

Why study Mark?

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?' They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.'

'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'

Peter answered, 'You are the Christ.'

Mark 8 v 27-29

Jesus has always been endlessly fascinating to people, and there are many opinions about who he was, why he came and his significance for the world. Yet often these opinions are based on half-remembered stories from school or church—few are based on the accurate eye-witness record of Jesus found in the gospels.

These ten Bible-studies in Mark's gospel, the shortest of the four, provide a great opportunity to find out the truth about Jesus, as they take us on a journey of discovery through the first eight chapters. We join the disciples as they begin to learn who Jesus really is. Find out for yourself just how much Mark has packed into his brief account of Jesus!

You'll learn, beyond doubt, that Jesus is King, but also find answers to many questions: Why does this promised King come in such a secret way? Why is He powerful, yet opposed? Why does He stop people talking about Him? Why do some recognise Him, but not others?

Most of all however, with two very practical sections for personal application in every session, this course aims to help each of us live with Jesus as our King.



Mark 1 v 1-13

THE PROMISED KING

talkabout

1. What difference would it make to you if we did not have the Old Testament? Why might some people (including Christians) be happy to get rid of it?

Read Mark 1 v 1-13

investigate

In verse 1 Mark gives away the plot of his book! He refers to Jesus as 'Christ' and 'Son of God'. The first half of Mark's Gospel shows us that Jesus is the Christ—God's promised Saviour King. It comes to a climax when Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ (8 v 29). The second half of Mark's Gospel shows us that Jesus is the King who dies. It comes to a climax when a soldier says that Jesus is the Son of God after he has seen Him die (15 v 39).

2. Look at verse 1. What does Mark mean when he describes the story of Jesus as 'the gospel'? Do you know what the word 'gospel' means?

Mark begins his story with three 'voices', making declarations about Jesus, that each draw on the Old Testament: (1) the Old Testament Scriptures themselves; (2) John the Baptist—the last Old Testament prophet (see Matthew 11 v 13); (3) the Father in heaven, whose words about Jesus contain references to Old Testament Scriptures. Mark uses the Old Testament to show us who Jesus is and what He has come to do.



3. Look at verses 2-3. Mark quotes from two Old Testament (OT) passages: **Malachi 3 v 1 and Isaiah 40 v 3**. Look up both and find out what links these two quotes.

4. What is the message of Malachi 3 v 1-2?

5. What is the message of Isaiah 40 v 1-11?

6. So, what do these quotes tell us about Jesus?



apply

7. Why do we need the OT? What answer is found in **Luke 24 v 27**?

- Briefly discuss how the OT prepares the way for Jesus.
- Many people today are mostly ignorant of the Old Testament. How can this affect their response to the Christian message?



getting personal

Do you regularly read and study the Old Testament? Do you understand its purpose? Or know how it points out our need for Jesus and points forward to what He is like? How could you make sure that you don't ignore the Old Testament, or use it wrongly?





explore more

The quote from Isaiah 40 is an announcement to Israel that the exile in Babylon would end. However, this passage is clearly talking about more than the historic physical return of the Israelites to their homeland. In what sense does Jesus bring exile to an end?



investigate

8. Look at verses 4-8. Mark tells us what John wore, to remind us of the Old Testament prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1 v 7-8). Why does Mark do this? **See Malachi 4 v 5-6.**

9. What does John tell us about Jesus?

10. Look at verses 9-11. Why does Jesus come to be baptised?

11. The voice of the Father in heaven alludes to Psalm 2 v 7-8. What does this psalm tell us about Jesus?





explore more

The Father also uses words from two other Old Testament passages—**Genesis 22 v 2** and **Isaiah 42 v 2**. Look at each of these verses in their contexts. What do they tell us about Jesus?



investigate

12. Look at verses 11-13. The term ‘the son of God’ was also used of the nation of Israel (Exodus 4 v 22-23). Compare Jesus’ experience in the desert with that of Israel’s in the Old Testament. What are the similarities and the differences between Israel and Jesus in verses 12-13?

13. Can you summarise what Mark wants us to learn from the Old Testament about Jesus?



apply

14. What can we learn from Mark’s introduction of Jesus about how to understand and proclaim Jesus to the world?
- How do people today often think of Jesus and how is Mark’s description different?
 - Is the popular Christian view of Jesus also different from Mark’s description? How has this come about?
 - How do Mark’s references to the Old Testament help his readers understand better who Jesus is?





getting personal

How do you talk about Jesus to others? Are there aspects of Jesus that you leave out? If so, why? How can you guard against pressures to do this?



pray

Thank God...

- that you can read and study for yourself everything He has said about the gospel of Christ in both Old and New Testaments.
- that, as in the days of John the Baptist, God is longsuffering and patient with sinners, holding back His judgment on this world in order to give us warning and opportunity to repent and be saved.
- that Jesus took God's judgment on Himself so that we can be saved.

Ask God...

- to give you boldness, love and opportunity to proclaim Jesus to the non-Christians you come into contact with.
- to help you understand the Old Testament truth about Jesus, so that you can proclaim Him accurately.
- to help you not to dilute the Bible's message about Jesus Christ.

