MARK



Scripture Journal

MARK

INVITATION TO MARK

of all the eye-witness accounts of Jesus. teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. It is the shortest The book of Mark is one of four accounts of the life and

leader in the church at Rome. will know who these men are. A man named Rufus was a father of Alexander and Rufus, expecting that his audience that Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus' cross, was the quotations from Jesus that are in Aramaic. He also notes common language of the time, but it uses many Latin terms. with Jewish customs. The book is written in Greek, the distance from the land of Israel, and who were not familiar people whose first language was Latin, who lived at a This book is written for a Roman audience-that is, for The author explains Jewish customs, and he translates

But why was it written?

Jesus: He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark says that through the Gospel, is the theme of the identity of From the very first sentence, and working all the way

the person of Jesus is the main focus of his gospel; he wants to tell us about Jesus and who he is.

Throughout his gospel Mark identifies Jesus and gives us the evidence that we need to understand who Jesus is.

But the message of Mark isn't just about the identity of Jesus, but why he came to earth. Jesus himself tells us several times why he has come (for example in Mark 1:38 Jesus says that he has come to preach). Three times we learn that Jesus must suffer and die (in chapters 8 to 10). But why? Mark then helps us to understand what Jesus came to do.

When Jesus first arrives in Galilee proclaiming the message of his kingdom he tells us what the right response to this news is: "Repent and believe." (Mark 1:15) Jesus makes it clear that the arrival of his kingdom demands a response. It's not possible to sit on the fence when it comes to the claims of Jesus. You can either accept him or reject him. Repent or don't. Believe that he is the Son of God, God's promised King, or don't. Over the course of the whole book Mark builds up a picture of what it looks like to repent and follow Jesus.

In Mark the tension centers around the identity of Jesus. If we think of the book as a drama, we may say that in its opening half, the tension is over the question: Who is this man?

This tension builds over the course of three acts:

• In the first act, Jesus teaches and heals the crowds that swarm to him.

- In the second act, Jesus encounters more conflict and opposition.
- In the third act, the disciples struggle more to understand who Jesus is.

Each act begins with a reference to Jesus calling or commissioning his disciples, and each one ends with an episode that calls attention to the question of his identity. The episode at the end of the third act shows Jesus healing a blind man in two stages, so that he slowly comes to see. This reflects the experience of the disciples, who have only gradually come to recognize who Jesus is. Then in the central episode of the whole story—between its two halves—Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, the one bringing God's reign to earth.

Now the overt conflict begins. As the Messiah, Jesus has come to introduce a radical new way of life that will undercut existing power relationships. (*Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.*) This is threatening to those who are currently in power. As he and his disciples travel to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, Jesus warns them three times that he will be betrayed and executed, but adds that in the ultimate triumph of God's plan, he will then rise from the dead.

The second half of the drama depicts this outcome, and it too does so in three acts:

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- In the first act (which, significantly, also ends with the healing of a blind man), Jesus and his disciples travel to Jerusalem .
- In the second act, Jesus teaches in the temple and clashes with the established leadership .
- In the final act, this leadership executes its plan and has Jesus arrested and crucified, seemingly "overturning" all he has done. But then God "overturns" their deed and raises Jesus to life.

Readers of the story are thus called first to examine the identity of Jesus – who he is and why he came. Then, as they put their trust in him, to be faithful to Jesus, even if this means suffering the same fate he did. This is how God will continue to overturn the existing order and establish the way of life that Jesus taught. Implicit in this is the promise that God will "overturn" the death of believers just as he did that of Jesus. They too will be vindicated and raised to new life.

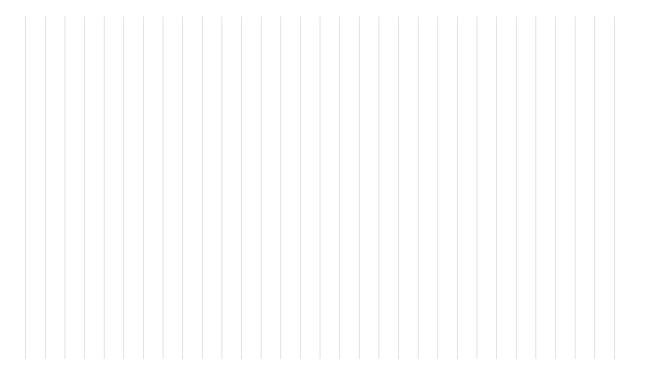
MARK

John the Baptist prepares the way

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, ²as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way' – 3'a voice of one calling in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him."'

⁴And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan. ⁶John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And this was his message: 'After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'



The baptism and testing of Jesus

⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'

¹²At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

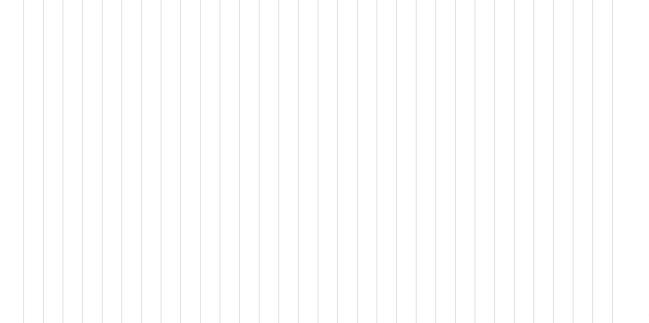
Jesus announces the good news

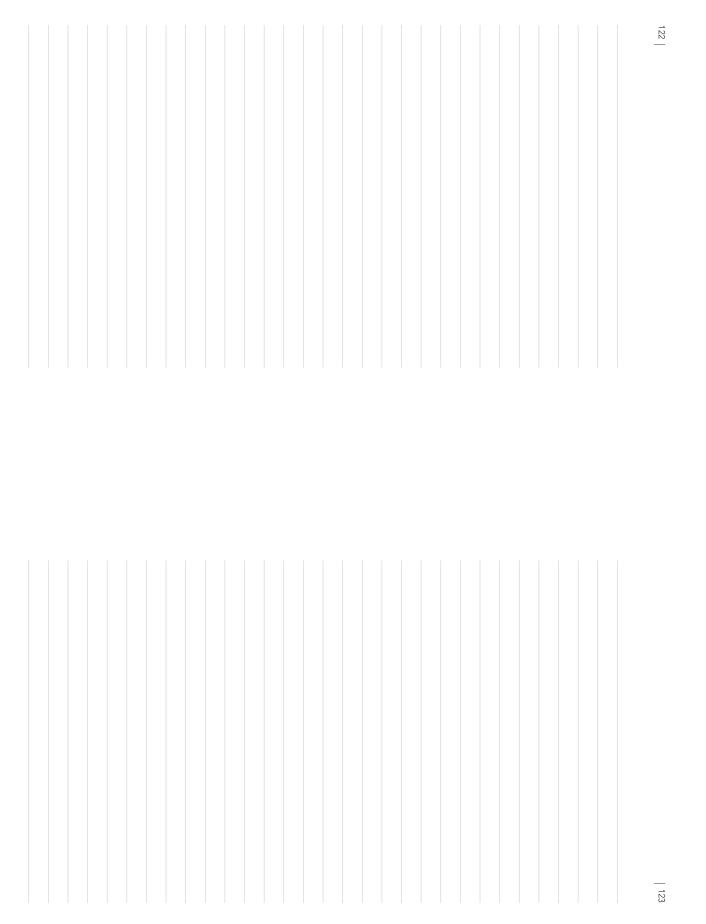
¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁶''The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'

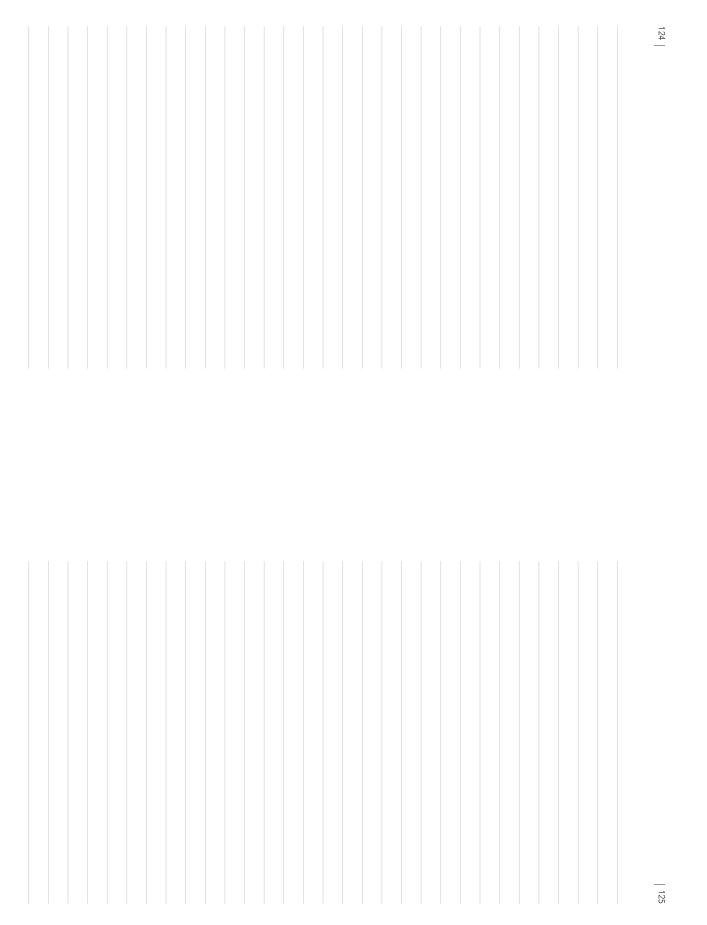
Jesus calls his first disciples

¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' ¹⁸At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.





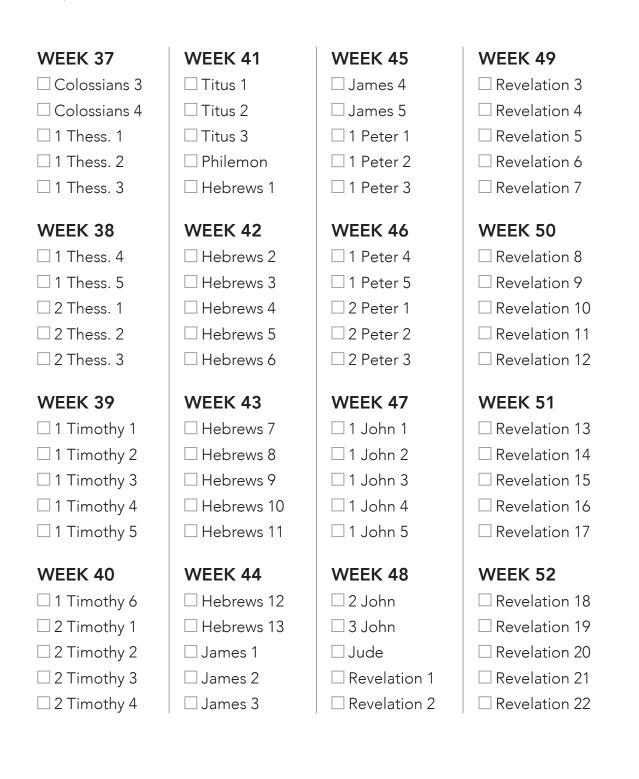


Reading Plan – Read the new Testament in a year $\mid~127$

READING PLAN Read the Mew Testament in a year

WEEK 1	WEEK 5	WEEK 9	WEEK 13
Matthew 2Matthew 3	Matthew 22Matthew 23	Mark 14Mark 15	Luke 18
Matthew 4	☐ Matthew 24	🗌 Mark 16	🗆 Luke 20
Matthew 5	Matthew 25	Luke 1	Luke 21
WEEK 2	WEEK 6	WEEK 10	WEEK 14
Matthew 6	☐ Matthew 26	🗆 Luke 2	Luke 22
Matthew 7	Matthew 27	Luke 3	Luke 23
Matthew 8	☐ Matthew 28	Luke 4	Luke 24
Matthew 9	🗆 Mark 1	Luke 5	🗌 John 1
Matthew 10	Mark 2	🗆 Luke ó	John 2
WEEK 3	WEEK 7	WEEK 11	WEEK 15
Matthew 11	🗆 Mark 3	🗆 Luke 7	John 3
Matthew 12	🗌 Mark 4	Luke 8	John 4
Matthew 13	Mark 5	🗆 Luke 9	🗌 John 5
Matthew 14	🗆 Mark 6	Luke 10	🗌 John 6
☐ Matthew 15	🗌 Mark 7	Luke 11	🗆 John 7
WEEK 4	WEEK 8	WEEK 12	WEEK 16
Matthew 16	🗆 Mark 8	Luke 12	🗌 John 8
Matthew 17	🗌 Mark 9	Luke 13	🗆 John 9
Matthew 18	🗆 Mark 10	Luke 14	🗆 John 10
Matthew 19	□ Mark 11	Luke 15	🗆 John 11
☐ Matthew 20	☐ Mark 12	Luke 16	John 12

Acts 27 Acts 28 Acts 28 Romans 1 Romans 3 Romans 4 Romans 5 Romans 5 Romans 7 Romans 8 WEEK 26 WEEK 26 Romans 10 Romans 11 Romans 12	WEEK 17 U John 13 John 14 John 15 John 16 John 17 WEEK 18 John 18 John 19 John 20 John 21 Acts 1	WEEK 22 Acts 17 Acts 18 Acts 19 Acts 20 Acts 21 WEEK 23 Acts 22 Acts 22 Acts 22 Acts 22 Acts 22 Acts 24 Acts 25 Acts 25 Acts 25 Acts 25	WEEK 27 Romans Romans Romans Romans Unit Unit Unit WEEK 28 WEEK 29	IEEK 27 Romans 14 Romans 15 Romans 16 1 Corinthians 1 1 Corinthians 2 1 Corinthians 3 1 Corinthians 5 1 Corinthians 5 1 Corinthians 7 I Cerinthians 7
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