Bible clearly teaches three Divine Persons, each rightly called God, yet all the one and same God. The doctrine of the *Trinity* (or “Tri-unity,” a man-made label) is then a summary of the teachings of the Bible regarding the nature of God. God is one in essence, three in Person. It is an unexplainable reality, part of the mystery of God. All three persons of the Trinity are present at the baptism of Jesus. You can consider this event as Jesus’ commissioning for ministry. All three persons are united in the mission set forth for Jesus.

16. Read John 8:29. What does Jesus say about His own goal in life?

17. Did you notice that God the Father told His Son that He was well pleased with Him before Jesus' ministry even began? What does this reveal about God's love for His Son for the 30 years before this day?
18. **Heartbreak to Hope:** Have you had to wait for something for a very long time? Did you think God was being lazy or had forgotten you? Maybe He was preparing the background for answering your prayer as He did during the 30 years before Jesus showed up for all to see. Can you look back now and recognize how God was at work on your behalf or for someone you love?

Write a prayer to God in response to what He has shown you in this lesson.

DAY FOUR STUDY

Ask the Lord Jesus to speak to you through His Word. Tell Him that you are listening.

Read Mark 1:1-13.

19. According to Mark 1:12-13, what happens next and why?

20. Who helped Jesus (v. 13)?

Historical Insight: Mark mentions Jesus being in the presence of wild animals. Considering his Christian audience in Rome knew of the fights to the death involving humans versus wild animals in the Colosseum, perhaps Mark was showing how Jesus could identify with them in that way, too.

21. What else interests you from Mark 1:1-13?

22. **Heartbreak to Hope:** Reflect back on this whole lesson, how did someone experiencing heartbreak, pain, or uncertainty find hope, healing and love?

Write a prayer to God in response to what He has shown you in this lesson.

Recommended: Listen to “Jesus and the Kingdom of God” at melanienewton.com/podcasts after doing this lesson to reinforce what you have learned. Use the listener guide on the next page.

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

“The time has come...The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15)

GOD’S KINGDOM BEGAN AT CREATION.

- The whole idea of kingship is God's idea. When we talk about God as king, we're talking about the rule of God Almighty over His entire creation, including all people. *Daniel 4:34*
- God set up a theocratic kingdom at Creation. God was the ultimate ruler. But, He chose to give Adam and Eve responsibility as God's servants in God's kingly rule over the creation.
- Because sin separated people from a direct relationship with God, God's rule became a representative rule through delegated authorities. *Genesis 10:8-12; Genesis 17:6; Genesis 35:11; Genesis 49:10; Daniel 5:21; Romans 13:1*

GOD CHOSE ISRAEL TO BE A THEOCRATIC NATION.

- God set up Israel as a theocratic nation with God as her King. The sacrificial system in the Law temporarily removed sin from the people so God could dwell with them. *Deuteronomy 33:5*
- Israel was not content with the theocracy and demanded a strong human ruler to be their king. But, the king of Israel was still under God's authority.
- Faithful Israelites considered God to be their ultimate King and themselves to be part of His Kingdom, even within the nation of Israel.

THE PROMISED MESSIAH’S ROLE IN GOD’S KINGDOM

- After Saul's failure to honor God, He chose David to be the next king of Israel, a man who loved God and would represent God well as he ruled Israel. Through David, God made a promise to have one of David's descendants to be on Israel's throne forever. *Psalms 2; Psalm 110*
- Messiah as a descendant of David is one whom God had chosen to rule in His name as the official representative of God's rule over His people. The kingdom of God would once again come to earth. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise is in Jesus.

GOD SENT MESSIAH JESUS TO OFFER ENTRANCE INTO HIS KINGDOM.

- At His birth, Jesus came announced as a King, qualifying for the throne of David through both Mary and Joseph. *Luke 1:32-33*

- At the age of 30, Jesus began to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was near and whoever repented from their lack of faith and believed in Him would enter that forever Kingdom.
- For 3 years, Jesus demonstrated that He is God as He delivered men and women from their physical and spiritual ills.
- When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey (Mark 11), the crowds understood that Jesus was presenting Himself as the Messiah, capable of bringing in the Kingdom.

THE KING HAD TO SUFFER FIRST TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE.

- In Jerusalem, Jesus was rejected as the King—as God’s representative to rule in God’s place on earth. God’s plan was to first deal with sin once and for all so He could have a restored relationship with His creation.
- The Jews expected the Messiah to redeem Israel by overthrowing the rule of the Romans and establishing an earthly kingdom. But, the Messiah would first deliver His people *spiritually*; that is, to redeem them from sin. Later, Jesus the Messiah will deliver His people from their physical enemies, when He sets up His Kingdom on the earth.

GOD’S KINGDOM—JESUS IN HEAVEN

- The time between Jesus’ ascension to heaven and His return to earth is called the “until” time (Luke 21:24). Every believer in Jesus Christ for the past 2000 years is part of God’s Kingdom, now headquartered in heaven where our King Jesus resides and has all authority over heaven and earth. *Ephesians 1:21-23; Philipians 2:9-11*

GOD’S KINGDOM—JESUS ON EARTH

- The Bible teaches that at the end of a 7-year period commonly called “The Great Tribulation,” Jesus Christ will bring His physical Kingdom to Earth for 1000 years with Jerusalem as His capital. *Revelation 1:5; 17:14; 19:16; 20:4*
- In this earthly Kingdom, Jesus Christ will be the supreme political ruler as well as the spiritual leader and object of worship. The government of Christ will be one of absolute authority and power. It will also be one of righteousness and peace. All Christians will have been given resurrection bodies and will participate with Christ in administering His earthly kingdom. *Psalms 2; 72; Isaiah 11; Daniel 7:13 14*

The Kingdom of God is the dynamic rule of God manifested in Christ to destroy His enemies (sin, death, and Satan) and to bring to men the blessings of God’s reign. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 6 that we should pray for His Kingdom to come and for God’s will to be done on Earth as it is done in heaven. That will happen after the “until time” in which we now live.

Let Jesus satisfy your heart with hope, healing, and love as you get to know Him and trust Him more each day.