

JESUS

The Suffering Servant



**Learning
the Gospel
According to Mark**

Jesus, the Suffering Servant: Learning the Gospel According to Mark

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Published by 1941 Publishing, a division of Young Life Discipleship
Young Life, P.O. Box 540, Colorado Springs, CO 80901

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Printed in the United States of America

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The development, printing, and distribution of this book was made possible by a generous gift.



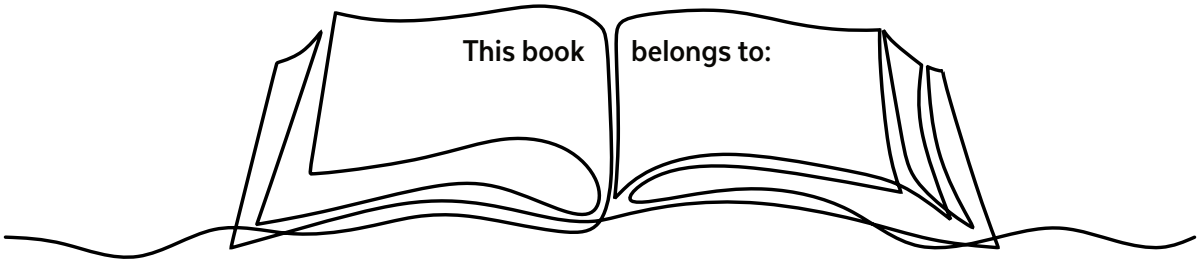


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


LIFE of JESUS

AS RECORDED IN
MARK'S GOSPEL



MARGIN MARKS

As you read Mark and Psalms, use these icons to mark key themes and ideas. Create and add to the list as needed.

kingdom, king, Messiah	
identity of Jesus	I. D.
Sabbath day	
joy	
sadness	
anger	
love for God	
God's love for us	
love for others	
cross/crucifixion	
resurrection	
repentance	
miracle	
God's power	
story-telling, parable	ABC
faith/belief	
obedience	
disobedience	
forgiveness/washed clean	

Mark: The Prequel

Mark tells the story of Jesus that began back in Genesis when God created the heavens and the earth through Jesus (see Colossians 1:15).

The story started **very good**. But humanity, God's special and beloved creation, quickly spoiled things by rejecting the identity and the responsibility God gave them. Translation: they rejected God himself.

It would have been fair for God to reject humanity in return. But he didn't. Instead, he chose a specific family — Abraham, father of Isaac, father of Jacob, aka Israel — to live as his people and to share his truth with all the nations.

Except they didn't. They failed miserably.

At one point they were enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years. Eventually they were led to freedom by a man named Moses. But on their journey to a new home, they messed up again and again. When they finally arrived in the Promised Land 40 years later, God gave them leaders called "judges" back then (see the book of Judges for their stories). Some did a good job and some failed miserably.

One day God's people said, "No more judges. We want a king, like all the other nations have," forgetting that they already had a King, God himself. Once again, God had every right to reject the people who rejected him. But he didn't. He gave them what they asked for. A few of the kings did a good job. Most of them failed miserably. (Notice a pattern?) The most important king was David. God promised that someday one of David's descendants would rescue his people.

Next failure: God's chosen nation split in half. Bigger and stronger nations began attacking them. God sent prophets — people who spoke on God's behalf — to warn them about disobedience and unfaithfulness. The kings and the people mostly ignored the prophets.

Then, disaster.

First the northern part of the nation was defeated. The people were exiled. Then the southern part of the nation was defeated. The temple was destroyed. The people were exiled. They cried out to God for justice.

Generations later, a small group of exiles were allowed to return home. They began to rebuild the city walls and the temple. But life was difficult. They continued to cry out to God. God promised that someday a Messiah would come to rescue his people, restore the temple, and establish a new Kingdom.

For 400 years, powers kept shifting. Judea was ruled by Persians, then Greeks, and finally Romans. The Jews still waited and hoped for the promised Messiah to come and rescue them from their enemies. They waited, and waited, and waited some more, always hoping for a strong and mighty leader who would defeat the Romans, sit on the throne as King, and welcome God back to a bigger and better Temple.

And then, Jesus arrived. He wasn't at all what the people expected. He didn't bring an army. He didn't strike down the Roman occupiers. He didn't set up a powerful government. He didn't rally a group of revolutionaries. He didn't look or act anything like a mighty Messiah.

Instead he was a Suffering Servant. The book of Mark tells his story.

Mark: Ways to Read

Reading the Bible doesn't have to feel daunting or dull. In fact, spending time in God's Word can be exciting and energizing even if the words and stories feel unfamiliar and unclear at first.

Here are some reading strategies for digging into Scripture. Try them out as you read Mark and other parts of the Bible.

COPY IT

It's as easy as it sounds. Just pick a few verses or passages to copy out in your journal. This slows you down, helping you notice each and every word. You'll see things when copying that you won't see when just reading to yourself.

MARK IT

Use the icon emojis on page 7 to mark the margins of your Bible as you read. This will help you notice themes and patterns in the stories. If you notice other themes, create new icons for those and add them to the list on page 7.

CHART IT

When stories or passages include two or more characters or two or more main ideas, make a chart for each one, listing things that are related (same or different). In the story of Jairus and the bleeding woman (Mark 5:21-43) you could make a list comparing these two people and their stories.

SHOW IT

Take a story or teaching of Jesus and make it visual. Doodle, draw, or design the words. Allow yourself to both read and see the meaning.

DESCRIBE IT

With two or more people, read the story one verse at a time. Stop and visualize it. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What's happening off to the sides? Describe it to each other. Continue with the next verse until you get to the end of the story.

INVERT IT

Take Jesus' words and invert them into their opposite. Notice how harshly wrong they sound. Sometimes it's easiest to see the rightness and goodness of something by seeing what its opposite would be.

SPEAK IT

Reading silently is easy and quick for many people. But it can lead to lazy reading. Sometimes read the verses out loud, by yourself or with others. Just listen. Close your eyes if someone else is reading. Hear carefully what the words say and what the Spirit is teaching.

PRAY IT

Take a passage and turn it into a prayer. In Mark 4:40, Jesus says to his disciples, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" You could pray this as, "Dear God, help me to not be afraid. Please give me deeper faith to trust you all the time. Amen."

MARK 1:1-20

FYI

Some scholars believe the opening line of Mark was originally the title.

Old Testament references:
Malachi 3:1
Isaiah 40:1-5

John the Baptist was related to Jesus. You can read about his own miraculous birth story in Luke 1. Verse 36 says that John's mother, Elizabeth, was a relative of Mary. When Mary and Elizabeth were both pregnant, John leaped within his mother's womb at the sound of Mary's voice (Luke 1:39-40).

The events in verses 9-11 show the presence of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit together as one, but still distinct from each other.

Mark's account of Jesus' life starts off at a sprinter's pace and never slows down. Watch for the word "immediately" as you read.

Mark skips the birth and childhood of Jesus and jumps right in with, "**This is the Good News of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.**"

Right from the beginning, Mark grabs his readers' attention with a shout about what's coming. But strangely, even though Mark races ahead from event to event without a pause, the very first thing he does is look back hundreds of years to a promise made by Isaiah (one of the most well-known prophets of the Jewish people, and one of the longest books in the Old Testament).

Mark writes: "It began just as the prophet Isaiah said it would," with a messenger shouting, "**Prepare the way for the Lord's coming! Clear the road for him!**" Back in the days when kings and queens reigned, this is just the kind of thing a herald would say when the king himself was approaching a town or village or neighboring kingdom.

And that's exactly what John the Baptist does here: announces the arrival of a king, of *the* King. But it isn't going to look the way people expected. This arrival and this King are going to change everything from that moment forward.

Mark is going to tell us and show us why.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

verse 1 (Mark makes the announcement)

What do you think the “Good News about Jesus” is?

verses 16-20 (Jesus calls his first disciples/followers)

Think back to when you began following Jesus. Where were you? What did you experience? What drew you to him?

What things have you left behind in order to follow Jesus?

What new things have you learned and made part of your life as a follower of Jesus?

Something I'm learning about Jesus:

Something I'm learning about being a follower of Jesus: