

# Glossary

## **Abrupt**

Sudden and unexpected. Mark's ending is very different from that of the other gospels which have more detail on the resurrection. (Abrupt can also be used to mean brief to the point of rudeness - applied to spoken words. That is not the meaning here.)

## **Admonition**

A warning. Used here it refers to firm, friendly and constructive advice. Jesus is telling His disciples that when it comes to listening to God's instructions it is important not to be casual but to be careful and diligent.

## **Adversity**

Difficulty or hardship.

## **Ambiguous**

Open to more than one interpretation; not having one single and obvious meaning. Most words have a range of meanings, which means they can be used to express a variety of thoughts. In everyday-life the context and grammar usually makes it very clear what is meant. Did you bring Mike or did you bring the *mike* does not cause problems (assuming the hearer knows that mike is a common abbreviation for microphone). But precisely what Jesus meant when referring to Himself as the Son of Man is not so obvious and needs to be determined by the way He used the expression in a range of contexts and also its Old Testament background. In John's Gospel, ambiguity opens up the way for multiple layers of meaning and a depth which become apparent by thinking about and meditating on the passage.

## **Aramaic**

The language spoken by Jesus and the Jewish people in Jesus' day. It is a Semitic language related to Hebrew and has the same alphabet. The Old Testament scriptures were written in Hebrew, apart from a few chapters in the book of Daniel and Ezra which are written in Aramaic.

## **Biography**

A biography is a written account of a person's life story written by someone else. An autobiography is an account written by the person themselves. Modern biographies often try to explain how a person developed into the person they became, the influences that shaped their lives and an assessment of their achievements.

## **Blasphemy, blasphemous (adjective)**

Is showing great disrespect to God or to something holy. It could be something said or something done. Blasphemy is therefore offensive to God and to those who respect Him. Using God's name in vain, as a swear word, is blasphemous and was forbidden in the second of the Ten Commandments. Blasphemy is not the same as holding a belief or opinion that does not agree with a particular religion which may be expressed courteously and respectfully. Here, Jesus was thought to be blasphemous because He was acting as if He was God (which He is of course).

## **Chronological (adjective)**

In strict order of time. In a chronological account the events are recorded in the same sequence as they occurred. Other ways of organising material would be topical or thematic - grouping material that deals with the same subject into one place. Ancient writers were generally not so focussed on strict chronology. But here, Mark is writing chronologically because he is explaining the story of rising opposition.

## **Context**

The parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning. The context of a particular word will be the sentence, paragraph and book. In a wider sense it will include its historical, cultural and social context.

## **Deity**

A God (or in pagan religions, a goddess). A creator or supreme being. Here applied to Jesus who was both man and God (something that the disciples were slow to understand). In the Old Testament, it was Isaiah who explained fully there was only *One True God* and that the gods of the nations were

merely idols. The first Christians faced the problem of explaining how God was *One* and yet Jesus was truly God as well as man. They began to use a special new word - *trinity* - to express the thought that God was three persons in one (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). So we can talk about the deity of God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

### **Domination**

Compelling someone to do something against their will by force of personality or even physically. (More on this in the *Leader's Manual*.)

### **Gospel**

There are three main ways in which the word *gospel* is used, all connected. Gospel can mean the message of the good news of the Kingdom of God through Jesus – as in ‘He preached the gospel.’ Gospel has also come to mean the name for the four accounts in the New Testament (as in Mark’s Gospel or John’s Gospel). In this sense it is a genre (as opposed to letter or poetry). A third way in which the word is sometimes used is as a short summary of the steps to *get right* with God – as in ‘*Paul explained the gospel to the man and led him to Christ.*’

### **Haemorrhage**

Bleeding; in this case the woman had a problem with excessive bleeding with her monthly period.

### **Implied**

Something that is suggested but not directly expressed is implied. If teacher sees a student throw some litter on the ground, he or she might say, “*Peter, there’s a waste-bin over there in the in the corner.*” The implication is that the teacher is telling the student to pick up the litter and go and put it in the bin. In this case it is a softer and less direct way of correcting behaviour than an explicit command or direction. When we read the Bible, we can pick up implications by carefully reading the context.

### **Inadequacy**

The opposite of adequacy. Used here it means that the problem is not with God. It is not that He cannot explain or present the gospel well enough. The problem is with the hearers. God is all-knowing and all-powerful.

### **Intimidation**

Motivating people to do something through fear. (More on this in the *Leader's Manual*.)

### **Intertwined**

Twisted together so as to be difficult to separate. The original word applied to threads but it can be used for more abstract ideas like destinies or plot lines in a story.

### **Legalism**

A system of rules and regulations. The Christian life is not a collection of rules. It is a living relationship with Jesus who shows us how to live and also gives us the power we need to follow Him. Legalism ties people up with guilt. Jesus frequently clashed with the Pharisees who had added a lot of extra rules to the Law of Moses, for example, how far one was allowed to walk on the Sabbath.

### **Lent**

A period of 40 days during which Christians remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ. In some traditions people refrain from eating certain foods as a spiritual discipline.

### **Manipulation**

Motivating a person to do something by making them feel guilty. (More on this in the *Leader's Manual*.)

### **On the face of it**

An expression or idiom that means what appears to be immediately obvious. A similar expression is ‘*on the surface*’.

### **Ostentatious (adjective)**

Someone who is ostentatious makes showy displays designed to impress others. Another word with a similar meaning is pretentious.

### **Paradox, Paradoxical (adjective)**

The putting together of two seemingly contradictory statements or propositions which on further thought prove to be well founded or true. Here men and women have the freedom to reject the message of the kingdom (to resist it). And yet the kingdom will not fail (it is irresistible). On the face of it both cannot be true, but God will find a way to fulfil His kingdom promises either by finding willing hearers or if necessary by conquest (see the end of the *Book of Revelation*). Perhaps the biggest paradox is how a person crucified as a criminal can also be the Saviour of the world. There are lots of paradoxes in the Bible because truth is not always so simple. In *Romans*, Paul talks about the paradoxes around freedom from the law (7) and also of the Jewish rejection of their Messiah (9-11). Paradoxes contain two *incompatible* statements that can be *resolved* by understanding the bigger picture.

### **Portrait**

A word used in the world of art to describe a head and shoulders painting of a person. A portrait is sometimes contrasted with a photograph. In this sense it brings out the person's character, personality and individuality, whereas a photograph is an exact likeness of the outside. The word can be applied to writings. The gospels as portraits bring out different emphases. Mark shows Jesus as a man of action. Matthew brings out Jesus as a fulfiller of the Old Testament promises. Luke particularly emphasises Jesus' concern for the outsider. The gospel portraits therefore have a particular message about who Jesus is and leave out a lot that could be said. A biography would be perhaps closer to a photograph.

### **Pluck**

Pluck used as a verb (action word) means to take hold of something and quickly remove it. Here it is applied to grain. (It can also be used for the string of a musical instrument.) The Old Testament Law provided for the poor by requiring farmers to leave unharvested grain at the edges of fields so it could be gleaned or '*plucked*'. *Leviticus 19:9-10*.

### **Remorse**

Remorse is a distressing emotion experienced by people who regret actions which they have carried out in the past. Remorse is associated with strong feelings of guilt and shame, especially when the harm done cannot be undone. Remorse may lead to repentance which involves putting the wrong right or a change of action. But it may be shallow and short-lived.

### **Riddle**

A puzzle. A question or statement that needs to be thought-out because its meaning is not obvious. To speak in riddles is the opposite of plain speaking and requires some effort on the part of the hearer. See the *Leaders' Manual* for a brief study on the Greek and Hebrew words used for parable and riddle, and issues raised for translators.

### **Sufficient**

Sufficient means enough or adequate. Here applied to on-the-job training; the question is whether a person can learn all that is needed in this way. See the *Leaders' Manual* for more on this.

### **Synagogue**

A local meeting place for Jewish communities to come together to hear the scriptures read. They were especially important for Jews who lived a long way from Jerusalem and after the destruction of the temple in 70AD.

### **Unprecedented**

Something that has never happened before.

### **Welfare**

Welfare or well-being refers to a person's health and happiness. It can be applied to other aspects of life such as moral welfare or physical welfare. Attached to the word *economic* it concerns finance and material well-being. Some approaches to the gospel (often referred to as the *prosperity gospel*) emphasise this aspect of life. There are promises in the Bible that show God's concern for this facet of our lives and Jesus Himself fed the 5000 on the mountain-side rather than send them away hungry. But these things are not the main or central point of the gospel. They are consequences and out-workings of God's fatherly care for His children.