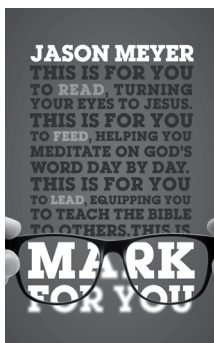




Turn your eyes upon Jesus

Mark

by Jason Meyer



Mark For You

These studies are adapted from *Mark For You*. If you are reading *Mark For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Mark For You*:

Study One → Ch 1-2	Study Six → Ch 5-6
Study Two → Ch 3	Study Seven → Ch 7-9
Study Three → Ch 4	Study Eight → Ch 10-11
Study Four → Ch 5	Study Nine → Ch 12-13
Study Five → Ch 6	Study Ten → Ch 14

Find out more about *Mark For You* at:
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Turn your eyes upon Jesus

The Good Book Guide to Mark

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Introduction: Good Book Guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, moms and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That's why we've designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let's take a look at what is included:

- ☞ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here's the question that will do that. It's designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. The **Leader's Guide** contains **guidance for questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- ⋮ **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned o other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that's not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you'll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. ⋮ **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God's word—in line with his concerns, purposes, and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader's Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God's word.

Why study Mark?

Church history has not always been kind to the Gospel of Mark. It has sometimes been seen as the least important Gospel simply because it is the shortest. Perhaps I picked up on these negative vibes and allowed them to color my view of Mark's Gospel. I still remember the first time I taught through it. I entered my study of Mark with low expectations and a somewhat impatient eagerness to get to the longer Gospels.

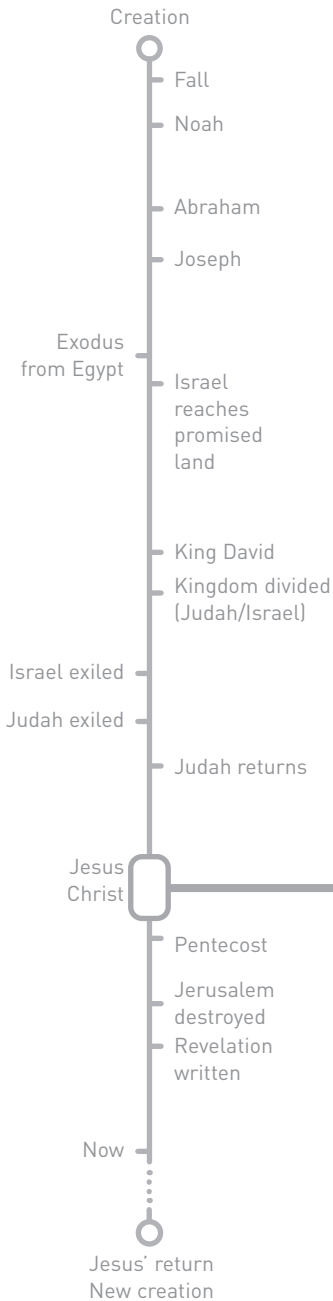
But I was wrong and my life was changed. If I have a first love now in Scripture, it is this Gospel and the Jesus who stands forth from its pages.

Mark's Gospel is fast-paced and action-packed. Mark uses the word "immediately" forty-one times! He does not meander with his message. He narrates this story in such a way that in town after town and story after story the message sounds: *The Son of God has come!*

But in the midst of this consistent message, there is a mystery that keeps building. Conflict and confusion abound because people struggle mightily to see clearly who Jesus is and why he has come. The mystery and the suspense build up a head of steam as the Son gets closer and closer to Calvary. It is only at the cross that someone finally puts the pieces together and confesses that the crucified Christ is the divine Son of God (Mark 15:39).

Mark portrays Jesus in a way that is stunningly compelling. Jesus' unrivaled power and wisdom leave us with a sense of awe, but the portrayal of his unparalleled heart touches us even more deeply. Jesus pours out his love on many different people in story after story all the way to the crescendo of the cross. It was there that God poured out his wrath on him so that he could pour out his love on us through him.

This study guide does not cover every part of Mark's Gospel in detail. Instead it goes through section by section, helping you to see the overall structure of Mark and how the key themes fit together. As you study, let this stunning portrayal of Jesus challenge your perception of him and of yourself. Turn your eyes to Jesus, and be transformed.



BIBLE TIMELINE

Where does the Gospel of Mark fit into the whole story of God's word?

MARK written 60s AD

1

Mark 1:1-45

INTRODUCING THE SON OF GOD



talkabout

1. What do you know about the Gospel of Mark? What do you hope to get out of it?



investigate

Read Mark 1:1-13

2. Mark gets right to the point. What is his Gospel about (v 1)? What claim is he making about Jesus?

DICTIONARY

Gospel (v 1): good news.

Baptizing (v 4): dunking in water.

Judea (v 5): the region around Jerusalem.

Locust (v 6): a type of insect.

Galilee (v 9): a region north of Judea.

But Mark doesn't want you to just take his word for it.

3. In the promise God made through Isaiah, who would the messenger prepare the way for (v 3)?

- Who is this messenger (v 4)?



explore more

optional

Mark 1:2-3 is actually a mixed quotation from three places.

▶ Read Exodus 23:20-21; Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3

In Exodus 23, God is delivering his people from Egypt into their own land.

How is the angel in Exodus 23:20 going to help God's people?

In Mark 1:4-5, how is John helping God's people?

It's significant that John baptizes people in the Jordan River (v 5). This was the border between the wilderness and the promised land. It's as if people are entering the promised land all over again.

How does Malachi 3:1 help us understand what it means that John is preparing the way for the Lord?

What detail in Isaiah 40:3 is fulfilled by John?

4. Look at what John says and does (v 4-5). How is this preparing the way for the Lord?



getting personal

John came to get people ready for Jesus' coming. Taking God seriously meant taking their own sin seriously! Imagine Jesus were coming to visit you. Is there anything you would want to change about your life to get ready for his coming?

5. What does John say about Jesus (v 7-8)?

6. What do we learn about Jesus from what happens next (v 10-11)?

People are being baptized as a sign of their repentance. So what is Jesus doing in that water? He does not need to repent! Jesus is identifying with the need of his people. Humans are not good enough for God. But Jesus came to identify with us, to help us, and to die for us—to bring us to God.

➔ **apply**

7. How does this passage call us to respond to Jesus?

⬇️ **investigate**

▶ **Read Mark 1:14-28**

8. What is Jesus' message (v 15)? What does he want people to do?

DICTIONARY

Sea of Galilee (v 16): a large lake.

Capernaum (v 21): a town in Galilee.

Synagogue (v 21): a building where Jews met locally to worship God.

"The kingdom of God is at hand" means that the King has come. God is intervening in human affairs.

9. In the following scenes, how do these people respond to Jesus' words?
- Simon, Andrew, James, and John (v 16-20)

- The unclean spirit in the synagogue (v 23-26)

- The other people in the synagogue (v 22, 27-28)

- 10.** What do the people in the synagogue mean in verse 27 when they say that Jesus has authority?

- How has he demonstrated that authority so far?

What Jesus says, happens. This is another proof of his identity as God—the one who spoke the world into being (Genesis 1).

Jesus next continues to cast out demons and heal diseases (Mark 1:29-34).

- 11.** How do you think casting out demons and healing diseases fit into Jesus' mission statement (v 15)?

In the ancient world, a herald would go ahead of an army and warn people to accept terms of peace. That is what Jesus is doing when he calls people to repent and believe. When we repent, we confess that we have tried to be our own king and we accept Jesus as Lord instead.



→ apply

12. Based on what you've read in this study, what could you say about Jesus to those who don't yet know him?

💬 getting personal

Take some time to reflect on your own view of Jesus. Do you believe he is God? Do you recognize his authority and rule in your life? Why, or why not? As you get to know Jesus better in these studies, are you willing to be challenged in your assumptions about him and your response to him?

↑ pray

Reflect together on the person of Jesus. Pray that the words of the hymn "Be Thou My Vision" would be true of you this week:

"Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise.
Thou mine inheritance, now and always.
Thou and thou only the first in my heart.
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art."

(Mary Elizabeth Byrne)



