

**Mark 1:1-8**

**Looking for the whole picture of Jesus**

Mark introduces his story of the life of Jesus as ‘good news’. But before getting to the content of that good news, he presents John, a messenger sent to prepare the way, who baptizes people in the wilderness.



**WATCH**



View this BBC Teach video explaining how people around the world see Jesus.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-education-ks3-a-z-of-religion-and-beliefs-j-is-for-jesus/zdgv47h>  
Jesus was a unique man, whose life is meaningful to people in different ways; but who is Jesus to you? Was Jesus just a good man, or something more?



‘Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be, is moderately important.’  
*CS Lewis*. Discuss this quote over a meal with family or friends. Can you share why you believe Jesus is important, and how he impacts your life right now?

**REFLECT**



Complete a jigsaw puzzle. The individual pieces show only part of the picture. If we only have some, we may miss important details. John the Baptist brought some clues about Jesus, and so did the Old Testament, but Jesus still wasn't quite the Messiah they expected.

**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.

**First impressions**

- What are some of the pieces that make up the story of Jesus?
- And, in a few words, what is the bigger or whole picture of Jesus?
- How does Jesus’ story impact upon your life?



**A prayer**

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.



**LISTEN**



Light the first two candles on your Advent wreath, the second may represent **peace**. Listen to ‘Comfort Ye’ from Handel’s *Messiah*  
<https://open.spotify.com/track/0yuQcCrZtI9vMLfYh3Bhwb?si=2b71876d81ba4d08>  
Then read Isaiah 40:1-11 the passage on which the lyrics are based.