

# 2

# The Jesus Identity

## Studies in Mark's Gospel

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### Starter

How is authority exercised in your workplace, your home or your school? How ought it be expressed?

### Introduction

So far in Mark's gospel we have been waiting the arrival of the 'Christ', who is the saviour king promised in the Old Testament (see 2 Sam 7:11b-16; Isa 11; Ps 110 etc). He is God's designated ruler of his kingdom. John the Baptist heralded the arrival of the king. Following John's imprisonment, Jesus began proclaiming that the time for the Christ's arrival was now fulfilled, the kingdom of God was at hand; so people should repent and believe this message (Mk 1:14-15). In this section of Mark's gospel we start to see the royal authority of Jesus 'the Christ' in action. We also start to see him interact with his subjects and his enemies.

### Read Mark 1:21-28

In what way might Jesus' teachings impress people today? In what way might his teachings have the opposite effect on people today?

1. Why are the people of Capernaum impressed with Jesus?  
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2. How does the evil spirit address Jesus? What does this interaction show us about Jesus and his mission? Why do you think Jesus wanted to silence the demon?  
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### Read Mark 1:29-34

A member of your group might like to find some further reading on this issue of 'driving out demons'. A good recent book is Peter Bolt, *Living with the Underworld*. Matthias Media 2007.

3. How might Jesus' healings be a sign of his authority?  
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4. Once again we notice that Jesus' ministry brings him into direct conflict with evil spirits as he drives demons out from people (1:32-34). What do you understand is going on in these situations?  
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5. [optional] What does Jesus teach his disciples about demons and the Satan in the rest of Mark's gospel? (see Mk 3:11, 14-15, 26; 6:7; 9:26-29; 38-41)

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6. From Jesus' actions and words so far in Mark's gospel, what did he think was his mission was all about?

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**Read Mark 1:35-39**

7. What else do we learn from these verses about Jesus' own understanding of his mission?

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Optional: How does Jesus' mission inform our mission as his church?

8. Luke's gospel records an incident from this same early period of Jesus' ministry in Luke 4:16-21. After also looking up Jesus' quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2, how might we fill out our understanding of Jesus' mission?

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9. How do you respond to Jesus' exercise of authority in Mark 1:21-39? How does his authority impact your life now? What difference will it make to you this week?

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10. [optional] How is Jesus' exercise of authority similar and/or different to the human exercise of authority (eg. in the workplace, home, or in government)?

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Take time to talk to Jesus in prayer, thanking him for the way he has revealed himself to you afresh in this passage.