

The Gospel of Mark: Session 1

...the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (1:1)

Basic Outline

The Gospel of Mark is a fast-paced book roughly divided into three parts:

Part 1: Who is Jesus? (1:1–8:26)

Part 2: What does it look like to follow Jesus? (8:27–10:52)

Part 3: What did Jesus come to do? (11:1–16:8)

Tips for Reading Mark¹

- The Gospels are a unique genre of literature. Only four true Gospels exist in the history of the world. They're not merely history, they're not merely biography, and they're not merely narrative. They are all of this and much more. Each Gospel writer is presenting the Good News about Jesus. They are not trying to answer every question we may have, but they are telling us what we need to know.
- Notice **three different groups** of people are mentioned frequently in Mark: the disciples, the crowds, and the opposition (Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.). As you read, pay attention to how the various groups are responding to Jesus.
- The **dialogue** helps us understand what Mark is communicating about Jesus. We hear how Jesus responds to followers, outsiders, and critics.
- Pay attention to what Mark is doing with **narration**. The narration moves the story along. Mark's narration specifically tells us how he wants us to understand what he's written.
- Make note of the **location/geography** as well as time. Most of Part 1 is in Galilee. So, if Mark moves the story outside of Galilee, we should pay attention. Also, careful attention to Mark's timeline lets us see that sometimes a whole lot of things happened on one single day. Part 2 is "on the way" — a phrase he uses often in that section. Where are we on the way to? Why? Part 3 is in Jerusalem and covers the span of one week, Passion Week.
- As you read Mark, make note of these things. Ask questions of the text. Read the text multiple times, and pray the Spirit would help you understand. Make use of the cross-references you have in your Bible; the Bible is its own commentary.

¹ Adapted from Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour* (Zondervan, 2014); Steven W. Smith, *Recapturing the Voice of God: Shaping Sermons Like Scripture* (B&H, 2015); Abraham Kuruvilla, *Mark: A Theological Commentary for Preachers* (Cascade Books, 2012).