

**STUDY SHEET
TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY
Session: May 5, 2003
Gospel of Mark**

Contextual Statement:

The Gospel of Mark, in its structure, is both beautiful and curious.

The structure is beautiful because it forms an arch: Chapter 1 - 8 rises upward into northern Palestine, and from chapter 10 - 16 we journey down south to Jerusalem. The keystone holding both arms of this arch together is chapter 9.

The structure is curious because it is called the "secret gospel;" the secret is revealed at the end of the story. Jesus constantly warns people not to tell people who healed them, or fed them, because "at the end of the story" they would know.

The really curious thing about Mark, is that "the end of the story," as we Christians know it," is not actually there. (See, I told you this was a curious structure.)

Mark's story begins with the baptism of John the Baptist, fulfilling the prophesy of Isaiah. It is not unintentional that Mark begins his story here, nor in reference to Isaiah. A new direction of history rises out of the ashes of an old birth: birth and resurrection starts the story, and ends the story. Immediately, Jesus participates in John's baptism, then goes to the desert to be confronted by "temptation." This is followed by "healing stories"

I appreciate that this is a "preacher" writing, but this gospel moves so fast into the spiritual deeps that it takes our breath away. So, hang on. Here we go!

I. Read Mark 1:1 to 2:12 in one reading.

II. 1: 1 Research the meaning of the following words by running them through your own human experience. This may mean you read some commentary, and then take the old code words and make them your own experience.

a. gospel

b. Jesus

c. Christ

d. Son of God

**III. 1: 4 Remind yourself of your own definition of "repentance."
Then, apply your definition to the "baptism of repentance."**

Note how this results in "the forgiveness of sins." Write down your own experience of what these words mean to you.

IV. 1: 13 Who is "Satan?" (Make it a "gut trip analysis," please.)

V. 1: 21 - 28 Do a "gut trip analysis" of this situation. What is going on here?