



The Gospel of Mark

Script References

Introduction

00:00–00:19

Jon: The Gospel of Mark is a book in the Bible about the life of Jesus, and the earliest reliable tradition tells us that it was written by a guy named John Mark.

Tim: Now, Mark didn't just grab a bunch of random stories about Jesus and throw them together. He's designed this book to address some really specific questions about whether or not Jesus was the Jewish Messiah.

Jon: So let's stop right there because that's a term a lot of people like me aren't very familiar with.

The Messiah

00:20–01:09

Tim: Yeah. So the Messiah was a royal figure, sometimes called "the Son of God," that Israel was expecting to come and set up a kingdom here on Earth. And around the time of Jesus, Israel was occupied by Rome, and so many Jews were hoping that the Messiah would come and overthrow the Romans and rule as king.

Jon: But Jesus didn't overthrow the Romans. In fact, he was killed by them.

Tim: And that brings us to the very issues Mark is trying to get at in this book. So in the first half, he focuses on who Jesus is.¹ Is he really the Messiah? And then in the second half, he's addressing how Jesus became the messianic King.² And then right here in the middle of the book is this pivotal story that brings the two halves together, and Jesus answers both of these questions.³

1. Mark 1-8

2. Mark 11-16

3. Mark 8-10

Who Is Jesus?

01:10–01:50

Jon: Okay, so let's talk about the first half of the book—who Jesus is.

Tim: So Mark makes his beliefs about Jesus very clear from the first line of the book, “The beginning of the good news about Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God.” ⁴

4. Mark 1:1

Jon: One of the next stories is Jesus getting baptized, and God’s voice announces from Heaven, “This is my Son.” ⁵ So it couldn’t be more clear. It’s presenting Jesus as the Messiah.

5. Mark 1:9-11

Tim: Yes. But as you’re reading through this first half of Mark, you’ll notice something really interesting start to happen. Jesus is going about healing all these different people, and he’s constantly telling them to keep quiet about who he is.⁶ This happens so many times in Mark’s account. It’s very strange.

6. Mark 1:34, 1:44

Jon: Yeah. Why keep it a secret?

The Central Story

01:51–03:03

Tim: So remember, lots of Jews had lots of different expectations about what the Messiah would be and do, and so Jesus doesn’t want people to misunderstand what it means for him to be Israel’s Messiah. And so with all of that in mind, we come now to the pivotal story at the center of the book, where Jesus takes his disciples away and he asks them, “Who do you all say that I am?” ⁷

7. Mark 8:29

Jon: And Peter says what everyone has been saying. “You’re the Messiah, the Son of God.” ⁸

8. Mark 8:29

Tim: But then something new happens because Jesus starts explaining to them how he’s going to become the messianic King, and it is not what they expected. He says he’s going to suffer and die and rule by becoming a servant, or in his words, “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to become a servant and give his life as a ransom for many.” ⁹

9. Mark 10:45

Jon: Peter is startled by this, and he rebukes Jesus because there is no way he’s going to let Jesus die. And Jesus responds, “Get behind me, Satan,” ¹⁰ which is really intense.

10. Mark 8:33

Tim: It really is, but it highlights how important it is for Jesus that his disciples come to understand who he really is. And so here now in this pivotal section, Jesus tries three different times to have this conversation with them, and every time they respond in confusion and even fear. ¹¹

11. Mark 8:31-38;
9:30-32; 10:32-34

How Jesus Becomes the Messianic King

03:04–03:50

Jon: Okay, so this launches us into the second half of the book where Mark addresses the question of how Jesus becomes the messianic King. It's the last week of Jesus' life. He goes to Jerusalem, gets in conflict with the religious leaders, and gets arrested.

Tim: And he's put on trial as someone who's claiming to be the king of the Jews. He's even given a crown and a purple robe, like a king would get, but it is all a cruel joke.

Jon: Then he's mocked and beaten and hung up on a cross where he dies.

Tim: And it's here in this crucial scene that we meet a new character.

Jon: A Roman soldier.

Tim: Who suddenly gets everything that's going on.

Jon: He says, "Surely, this is the Son of God."¹²

12. Mark 15:39

Tim: Which is crazy! It's an enemy who is first putting it all together, that Israel's messianic King is the crucified Jesus.

An Abrupt Ending

03:51–04:55

Jon: That's the structure of the book of Mark, but the book doesn't end with Jesus dead on the cross.

Tim: No. So on the third day, some women go to visit Jesus' tomb, only to find that it's empty. And then there's this angel standing there instructing them to go and tell this good news that Jesus is alive from the dead. But instead they run away and they don't tell anyone because they're afraid. And that's how the book ends.

Jon: Which is a really abrupt ending.

Tim: Yeah. It's so abrupt that later scribes did add an ending that brings more closure to the story. And you'll find that story in your Bible with a little footnote that says it was added much later. But Mark's a brilliant storyteller, and he's intentionally ended this book abruptly.

So all through the book, the disciples have been confused about Jesus' plan to give up his life, the story in the middle and now right here at the end. It's like Mark is acknowledging just how startling this claim really is, and he wants you the reader to wrestle with it for yourself. Is this crucified Jesus really the Messiah that they've been waiting for?