



Getting started with Mark's Gospel

“The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God” - Mark 1:1

These are the opening words of Mark's account of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. These words reveal a lot about what unfolds as you read his gospel.

First all of it's the **BEGINNING** of the good news of Jesus. What is recorded for us in Mark's account of Jesus is simply the beginning of what the risen Lord Jesus continues to do in our world today. It tells the beginning of a story we are still very much part of as those who continue to put their trust in Jesus as the Messiah. That means that as we read we are meeting the same Jesus who is still at work in our world today.

Second, it's **GOOD NEWS**. What is contained on the pages of Mark's gospel is good news. That is, life changing, eternity changing good news. It's gospel! That means as we read this book together we are reading a life changing announcement of good news. Good news to believe and good news to share.

Third, it sets before us **EVIDENCE** upon evidence of Jesus' identity as the long promised Messiah, and the Son of God. It also sets before us the way that Jesus fulfils the role of Messiah by suffering, dying and rising from the dead. As you read look out for the proof that Jesus is who Mark tells us he is.

There are lots of ways to divide up Marks gospel but a very simple way is to split it in half.

Mark chapters 1-8 are largely concerned with answering the question: “**Who is Jesus?**” This section climaxes with Peter's famous confession in chapter 8:29 where he says: “You are the Messiah.”

The section opens with a number of voices revealing the identity of Jesus. The voice of John the Baptist, the voice of God the Father from heaven, and the voice of the prophet Isaiah. Chapters 1 to 8 also contain accounts of many healings. These healings are a demonstration of Jesus power, and therefore identity as the Son of God. In chapters 1 to 8 we see his authority to forgive sin, heal the sick, control creation and even raise the dead.

Mark chapters 8-16 are largely taken up with the subject of “**The mission of Jesus.**” Following Peter's confession about Jesus being the Messiah, Jesus has much to teach them about what sort of a Messiah he will be. On three occasions he talks with them about His death and

resurrection (Chapter 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). This is not an idea that comes easy to the disciples but one they will have to learn.

Alongside the unfolding mission of Jesus to go to Jerusalem and be crowned as God's king at the cross and resurrection, we also see much discipleship training. As you read look out for how Jesus is teaching his disciples (including us!) about what it means to be a disciple. The section climaxes with a detailed telling of the betrayal, the trial, the cross, and Jesus' death. Mark's gospel moves at quite a pace. We read lots of words like "immediately!" This gives us a sense that Mark is running us to the climax of his good news – the cross and resurrection of Jesus. This is way that the kingdom comes, and Jesus becomes God's saving king (The messiah).

Flowing throughout both halves of the gospel are various reactions to Jesus. There is a growing hostility to Jesus from the religious leaders and the establishment. But there is also great faith, and crowds flocking to Jesus for help. We also see the demons reacting to Jesus because they know who he is. All this helps draw our attention further to the identity of Jesus but also draws us as readers into the question of how we will react to Jesus as we read about him. Faith or fear? Follow or Reject?

Mark's gospel ends quite abruptly in chapter 16 with a brief resurrection account. There is an ending that appears in italics that you'll see from the footnotes does not appear in some of the earliest copies of Mark's gospel we have.

It could be that Mark did finish his gospel off in some way but we don't have it, it could be simply that he never finished it because he got put in prison or something. Truthfully we don't know! But if he did intend it to end at 16:8 – it certainly draws us as readers into how we will respond to the resurrection.

Will we believe or not? Will we take this good news to others, or will fear stop us spreading it to others?

Unlike the other gospels Mark does not give us an exact reason he writes his gospel but may be Mark 1:15 is what he intended.

*'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near.
Repent and believe the good news!'*

As we read Mark – the good news of Jesus the Messiah the Son of God – maybe he intends to lead us to repentance and ongoing belief in the Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)

My notes on Mark:



g r o w
g r o u p

RBT Grow Group is on Tuesday 5th
September

Bring along some things from your reading of
Mark to share with others.

Some RBT reading ideas:

Why not meet up once a week to read it with a friend?

Why not listen online at Biblegateway.com?

Check out this really helpful poster outlining Mark:

<https://d1bsmz3sdiplr.cloudfront.net/media/Posters%20Download/44-Mark-FNL.jpg>