

# THE BOOK OF MARK

Written around the year 70, the Gospel of Mark is earliest narrative account we have of Jesus of Nazareth. Mark is also the shortest gospel. But its importance is greater than its relative brevity might suggest. Mark forms the foundation for the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and sets out a threefold narrative pattern that Matthew and Luke also follow:

Part 1: Galilee, where most of Jesus' public ministry happens (Chapters 1-8)

Part 2: Journey to Jerusalem for the Passover (Chapters 8-10)

Part 3: Jerusalem and Jesus' final week, including confrontation with the authorities, execution, and discovery of the empty tomb (Chapters 11-16)

Mark also offers a unique look at Jesus' ministry. Much of what is most familiar about the story of Jesus is not in the gospel of Mark. For example, there is no birth narrative or stories from Jesus' early years. There is also no story of the Good Samaritan or the prodigal son. Instead, Mark tells an urgent account of, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (something that for Mark is a secret while Jesus was alive) in whom the Kingdom of God has come near, and those who will learn to follow in his "Way."

## WHY READ

One of the best ways to learn more about the Bible is to spend time reading it each day. This study, provides a simple, easy-to-follow plan (with helpful study tips!) that gets you reading and learning as a Lenten practice.

## HOW TO READ

There are essentially two movements in Bible study: what did it mean back then? (discerning context, history, scholarship) and what does it mean today? Start by reading the overall introduction in your study bible, learning some of the history and context for the book of Mark.

Be consistent. Again, one of the best ways to better understand Scripture is to spend time with the text daily. Forget what you already know or think you remember. Read what's actually in the text, approaching it with humility and with as few preconceptions as possible.

Mark up the text. What stands out to you? Look for connections, contradictions, conundrums. What questions does it raise? Circle, underline, highlight, and annotate. Write it down in your own words.

Ask, "Why was it important for people to write this down?" Or, "What was going on in their world that this was important to them?" These are some of the best questions to ask when reading the bible. People wrote, compiled and edited these stories because they spoke to some of the deepest questions about life.

Wonder what connections in the text draws you toward today? Where does the text inspire you? Make you think more? Where do you see connections to the here and now?

Find opportunities for reflection with others—your friends, family or small group. Scripture is meant to be read, studied, and wrestled with in community. Together, we dance with a text, probe and question.

# BOOK OF MARK READING PLAN

February 27: Mark 1:1-13

February 28: Mark 1:14-28

February 29: Mark 1:29-45

March 1: Mark 2:1-12

March 2: Mark 2:13-22

March 3: Mark 2:23-28

March 4: Mark 3:1-35

March 5: Mark 4:1-20

March 6: Mark 4:21-34

March 7: Mark 4:35-41

March 8: Mark 5:1-20

March 9: Mark 5:21-43

March 10: Mark 6:1-6

March 11: Mark 6:7-13

March 12: Mark 6:14-29

March 13: Mark 6:3-44

March 14: Mark 6:45-56

March 15: Mark 7:1-13

March 16: Mark 7:14-23

March 17: Mark 7:24-37

March 18: Mark 8:1-26

March 19: Mark 8:27-38

March 20: Mark 9:1-13

March 21: Mark 9:14-29

March 22: Mark 9:30-41

March 23: Mark 9:42-50

March 24: Mark 10:1-12

March 25: Mark 10:13-31

March 26: Mark 10:32-45

March 27: Mark 10:46-52

March 28: Mark 11:1-14

March 29: Mark 11:15-25

March 30: Mark 11:27-33

March 31: Mark 12:1-12

April 1: Mark 12:13-40

April 2: Mark 12:41-44

April 3: Mark 13:1-23

April 4: Mark 13:24-37

April 5: Mark 14:1-25

April 6: Mark 14:26-52

April 7: Mark 14:53-65

April 8: Mark 14:66-72

April 9: Mark 15:1-20

April 10: Mark 15:21-41

April 11: Mark 15:42-47

April 12: Mark 16:1-8