

Lesson #1 The Real Jesus

Appetizer: We'll begin this study with a short discussion. When have you had the wrong impression about someone when you first met them?

Main Course: Most people have some half-formed picture of Jesus. They think of him as a good man, a great teacher or even a divine figure. Mark's first chapter tells us how Jesus was identified and introduced to the people of his time. Read Mark 1:9 – 45.

1. What activities does Jesus get involved in throughout this passage?
2. John baptized people who confessed their sins. If Jesus was the son of God, why do you think he was baptized (vv. 9-11) and then tempted (vv. 12-13)?
3. Jesus' first action is to proclaim that "the kingdom of God is near" (vv. 14-15). Why was this good news?
4. Some working fishermen, who were not likely to be very religious, are Jesus' first followers (vv.16-20). Why do you think they follow him with so little persuasion or information?
5. Jesus' dynamic authority becomes apparent as he helps people (see vv. 21-34). What words or actions show his authority?
6. What does Mark 1:35 reveal about the source of Jesus' authority?
7. When everyone was looking for him, Jesus left (vv.36-39). Why then do you think he stops and touches one man with leprosy (vv.40-45)?
8. Mark clearly wants to tell us who Jesus is. Yet Jesus himself seems strangely reluctant to reveal his identity (vv. 34, 43-44). (Later he's much more open.) Why this hesitance now?

Dessert: How would you summarize the way this chapter describes Jesus, and what impresses or puzzles you most? Explain.