

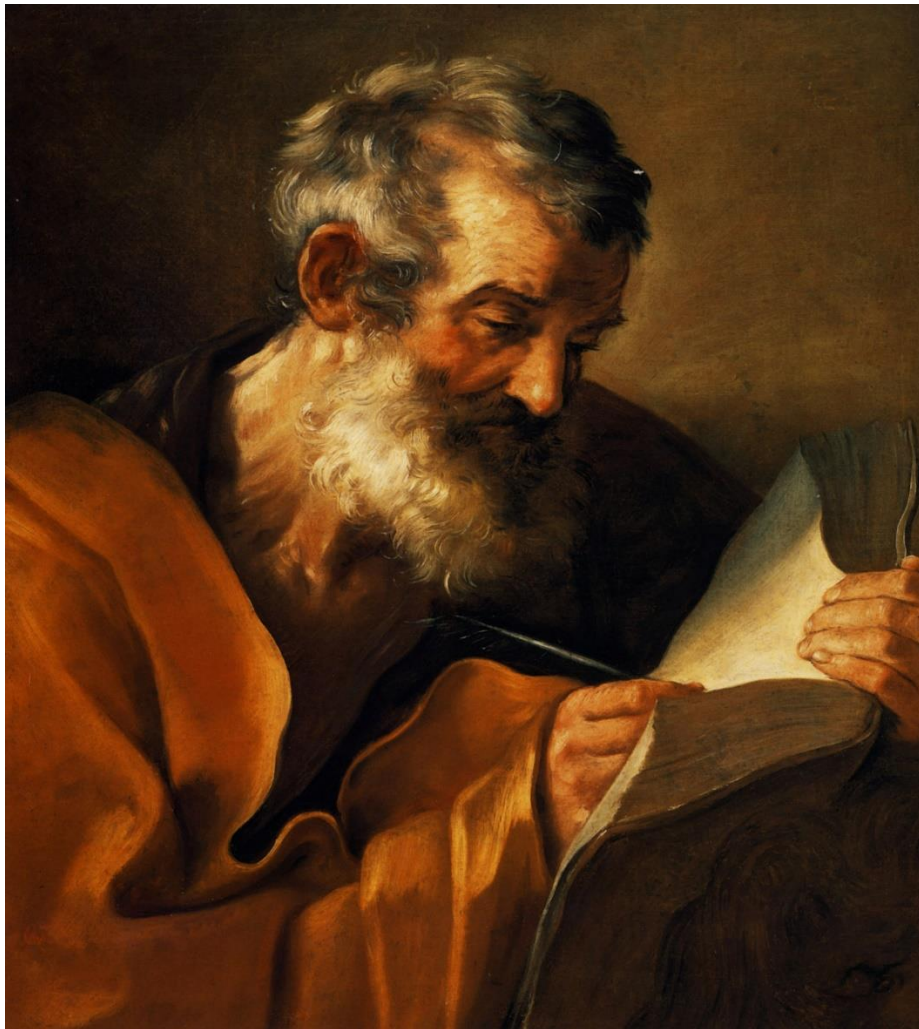
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THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

NEW TESTAMENT

BOOK 41

MARK



Saint Mark by Guido Reni

SUMMARY

The Gospel According to Mark has no story of Jesus's birth. Instead, Mark's story begins by describing Jesus's adult life, introducing it with the words, The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark tells of John the Baptist, who predicts the coming of a man more powerful than himself. After John baptizes Jesus with water, the Holy Spirit of God recognizes Jesus as his son, saying, You are my Son, the Beloved.

Jesus goes to the wilderness, where Satan tests him for forty days, and Jesus emerges triumphant. Jesus travels to Galilee, the northern region of Israel. He gathers his first disciples, Simon and Andrew, two Jewish brothers who are both fishermen.

Jesus asks them to follow him, saying that he will show them how to fish for people rather than for fish. Simon and Andrew, as well as James and John, drop their nets and follow him.

Jesus exhibits his authority in Galilee, where he cleanses a leper. Mark reports that Jesus heals a paralytic, Simon's sick mother-in-law, and a man with a withered hand.

The miracles cause the crowds that gather to watch Jesus to become bewildered, fearful, and antagonistic. The Pharisees and followers of Herod begin plotting to kill Jesus. Jesus stays focused on his ministry.

Jesus's ministry attracts many followers. The miracle stories become increasingly longer and more elaborate, emphasizing the supernatural power of Jesus's authority. Mark says that even wind and sea obey him.

Simultaneously, Jesus becomes increasingly misunderstood and rejected, even by his own apostles. Jesus notes his disciples' frequent misunderstandings of his message.

Jesus's power continues to reveal itself in his control over nature: he calms a storm, cures a man possessed by a demon, and revives a dead young girl. Despite his successes, however, he continues to be reviled in his own hometown of Nazareth.

The story of Jesus's ministry reaches King Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee who beheaded John the Baptist. Jesus disperses the apostles, charging them with the responsibility to spread the Gospel and to heal the sick.

When the apostles rejoin Jesus, they are once again swarmed with people eager to hear Jesus's message. Through a miracle, Jesus divides five loaves of bread and two fish and feeds all 5,000 people. His disciples, however, seem not to understand the magnitude of his miracle: when he walks on water, they are shocked.

The Pharisees, who are upset at Jesus's abandonment of the traditional Jewish laws, question Jesus. He responds by pointing out that it is important to obey the spirit of the law rather than simply going through the technical actions that the law proscribes. Jesus preaches that human intention, not behavior, determines righteousness.

Jesus travels again through northern Palestine. He heals a deaf man and the child of a Gentile and works a second miracle in which he multiplies a small amount of bread and fish to feed 4,000 people.

SUMMARY Continued

His disciples, however, continue to misunderstand the significance of his actions. Peter, the foremost of the disciples, seems to be the only one who recognizes Jesus's divine nature. Jesus begins to foresee his own crucifixion and resurrection.

He continues to travel across Galilee but shifts his emphasis to preaching rather than working miracles. He appears to some of his disciples to be transfigured, made brilliantly white. Jesus explains that John the Baptist served as his Elijah, predicting his arrival. He preaches against divorce and remarriage.

He announces that young children, in their innocence, are models for righteous behavior, and that the rich will have great difficulty entering the kingdom of God. He teaches, despite the sacrifices necessary to enter the kingdom, it will be worth it: Many who are first will be last, and the last, first.

Finally, Jesus journeys to Jerusalem, where he drives the money changers from the temple and begins preaching his Gospel. He is well received by the common people but hated by the priests and the scribes. However, he successfully defends himself against the priests' verbal attacks.

He teaches that obedience to Caesar is important, that the dead will be resurrected, that loving one's neighbor is the greatest commandment, and that the End of Days will soon come, bringing God's retribution on the unjust and the return of the Son of man.

Eventually, Jesus allows himself to succumb to the conspiracy against him. At the Passover Seder, Jesus institutes the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist, telling his followers to eat and drink his symbolic body and blood. At the dinner, Jesus says that one of his disciples will betray him. The disciples are surprised, each asking, Surely, not I?

After dinner, Jesus goes to a garden called Gethsemane and prays while Peter, James, and John wait nearby. The three disciples fall asleep three times, though Jesus returns each time and asks them to stay awake with him as he prays. Jesus prays to God that, if possible, he might avoid his imminent suffering.

Jesus is leaving the garden with Peter, James, and John when Judas Iscariot, one of the apostles, arrives with the city's chief priests and a crowd carrying swords and clubs. Judas kisses Jesus, indicating to the priests Jesus's identity.

The priests arrest Jesus and take him to the court of the high priest. There, Jesus publicly claims that he is the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One, and the Jews deliver him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who agrees to crucify him.

On the cross, Jesus cries out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He dies and is buried by Joseph of Arimathea, a righteous Jew. When Mary Magdalene and other women come to Jesus's grave on the third day after the crucifixion, however, they find it empty. A young man tells them that Jesus has risen from the grave. Jesus then appears in resurrected form to Mary, Mary Magdalene, and the apostles.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 1:8** *I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*
- 1:15** *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.*
- 3:14** Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,
- 3:15** and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.
- 3:28** *Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter;*
- 3:29** *but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation-*
- 3:30** *because they said, He has an unclean spirit.*
- 4:20** *But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.*
- 5:8** For He said to him, *Come out of the man, unclean spirit!*
- 5:19** However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, *Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.*
- 5:34** And He said to her, *Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.*
- 5:36** *As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be afraid; only believe.*
- 6:4** But Jesus said to them, *A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.*
- 6:5** Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.
- 6:6** And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.
- 6:12** So they went out and preached that people should repent.
- 6:56** Wherever He entered into villages, cities, or in the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.
- 9:7** And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, *This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!*
- 9:23** Jesus said to him, *If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.*
- 9:28** And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could we not cast it out?
- 9:29** So He said to them, *This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.*
- 9:31** For He taught His disciples and said to them, *The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.*
- 10:52** Then Jesus said to him, *Go your way; your faith has made you well.* And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.
- 11:22** So Jesus answered and said to them, *Have faith in God.*
- 11:23** *For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be removed and be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.*

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 11:24** *Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*
- 11:25** *And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.*
- 11:26** *But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.*
- 12:29** Jesus answered him, *The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.*
- 12:30** *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment.*
- 12:31** *And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.*
- 13:5** And Jesus, answering them, began to say: *Take heed that no one deceives you.*
- 13:6** *For many will come in My name, saying, I am He, and will deceive many.*
- 13:9** *But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.*
- 13:10** *And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.*
- 13:11** *But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.*
- 13:12** *Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.*
- 13:13** *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*
- 13:21** *Then if anyone says to you, Look, here is the Christ! or, Look, He is there! do not believe it.*
- 13:22** *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*
- 13:23** *But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.*
- 13:26** *Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*
- 16:15** And He said to them, *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*
- 16:16** *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*
- 16:17** *And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;*
- 16:18** *they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.*
- 16:19** So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

CHARACTER Definitions

JAIRUS - As Jesus walked with Jairus, they had to press through a large crowd. It is likely that the crowd slowed Jesus' progress considerably, and this must have been frustrating for Jairus—time was of the essence, since his daughter was at the point of death.

In the midst of the crowd, a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the hem of his robe, saying to herself, If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed. Her flow of blood dried up immediately.

Jesus felt that power had gone out from Him, and He turned to ask who had touched His clothing. The woman came to Him, trembling in fear, and, falling before Him, told Him the truth. Jesus said, Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.

As Jesus was speaking to the woman, some people from the house of Jairus arrived and told Jairus that his daughter was dead and there was no need to trouble Jesus anymore. Jesus overheard the news and gave Jairus two commands and a promise: Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.

Together, they continued toward the house of Jairus. When they got there, the mourners were wailing and weeping, but Jesus asked them, Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.

The mourners turned into scoffers, laughing and making fun of Jesus. Undeterred, Jesus went into the house, taking with Him Jairus and his wife, along with Peter, James, and John.

Jesus entered the room where Jairus' daughter lay. He took the dead girl by the hand and said, Talitha Cumi, which means, Little girl, I say to you, arise. Immediately, the girl's spirit returned, and she got up and began walking around. Jesus then commanded Jairus to give his daughter something to eat but not to tell anyone about the miracle.

When Jesus stopped on His way to Jairus' house to speak to the woman in the crowd, He allowed time to pass. Jesus was not worried about Jairus' daughter dying. He knew all along that He would heal her, even if that meant raising her from the dead.

In a beautiful act of mercy, Jesus stops to care for the woman in the crowd who had reached out to Him in faith. Jairus undoubtedly felt the urgency of his situation, and he probably chafed at what he saw as a delay. His daughter was lying at death's door, and Jesus was taking His time.

Jairus learned that God's timing and purpose are not like ours. Sometimes He requires patience from us, sometimes He waits longer than we think is rational, and sometimes He allows temporary loss in order to show us the eternal abundance of His blessing.

Jairus was a leader in the synagogue, and the bleeding woman in the crowd was likely an outcast because of her ailment. But Jesus graciously met their respective needs and responded to their faith with equal love, power, and willingness to heal.

CHARACTERS Continued

He shows no partiality to princes and does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands.

BARTIMAEUS - As Jesus was walking by him, Bartimaeus heard who it was that was passing and called out to Him: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! By calling Jesus the Son of David, the blind man was affirming his belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

The people told Bartimaeus to be quiet, but he kept calling out, even more loudly and persistently than before. This is further proof of his faith. In addition to his proclamation of Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the blind man showed that he believed in Jesus' goodness and deference to the poor and needy.

Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was not like the other religious leaders, who believed that an individual's poverty or blindness or bad circumstances were a result of God's judgment.

Jesus responded to Bartimaeus's cries by telling His disciples to call the blind man over. Blind Bartimaeus jumped up and went to Jesus, and Jesus asked him, What do you want me to do for you? The beggar could have asked for money or for food, but his faith was bigger than that.

Bartimaeus said, Rabbi, I want to see. There is no pretention or religious pride in this interchange between God and man. The blind man had a desire, and he ran to Jesus with that desire.

He simply expressed to Jesus his desire, trusting that Jesus was both willing and able to fulfill it. Jesus said to him, Go your faith has healed you, and Blind Bartimaeus instantly recovered his sight and followed Jesus.

By saying, Your faith has made you well, Jesus emphasizes the necessity of faith. Blind Bartimaeus had the kind of faith that pleases God—a wholehearted trust in the Healer.

Jesus showed once again that God rewards those who earnestly seek him. Blind Bartimaeus understood this truth. He earnestly sought the Lord, and his actions reflected the kind of faith that is pleasing to God.

MARK - John Mark, often just called Mark, is the author of the gospel of Mark. He was a believer in the early church mentioned directly only in the book of Acts. John Mark is first mentioned as the son of a woman named Mary, whose house was being used as a place for believers to gather and pray.

Later, Mark is mentioned as a companion of Barnabas and Paul during their travels together. John Mark was also Barnabas' cousin.

John Mark was a helper on Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey. However, he did not stay through the whole trip. John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas in Pamphylia and left the work. The Bible does not say why Mark deserted, but his departure came right after a mostly fruitless time in Cyprus.

CHARACTERS Continued

Only one conversion is recorded in Cyprus, but there had been strong demonic opposition. It's likely that the young John Mark was discouraged at the hardness of the way and decided to return to the comforts of home.

Sometime later, after Paul and Barnabas had returned from their first journey, Paul expressed a desire to go back to the brothers in the cities they had previously visited to see how everyone was doing. Barnabas agreed, apparently upon the provision that they take John Mark with them.

Paul refused to have Mark on the trip, however, citing Mark's previous desertion. Paul thought it best not to have a quitter with them; they needed someone more dependable.

Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about John Mark and wound up separating from each other and going on separate journeys. Barnabas took John Mark with him to Cyprus, and Paul took Silas with him through Syria and Cilicia to encourage the believers in the churches in those areas.

Barnabas, the son of encouragement, desired to forgive John Mark's failure and to give him another chance. Paul took the more rational view: pioneering missionary work requires dedication, resolve, and endurance. Paul saw John Mark as a risk to their mission.

John Mark sails off to Cyprus with his cousin Barnabas, but that is not the end of his story. Years later, he is with Paul, who calls him a fellow worker. And near the end of Paul's life, Paul sends a request to Timothy from a Roman prison: Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

Obviously, John Mark had matured through the years and had become a faithful servant of the Lord. Paul recognized his progress and considered him a valuable companion.

John Mark wrote the gospel that bears his name sometime between AD 55 and 59. There could be a veiled reference to John Mark in Mark 14:51-52. In that passage a young man, roused from sleep on the night that Jesus was arrested, attempts to follow the Lord, and the mob who had Jesus in custody attempts to seize him.

The young man escapes and flees into the night. The fact that this incident is only recorded in Mark's gospel—and the fact that the young man is anonymous—has led some scholars to surmise that the fleeing young man is actually John Mark.

MARY MAGDALENE - Mary Magdalene was a woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons. The name Magdalene likely indicates that she came from Magdala, a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. After Jesus cast seven demons from her, she became one of His followers.

Mary Magdalene has been associated with the woman in the city who was a sinner who washed Jesus' feet, but there is no scriptural basis for this. The city of Magdala did have a reputation for prostitution.

CHARACTERS Continued

This information, coupled with the fact that Luke first mentions Mary Magdalene immediately following his account of the sinful woman, has led some to equate the two women. But there is no scriptural evidence to support this idea.

Mary Magdalene is nowhere identified as a prostitute or as a sinful woman, despite popular portrayals of her as such. Mary Magdalene is also often associated with the woman whom Jesus saved from stoning after she had been taken in adultery. But this is an association with no evidence.

Mary Magdalene witnessed most of the events surrounding the crucifixion. She was present at the mock trial of Jesus; she heard Pontius Pilate pronounce the death sentence; and she saw Jesus beaten and humiliated by the crowd.

She was one of the women who stood near Jesus during the crucifixion to try to comfort Him. The earliest witness to the resurrection of Jesus, she was sent by Jesus to tell the others.

Although this is the last mention of her in the Bible, she was probably among the women who gathered with the apostles to await the promised coming of the Holy Spirit.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA - Joseph of Arimathea was a biblical figure who played an important role in the burial of Jesus Christ. His account can be found in each of the four Gospels. He is called Joseph of Arimathea because he came from the Judean town of Arimathea and to distinguish him from other Josephs in the Bible.

While there is not much information in the Bible about Joseph of Arimathea, there are certain things we can glean from the text. We learn that Joseph was actually a part of the Council, or Sanhedrin—the group of Jewish religious leaders who called for Jesus' crucifixion.

However, as we read on we see that Joseph was opposed to the Council's decision and was in fact a secret follower of Jesus. Joseph was a wealthy man, although the source of his wealth is unknown. In addition, the Bible refers to Joseph as a good and upright man.

After Jesus' death on the cross, Joseph, at great risk to himself and his reputation, went to the Roman governor Pilate to request Jesus' body. Nicodemus, the Pharisee who had visited Jesus at night to ask questions about God's Kingdom, accompanied Joseph. The two men were granted custody of Jesus' body, and they immediately began to prepare the body for burial.

Following Jewish custom, they wrapped the body in strips of linen and mixed in myrrh and aloe. However, it was the Day of Preparation—the sixth day of the week, just before the Jewish Sabbath—and it was late in the day.

Joseph and Nicodemus hurriedly placed Jesus in Joseph's own tomb, located in a garden near the place of Jesus' crucifixion. Unbeknownst to Joseph and Nicodemus, their choice to put Jesus in Joseph's tomb fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy spoken hundreds of years before Jesus' death:

CHARACTERS Continued

He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. This is one of the many prophecies that have confirmed Jesus' identity as the Messiah and Son of God.

The day after Jesus' burial, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate to request that the stone Joseph had placed in front of the tomb be sealed, and a guard posted, for three days.

They cited Jesus' assertion that He would rise after three days and claimed the disciples might attempt to steal the body in order to fabricate a resurrection. Their precautions were for naught, as Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, just as He had predicted.

SIMON OF CYRENE - Simon of Cyrene is mentioned in three of the four Gospels as the man impelled by the Roman soldiers to carry Jesus' cross out of Jerusalem. His place of origin has led many to wonder if he was of African descent (and therefore black), or if he was simply born there as were many others of Greek, Roman, and Jewish descent.

Cyrene was situated in modern-day Libya, on the northern coast of the African continent. Settled by the Greeks in 630 B.C. and later infused with a significant Jewish population, Cyrene was the capital of the Roman district of Cyrenaica at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. By then, Cyrene was home to a large number of Greek-speaking, or Hellenistic, Jews.

Many Jews from Cyrene had returned to their native Israel and were part of a community in Jerusalem called the Synagogue of the Freedmen comprising Jews from many other provinces including Alexandria (Egypt), Cilicia and Asia. Luke records men from Cyrene being among those converted at Pentecost.

After the martyrdom of Stephen, believers from Cyrene were among the first to be scattered by the persecution in Jerusalem; arriving in Antioch, they preached to the Gentiles there. These believers were instrumental in the formation of the church at Antioch, where, for the first time, the disciples were called Christians.

Simon of Cyrene is mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Matthew only records his name and place of origin, but Mark and Luke say that he was on his way in from the country. Mark, uncharacteristically, provides the most information about Simon, adding that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, men obviously well known to Mark's readers.

It is speculated that the Rufus mentioned here may be the same man Paul greets in his letter to Rome, whom he calls chosen in the Lord and whose mother has been a mother to me, too. Paul's knowledge of Rufus's family indicates that at some point they lived further east.

So does any of this indicate whether Simon was black? Ultimately, we don't know for sure. There is always the possibility that Simon was an African who converted to Judaism, or that he was of mixed descent. However, considering that people of Jewish lineage lived throughout the Roman Empire, it is also possible that Simon of Cyrene was olive-skinned.

BIBLE TIMELINE

5 BC	Birth of Jesus	Mark 1
26 AD	John the Baptist Prepares the Way	Mark 1:4
26 AD	The Baptism of Jesus	Mark 1:9
27 AD	Temptation of Jesus	Mark 1:12
27 AD	Jesus Calls his First Disciples	Mark 1:16
28 AD	Jesus Ministers in Galilee	Mark 2
28 AD	Jesus Lord of the Sabbath	Mark 3
28 AD	Jesus Speaks Many Parables	Mark 4
28 AD	Jesus Heals a Demoniac	Mark 5
29 AD	Jesus Sends out His Twelve Apostles	Mark 6
29 AD	John the Baptist Beheaded	Mark 6:14
29 AD	Jesus Feeds the 5,000	Mark 6:30
29 AD	Teachings on Clean and Unclean	Mark 7
29 AD	Peter's Confession of Christ	Mark 8
29 AD	The Transfiguration	Mark 9
30 AD	Final Journey to Jerusalem	Mark 10
30 AD	The Triumphal Entry	Mark 11
30 AD	Closing Ministry in Jerusalem	Mark 12, 13
30 AD	Thursday Before Passover	Mark 14
30 AD	Jesus' Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion	Mark 15
30 AD	Jesus' Resurrection	Mark 16

MAP REFERENCES

