

rockypc SERIES COMPANION 2024



ONE STEP CLOSER

Mark's Gospel

WEEKS 24-28

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak



ONE STEP CLOSER

AN INTRODUCTION TO MARK'S GOSPEL¹

Jesus is the man of action, moving quickly and decisively from one event to the next. From the opening sentence, Mark's Gospel is packed full of action. It begins with God's interruption of history (1v1) and ends with a declaration that changes lives (15v39). But this book is not ancient history that belongs in a museum, Mark places all his readers in the story, recording for us the fast-paced movement of Jesus' ministry. In town after town, and story after story Mark shows us Jesus, the Son of God who's come to change the world.

The narrative moves quickly—the word 'immediately' appears 41 times in this the shortest and earliest gospel account, moving the action forwards with conflict arising quickly.² The people Jesus interacts with can't understand how He will bring all God's promises to bear as one who came to suffer, die and rise again.³

Mark shows us Jesus doing, more than Jesus teaching (in comparison with the other Gospel stories which include longer teaching sections), but the teaching is always there. What Jesus says is the climax to the story. Time and again, through his actions and his words, Jesus draws us towards himself because of his deep compassion for people in great need. Jesus shows what love is and the story moves unerringly towards the moment on calvary where Jesus dies on a cross, bearing God's wrath, so that God might pour out his love on all who would draw near to Jesus in faith.

Mark's Gospel story about Jesus focuses on the action. Our response to Jesus therefore, can't be passive, but, like his ministry, must be deliberate and decisive. He invites us, in each episode, to step closer to him — to know him, to see what he is like, to experience his compassion in our own lives, to be confident in his strength.

This year, we're taking a slow walk through Mark's Gospel. Taking one step at a time towards the cross. It's our hope that you'll find Jesus worthy of your greatest attention: unpredictable but reliable, gentle but powerful, authoritative but humble, human and divine. We urge you to consider the significance of his life for your own life, day-to-day, and invite you to take ONE STEP CLOSER each day.

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT READING THE GOSPELS — MARK IN COMPARISON WITH MATTHEW, LUKE & JOHN

We want to recognise that each of the Gospels tell the same overall story, and include very similar, smaller episodes in that story. It can be tempting then to read MARK in constant comparison with the other Gospels. However, it's important to realise that each Gospel writer is telling the story from their own perspective, with their own specific purpose behind what they include (or choose to leave out). Often this relates to the specific audience they're addressing. That's why we have four Gospels, and not one!

During this series, try to resist the temptation to look at the other Gospels to compare narratives (certainly not as the first thing you do). Instead, try to read Mark's Gospel on its own terms. Try to see how the details included by Mark fit together to form a compelling picture about who Jesus is, and how Jesus' identity is tied to his life-giving death on a cross.

¹ 'Gospel' means at its simplest 'good news'. It is a proclamation that things have changed for the better. Typically in the ancient world it was a word used to announce victory in battle. In the Bible, it proclaims the good news of the arrival of God's Promised King, heralded by the coming of His Promised King, Messiah Jesus. When used of the first four books in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John), we are referring to the good news story about Jesus according to that author.

² The Greek word translated 'immediately' is εὐθύς. In the New International Version, it is also translated with words like 'at once' or 'without delay'.

³ Mark's Gospel is presented in two acts. Act One identifies Jesus as God's promised Messianic King (ch1-8), whose purpose in coming, revealed in Act Two, was to give his life by dying on a cross as a ransom for many (ch9-16).

SO, WHO WAS MARK?

The earliest and most reliable information about Mark comes from Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis until 139AD. Papias said that John Mark was a secretary and writer for the apostle Peter. Interestingly, Mark mentions Peter more than any of the other gospel writers. As you read through Mark, you'll see almost nothing happens where Peter is not present. The entire account then, is almost certainly the eyewitness testimony of Peter.

The book itself turns on Peter's confession:

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 Messiah."

Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

Mark 8v27-31

The events of Mark's gospel take place around Palestine, an area from Caesarea Philippi in the North to Beersheba in the South. During Jesus' ministry this region was ruled by the Roman Empire during the reign of Pontius Pilate and the tetrarchs, Antipas and Philip.

The Gospel stories are certainly intended to speak to everyone, but as mentioned above, each Gospel author has a specific purpose for what they included, often targeted towards a specific audience of people with specific needs.

Mark's Gospel seems to be especially focused on Roman Gentiles, making sure he explains things from the Jewish/Hebrew culture that wouldn't otherwise make sense. So, it's significant that from the turning point of Peter's confession about Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the story moves rapidly to its conclusion where a Roman centurion looks up at Jesus on the cross:

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

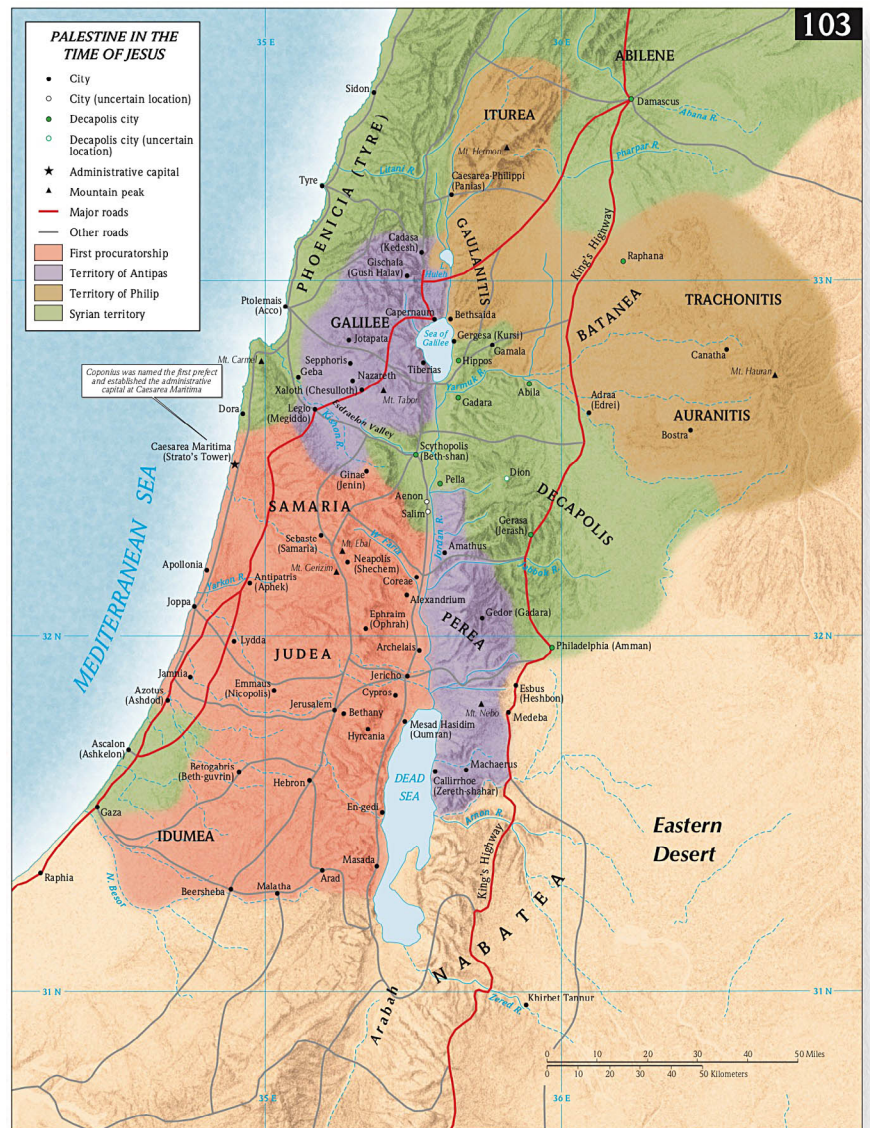
Mark 15v39

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SERIES COMPANION

ON YOUR OWN—Take your time reading through each of the passages and consider where you are up to in Mark's Story. Ask where Jesus is currently located, find it on the map, and consider whether this is significant. If you have time, work through the questions before your GROWTH GROUP so that you've started thinking about the topic before you arrive.

WITH YOUR GROWTH GROUP—Don't be afraid to stop and talk about things that grab your attention or raise questions for you. Above all, spend your time considering what we learn about the man, Jesus, and consider what it will mean for you to take ONE STEP CLOSER to him in faith.

ON SUNDAY—Make sure you bring your SERIES COMPANION along with you, so that you can keep track of any questions you have and record the way that God's Spirit is helping you to understand His Word and grow in your love for Jesus.





TRAPPING JESUS?

MARK 12v13-44

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

Are you good at comebacks? Tell us about your best zinger or your lamest reply.

Jesus spent several chapters on the way to Jerusalem (Ch 8-10) explaining what it looks like to be a disciple of the Messiah who would be crucified and rise again — giving up everything to follow him, instead of seeking their own glory. Having reached Jerusalem, Jesus has cursed the temple (Ch 11) and told a parable against the Jewish religious leaders (Ch 12v1-12). With murderous intent, they come to Jesus with a series of 3 questions.

READ MARK 12v13-17

The Pharisees were an anti-Roman religious group seeking God's blessing by focusing on purity. The Herodians were Jews, who were pro-Roman power brokers and often reflected pagan Roman values. It's a surprise that they've teamed up against Jesus (see also Mark 3v6).

1. What is their tactic as they confront Jesus?

Note: The 'imperial tax' was a tax for the nations that Rome had subdued and would be used to further bolster Rome's power and oppression

2. How does Jesus outwit them?

3. What do you think Jesus means by telling them to give back 'to God what is God's'? (see also Genesis 1v26-27; Exodus 20v1-4)

**MARK 10v18-27**

The Sadducees were a different religious group. They were the aristocratic, wealthy, educated, ruling elite. They held conservative views on lots of issues. For example, they only read and held to the first 5 books of the Old Testament (called the Pentateuch or Book of Moses). And they didn't believe in any future resurrection because others drew this doctrine from other parts of the Old Testament, such as Isaiah 26v19 & Daniel 12v13.

READ DEUTERONOMY 25v5-10

This law, known as the 'levirate marriage' ensured that the family name and inheritance in the land was maintained, as well as caring for widows.

4. What do you think of the Sadducees' tactics and question?

Resurrection life won't be the same as never-ending earthly life

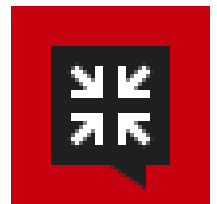
5. Why do you think we won't need marriage anymore? Why would we want to be like angels? (see also Isaiah 54v4-8; Psalm 103v13-22)
6. How does this fit with what Jesus said only a few days earlier in Mark 10v6-9?

Listen to this podcast episode if you want to think about this more:

Will My Spouse Be My Best Friend in Heaven? by Ask Pastor John

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/will-my-spouse-be-my-best-friend-in-heaven>

7. What bad mistake have the Sadducees made? (see also Exodus 3v1-6)



READ MARK 12v28-34

This man is from a third religious group, the 'teachers of the law' or 'scribes'. His question seems more genuine and less like a trap. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6v4 and Leviticus 19v18 to show what he thinks are the most important laws.

8. What do these commands show about God's heart? (see also Micah 6v6-8)

No one dares ask Jesus any more questions, so Jesus goes on the offensive and asks a question himself.

READ MARK 12v35-37

Jesus isn't denying that the Messiah comes from King David's family line. He is questioning whether the Messiah is lesser than David because he's a descendant. He quotes Psalm 110v1, which was written by David and used as a coronation song. Jesus' point is obscured in English by the repetition of the word 'Lord'. The Psalm says 'YHWH [the LORD and the 'I AM' of Exodus 3], says to my lord [king]'. In other words, God is talking to David's lord and king.

9. What have the teachers of the law failed to understand? How is this the one thing the teacher of the law in the previous story (v28-34) lacked, even though he was not far from the kingdom of God?

READ MARK 12v28-44

10. What is the contrast between the teachers of the law and the rich, with the widow?

Today we've seen a number of short snapshots of interactions between Jesus and the various religious and political leaders. But they are not unrelated to one another.

11. What ties all of these stories together? ie what do we learn about Jesus, the Lord God and discipleship?

growing disciples

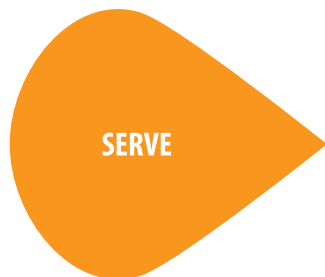
At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.



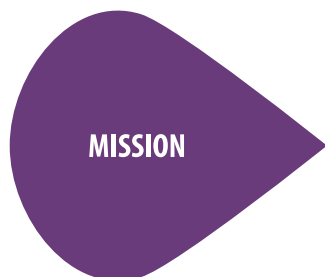
Is the Lord God worthy of your honour, love and devotion? What does whole-hearted love for God look like for you?



What have you learned or been reminded of today, about who God is or who Jesus is? How has this convicted you or comforted you?



When are you tempted to serve others for show and your own honour? How have Jesus' words stirred your genuine love for others today?



Can Jesus be trapped? What help is there for us when our friends and family ask hard questions or try to trip us up?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he is the one God, who is far above and beyond all others. Pray that we would give him the honour, praise and worship that he is due.
- Praise him as the living God who is powerful to raise us to a transformed life with him forever.
- Pray that we would love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.
- Declare that Jesus is God's Messiah, Lord over all. Pray that we would give everything, our whole selves, to follow him.
- Confess that we seek our own honour, at others' expense. We often serve, just for show. Pray that, in humility, we would love others as ourselves.



THE END OF THE TEMPLE

MARK 13

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

What's your biggest worry about sharing the gospel with others?

We have spent 2 chapters with Jesus in Jerusalem, as he goes in and out of the temple. He has pronounced judgment on it — the temple will become like a withered fig tree (11v15-21). He has also proclaimed God's judgment on the temple leaders for rejecting him (11v27-12v12) and he has sparred with those leaders, leaving them speechless and murderously angry (12v13-44).

In today's passage, Jesus leaves the temple for a final time and gives a long speech to his disciples about it. It is a famously difficult speech to understand. So we're going to read the whole speech through, consider some options and then go through the passage again more slowly.

READ MARK 13

Broadly speaking, Christians have read this speech and concluded that Jesus is talking about 3 different future events (or some combination of them):

1. The **destruction of the temple in AD70** by the Romans, led by future emperor, Titus, crushing a Jewish rebellion with an awful siege.
The problems for this interpretation for Mark 13 is that it is hard to see its connection with the coming of the Son of Man, and that all of the New Testament was written before AD70, so there is no connection made by God's Word itself.
2. The **second coming of Jesus**.
The problems for this interpretation are that it didn't happen in the lifetime of the disciples (13v30) and that it misunderstands in which direction the Son of Man is 'coming' — Jesus is quoting Daniel 7 where the Son of Man comes to the throne room of the Ancient of Days.

A significant problem with both of these interpretations is that they fail to take account of the flow and structure of Mark's narrative about Jesus. It would be odd for Mark to press pause on telling us about Jesus' judgment on the temple and his determined journey to the cross, in order to talk about a time 35 years in the future or to let his disciples know about a time more than 2000 years after their lifetimes.

3. **Jesus' death and resurrection** which are imminent in the narrative and have been the focus of the whole book, but especially from Chapter 8 onwards (remember he has already plainly predicted his death and resurrection in 8v31, 9v31 and 10v33). There are also significant links between Mark 13 and the narrative that follows in Ch 14-16.

We're going to see that Jesus is not unveiling a scary apocalypse, but he is drawing on Old Testament imagery to explain just how significant his death and resurrection will be. It signals the end of the temple age and the beginning of the age of his kingdom where God gathers his people from all over the world, as the gospel of Jesus is preached.

If this approach is unfamiliar to you, have a go at seeing it from this perspective, test it out, and see if it fits better than you previously thought.

READ MARK 13v1-4

1. How does Jesus respond to the disciples' wonder over the temple?

2. What do you think of the disciples' private question? Is this what you would have asked, if you were in their shoes?
3. What was important about the temple for the Jewish people? Why was it a big deal that Jesus had declared its judgment? (see Malachi 3v1-5)

READ MARK 13v5-8

4. What things here do *not* signal the end of the temple? (see also Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2v39-44)

READ MARK 13v9-13

5. How will these events happen to Jesus first? (scan Ch14-16)

6. How will Jesus' disciples follow in his footsteps? (see Mark 15v42-46; Acts 2v5-11; 4v1-12; 26v1-8)

READ MARK 13v14-27

There are no speech marks in Greek, so we use context to tell us when there is speech and when there is narrative. 'let the reader understand' in v14 could be an emphasis that Mark adds to talk to later readers so that they will pay extra attention at this point. Or perhaps these are Jesus' own words to readers of the book of Daniel

READ DANIEL 12

Daniel writes during Judah's exile to Babylon. He prophesies an 'abomination that causes desolation' 3 times (9v27; 11v31 and 12v11) as a desecration of the temple and the end of temple sacrifices.

7. What is the most abominable event in the history of the world? How did it signal the end of the temple age? (see Mark 15v27-38)
8. How does the Lord show his kindness to his chosen people who are fleeing in fear on that day? (see Mark 14v48-50; 15v44-45; 16v8)

The terrifying images of de-creation in v24-25 are a common prophetic reference to God's judgment on various nations. You can see them used for judgment on Babylon (Isaiah 13), Egypt (Ezekiel 32), Judah (Joel 2; Micah 3; Zechariah 14), Tyre and Sidon (Joel 3), and Israel (Amos 8).

9. How was God's judgment on all nations poured out? (see Mark 15v33-34)

READ MARK 13v26-27

10. When does the Son of Man demonstrate his glory and power? (Daniel 7v13-14; Mark 16v6-7)

11. How are God's elect gathered? (Isaiah 11v10-12; Mark 13v10)

READ MARK 13v28-36

12. What are the disciples supposed to be awake and watching out for? (Mark 14v17; 14v32-42; 14v72; 15v1) Can they do it?

13. Drawing this whole chapter together, why do you think Jesus used so much graphic Old Testament imagery to explain his imminent death and resurrection to his disciples?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What comfort and hope do you find in Jesus' death and resurrection, as he describes it in Mark 13?



The temple age is over and Jesus is reigning now, as the glorious Son of Man. How should we respond to threats of false religion, war, natural disaster?



SEEKING GOD

What is so important about preaching the gospel of Jesus in the age of his kingdom?
How can it be your priority?



MISSION

How does Jesus calm our fears as we speak the gospel to others?



MISSION

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for the world-shaking event of Jesus' death, where he bore the judgment for many. Praise God that as the temple age ended, we can now find forgiveness, restoration and God's glory in his Son, Jesus.
- Praise Jesus as the Son of Man, exalted in resurrection to receive all authority, glory, sovereign power, worship and everlasting dominion. Praise him that he is ruling now, in a kingdom that can never be destroyed.
- Pray that we would find comfort and hope in Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Thank God that as we declare the gospel of Jesus, God is gathering people from the four corners of the earth. Praise him for bringing us to him, from all over the world, as his chosen people.
- Pray that we would keep speaking this gospel even when we are hated by our families, and at odds with other religions and secular leaders. Pray that we would not worry, but stand firm to the end and be saved.
- Thank God for his Spirit who speaks through us. Pray that he would equip and empower us to proclaim Jesus to our friends and family.



THE HOUR HAS COME

MARK 14

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

6. How does Jesus reinterpret the Passover meal, in light of his impending betrayal and death? (see also Psalm 75v6-8; Exodus 24v3-8 and Jeremiah 31v31-34)

READ MARK 14v32-41

7. What does the disciples' failure to stay awake and watch show? (see also Mark 13v32-37)

8. What insight do we get into Jesus' relationship with his Father?

9. How do we see Jesus' agony here?

READ MARK 14v42-52

10. What strikes you about Jesus' arrest? (see also Amos 2v6-16)

READ MARK 14v53-72

In this final sandwich, Peter's earlier declarations of loyalty amount to nothing (Mark 14v27-31)

11. How do you think we should feel towards Peter, and how should we view his actions? Condemnation? Anger? Something else?

12. Look at repeated words and ideas as Jesus is before the Sanhedrin (Jewish ruling council). What are we meant to notice about Jesus? (see also Isaiah 53v7-12; Daniel 7v13-14)

13. What does Jesus' trial show about the Jewish religious leaders?

growing disciples

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What has stood out to you about Jesus in his last few days? What is praiseworthy and magnificent about him?



SEEKING GOD

Does your response to Jesus match the lavish devotion of the woman in Bethany? What will it look like for you to show him this kind of worship and adoration?



SEEKING GOD

What would you say to someone who thinks Jesus is a powerless victim, who died a pointless death?



MISSION

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise Jesus as the one whose body and blood are poured out to bring us a new covenant of forgiveness.
- Praise Father and Son who work together to save us. Praise Jesus for going through the agony of the cross and submitting to his Father's will.
- Praise Jesus as the only one who could die as a ransom for many, bearing our sins and rising in glory as the Son of Man.
- Praise Jesus as the king who was victorious through a shameful death, rather than with the sword.
- Praise Jesus as the innocent one who faced his accusers in silence, so that he might be condemned for our sake.
- Praise Jesus who endured the betrayal of those closest to him, that he might call us brothers and sisters.
- Praise God for the woman who recognised the beauty of Jesus' death before it happened. Pray that our devotion to Jesus would be like hers — lavish and unashamed.
- Pray that we would tell our friends and family of the power and the glory of our king who died and rose for us.



THE KING OF THE JEWS

MARK 15v1-39

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

Are you scared of the dark? What does darkness represent to us?

Last week, we saw Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane as he decided to follow his Father's will, to drink the cup of his judgment. He was betrayed and disowned by his closest friends, left alone to face arrest and false accusation before the Jewish Sanhedrin.

READ MARK 15v1-15

Mark repeatedly tells us that Jesus was 'handed over'.

1. What is the significance of this act that is described several times in v1, 10, 15? (see also Psalm 2v1-7, Mark 10v33-34)

As in his trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus stays silent before his Gentile accusers (Mark 14v60-61; cf Isaiah 53v7-9)

2. What do you think about Pilate's actions? The Chief Priest's? The crowd's?

READ MARK 15v16-20

3. What irony do you see in how the soldiers treat Jesus?

READ MARK 15v21-32

Simon is forced to become Jesus' first follower who actually takes up their cross (see Mark 8v34)

4. What irony do you see in the mockery, as Jesus is hanging on the cross?

5. How many times is Jesus called the 'King of the Jews/Israel' throughout this chapter so far? Why do you think it is repeated so often?

READ PSALM 69v16-21; PSALM 79v1-8; PSALM 89v19-52

6. What does the mocking of Jesus by the soldiers, religious leaders, passers by and crucified rebels show about who he is and what he is going through?

READ MARK 15v33-34

7. What does this time of darkness show? (see Exodus 10v21-23; Isaiah 59v9-18)

Jesus' despairing cry of v34 echoes David's in Psalm 22. Mark has pointed us to other aspects of this Psalm already. See if you can notice them as you read it.

READ PSALM 22

8. What makes David feel forsaken by God, the first half of the Psalm? How does this describe Jesus' experience too?

From verse 22, Psalm 22 becomes more hopeful.

9. How will we see these verses be fulfilled in Jesus' story too?

Jesus' cry of anguish makes us wonder about the nature of the one God who is Father, Son and Spirit. We naturally wonder how God could forsake himself. Or if he is an abusive Father.

10. How do you explain what is happening here? Think about what we've seen of what is happening at the cross and how we've seen Father, Son and Spirit relating in Mark's gospel.

READ MARK 15v35-39

Those nearby might have misunderstood Jesus' words in v34 to call Elijah to mind. Or they might have been following a tradition that said Elijah would be the Saviour of Israel. But in this last possible moment for Jesus to be saved from this dreadful fate, he remains on the cross, alone.

11. What happens to the temple as Jesus breathes his last breath? (see also Mark 13v1-2, 14; 1 Kings 9v1-9)

Interestingly, Mark doesn't tell us that Jesus said he would destroy the temple and rebuild it in 3 days (as John does in John 2v19; cf Mark 12v10-11). These words are on his enemies' lips in false testimony (Mark 14v58) and scorn (Mark 15v29). And yet, we can't help but see that Jesus is the hope for a new temple, and a new way to worship God (eg Isaiah 2v1-5)

12. What happens to a Gentile soldier as Jesus breathes his last breath? (see also Mark 1v1, 11; 9v7; Isaiah 56v6-8)

growing disciples

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Describe Jesus, from what we've read today. How does seeing him like this impact you?
How do you want to respond to him?



What is one aspect of Jesus' death that you'd like to tell your friend/family member about? How might you go about doing that?



PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise Jesus the King of the Jews who was innocent, yet submitted to mockery, torture and death.
- Praise Jesus for bearing God's wrath for us. Thank him for saving us, by not saving himself.
- Praise Jesus for holding back his power and retribution on his enemies, silently withstanding their scorn.
- Praise Jesus for destroying the temple and becoming the new way to worship God.
- Pray that we would declare Jesus to be the Son of God, glorious and reigning in his death and resurrection.
- Pray that we would feel the horror of the cross and know the costly love of the God who endured it.
- Pray that our family and friends would know the God and Saviour we follow, as we keep sharing Jesus with them.



HE IS RISEN
MARK 15v40-16v8

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

What makes it hard for some people to believe in the resurrection? What alternative theories have you heard for the empty tomb?

Alone and in the darkness of God's judgment, Jesus was crucified. And the only one who stood in front of Jesus was a Roman centurion, seeing and declaring that Jesus was surely the Son of God. We're picking up the story today, still at the cross. Mark uses another sandwich to highlight the middle of the story. The sandwich is women-Joseph-women.

READ MARK 15v40-41

These women (probably including Jesus' own mother cf Mark 6v3) have followed Jesus, serving him and outlasting the male disciples, who have all fled.

1. How are they contrasted with the centurion in 15v39? (see also Psalm 38v9-12)

READ MARK 15v42-47

Part of the punishment of crucifixion was the shame of being hung on a cross and the lack of a burial, as bodies were left for birds and animals to devour. In fact, it was a Roman law that those who were crucified should not be buried.

2. What is surprising in this part of the story? Think about who collects the body, how they do it and Pilate's reaction.

3. What's the rush for Joseph? (see also Deuteronomy 21v22-23)

READ MARK 16v1-3

4. What are the women's expectations as they go to the tomb?

5. What have the women failed to understand? (see also Mark 9v33-34; 14v8)

READ MARK 16v4-8

6. What scene do the women see as they arrive at the tomb?

7. What does this scene remind us of? (see also Mark 9v1-3; 14v62, Psalm 110v1-3; Daniel 7v9-14)

8. What is the angel's message?

9. How is Jesus vindicated as the righteous one in his resurrection? (see also Isaiah 53v9-12)

10. How is Jesus' forgiveness demonstrated in his resurrection? (see also Mark 1v14-18; 14v27-31, 50, 66-72)

11. What is the irony as the women disobey the angel in v8? (see also Mark 1v43-45; 9v9; 13v26-27)

12. How does Mark's sandwich contrast the women with Joseph of Arimathea?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What convinces you that the resurrection really happened?





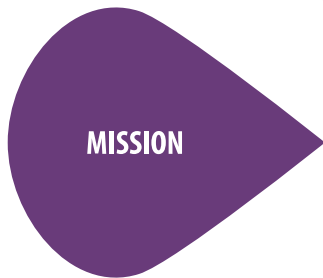
What do you need to remember and take to heart about the risen Jesus?



How does fear stop you sharing the news of the crucified, risen Jesus with others?

Can Jesus forgive you when you give in to fear?

How have you been encouraged to be bold today?



What would you say to someone who says that believing is a private matter and we don't need to speak about Jesus to others?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for raising Jesus as the glorious Son of Man, in power and majesty. Praise Jesus as the eternal king at the right hand of the father.
- Praise Jesus who was vindicated in his resurrection as the righteous one who bore the sins of many in his crucifixion.
- Pray that we would have confidence that the resurrection really happened, and that it is our hope for resurrection in Jesus' kingdom.
- Pray that we would tell the world of this good news. Pray that we would share the gospel far and wide, to all nations.
- Ask forgiveness for the times when fear has stopped us from speaking. Thank God that Jesus forgives us and gathers us to himself.

Mark's gospel finishes with 16v8. You will see in your Bible that there is further text in italics for verses 9-20. These are not likely to be part of the original text, but were a later addition by editors who tried to smooth out what they thought was an anti-climactic ending. See a commentator's reasoning for not considering v9-20 as Scripture:

A SURPRISE ENDING

'I do not believe Mark 16v9-20 is part of Scripture. In other words, I do not think Mark wrote it, but that others added it later. There are several reasons for thinking this:

- Mark 16v9-20 is not found in our oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (eg *Codex Sinaiticus*; *Codex Vaticanus*)
- It is also not mentioned in the writings of early Christians, such as Clement of Alexandria (d.215), Origen (d. 253), Eusebius (d. 340) or Jerome (d. 420)
- The language is different from the rest of Mark. One of the longer endings introduces nine new words that are found nowhere in Mark, and the even longer ending has an additional 18 new words that are not found in Mark.
- The style of the writing is also different. Mark 16v9 names Jesus as the 'Lord Jesus,' a phrase which seems to come from later Christian worship.
- It does not flow well. Mary Magdalene is introduced in 16v9 as if she is being introduced for the first time — but she has been mentioned several times in the preceding verses (15v40, 47, 16v1).
 - It appears to include a random collection of signs drawn from the book of Acts.

One of the main arguments for including the long ending is that the ending in verse 8 is strangely abrupt — it does not fit. I could not disagree more.

Every time Jesus does something to demonstrate his deity in Mark's Gospel, the response of the people is the same: fear (4v41; 5v15, 33, 36; 6v50; 9v6, 32). This gospel is no tame gospel. It cannot be domesticated. Fear here means something like shock and awe and sheer terror as your categories and presuppositions are blown to bits and your understanding of Jesus keeps growing and stretching and expanding.

So it is entirely fitting that Mark closes with fear.'

p252, Meyer, Mark For You