

**INTRODUCTION
TO
THE
GOSPEL
ACCORDING
TO
MARK**

FAME Thursday Night Bible Study

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November, 2009

Overview

The Gospel According to Mark is an action packed account of the ministry of Jesus on earth. It is not a biography of Jesus like Matthew and Luke which provide information on the family of Jesus. This gospel concentrates on the actions of Jesus rather than on His teaching. His actions proclaim Jesus as a Savior-King who has power to conquer and defeat demons, disease and death.

Mark's attention to details allows readers to become part of the event so that they better understand Jesus' actions and the people responses. By actions Jesus shows us how to be a servant, how to evangelize, how to prepare disciples and how to glorify God. By the actions of Jesus, healings and miracles the people saw that Jesus was the Son of God which His teachings testified to.

Author

The author's name is not given in the Gospel According to Mark. However, the early church fathers (Papias, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius) all accepted Mark as the author. The church leaders of the 2nd century also accepted Mark as the author.

Mark also known as John Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10) and close friend of Peter (I Peter 5:13). As his name indicated, John Mark was of Jewish and Roman heritage - John was Jewish and Mark was Roman. Mark was the son of Mary a rich widow who became a follower of Christ. Tradition says, Mary's house was the site of the Last Supper (14:12 – 26) and the site of Pentecost (Acts 2:1 – 4). We also know as recorded in Acts 12:12 that it was at Mary's house where the prayer meeting occurred when Peter was thrown into prison and was miraculously released. Mark was involved in the early formation of the Jerusalem church and knew Peter and the other disciples.

Mark had a close relationship with Peter. Peter may have led Mark to Christ since Peter refers to Mark as "my son" in I Peter 5:13. It appears that Mark also assisted Peter with his ministry in Babylon/Jerusalem. It is believed that Peter was the resource for the writing of the Gospel because Mark was a teenager during the last 3 years of the life of Jesus. Papias a church father recorded that Mark wrote down all that Peter told him.

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13: 1 -5). However early in the journey at Perga, Mark left and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Luke does not give a reason for the abrupt departure. But on the second missionary journey Paul refused to allow Mark to accompany them. This led to a disagreement and parting of the ways for Barnabas and Paul. Paul chose Silas to accompany him. Barnabas went to Cyprus with Mark. (Acts 15:36 – 41). Paul and Mark did reconcile because Mark was a source of comfort to Paul during Paul's first imprisonment (Col 4:10 – 11; Philemon 24). Paul also asked Timothy to bring Mark to him during his second imprisonment and impending death (II Timothy 4:11)

Date

There are no dates within the Gospel or historical events to identify a date for its writing. Since there is no reference in the letter to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD it is believed that the Gospel was written before 70. But when before 70 AD is still being debated. Some scholars propose an early date of mid to late 50s AD. They cite the following reasons for the early date:

- Mark was the first gospel to be written. The other gospels quote all but 31 verses of Mark.
- The authors of Matthew and Luke used Mark as a resource. Many believe that Luke was written in the 60s AD and Matthew between the 50s and 60s.

Other scholars propose the date as the mid to late 60s AD. They site the following reasons:

- Written after Peter's death in 64 – 67 AD. Peter was the disciple that provided the detailed account for the gospel.
- Written after Mark went to Rome at the request of Paul, 62 – 63 AD. The Gospel According to Mark is believed to have been written in Rome.

During our study of this gospel I propose that the Gospel According to Mark was written between 55 and 70 AD.

Audience

The Gospel According to Mark does not reveal to whom the book was written as does many of the letters of the New Testament. From the contents and style of the gospel it is believed that the audience was Gentile Christians, especially Romans. This conclusion is based on the following factors as listed by the Nelson Bible:

- Mark used Christian terms such as baptize and Holy Spirit and did not explain them
- Mark took the time to explain Jewish terms (5:41) which was not necessary if he was writing to Jewish Christians.
- Mark does assume knowledge of the Hebrew Bible. He directly only quotes scripture one (1:2,3)
- Mark omit any references to not preaching to the Gentiles.

Mark also knew that the Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome needed encouragement. They would be a minority in Rome that would come in constant conflicts with the values and culture of the city.

The primary audiences of the other Gospels are as follows:

- Matthew written to the Jewish community
- Luke written to the Greek community

- John written to new Christians who were dealing with false teachings such as Gnosticism

Purpose

The Gospel According to Mark was written to record and inform the people of Rome and the wider church of a clear picture of Christ. There was no written account of Christ and people relied on oral communication. The Jewish Christians had the Hebrew Bible which prophesied of the Messiah. But the Gentile Christian had nothing written that informed them of the Christ, the Messiah.

Mark wanted to provide a personal and close look at Jesus, the Savior and Lord to encourage the people as they were persecuted. He wanted to assure the people that Jesus the Son of God lived, served, suffered and died for them. Mark wanted to assure those who did not see Jesus that their Savior did live and die, but he arose from the grave triumphantly. The people could be assured that their belief in the Savior, Jesus the Christ was grounded in truth. The people could be assured that their suffering and dying was not in vain.

As Mark presented Jesus, the Son of God, the Servant it also provided a model for living as a Believer. The Romans and other Gentile Christians needed to know the cultural, social and personal implications of becoming a Believer. How should they live in a hostile environment? How could they be a servant to others?

Message

The primary messages/themes of the Gospel According to Mark include the following as discussed in The Life Application Commentary of Mark and the ESV Bible:

- **Jesus Christ, the Son of God** (1:1, 9-11, 21-34; 2:1-12, 23-28; 3:7-12; 4:35-41; 5:1-20; *;27-31; (;1-13; 10:46-52; 11:1-19; 12:24-37; 14:32-42, 60-65; 16:1-8).

Jesus was God in the flesh. As He lived on earth He told the people that He was the Son of God. Jesus as divinity had the power and authority to forgive sin, pay the penalty for sin and change lives. Jesus as a human living on earth was also divine.

- **Jesus Christ, Servant** (1:40 -45; 3:1-12; 7:31-37; 8:22-26, 34-38; 9:33-50; 10:13-35; 12:38-44; 14:17-26, 32-50; 15:1-5, 12-47)

Jesus was the prophesied Messiah for Israel, but He came not as a king, but as a servant. Jesus was the suffering servant. He served the people by telling them of

God, healing them and giving His life as a ransom for their sins. He suffered why living on earth. He suffered by being born into a poor family, rejected by His own, falsely accused, convicted of a crime He did not commit, beaten/tortured, mocked and crucified. Jesus provided the model for being a servant for the people of the New Testament and for us today.

- **Discipleship** (1:16-20; 3:13-19; 6:7-13; 8:27-10:52; 13:1-14:52; 15:42-16:8)

Jesus had many followers/disciples. He selected 12 to mentor and teach so that they could be the leaders of the Church after His ascension. These 12 disciples during their time spent with Jesus did not understand Jesus and His teaching. But He continued to mentor them. After His resurrection and ascension they came to better understanding of Jesus and His teaching. They functioned as the leaders they were mentored to be.

- **Miracles** (1:29-34,40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-12; 4:35-41; 5:1-43; 6:30-56; 7:24-37; 8:1-10,22-26; 9:17-29; 10:46-52; 16:1-8)

The Gospel According to Mark records more of Jesus miracles than sermons or parables. This gospel is action packed showing the awesome power of God because of His love for the people. The miracle also showed the people his true identity.

- **Evangelism** (1:2-8, 14-20, 38-39; 2:13-17; 3:13-19, 31-34; 4:1-34; 5:1-20; 6:1-13; 7:24-37; 9:33-41; 10:13-31; 12:28-34; 13:1-23, 32-36; 14:9)

Jesus told the Jewish community and Gentiles the good news. Yes He went first to the Jews, but He did not ignore the non-Jews. Jesus also challenged His followers to take the gospel message to others.

Synoptic Gospels

There are four Gospels, “good news”, revealing Jesus and His ministry on earth and the kingdom of God - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. However Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels because they reveal the life of Christ during His ministry on earth. They tell many of the same stories and teachings of Jesus in the same chronological order. The Synoptic Gospels presents more of Christ’s ministry in the north around Galilee.

Harmony between the Gospels.

1. Preface

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Prologue	1:1	1:1	1:1-4	1:1-18

2. Birth and Childhood

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Promise of the Birth of John the Baptist			1:5-25	
The Annunciation			1:26-38	
Mary's Visit to Elizabeth			1:39-56	
The Birth of John the Baptist			1:57-80	
The Genealogy of Jesus	1:2-17		3:23-38	
The Birth of Jesus	1:18-25		2:1-7	
The Adoration of the Infant Jesus	2:1-12		2:8-20	
The Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple			2:21-38	
The Flight into Egypt and Return	2:13-21			
The Childhood of Jesus at Nazareth	2:22-23		2:39-40	
The Boy Jesus in the Temple			2:41-52	

3. Preparation

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
John the Baptist	3:1-6	1:2-6	3:1-6	1:19-23
John's Preaching of Repentance	3:7-10		3:7-9	
John Preaching and Replies to Questioners			3:10-14	
John's Messianic Preaching	3:11-12	1:7-8	3:15-18	1:24-28
The Imprisonment of John	14:3-4	6:17-18	3:19-20	
The Baptism of Jesus	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	1:29-34
The Genealogy of Jesus	1:1-17		3:23-38	
The Temptation	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	

4. The Beginning of Jesus' Public Ministry (According to John)

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Call of the First Disciples				1:35-51
The Marriage at Cana				2:1-11
The Sojourn at Capernaum				2:12
The First Journey to Jerusalem				2:13
The Cleansing of the Temple	21:12-13	11:15-17	19:45-46	2:14-22
Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem				2:23-25
The Discourse with Nicodemus				3:1-21
Jesus' Ministry in Judea				3:22
John's Testimony to Christ				3:23-36

5. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Journey into Galilee	4:12	1:14a	4:14a	4:1-3
The Discourse with the Woman of Samaria				4:4-42
Ministry in Galilee	4:13-17	1:14b-15	4:14b-15	4:43-46a
Jesus' Preaching at Nazareth	13:53-58	6:1-6a	4:16-30	
The Call of the Disciples	4:18-22	1:16-20		
Teaching in the Synagogue at Capernaum		1:21-22	4:31-32	
The Healing of the Demoniac in the Synagogue		1:23-28	4:33-37	
The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	

The Sick Healed at Evening	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
Jesus Departs from Capernaum		1:35-38	4:42-43	
First Preaching Tour in Galilee	4:23	1:39	4:44	
The Miraculous Catch of Fish			5:1-11	
The Cleansing of the Leper	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
The Healing of the Paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	5:8-9a
The Call of Levi (Matthew)	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
The Question about Fasting	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39	
Plucking Grain on the Sabbath	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	
The Man with the Withered Hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
Jesus Heals Multitudes by the Sea	4:24-25 12:15-16	3:7-12	6:17-19	
The Choosing of the Twelve	10:1-4	3:13-19	6:12-16	

6. The Sermon on the Mount (According to Matthew)

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Occasion of the Sermon	4:24-5:2	3:7-13a	6:17-20a	
The Beatitudes	5:3-12		6:20b-23	
The Salt of the Earth	5:13	9:49-50	14:34-35	
The Light of the World	5:14-16	4:21	8:16	
On the Law and the Prophets	5:17-20		16:16-17	
On Murder and Anger	5:21-26		12:57-59	
On Adultery and Divorce	5:27-32	9:43-48	16:18	
On Swearing and Oaths	5:33-37			
On Retaliation	5:38-42		6:29-30	
On Love of One's Enemies	5:43-48		6:27-28 6:32-36	
On Almsgiving	6:1-4			
On Prayer	6:5-6			
The Lord's Prayer	6:7-15	11:25	11:1-4	
On Fasting	6:16-18			
On Treasures	6:19-21		12:33-34	
The Sound Eye	6:22-23		11:34-36	
On Serving Two Masters	6:24		16:13	
On Anxiety	6:25-34		12:22-32	
On Judging	7:1-5	4:24-25	6:37-42	
On Profaning the Holy	7:6			
God's Answering of Prayer	7:7-11		11:9-13	
The Golden Rule	7:12		6:31	
The Straight and Narrow and Wide Broad Gate	7:13-14		13:23-24	
The Test of a Good Person, "By their Fruits"	7:15-20 12:33-35		6:43-45	
Not Every One who "Says Lord, Lord" shall Enter into the Kingdom	7:21-23		6:46 13:25-27	
The House Built upon the Rock	7:24-27		6:47-49	
The End and the Effect of the Sermon	7:28-29	1:21-22		

7. The Sermon on the Plain (According to Luke)

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Occasion of the Sermon	4:24-5:2	3:7-13a	6:17-20a	
The Beatitudes	5:3-12		6:20b-23	
The Woes			6:24-26	
On Love of One's Enemies	5:38-48		6:27-36	

On Judging	7:1-5	4:24-25	6:37-42	
The Test of a Good Person, "By their Fruits"	7:15-20 12:33-35		6:43-45	
The House Built upon the Rock	7:21-27		6:46-49	

8. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee Continued

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Healing and Cleansing of the Leper	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
The Centurion of Capernaum and his Servant	8:5-13	7:30	7:1-10 13:28-29	4:46b-54
The Widow's Son at Nain			7:11-17	
The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
The Sick Healed at Evening	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
On Following Jesus, the Would-be Followers	8:18-22		9:57-62	
Stilling the Storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
The Gadarene Demoniacs	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
The Healing of the Paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	5:8-9a
The Call of Levi (Matthew)	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
The Question about Fasting	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39	
Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
Two Blind Men Healed	9:27-31 20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
The Dumb Demoniac Healed	9:32-34 12:22-24	3:22	11:14-15	
The Harvest is Great	9:35-38	6:6b 6:34	8:1 10:2	
Commissioning the Twelve	10:1-16	6:7-11 3:13-19	6:12-16 9:1-6 10:3	
The Coming Fate and Persecution of the Disciples	10:17-25 24:9-14	13:9-13	6:40 12:11-12 21:12-19	13:16
Exhortation to Fearless Confession	10:26-33		12:2-9	
Divisions within Households	10:34-36		12:51-53	
Conditions of Discipleship	10:37-39		14:25-27 17:33	12:25
Rewards of Discipleship	10:40-42	9:41	10:16	13:20
Continuation of Journey	11:1			
John the Baptist's Question and Jesus' Answer	11:2-6		7:18-23	
Jesus' Witness concerning John	11:7-19		7:24-35 16:16	
Woes Pronounced on Galilean Cities	11:20-24		10:12-15	
Jesus' Thanksgiving to the Father	11:25-27		10:21-22	
"Come unto Me"	11:28-30			
Plucking Grain on the Sabbath	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	
Healing the Withered Hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
Jesus Heals Multitudes by the Sea	12:15-21	3:7-12	6:17-19	
The Woman with the Ointment	26:6-13	14:3-9	7:36-50	12:1-8
The Ministering Women			8:1-3	
Jesus is Thought to be Beside Himself		3:20-21		
On Collusion with Satan	12:22-30 9:32-34	3:22-27	11:14-15 11:17-23	
The Sin against the Holy Spirit	12:31-37 7:16-20	3:28-30	12:10 6:43-45	

Against Seeking Signs, the Sign of Jonah	12:38-42 16:1-4	8:11-12	11:16 11:29-32	
The Return of the Unclean Evil Spirit	12:43-45		11:24-26	
Jesus' True Kindred Relatives	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	15:14
The Parable of the Sower	13:1-9	4:1-9	8:4-8	
The Reason for Speaking in Parables	13:10-17	4:10-12 4:25	8:9-10 8:18b 10:23-24	
Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower	13:18-23	4:13-20	8:11-15	
"He who has Ears to Hear, Let him Hear"	5:15 7:2 10:26 13:12	4:21-25	8:16-18	
The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly		4:26-29		
The Parable of the Tares (Weeds)	13:24-30			
The Parable of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19	
The Parable of the Leaven (Yeast)	13:33		13:20-21	
Jesus' Use of Parables	13:34-35	4:33-34		
Interpretation of the Parable of the Tares	13:36-43			
The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and of the Pearl	13:44-46			
The Parable of the Net	13:47-50			
Treasures New and Old	13:51-52			
Jesus' True Kindred Relatives	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	15:14
Stilling the Storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
The Gerasene Demoniac	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth	13:53-58	6:1-6a	4:16-30	
Second Journey (to Jerusalem)				5:1
The Healing at the Pool called Bethesda				5:2-47
Commissioning the Twelve	9:35 10:1-16	6:6b-13	9:1-6	
Herod Thinks Jesus is John, Raised	14:1-2	6:14-16	9:7-9	
The Death of John the Baptist	14:3-12	6:17-29	3:19-20	
The Return of the Apostles		6:30-31	9:10a	
Feeding the Five Thousand	14:13-21	6:32-44	9:10b-17	6:1-15
The Walking on the Water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
Healings at Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		6:22-25
The Bread of Life				6:26-59
What Defiles a Person - Traditional and Real	15:1-20	7:1-23	11:37-41 6:39	
The Syrophenician (Canaanite) Woman	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Jesus Heals a Deaf Mute and Many Others	15:29-31	7:31-37		
Feeding of the Four Thousand	15:32-39	8:1-10		
The Pharisees Seek a Sign	16:1-4 12:38-39	8:11-13	11:16 11:29 12:54-56	
The Leaven (Yeast) of the Pharisees	16:5-12	8:14-21	12:1	
A Blind Man is Healed at Bethsaida		8:22-26		

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STUDY RESOURCES

Study Bibles

The Preacher's Commentary – Mark, Thomas Nelson, 1985

Life Application Bible Commentary –Mark, Tyndale House Publisher, 1993

The Message of Mark by John R. W. Scott. Inter-Varsity Press 1993.

Outline for Gospel According to Mark

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 - iv. The Pharisees' defense of tradition 7:1 – 23
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- III. **The Servant Son's approach to the Cross 8:31 – 10:52**
 - a. Jesus announcement of His coming death and resurrection 8:31 – 10:34
 - b. Jesus' teaching and practice of servant hood 10:35 - 52
- IV. **The Servant Son's ministry and death in Jerusalem 11:1 – 15:47**
 - a. Jesus' initial ministry in Jerusalem 11:1 - 33
 - b. Rising opposition to Jesus 12:1 - 44
 - c. The Olivet Discourse 13:1 – 37
 - d. Jesus' preparation for His death 14:1 – 42
 - e. Jesus rejection by His disciples, people and His father 14:43 – 15:47
- V. **Epilogue: The living and victorious Servant Son 16:1 - 20**