

Worship Material
Looking for the whole picture of Jesus
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 10th December

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord, we come because we want to see you today,
we come because we want to hear your story,
we come because we want to experience your love,
we come because we want to encounter you in our lives.

Amen.

Read Mark 1:1-8

Bible notes

‘Who is Jesus?’ is Mark’s question for us. First, the opening phrase is helpfully ambiguous. It could read either as the good news ‘proclaimed’ by Jesus Christ or about Jesus. It tells us we need to listen carefully and not to assume we know the story. This is a book with hidden depths. Second, the quotation (vv.2-3) is a combination from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3, with a few words from Exodus 23:20. Does this matter? Yes, and no. No, because the writer was quoting from memory in a time long before printing. Yes, because Mark is setting out his stall for what is to come. Third, because we should listen and because he is setting out his stall, Mark’s introduction to Jesus’ story begins with John the Baptist, who is the one anticipated by the prophets, and the one whose words and actions mark a watershed in the story of God in creation.

There are two small details that we might miss. First, John’s clothing. Mark quotes the description of Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). Mark wants to be sure we know who he (Mark) thinks John is and what his role is. Second, in the Old Testament when Israel crosses the Jordan, it leaves the wilderness and all the accompanying wandering, and enters the Promised Land. According to Isaiah, the restoration of Israel is a whole new beginning with God; and Mark sees this becoming a reality in the transforming presence of Jesus Christ. To put it another way, Mark begins his account with creation on the brink of a total and radical transformation. The story told in the Gospel understands this as being all about a man from Nazareth, with 12 disciples (just like the 12 tribes of Israel) as the barebones of a new people of God. The story is going to be fantastic – in every sense.

Prayer

Prayer of thanksgiving

There is so much to say 'thank you' for.

God, we thank you for your persistence with us, never giving up on us; and for the persistence of those who prayed for us that we might come into the kingdom. You knew the right time for us. You knew what lay around the corner for us then, and you know what lies ahead now. Thank you for the excitement you fill us with. Thank you for your Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Thank you for the peace knowing him gives us. Thank you for your Holy Spirit, the One who stirs up, who opens up your Word, and helps us to put the pieces together that we might see the bigger picture of Jesus and all that he came to be and do.

**Thank you that there is always more to discover.
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we give you thanks and praise. Amen.**

A prayer to conclude

Lord, as we go into our week
may we look for more of you.
Help us to see more clearly,
to see further, to see what you see,
to see the whole picture –
and to live our faith each and every day.
Amen.