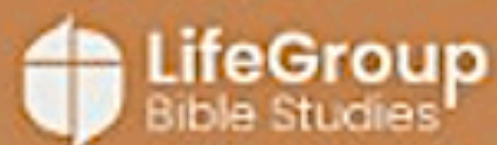




THE STORY  
OF JESUS  
IN THE  
GOSPEL  
OF MARK



FALL 2025  
SPRING 2026



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- As Jesus grew in popularity with the crowds, the Pharisees conspired to kill Him (Mark 3:1-12)
- Jesus encountered a man who needed healing on the Sabbath.
- The religious leaders were looking for a way to accuse Jesus, so they watched to see if He would “break” the Sabbath – according to their rules, not God’s law.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- Jesus knew they were trying to trap Him, but He didn't hide what He was doing.
- He put the man in front of everyone and asked them what was lawful.
- Jesus was giving them a chance to see how their extra rules were hurting people.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- Asking a question was a well-known method of teaching in Greek philosophy, the Socratic method.
- Instead of telling students what to think, the teacher asked a series of questions to help them discover the truth for themselves.
- But Jesus' opponents didn't even answer.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- In their honor/shame culture, it would have been a huge blow to their honor for experts like the Pharisees not to answer Jesus' question.
- Challenging others intellectually in public was a big part of the honor system, which scholars call the “challenge-riposte,” like the intellectual equivalent of challenging someone to a duel.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- The person offering the challenge asked a challenging question and the other person responded, which was called the “riposte” or defense of the honor.
- If the answer was good enough, the honor challenge was defended.
- If not, the person would lose honor by not being able to answer well enough.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- In reading the Gospels, we see people challenge Jesus this way all the time.
- Every time Jesus responded to a challenge, no matter how tricky the question, He won. People were amazed by His answers.
- It was not as common to see Jesus making the challenge, but this time He did.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- That the Pharisees did not answer meant they were publicly disgraced, which would have angered them.
- But Jesus was also angered by their silence.
- Not because they didn't answer His honor challenge, but because they were so blinded by their pride that they missed the heart of the law, which is love.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- Jesus healed the man publicly, knowing it would anger the Pharisees.
- He did it anyway, not only because it was the right thing to do, but because it showed the Pharisees and the crowds that God's law is about bringing life and doing good.
- Unfortunately, the Pharisees' response was not repentance but doubling down on their feelings about Jesus.



# Jesus Grew in Popularity

- Meanwhile, large crowds were following Jesus because they had heard about all He was doing.
- They came to Galilee from all over Israel, even on the other side of the Jordan and way up north in Tyre and Sidon.
- But we don't know about these people's hearts. Were they really following Jesus as Lord or were they just looking for a miracle?



# Our Reaction

- What is our true reaction to Jesus?
- Am I just looking for what Jesus can do for me?
- Am I looking for Him to be something other than what He is?
- Am I really laying down my life, submitting to Him as Lord, and following Him as a disciple?



# Jesus Chose His Disciples

- Jesus chose His 12 disciples and gave them a mission (Mark 3:13-19)
- Just like many others, Jesus went up on a mountain.
- Jesus decided to officially call and appoint His apostles, give them the power to cast out demons and send them on the mission to preach the kingdom of God.



# Jesus Chose His Disciples

- The first five disciples we have already met – the four fishermen and Matthew, the tax collector.
- Philip was from Bethsaida. Jesus called him in Galilee, and he went to find Nathanael and told him they had found the Messiah.
- Bartholomew (aka Nathanael) came from Cana in Galilee.



# Jesus Chose His Disciples

- Thomas was also called Didymus, “the twin,” though we never meet his twin. Asks about the way (John 14:6).
- James “the less” (the younger), also “son of Alphaeus.”
- Thaddeus (aka Jude or Judas [not Iscariot]) asked Jesus why He revealed Himself only to them and not the whole world (John 14:22).



# Jesus Chose His Disciples

- Simon the Zealot. Zealots were a radical political group who incited the people of Judea to an armed revolt against Rome.
- Judas Iscariot. Mark tells us right away that this is the Judas who would betray Jesus.
- This was an unusual group of guys from all different backgrounds from throughout Galilee.



# Jesus Chose His Disciples

- Jesus appointed them as apostles, which means messenger, but it was more than just a term; it was an office.
- In the Greek world, it was a messenger sent on mission with delegated authority from the king.
- This was a special office reserved for the 12 (plus Paul) who first spread the Gospel message to the world.



# Jesus Chose His Disciples

- The apostles laid the foundation for the Christian faith that other generations built upon (Ephesians 2:20).
- Their purpose was to spread the message of the Gospel, but Jesus also gave them the authority to cast out demons.
- Miracles helped people believe they were from God but also because it showed what kind of king was coming.



# Said He Was Crazy

- Even Jesus' own family said He was crazy (Mark 3:20-34)
- In this section, we see two more negative reactions to Jesus' ministry, which came after He called His disciples.
- This time it wasn't the religious or political leaders who felt threatened by His power or strangers who didn't really know Him. It was His own family.



# Said He Was Crazy

- Just after He commissioned His apostles, Jesus went home, and the crowd around Him was so packed that they couldn't even eat.
- When His family heard this, they went to get Him and bring Him inside so He could eat, saying He was out of His mind.



# Said He Was Crazy

- When people told Him His mother and brothers were looking for him, Jesus responded that it was not His biological family but those who do the will of God who were His real family.
- At this point in the story, Jesus' family lacked a full understanding of His identity.



# Said He Was Crazy

- There were also scribes who came down from Jerusalem to see what it was all about, and they claimed that He was possessed by Beelzebub, another name for Satan, the prince of demons.
- Jesus told them that didn't make any sense.
- Why would He be casting out demons if He were a prince of demons?



# The Trilemma

- British writer and literary scholar C. S. Lewis wrote that we can come to only one of three conclusions about Jesus – either He is a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord.
- We can't just believe He was a good teacher, because He claimed to be God. If He's not really God, then He was either a liar, intentionally deceiving people and therefore not a good moral teacher, or He was a madman who really was crazy.



# The Trilemma

- C.S. Lewis:
- “You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”



# Their Response

- Those who felt threatened by Jesus responded with hatred or fear; those who were healed and witnessed miracles, with thanksgiving and awe – sometimes by worshipping and following Jesus but sometimes just taking the miracle and moving on.
- But true disciples of Jesus respond to Him by bowing down in worship and following Him as Lord.



# Our Response

- This is the only real response we can have to Jesus.
- Discipleship isn't some "mild approval" of Jesus. It's confessing Jesus as Lord and also treating Him as Lord – laying down your life, picking up your cross, and following Him wherever He leads.
- Evangelism is sharing the message of the Gospel with anyone who will listen.



# Design in Nature



# Romans 1:20

“For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”



# Design in Astronomy



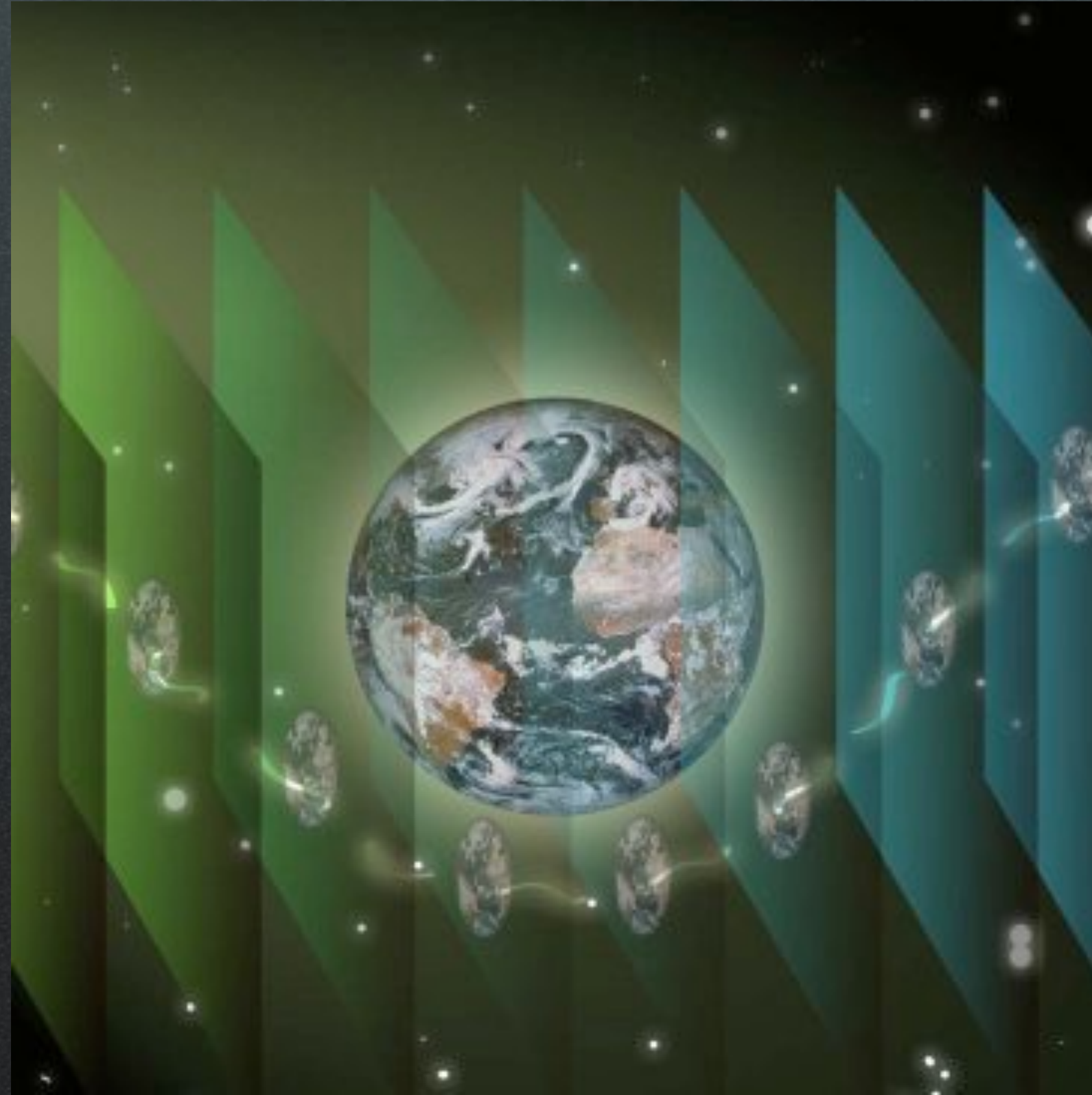


# Isaiah 40:26

“Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing.”



# Universe is Just Right





# George Greenstein

“As we survey all the evidence, the thought insistently arises that some supernatural agency - or rather Agency - must be involved. Is it possible that suddenly, without intending to, we have stumbled upon scientific proof of the existence of a Supreme Being?”



# Character of God

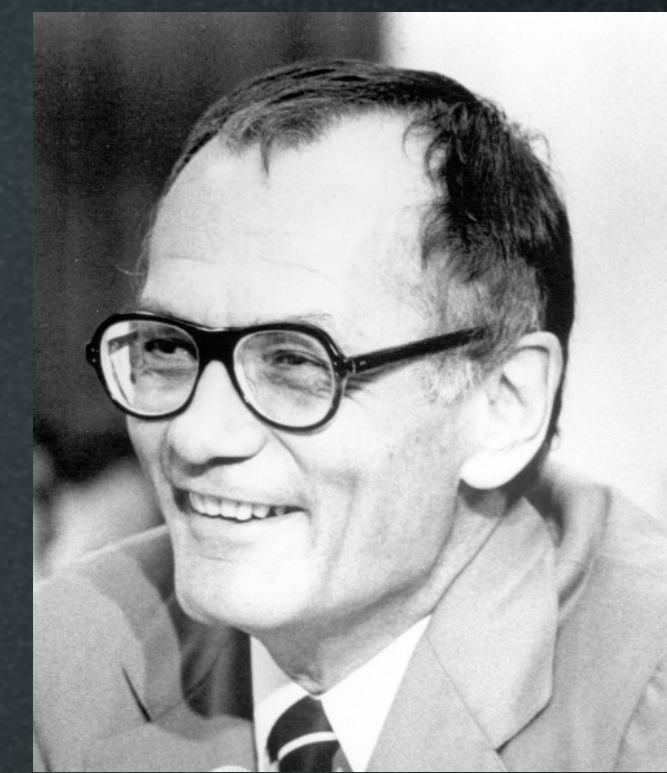
God is loving and caring

“because He cares for you.”

1 Peter 5:7



# Robert Jastrow



“For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”



# Character of God

God is loving, caring, and  
omnipotent.

“In the beginning God created.”

Genesis 1:1



# Kalam Argument

1. Everything that has a beginning of its existence has a cause of its existence.
2. The universe has a beginning.
3. The universe has a cause of its existence.
4. If the universe has a cause of its existence then that cause is God.



# Character of God

God is loving, caring,  
omnipotent, and eternal.

“Even from everlasting to everlasting,  
Thou art God.”

Psalm 90:2



# Design in Biology





# Design in Biology

- Molecular motors within the cell have irreducible complexity.
- The genetic code implies intelligence.
- Mutations do not produce real change.
- Life on earth shows the marks of intelligent design.



# Character of God

God is loving, caring,  
omnipotent, eternal, and  
intelligent.

“How precious are thy thoughts to me,  
O God! How vast is the sum of them!”

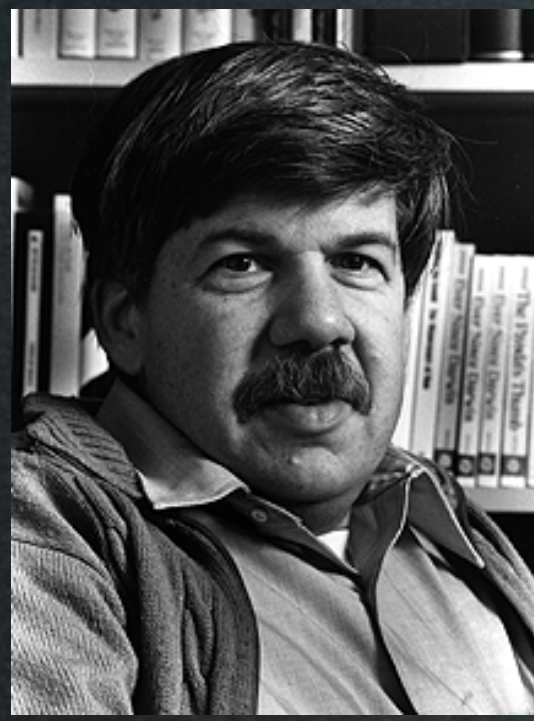
Psalm 139:17-18



# Design in Geology



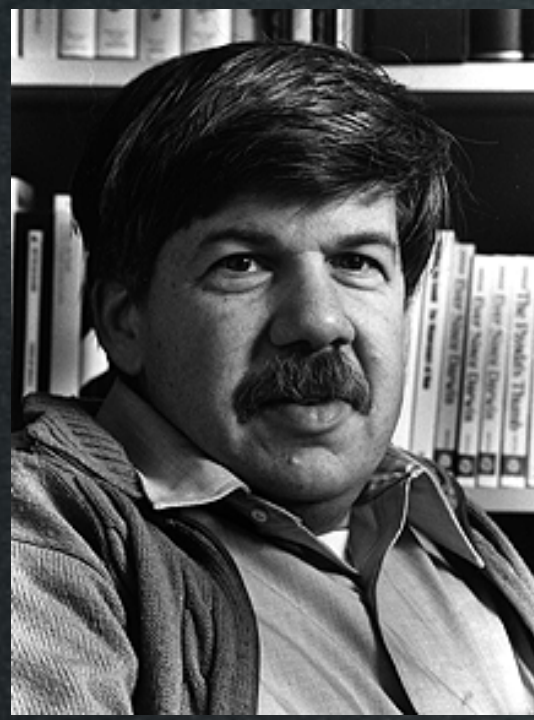




# Stephen Jay Gould

“Imagine an organism built of a hundred basic features, with twenty possible forms per feature. The grab bag contains a hundred compartments, with twenty different tokens in each . . . .”





# Stephen Jay Gould

“To make a new Burgess creature, the Great Token-Stringer takes one token at random from each compartment and strings them together. Voila, the creature works -- and you have nearly as many successful experiments as a musical scale can build catchy tunes.”



# Character of God

God is loving, caring,  
omnipotent, eternal,  
intelligent, and creative.

“O Lord, how many are Thy works!”

Psalm 104:24



# Resources

