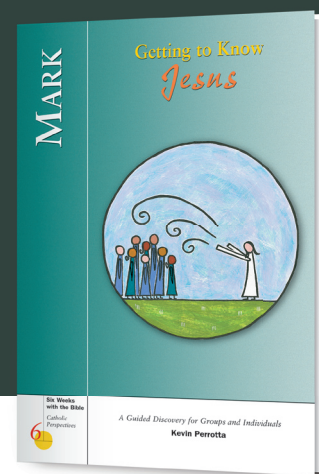


# Welcome to ***SIX WEEKS WITH THE BIBLE***

## **An Introduction to the Gospel of Mark**



In this segment we'll explore the Gospel of Mark.

Mark's Gospel was written before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Instead of a literal account of Jesus' words and actions, the Gospel is a confession of faith in Jesus. Mark is writing for a community of Christian Jews in Rome. He feels a need to explain the new teachings and to give meaning to the persecution and martyrdom they experience because of their belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

Mark doesn't think a preamble is needed as in the other Gospels—the preface is already written, and the preface is the Old Testament. Jesus is introduced as the long-awaited Messiah.

Mark never met Jesus in person. He knows about Jesus through Peter, for whom he translated in Rome. The messianic identity of Jesus is the central theme of this Gospel. Mark proclaims it and tells his audience that acceptance of Jesus' message will lead his disciples to renounce everything and even face the possibility of martyrdom.

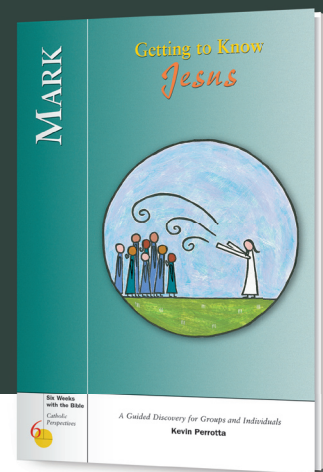
Mark's Gospel shows us the people of Israel waiting for a political Messiah who will restore them to their former glory. Under the economic and military power of the Romans, Israel has forged a false expectation of their Messiah. Mark tells them that the Messiah is already among them, but not as they expected. Jesus is a humble and merciful Messiah who is passionate about justice. The Good News of the Kingdom of God is inaugurated with peace and miracles. It is proclaimed by a group of fishermen who continue Jesus' mission.

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## An Introduction to the Gospel of Mark



. . . continued

The Messiah has specific and surprising characteristics:

- Expected, yet a surprise. Only the humble and the meek saw in Jesus the long-awaited Messiah.
- A radical Messiah. He offers liberation, not from the Romans, but from everything that opposes the Kingdom of God.
- A “now-but-not-yet” Kingdom. The Kingdom emerges and its presence is shown in the parables, but it has not yet reached its fullness.
- A suffering Messiah. In Mark 8:29, Peter proclaims who Jesus is; but, 5 verses later, he asks Jesus not to go to Jerusalem. The disciples struggle to comprehend and accept a suffering Messiah.

Throughout the Gospel, however, others understand better. A Roman soldier witnesses Jesus’ suffering and declares what the disciples struggle to comprehend: “Truly, this man was the Son of God.”

The crucial question Jesus asks his disciples, including each of one of us, is “Who do you say that I am?”

Thank you so much for allowing us to be part of your Bible-study experience. We hope you find the next six weeks enriching and fulfilling. If you have any questions, or would like additional information on the Gospel of Mark, feel free to e-mail us anytime at [sixweeks@loyolapress.com](mailto:sixweeks@loyolapress.com). Our experts are available Monday–Friday to answer your questions.

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