

# CHAPTER 2

## WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

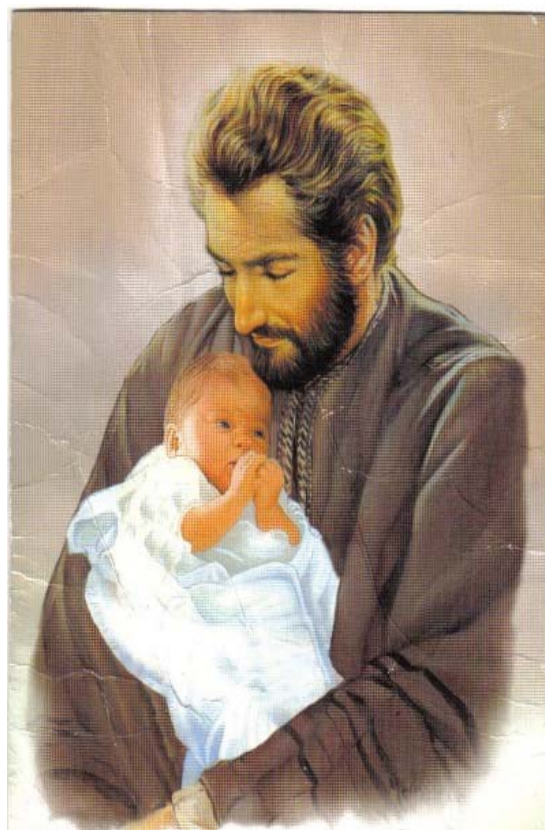
- ***Incarnation:*** a distinctive sign of the Christian faith
- ✓ Essential Christian ***dogma***
- ❖ Truth either divinely revealed or connected with revelation which the Church teaches is binding on all Christian people to accept
- ✓ Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it” (CC, 461)
- ✓ Word of God took on human flesh from his mother, Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit
- ✓ Christians believe that ***Jesus is fully God and fully human***

## ***Scriptural Background for the Incarnation***

- ***Luke: Annunciation*** (Gabriel's announcement to Mary; Name the child "Jesus" which means "***Yahweh is salvation***")
  - ✓ Elizabeth conceived a child in her old age
  - ✓ Mary's YES: simple, humble response to allow God's divine plan of salvation to move forward
- ***Matthew: Nativity*** (Birth of Jesus 9 months after the Annunciation)
  - ✓ Birth in Bethlehem (Predicted by ***Micah 5:1***)



- ✓ ***Role of Joseph:*** Not much is known in the New Testament (No words spoken)
- ❖ Carpenter; legal father of Jesus; descendent of King David; Nothing in the Gospels about his death
- ❖ Man of faith; “the just Man”; flexible; gentle; courageous; a man with dreams; trusting; loving



- ***John: Prologue:*** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . .” (John 1:1-4; 14)
- ✓ “Word became flesh” = Jesus became human
- ✓ Selection of the word “flesh” to counteract a 1<sup>st</sup> century heresy (Docetism)
- ❖ ***Docetism:*** Jesus only ***seemed*** to be real; If Jesus only ***seemed*** to be a man, then he only ***seemed*** to die and resurrect.
- ✓ Author of John’s Gospel: Jesus was one of us
- ✓ ***Incarnation:*** literally means that God became flesh (Jesus is God-man)



## ***Purpose of the Incarnation***

- To save us by reconciling us with God
- To reveal God's love to us
- To serve as the perfect model of holiness
- To allow us to share in God's nature



## ***Learning About Jesus***

- ***Personal Level:*** Family, teachers, retreats
- ***Tradition of the Church:*** Sacred Scripture, Gospels, Deposit of Faith, Magisterium
- ***Eyewitnesses:*** Apostles

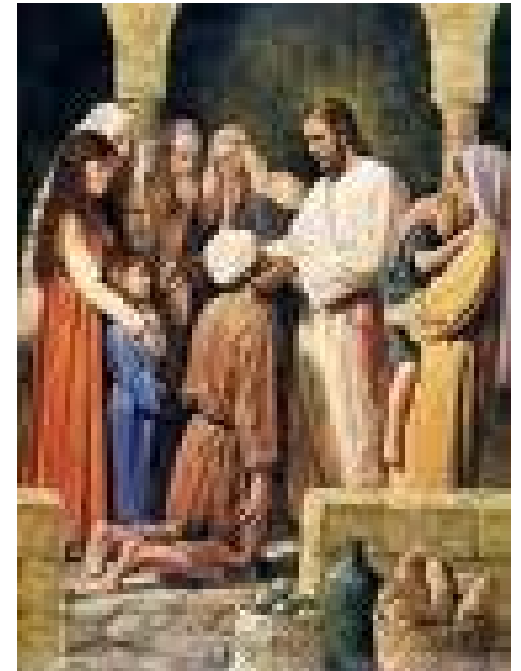
## ***Overview of the Jesus of History***

- Historians with proof of a real man
- ✓ ***Jesus bar Joseph:*** Jesus, Son of Joseph
- ✓ ***Jesus, the Carpenter*** (profession)
- ✓ ***Jesus of Nazareth*** (place of residence)

- ✓ ***Palestinian Jew*** born in Bethlehem
- ✓ Mother named Mary
- ✓ Birth date: between 4-6 BC
- ✓ Born during the rule of King Herod in Palestine; Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus
- ✓ ***Hidden life*** in Nazareth in Galilee
- ✓ Learned trade of ***carpentry*** (Foster father, Joseph)
- ✓ Observed Jewish law, celebrated feasts, worshipped on the Sabbath
- ✓ Baptized by ***John the Baptist*** (28 AD); began his public ministry (itinerant preacher; prophet)
- ✓ ***Central Message:*** repentance, the coming of God's Kingdom
- ✓ Performed miracles



- ✓ ***Provocative***; asked people to make a clear choice to turn from sin, accept God's love and believe in him and his teachings
- ✓ His teachings threatened and angered authorities; betrayed by his follower; arrested
- ✓ Condemned to die by the Roman prefect, ***Pontius Pilate***
- ✓ ***Crucified*** (30-33 AD)
- ✓ Claimed to be ***"King of the Jews"***: a crime interpreted under Roman Law as sedition against the Roman Emperor, ***Tiberius***





# ***SYNOPTIC GOSPELS***

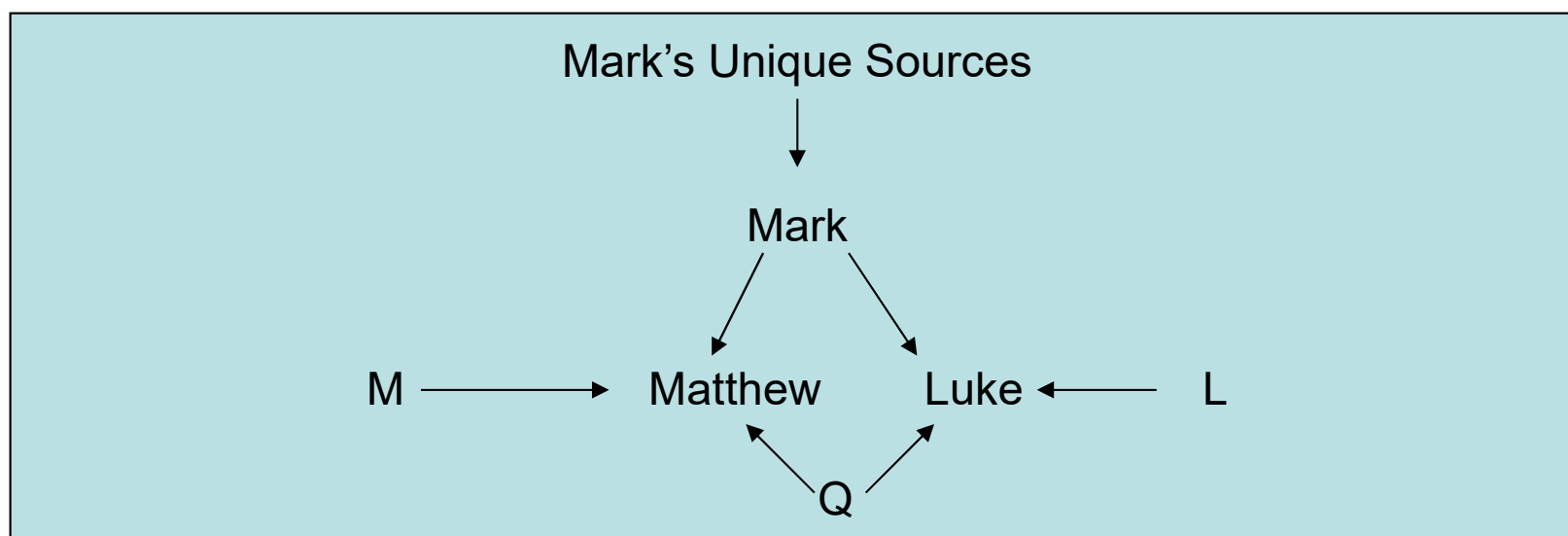
- Four gospels: our primary source of information about Jesus Christ
- ***Synoptics include Matthew, Mark, Luke***
- Matthew and Luke follow the general outline of Mark's gospel in reporting the events of Jesus' life
- ***“Synoptics” (Greek): means “seen together”***
- ***Mark: oldest***; Matthew and Luke both “improve” on difficult passages
- ✓ Originally believed to be an abridged, later version of Mt.

- **Matthew:** well-ordered work with detailed lessons, especially in the area of **Christian morality**
- ✓ Became popular in **worship services** and for teaching new Christians
- ✓ Emphasizes the **fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies**, linking the Old Testament and the New Testament



- **What Is Meant By “Gospel”?**
- Oral traditions, lived faith of his own community, and other gospel sources available to him, Mark was the first to write the literary form we call gospel
- ✓ “Good News”: meaning of the word “gospel”
- ✓ Life of Jesus: Good news of God’s love for humanity
- ✓ Preaching about Jesus
- ✓ Four written versions (unique): under the inspiration of the HS

- **Papius** (2<sup>nd</sup> century bishop): Claimed that the author of **Mark** was John Mark (a disciple of Peter)
- ✓ Date: 67-73 AD shortly before or after the destruction of the Jewish temple by the Romans (70 AD)
- ✓ In the 80's AD: Matthew and Luke wrote their gospels using the following sources:
  - 1) Gospel of **Mark**
  - 2) "**Q**" (German – **Quelle** source); probably a collection of Jesus' sayings handed down
  - 3) "**M**" and "**L**" – unique to each of them

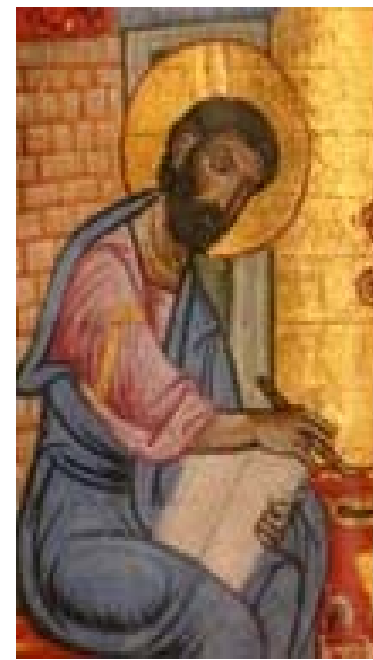


# *The Gospel of Mark*

- **Author:** John Mark, a traveling companion of Paul and Peter
- Anonymous author: likely a Christian (Jewish background)
- Written between 65-70 AD
- **Audience:** ***Gentile Christians*** who were ***suffering persecution***
- ✓ Written in Rome after Nero's persecution of the Christians
- ✓ Written for Christians in Syria or Palestine to bolster suffering Christians during the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (66-70 AD)
- ✓ Author drew on oral traditions (Peter's own testimony), written collections of the parables, miracle stories and other sayings of Jesus, and an outline of Jesus' passion story



- ***Geographical Framework:***
- *Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan (1:1-13)*
- *Jesus' preaching and performing miracles in Galilee (1:14-9:50)*
- Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (10)
- Jesus' preaching, rejection and crucifixion in Jerusalem (11:1-16:8)
- Matthew and Luke with the same general theme



- ***Theme:*** readers to remain faithful to Jesus, the Lord, who Himself suffered and died for them
- ✓ ***Son of Man:*** Jesus walked the path of suffering to eternal life. So must His followers undergo suffering before they gain their eternal reward
- ✓ ***Messianic Secret:*** Who is this person? Will you follow Him?

# *Gospel of Mark*

- ***Part I: Mark 1:14-8:26 (Galilee)***
- ***Message:*** Centers on the ***Kingdom of God at hand*** (Repent; Jesus is God's agent in establishing this Kingdom)
- ***Authoritative*** teacher; healer and worker of miracles
- Apostles misunderstand who Jesus is; misunderstand His message

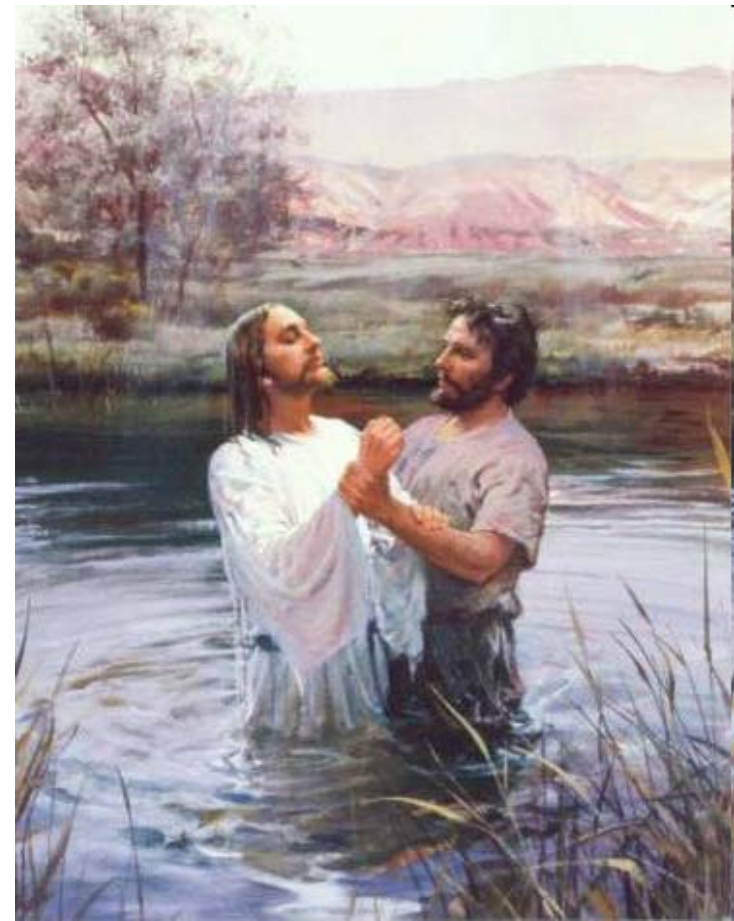


## ***Prologue (Mark 1:1-13)***

- “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (***Mark 1:1***)
- ***No doubt about Jesus’ identity***
- ***Readers knows who Jesus is***; Apostles and gospel characters misinterpret and misunderstand Jesus, His teachings, and His way of the cross
- Mark wants his readers to know that the good news of the Kingdom is good news simply because of Jesus.
- Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist launches His public ministry
- ✓ John the Baptist in camel skin ---- Elijah (prophet); Dove (Holy Spirit) descending on Jesus



- “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.”  
(**Mark 1:11**)
- Synoptic gospels ambiguous about who saw the vision
  - ✓ Perhaps only Jesus, though bystanders may have heard the voice
  - ✓ **John’s gospel** (1:32-34) John the Baptist also saw the dove, convincing him that Jesus was the Son of God and enabling him to proclaim Jesus as the “Lamb of God”
- Prologue ends with Jesus’ symbolic 40 day retreat in the desert (tested by Satan)
  - ✓ Jesus represents a new Israel --- Israel’s 40 years of traveling in the desert



## ***Jesus the Authoritative Teacher***

- “The people were spellbound with His teaching because He taught with authority, and not like the scribes.”

***(Mark 1:22)***

- ✓ Very clear that Jesus taught with authority
- Meaning of “authority” (many nuances)
  - ✓ Right to command
  - ✓ Someone with official power
  - ✓ Source of reliable information
  - ✓ Ability to gain the respect of others and influence what they do
  - ✓ Knowledge, skill or experience worthy of respect
- ***Author:*** “creator or originator of something”

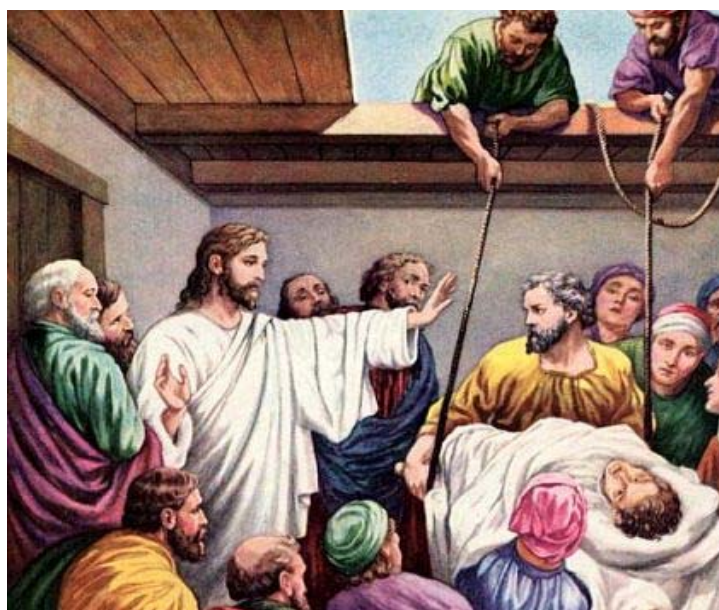


- ***Right To Command: Every teacher needs students.***
- ***Call of the First Disciples (Mark 1:16-20)***
  - ✓ Simon and Andrew/James and John (sons of Zebedee) dropped what they were doing to become “fishers of men”
- ***Call of Levi (tax collector), Son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:13-17)***
- ***Jesus did the gathering*** of disciples (learners)
- ✓ Contrary to the custom of the day when ***disciples sought out a learned and spiritual leader***



## ***Jesus' First Major Teaching (Mark 2:1-3:6)***

- Involves **5 conflicts or controversies**
- ***A Paralytic Man Carried By His Four Friends (Mark 2:1-12)***
  - ✓ Jesus claims that ***He can forgive sin***
  - ✓ Statement equal to ***blasphemy*** (Jewish point of view)
  - ✓ Jesus shows that He had the power to forgive sin by backing up His teaching with action



- ***Call of Levi and Jesus' Table Fellowship With Sinners (Mark 2:13-17)***
- ***Conventional Thinking:*** If you associated with sinners, then you must be a sinner; Respectable and holy people would not think of socializing with outcasts
- ✓ According to Jesus, God's Kingdom ***INCLUDES***, not ***EXCLUDES***.
- ✓ "People who are healthy do not need a doctor; sick people do. I have come to call sinners, not the self righteous." ***(Mark 2:17)***





- **Question of Fasting (Mark 2:18-22)**
- The third conflict involved Jesus **not fasting** according to the strict obligations of Jewish law
- ✓ Mark presents Jesus as the author of a new age
- ✓ He is the **bridegroom** who is ushering in God's Kingdom
- ✓ Fasting signifies penance
- ✓ With Jesus, it is **a time to rejoice and celebrate**
- ✓ "No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins." **(Mark 2:22)**



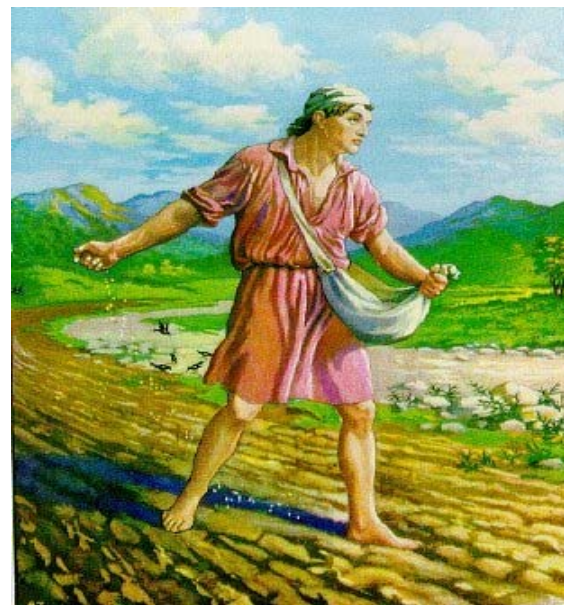
- ***Conflicts Four and Five Involve the Sabbath***
- Jesus is free to interpret the meaning of eating customs on the Sabbath. Why?
  - ✓ Jesus, the Son of Man, is Lord of the Sabbath.
  - ✓ “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”  
***(Mark 2:27)***
  - ✓ Jesus taught that doing good on the Sabbath is always allowed  
***(Mark 3:4)***
  - ✓ Hardness of heart of religious authorities who did not want their authority called into question





## *Parables of Jesus*

- Jesus as a creative, original, influential teacher, won the respect of the people
- ***Four Parables About the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:1-34)***
- Kingdom of God is a mystery
- ***Parable of the seed growing by itself (Mark 4: 26-29)***
  - ✓ It grows without our knowledge of how it occurs
  - ✓ God is in charge; In His good time, He will bring the Kingdom to fruition
- ***Parable of the Growing Seed***
- ***("The Sower") (Mark 4:1-20)***
  - ✓ There is no stopping God's Kingdom
  - ✓ At first, there will be apparent failure in the reception to Jesus' pronouncement about the Kingdom



- ✓ This is to be expected when sowing seeds
- ✓ **Good News:** yield will be spectacular when it reaches the people of faith
- ***Parable of the Lamp (Mark 4:21-25)***
- ✓ What remains hidden now will become crystal clear for all to see in the future
- ***Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-32)***
- ✓ Jesus' ministry might seem small for now, but God will eventually bring it to fullness
- ✓ Kingdom starts small → Will become so large that it will embrace the whole world



- ***Parables***: source of ***great encouragement*** to Mark's audience who were ***suffering for their faith***
- ✓ May be a struggle now, but the Kingdom will win out
- Parables forced listeners (crowds and disciples) to think and interpret
- ✓ Parables misinterpreted: Seemed like a riddle to Jesus' opposition
- ✓ "The mystery of the Kingdom of God has been granted to you."  
***(Mark 4:11)***



## ***Jesus the Healer and Miracle Worker***

- Includes: healing miracles, exorcisms, nature miracles, a raising from the dead (Jairus' daughter)
- Miracle stories follow a pattern – Use ***Mark 2:1-12***
- ***Introduction:*** presents setting and situation
  - ✓ Jesus is teaching in a room so crowded that the friends of the paralyzed man lower him through a roof
- ***Display of Faith:***
  - ✓ Jesus witnesses this in the friends of the paralyzed man
  - ✓ To forgive man's sins: angers the scribes who think that Jesus is guilty of blasphemy
  - ✓ "But that you may know the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth" – He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, pick up your mat, and go home." (***Mark 2:8-11***)

- Jesus' **response** to the problem
  - ✓ Jesus cures the man
  - **Result** of the miracle
  - ✓ The man got up, picked up his mat, and walked
  - **Reaction** to the miracle (Conclusion)
  - ✓ "They were all astonished and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this." (**Mark 2:12**)
- 
- Jesus' miracles in **Mark** seen as a proclamation of the Kingdom
  - Jesus' as God's Son successfully battling the forces of evil
  - Jesus with power over Satan, in his unbinding the demon-possessed man from Gerasene (**Mark 5: 1-20**)



- Jesus overpowers sickness and death –The woman with the blood flow and the raising of Jairus' daughter  
***(Mark 5:21-43)***



- ***Dynamis*** (Greek – power): to describe Jesus’ miracles
- Power of God had broken into human history
- Salvation is taking place right now through Jesus
- ***Themes:*** power to forgive sin
- ***Faith with a major role;*** linked to repentance (turning away from sin)
- **Types of Miracles:**
  - ✓ Physical Healings
  - ✓ Nature Miracles
  - ✓ Exorcisms
  - ✓ Raising From the Dead





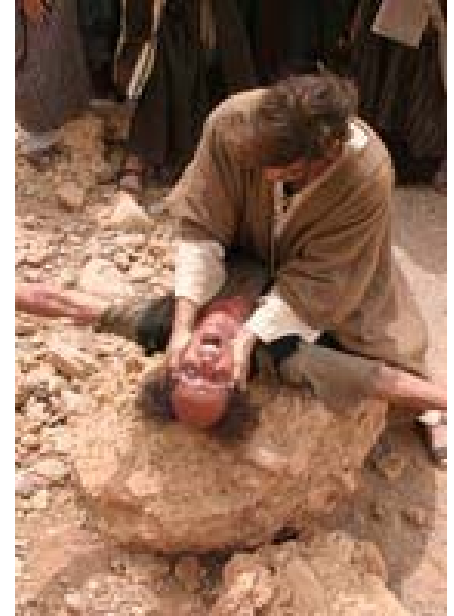
## *The Messianic Secret*

- **Mark 1:1** Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ
  - ✓ People interpreted the coming of the Messiah in political terms
  - ✓ Jesus' idea of Messiah is radically different
- **Mark 8:27-33:** Jesus' words met with confusion and amazement
  - ✓ Disciples slow to comprehend (**Mark 8:21** "Do you still not understand?")
- Slowness of disciples symbolized in the ***cure of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)***
  - ✓ Symbolic way of saying that people's faith in Jesus was **NOT** total
  - ✓ People came to believe only gradually



- Only the ***demons*** recognize who Jesus truly is (supernatural origins)
- ✓ Jesus would not let them speak (***Mark 1:34***)

- ***Why this secret?***
- Jesus did not want to be a sideshow
- Jesus is the ***Suffering Servant*** prophesied by Isaiah centuries before. He is the Messiah who takes up a cross, not a glittering throne.



- On the road to **Caesarea Philippi**, Jesus put the question to the apostles concerning his identity. They thought He was a prophet, John the Baptist, or Elijah. Even Peter, leader of the apostles, did not understand the true nature of Jesus' messiahship.
- ✓ Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." (**Mark 8:31-33**)
- Peter judges by the wrong standards.
- Glory comes after Jesus' suffering and death (way to salvation)



# *Suffering Servant*

- Mentioned in *Isaiah 52*
- To encourage the exiled Israelites in Babylon
- Redemption comes through suffering
- Jesus as the *Suffering Servant* (in the New Testament)



## ***Son of Man***

- Used 14 times in ***Mark***
- ***Old Testament Connection:***
  - ✓ Jesus emphasizes his ordinary human nature (human like us)
  - ✓ ***Book of Daniel:*** supernatural figure; Jesus will usher in the fullness of God's Kingdom; He is the judge of all humanity

## ***The Way of Discipleship***

- Mark challenges his readers to accept Jesus as the Messiah, but one who suffers crucifixion before he rises in glory
- Jesus' followers must be prepared to suffer as Jesus himself suffered
- **Mark 10:42-45** seen as the **climax** of the gospel
- **Cure of Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46-52)** Instantaneous
- ✓ If we have faith like Bartimaeus, listen to Jesus with open hearts, and depend on Him as our savior, then we will understand the secret of His Kingdom message.
- The challenge of discipleship: ***The Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17-31)***