



**LIKE HE
OWNS
THE PLACE**

SEVEN STUDIES IN MARK 1-4



CONTENTS

WEEK 1 - MARK 1:1-15 **6**

WEEK 2 - MARK 1:16-45 **10**

WEEK 3 - MARK 2:1-17 **14**

WEEK 4 - MARK 2:18-3:6 **18**

WEEK 5 - MARK 3:7-35 **22**

WEEK 6 - MARK 4:1-34 **26**

WEEK 7 - MARK 4:35-41 **30**

LIKE HE OWNS THE PLACE

ENCOUNTERING THE REAL JESUS IN MARK 1-4

- 'Jesus was a great moral teacher'
- 'Jesus didn't care about people's so-called morality, he accepted everyone'
- 'Jesus founded the Christian church'
- 'Jesus would hate what the Christian church has become'
- 'Jesus had great respect for the traditions of his Jewish people'
- 'Jesus was a subversive rebel, ultimately an outcast from his people'
- 'Jesus was kind and generous'
- 'Jesus wasn't the nice guy people think he was'

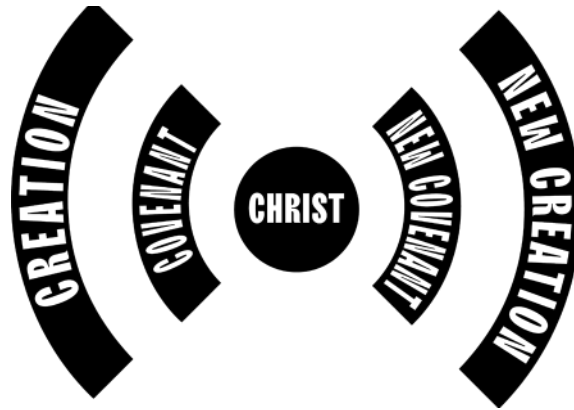
This is just a sample of the different ways people view Jesus, and even here the range is astounding! Maybe that's because, as contradictory as the above statements might sound, there may actually be some truth in each of them.

To meet the *real* Jesus, we're turning to probably the earliest written account of his life, Mark's Gospel. From what we can tell, Mark wrote in the early 60s AD, 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. His primary source seems to have been the eyewitness memories of Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples and a leader of the early church. One reason we can have confidence in what Mark wrote about Jesus is that most of the eyewitnesses to Jesus' life were still alive. Even if Mark had wanted to fabricate lots of fantastic stories, he couldn't have got away with it, he'd have been called out!

In contrast to John's Gospel, Mark doesn't start by telling us explicitly that Jesus is God become human. In contrast to Mathew's and Luke's Gospels, Mark doesn't start by telling us that Jesus was conceived by God's own Spirit, not by a human father. Instead, he jumps straight into presenting the striking actions of Jesus.

Some readers have therefore thought that Mark presents a 'lower' view of Jesus, as less than divine. But that's a mistake. Mark certainly presents the actions of Jesus without much explicit interpretation from Mark himself. But Mark tells the story of Jesus in a way that strongly alludes to parts of the Old Testament. That's how he helps us make sense of Jesus' actions.

Early this year (<https://mpc.org.au/gods-story>) we looked at how the whole Bible makes sense as one big story in 5 Episodes:



As Mark effectively narrates Episode 3, it shouldn't surprise us that he leans heavily on Episode 2 to help us make sense of Jesus. When we pay attention to how Mark is using the Old Testament - a major focus of this series - we'll discover a Jesus whose identity and authority is actually confronting. Jesus acts 'like he owns the place'... because he really does.

Let's pray that, whether we're new to church or have been part of it for decades, that we'd each gain new insight into Jesus from Mark... and that we'd be drawn to respond appropriately.

Pete Kutuzov
Jeremy Wales
Doug Wannenburg
Dan Wilton
Phil Campbell
September 2020

A grand theater stage with red curtains and a wooden floor. The stage is empty, and the curtains are drawn. The lighting is warm and focused on the stage.

WEEK ONE

MARK 1:1-15

THE SHOW IS STARTING!

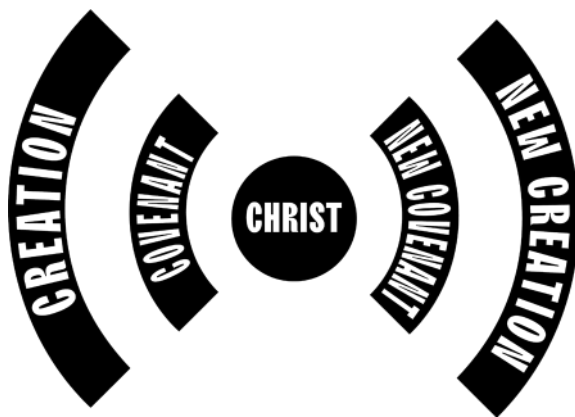
Jesus of Nazareth never held a political office, never wrote a book, never married, never attended university, and never visited a big city (even Jerusalem was only big at festival times). He was a lower-class worker who died homeless and poor. Yet, in spite of all odds - obscurity, powerlessness, and execution - he's arguably the most famous person in all of human history. Why? What makes Jesus one of the most recognised and influential people in all of history?

1. What opinions do your friends hold about Jesus?
How does the media portray Jesus?

In the midst of so many opinions about Jesus, we're turning to one of the biographies of Jesus' life known as the Gospel of Mark, to see who Jesus really is. The Gospel of Mark is one of the earliest accounts of Jesus' life, and was most likely written while many of those who were witnesses to the events described were still alive...

READ MARK 1:1-15

From the very beginning of this Gospel, Mark makes it clear who this book is about: Jesus. Mark is equally upfront that he thinks the life of Jesus is very good news - "gospel". But why?



Earlier this year we looked at how the whole Bible works as God's Story in 5 Episodes. Mark is telling Episode 3 and he picks up where Episodes 1 & 2 left off. The first thing Mark tells us about the story of Jesus is that it continues the story of the Old Testament: "as it is written..." (1:2-3). Here Mark merges quotes from two related Old Testament prophets which **we should read together (over the page)**:

MESSIAH, SON OF GOD

Why does Mark start by calling Jesus "the Messiah, the Son of God"? God made Adam, the first human, to represent God on earth as God's "image" (Genesis 1:26-28, 5:1-3) and so Adam was called "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). But Adam disobeyed and failed to faithfully represent God. God later called Israel to be his "son" (Hosea 11:1) - they're even called God's "firstborn" (Exodus 4:22-23). But Israel also failed to live up to the title and role. Israel's kings in the line of David were meant to lead the nation in obeying God, so they too were called God's "son" and "firstborn" (2 Samuel 7:14, Psalm 2:7, 89:26-27). Yet ultimately these kings led Israel into idolatry and exile instead. Since each Davidic king was 'crowned' by anointing with oil, the Hebrew and Greek words for 'anointed' - "Messiah" and "Christ" - were the title given the longed-for king who might **one day represent God truly**. Mark starts by saying that Jesus is that longed-for "Messiah, Son of God" who would indeed represent God truly (Mark 1:1 & 1:11). But this raises the question: What makes Jesus so special that he can fulfill that role, when Adam, Israel and the Davidic kings could not?

ISAIAH

Addressing those in exile, Israel's largest punishment for sin.

40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3 A voice of one calling:

"In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

MALACHI

Addressing the people after exile, when Israel had gone back to sinning again.

2:17 You have wearied the LORD with your words.

"How have we wearied him?" you ask. By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

3:1 **"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.** Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ...

4:5 "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction."

2. Both Isaiah and Malachi looked for God himself to arrive and put things right, with someone to prepare God's way beforehand. For Isaiah, how would God's arrival be good news?

3. For Malachi, would God's arrival really be good news? Why or why not?

4. Malachi looked for another 'Elijah' figure to come before God came to judge, since Elijah famously confronted disloyalty to God in Israel. John the Baptist deliberately wears the same distinctive clothing as Elijah (compare Mark 1:6 with 2 Kings 1:8). What does that say about John's role? How does his preaching and baptising fit into that role?

5. If John fills the 'prepare-the-way-for-God' role from Isaiah and Malachi, what role does Jesus fill? (verses 7-9) What does this say about who Jesus really is?

6. What three events happen as Jesus is baptised? (verses 10-11)? What do these say about who Jesus is and what he came to do? (see sidebar for Old Testament hints)

7. Verse 15 summarises the message of Jesus. What do you think he means when he tells everyone: “The time has come: the reign/kingdom of God has come near”?

8. What do you think Jesus means when he tells everyone: “Turn and trust the good news”? What is he telling people to trust in? What do people need to turn from trusting instead? What will happen if they don’t turn?

As Mark says in verses 1 and 14, the life and message of Jesus is very good news. But it also has an edge to it – it calls for repentance (Mark 1:4; 1:15). How people respond to it determines whether it really is good news for them, or hard news they don’t want to hear.

9. If someone asked you “Who is Jesus?”, how would you reply? How does this study affect your answer?

10. If Jesus is who Mark says he is, do you give Jesus the respect he deserves? What would appropriate respect for Jesus look like in your life?

The opening of Mark is jam-packed with Old Testament imagery because Mark doesn’t want us to miss the significance of this moment. The climax of all of history has come: not just the rightful king of Israel but the God of all creation has arrived! The question is: How will Israel respond? How will we? Let’s pray that we would respond appropriately as we encounter Jesus in Mark.

PSALM 2

[said by the Davidic king]

7 I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father.⁸ Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”

ISAIAH 42

[said by God]

1 “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.”

ISAIAH 64

[said to God]

1 “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down!”