

#4. THE GOSPEL OF MARK

1. Mark is the record of Simon Peter's recollections of Jesus as recorded by John Mark.

- John Mark is not one of the disciples, but is a recurring character in the Book of Acts (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39)
- Mark accompanied Barnabas (his cousin - Colossians 4:10) and Paul on their First Missionary Journey (Acts 12:25, 13:5-13). For some unknown reason, Peter deserted them at Perga and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). In spite of this, Barnabas wanted to take Mark along on the Second Missionary Journey, but Paul would not agree. The contention between them was so significant that the two apostles parted ways, and Silas replaced Barnabas as Paul's dressed companion (Acts 15:38-40). Years later, Paul would welcome John Mark back into the ministry circle (Colossians 4:10) and listed John Mark as a ministry partner. In Timothy 4:11, Mark was commended to Timothy as *profitable for the ministry*.
- Peter identified John Mark as "My Son (1 Peter 5:13). Connection to John Mark is indicated when Peter was released by the angel from prison, he went to the home of John Mark's mother (Acts 12:12).
- Of the four Gospels:
 - Mark is the most chronologically focused.
 - Mark contains the most events.
 - Mark's story centers in Galilee.
 - Mark cites Capernaum as Jesus' headquarters (1:21; 2:1; 9:33), from which Jesus would travel to towns like Bethsaida (8:22), Gennesaret (8:53), Tyre, Sidon (3:8; 7:24), and Caesarea Philippi (8:27).
 - Mark expresses the emotions of Jesus most frequently (1:41; 3:5; 6:34; 8:12; 9:36), also citing His human limitations (4:38; 11:12; 13:32).

2. Mark's name is from a Latin root, meaning *dedicated to the god Mars* or *warlike*. John

means *God is gracious*.

3. Mark's emphasis is upon the life of Christ, prepared for an audience in Rome.

- According to church tradition, it is the account of Peter's apostolic preaching about the life of Jesus. According to the Papias (circa 140AD), the Apostle John confirmed Mark's authorship by saying, "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatever he remembered...he (Mark) took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements." - from *The Exposition of the Oracles of The Lord* 6.
- Likewise, Justin Martyr (circa 150AD) spoke of the Gospel of Mark as *the memoirs of Peter* and indicated Mark compiled the account in Italy. Irenaeus called Mark *the disciple and interpreter of Peter*.
- Mark's tendency to interpret Aramaic phrases for his readers indicate the audience was Gentile (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22, 34) and is careful to explain Jewish customs (7:3, 4; 14:12; 15:42).
- Mark also uses Latin-based words at times instead of more common Greek terms (5:9; 6:27; 12:15, 42; 15:16, 39), further strengthening the idea of a Roman audience. He reckons time by the Roman system (6:48; 13:35). This idea is further strengthened by the omission of Jesus' genealogies, which would not have played an important role in the thinking of Romans. Finally Simon the Cyrene is identified as the father of Rufus, a prominent member of the congregation in Rome (Romans 16:13).

4. The Date of writing was between 55 and 65AD Papias is more specific, setting the date in 65AD, shortly after the deaths of Paul and Peter in Rome.

5. Key Chapters

- Chapter 1:1-13 discuss the birth of Jesus and His preparation for ministry.
- Chapters 1:14-13:37 focus on Jesus' ministry in and around Galilee and his final days in Jerusalem.
- Chapters 14:1-16:20 are the account of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

6. Key Verse

- **Mark 10:45 NASB** - “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

7. Key People

- **Jesus the Messiah** - The Messiah (the same term as Christ - *the anointed one*). In Mark, Jesus is seen particularly as God’s Servant; a true *man on a mission*.
- **The Twelve Disciples (the original Apostles)**
 - *Andrew*
 - *Nathaniel (also called Bartholomew)*
 - *James, the Elder*
 - *James, the Lesser or Younger*
 - *John The Beloved*
 - *Judas Iscariot*
 - *Jude(also called Thaddeus)*
 - *Matthew (also called Levi)*
 - *Simon Peter (also called Cephas)*
 - *Philip*
 - *Simon the Zealot*
 - *Thomas (also called Didymus)*

8. Key Places

- **Nazareth** - the hometown of Mary and subsequently of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Today it is primarily a Muslim and Christian community in Israel and the largest city in the North Region of Israel.
- **Jericho** - *a city of Palm trees* and the location of at least 22 various settlements throughout history. In this city Jesus healed two blind beggars, converted Zacchaeus the

tax collector, and used the area as the setting for the story of the Good Samaritan.

- **Bethany** - a village near Jerusalem; the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. A city of retreat and refuge for Jesus from time to time.
- **Mount of Olives** - a place of prayer and retreat for Jesus; scene of a large Jewish cemetery and the site of Jesus' Ascension. It was the location where Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem.
- **Golgotha** - a hill just outside Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. It is also known as *the place of the skull*.
- **Jerusalem** - the scene of intense confrontation between Jesus and the civil and religious leaders of Israel.
- **Capernaum** - a fishing village on the north shore of Galilee; hometown to Peter, Andrew, James, and John. A scene of considerable ministry during Jesus' life.
- **Galilee** - a large lake region in northern Israel; several locations were the scene of many miracles and teaching events by Jesus.
- **Judea** - a mountainous region in southern Israel, known today as the West Bank.

9. Key Themes

- **Jesus is the Son of God** - the message of Jesus' divinity and mission is clearly presented in Mark.
- **Jesus is the Servant of God** - Jesus is seen particularly as the suffering, obedient Servant of Jehovah. His delight is to fully perform every assignment given to Him by Father God.
- **Miracles** - contrasted with John, who records seven specific *sign miracles*, Mark emphasizes many other miracles Jesus did that were meant to validate His appearance as the anointed Christ, the Servant of God.
- **Evangelism** - illustrated in one chapter with the stories of The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Lost Son - all of Mark's Gospel resonates with the central idea that the

Servant of God has come to seek and save the lost.

10. The Contents of Mark

- *The Early years of John and Jesus - 1:1-13*
 - *John's Message 1:1-8*
 - *Jesus' Baptism 1:9-11*
 - *Jesus' Temptation 1:12, 13*
- *The Early Ministry of Jesus in Galilee and Surrounding Areas - 1:14-7:23*
 - *The Kingdom is Announced - 1:14, 15*
 - *Jesus Calls His Disciples - 1:16-20*
 - *Jesus' Ministry in Capernaum - 1:21-34*
 - *Jesus' Ministry in Galilee - 1:35-45*
 - *Jesus Defends His Ministry - 2:1-3:6*
 - *Jesus Ministers to the Multitude - 3:7-12*
 - *Jesus' Commissions The Twelve - 3:13-19*
 - *Jesus Rebukes the Scribes and Pharisees - 3:20-30*
 - *Jesus Identifies His Spiritual Family - 3:31-35*
 - *Jesus' Teaches in Parables - 4:1-34*
 - *The Sower - 4:1-9*
 - *The Reason for Parables - 4:10*

- *The Sower Explained - 4:13-20*
- *The Lamp - 4:21-25*
- *The Seed - 4:26-29*
- *The Mustard Seed - 4:30-34*
- *A Demonstration of Jesus' Power - 4:35-41*
 - *Calming the Storm - 4:35-41*
 - *Casting Out Demons - 5:1-20*
 - *Healing the Sick - 5:21-34*
 - *Raising the Dead - 5:35-43*
- *Jesus Returns to His Hometown - 6:1-6*
- *Jesus Sends Out His Disciples - 6:7-13*
- *Jesus Gains a Powerful Enemy - 6:14-29*
- *Jesus Debriefs His Disciples - 6:30-32*
- *Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - 6:33-34*
- *Jesus Walks on the Water - 6:45-52*
- *Jesus Heals Many Sick - 6:53-56*
- *Jesus Answers the Pharisees - 7:1-23*
- *Jesus' Ministry in the Gentile Regions - 7:24-9:50*
 - *In Tyre and Sidon, Jesus Delivers the Daughter of a Gentile Woman - 7:24-30*
 - *In Decapolis, Jesus Heals a Deaf-Mute - 7:1-37*

- *On the Eastern Shore of Galilee, Jesus Feeds Four Thousand - 8:1-9*
- *In Dalmanutha, Jesus Debates the Pharisees - 8:10-12*
- *On the Other Side of Galilee, Jesus Rebukes the Disciples - 8:13-21*
- *In Bethsaida, Jesus Heals a Blind Man - 8:22-26*
- *In Caesarea-Philippi and Capernaum, Jesus Teaches the Disciples - 8:27-9:50*
 - Peter Confesses Jesus as Messiah - 8:27-30
 - Jesus Predicts His Death - 8:31-33
 - Jesus Explains the Cost of Discipleship - 8:34-38
 - Jesus Reveals His Glory - 9:1-10
 - Jesus Clarifies the Role of Elijah - 9:11-13
 - Jesus Casts a Demon Out of A Boy - 9:14-29
 - Jesus Repeats His Prediction About His Death and Resurrection - 9:30-32
 - Jesus Defines Kingdom Greatness - 9:33-37
 - Jesus Explains the Nature of Spiritual Fruit - 9:38-41
 - Jesus Warns Against Becoming a Stumbling-block - 9:42-50
- *The Road to Jerusalem - 10:1-52*
 - *Jesus Teaches on Divorce - 10:1-12*
 - *Jesus Blesses the Children - 10:13-16*
 - *Jesus Confronts the Rich Young Ruler - 10:17-27*
 - *Jesus Teaches About Rewards to be Received by the Disciples - 10:28-31*
 - *Jesus Discusses His Death with the Disciples - 10:32-34*

- *Jesus Encourages His Disciples to Serve with Humility - 10:35-45*
- *Jesus Heals a Blind Man - 10:46-52*
- *His Passion in Jerusalem - 11:1-16:20*
 - *The Triumphal Entry - 11:1-11*
 - *Symbolic Acts of Purification - 11:12-26*
 - *Cursing the Fig Tree - 11:12-14, 20-26*
 - *Cleansing the Temple - 11:15-19*
 - *Jesus' Teaches in Public and Private Settings - 11:27-13:37*
 - *Publicly in the Temple - 11:27-12:44*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning His Authority - 11:27-33*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning His Rejection - 12:1-12*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning Paying Taxes - 12:13-17*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning The Resurrection - 12:18-27*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning The Great Commandment - 12:28-34*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning Jesus' Role as Messiah - 12:35-37*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning the Scribes - 12:38-40*
 - ✓ *Teaching Concerning True Giving - 12:41-44*
 - *Privately on Mount Olivet - 13:1-37*
 - ✓ *The Disciple's Question Concerning the End Times - 13:1*
 - ✓ *The Lord's Answer - 13:2-37*
 - *The Details of Judas' Betrayal - 14:1, 2, 10, 11*
 - *Jesus' Anointing, Last Supper, Betrayal, Arrest, and Trial by the Jews - 14:3-9, 12-72*
 - *The Anointing of Jesus at Bethany - 14:3-9*

- The Last Supper in Jerusalem - 14:12-31
- Jesus' Prayer in Gethsemane - 14:32-34
- Judas' Betrayal of Jesus in Gethsemane - 14:43-52
- The Jewish Trial in the House of Caiaphas - 14:53-72

- *Jesus' Roman Trial; Crucifixion*
 - Jesus Appears Before Pilate - 15:1-15
 - The Crucifixion at Golgotha - 15:16-41

- *Jesus is Buried in the Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea - 15:42-47*

- *The Resurrection of Jesus - 16:1-8*

- *Postscript - 16:9-20*

Worth noting

1. Mark gives great detail concerning the geographical movement of Jesus.

- To give the reader a better grasp on the flow of events, a chart of distances between important locations is provided here.
 - From Jerusalem to
 - Bethany - 2 miles
 - Bethlehem - 6 miles
 - Emmaus - 7 miles
 - Jericho - 15 miles
 - the Jordan River - 21 miles
 - Sychar - 31 miles
 - Mediterranean Sea - 40 miles
 - Cana - 69 miles
 - Capernaum was about 85 miles
 - Caesarea-Philippi was 105 miles
 - Tyre - 106 miles
 - Zerephath - 118 miles
 - Sidon - 130 miles

- From Capernaum to
 - Bethsaida - 6 miles
 - Cana - 16 miles
 - Nain - 22 miles
 - Nazareth - 23 miles
 - Caesarea-Philippi - 27 miles
 - the Mediterranean Sea - 32 miles
 - Tyre - 37 miles
 - Zerephath - 45 miles

2. As we dig deeper into the Gospels, we discover differences in the four accounts.

- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels, because they see the story of Christ from a common perspective (*syn - common or with commonality* and *optic - to see or view*). John is a highly theological presentation. He devotes as much as 92% of his gospel to material not contained in the Synoptics, and deals with less than two weeks in the ministry of Christ.
- In spite of these differences, there are about a dozen events that appear in all four Gospel accounts:
 - The feeding of the 5,000
 - The triumphal entry into Jerusalem
 - The identification of Judas as the betrayer
 - The prediction of denial by Peter
 - Jesus' betrayal and arrest
 - Jesus' appearances (2) before Pilate
 - The walk to Golgotha
 - The first three hours of the crucifixion

- The last three hours of the crucifixion

- The official certification of Jesus' death and removal of His body into a tomb

- The tomb is found to be empty on the morning of the third day.

When reading the Gospel of Mark

1. Remember that this Gospel was written during the Neronian Persecution. Many believers were martyred, along with the two greatest leaders of the Church, Paul and Peter. Mark wrote to remind them to be faithful as they remembered Jesus, the Lord's own Suffering Servant.

2. Mark wrote an *action gospel*, connecting great stories to each other and using the word *immediately* over 40 times. Even though his style was fast-paced, he takes time to explain detail and meanings. The structure of Mark's story makes it arguably the most underrated of the Gospel accounts.