



MARK

JULY 2017

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of the book of Mark. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to it than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

MARK – INTRODUCTION

This book was written by John Mark about 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. This was the same John Mark who went with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey and whose early return was the subject of their infamous disagreement (Acts 15:36-41).

Church History tells us that Mark was a close associate of Peter's and that this book is mostly made up of Peter's preaching about Jesus arranged and written down by Mark.

OUTLINE

HERE IS JESUS (1:1-13)

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and very direct in character. Nowhere is this clearer than in the introduction. In only 13 verses we are introduced to Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of God (vs 1). There are two events compressed into these verses that show us the truth of these words:

- **John the Baptist:** In sync with the prophecy in Isaiah 40 John the Baptist came to announce the coming of Jesus – the Lord.
- **The baptism of Jesus:** Jesus is baptized by John, The Holy Spirit descends on him and the Father declares that he is his 'beloved Son'.

WHO IS THIS MAN (1:14-8:21)

The first half of the book of Mark challenges us to keep pushing out the boundaries of our understanding of Jesus.

- He is a teacher, but not like any other (1:22).
- He is one who can forgive sin; so what does that tell us (2:1-12)?
- He can handle situations that send everyone else packing (4:35-5:43).

The challenge of these passages don't just relate to our understanding of the person of Jesus, but also the nature of the kingdom of God. The disciples he chooses are not the ones you'd expect. This causes all kinds of problems (2:13-17).

Similarly Jesus doesn't fit the model of a religious person of the day. He focuses on the heart of a person over the outward life (2:18-3:6 and 7:1-23).

A TURNING POINT (8:22–10:45)

Mark 8:29 is a turning point in the book. After Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ the focus shifts from the person of Jesus to the suffering that Jesus will have to go through. Jesus predicts his death and resurrection (8:31-32) and begins his journey to Jerusalem.

The emphasis here is not only on the suffering that Jesus will endure. Jesus also speaks about the expectations and path of discipleship. We are to take up our cross and follow him (Mark 8:34).

THE LAST WEEK (10:46 – 16:8)

As with all four of the Gospels the largest space is given to the week leading up to and including the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as the king riding on a donkey (Mark 10:47, 11:10). Yet, we don't find him playing the politician. He condemns the temple practices (Mark 11:12-25), condemns the Jewish leaders (Mark 12:1-12) and prophesies the end of the temple and the end of the world (Mark 13).

What is Jesus' purpose? He had come to give his body and blood as a sacrifice for sin (Mark 14:12-26). This he does by allowing himself to be arrested, allowing his unjust trials and allowing himself to be nailed to the cross.

In Chapter 16 we are told of the resurrection of Jesus. The book ends quickly. It is as if we're being told, point proven. Jesus has defeated sin and death. He's won the victory.

SOMETHING TO NOTE

There is some dispute among Bible scholars about whether Mark 16:9 – 20 was originally part of Mark's Gospel or added at a later point. Most modern Bibles will show this in some way with an explanation in the footnotes.

There isn't anything significant in these verse that we don't find elsewhere in the Bible so it isn't a debate we need to be too concerned about.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life? (Matthew 7:24-27)