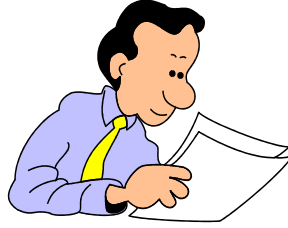


AN INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK



BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF MARK

- A. Mark is the shortest of the four gospels and apparently was the least popular of the four in the early church. Until fairly recent times, Mark's gospel tended to be neglected among them.
1. In early lists of canonical books, Mark appears as the second, third, or fourth Gospel—but never first.
 2. However, in the nineteenth century with the rise of Form Criticism and its evolutionary theory of origins for Scripture, it was insisted that Mark must have come first.
 3. J. W. McGarvey points out that the same evidence that supports the authorship of Matthew also testifies for the authorship of Mark.
 4. Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Jerome refer to Mark as being the author of the gospel.
 5. Our interest in Mark grows not from some speculative theory but from a confidence that all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for His people.
- B. Some facts about Mark:
1. He is mentioned by name ten times in the New Testament: Acts 12:12; Col. 4:10; Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:37, 39; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24; I Pet. 5:13.
 - a) Twice he is identified as "John whose surname was Mark." Acts 12:12, 25
 - b) Once he is designated as "John who was called Mark." Acts 15:37
 - c) Twice he is referred to simply as "John." Acts 13:5, 13
 - d) Five times he is mentioned as "Mark." Acts 15:39; Col. 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4:11; I Pet. 5:13
 2. Mark was not an apostle but was the son of a woman in Jerusalem whose name was Mary, Acts 12:12. Barnabas was a relative of Mark, Col. 4:10.
 3. Mark's occupation is unknown.
 4. Mark returned with Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch. Acts 12:25
 5. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first preaching tour, returning home from Perga for an unknown reason, Acts 13:13.
 - a) Paul did not want to take Mark on the second journey. Acts 15:38
 - b) A sharp contention about the matter arose between Paul and Barnabas.

- c) Paul and Barnabas separated and Paul took Silas with him on the second tour; Barnabas took Mark with him, and they sailed to Cyprus. Acts 15:39-41
- d) Several years later while Paul was a prisoner in Rome and awaiting execution, his restored confidence in John Mark is evident as he wrote to Timothy. 2 Tim. 4:11
- e) Peter refers to Mark as his son in I Pet. 5:13.

C. The book is believed to have been written some time before the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Some place the book around 50 A. D. while others believe some time between 65 and 70 A. D.

D. The purpose of Mark's Gospel is to prove the divinity of Jesus, 1:1.

- 1. While Matthew focuses on the human origin of Jesus, Mark considers more His divine origin. Matthew introduces Jesus as "the son of David, the son of Abraham." Matt 1:1
- 2. Mark introduces Jesus as "the Son of God." Mk 1:1
- 3. Matthew stresses the kingship of the Messiah and His relationship to Abraham and the Jewish people.
- 4. Mark presents Jesus as the Suffering Servant of God. Mk 8:31; 10:33
- 5. Isaiah 53 is relevant background material to the figure of the Christ as the Suffering Servant of God.

E. Reading Mark's Gospel is like watching a fast-paced, action-packed movie. Matthew speaks to the thinkers among us—those who have the time and patience to study carefully. Mark's gospel appeals to the doers—to people who are busy, on the move, leading the charge in a high-powered world.

- 1. But don't expect Rambo, Bill Gates or Michael Jordan to jump out of these pages. The hero of Mark's story is a servant as pointed out above. Mark paints a portrait of Jesus as the Servant of the Lord, the obedient Son of the Father, running to do whatever the Father desired.
- 2. You will not find the story of Jesus' birth in Mark—no stable in Bethlehem, no wise men, no shepherds. Mary and Joseph are hardly mentioned. There is no genealogy of Jesus either. No one really cares about the background or family tree of a servant. All we care about is what a servant is able to do. We want action—and that is precisely where Mark puts the emphasis. He tells us what Jesus does.
- 3. One can hardly keep up with Jesus! Mark fills his pages with phrases like "at once," "immediately," "just then," "without delay." One sentence connects to the next; one story leads into the next. Mark tells us that this is important and we had better pay attention. He wants us to feel as if we are right there on the scene, watching or participating in these incredible events. We find ourselves breathlessly pulled along as Jesus, the Lord's Servant, rushes to do the Father's will.

F. The reason Mark wrote as he did was to reach the Romans, the masters of his world.

1. The Romans were not deeply intellectual. They were impressed with actions more than with ideas. While other people talked about conquering the world, the Romans did it.
2. So when they were confronted with Jesus, the question they asked was, Why should I follow this man? Mark wanted the Roman readers to see Jesus as a man under orders—not from an emperor, but from the God of the universe.
3. The Romans were non-Jews, or Gentiles. They didn't have a background in the Old Testament Scriptures as the Jewish people did. The average Roman didn't care about fulfilled prophecy or Jewish customs or the law code of Moses. Gentiles did not understand all of that. So, Mark for the most part left it out. His focus was always on Jesus as a man who was powerful to act and powerful to save.
4. Mark was also concerned about the Roman Christians who were under intense persecution from Emperor Nero. Some Christians had already been persecuted for their faith. Mark wanted them to know that they were not alone in their suffering; the one they worshipped as Lord had already passed through His trials in victory.
5. Mark's Gospel may best fit this twenty-first century because Americans, Europeans and Japanese are out to conquer the world, so to speak. We are driven to succeed and we need a gospel of action. Furthermore, our culture doesn't have much religious or biblical background. Therefore, we need to start with a clear, straightforward presentation of Jesus. Men and women today want to know if Jesus can still calm the storms of life, if He can still restore relationships, if He can still give purpose and meaning to life in an aimless, meaningless, hectic world.
6. The Jesus we encounter in Mark's Gospel can do all that and more!



KEY CHARACTERS

JESUS: the miracle-working Servant of the Lord.

MARK: the author of this gospel; an early Christian and a companion to Paul, Barnabas and Peter.

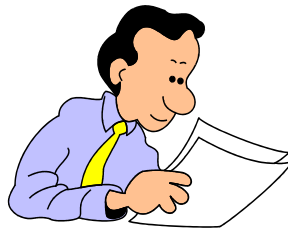
PETER: one of Jesus' closest followers and the one who often took a leadership role along with others.

JOHN the BAPTIST: a prophet who announced the coming of Israel's promised Deliverer.



SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A. Mark's Gospel is a fast-paced, you-are-there account of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection.
- B. Jesus models servanthood. He never saw people in need as an interruption.
- C. Two appropriate responses surface as we read the book:
 - 1. To believe in Jesus as Redeemer and to follow Jesus as Lord.
 - 2. Any other response puts us on a path away from God's kingdom, not toward it.



MATERIAL UNIQUE TO MARK

- A. Parable of automatic growth 4:26-29
- B. Deaf and dumb man healed 7:31-37
- C. Blind man healed at Bethsaida 8:22-26
- D. A young man who fled 14:51-52
- E. The great commission as given by Mark 16:14-18



MAJOR THEMES and/or ISSUES IN MARK

- A. The ministry of John the Baptist.
 - 1. Mark attaches great significance to John's work; he dates the "beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" from him. Mk 1:1
 - a) Both Peter and Paul specify the ministry of John as the beginning of the preaching of the gospel. Acts 10:36-37; 13:23-24.
 - b) Jesus Himself noted John's importance. Lk 16:16
 - 2. The Old Testament closed with a prophecy of his coming. Mal 3:1; 4:5-6.
 - 3. John's mission was the preparation of a people for the Messiah. Mk 1:2-3

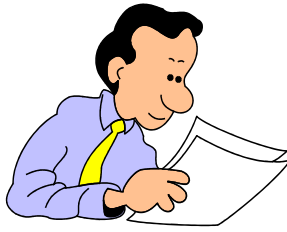
4. John's message was one of repentance and baptism unto the remission of sins. Mk 1:4; cf. Matt 3:2
5. His unusual manner drew people into the desert to hear him preach. Mk 1:5-6
6. The death of John came at the hands of Herod Antipas. Mk 6:14-29
 - a) Herod had taken his sister-in-law as wife.
 - b) John's bold rebuke of this immoral situation led to his death.

B. The apostles of our Lord.

1. The names of the Twelve are given four times in the New Testament. Matt 10:2-4; Mk 3:16-19; Lk 6:14-16; Acts 1:13.
2. Their importance to the work of Christ can hardly be overemphasized. Matt 18:18; Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14
3. A list of the apostles follows at the end of this outline.
4. The term "apostle" is used in two ways in the New Testament.
 - a) In its non-technical sense, it refers to anyone who acts under another's authority. Acts 14:4, 14; I Thess 1:1; 2:6
 - b) When used of the Twelve and Paul, it refers to one who is duly authorized to act as an ambassador on behalf of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor 5:20
5. Jesus' purpose in choosing the apostles is summed up at Mk 3:14-15.
 - a) They were to be with Jesus to learn from him and witness the events of His ministry, death, and resurrection. Cf. Acts 1:21-22
 - b) They were to be heralds of the kingdom of God.
 - c) They were empowered to perform signs as their credentials from the Holy Spirit as they preached.
6. The offices of these men were not to be perpetuated in church history.
 - a) Matthias was selected to fill an office that had been vacated by apostasy. Acts 1:15-26
 - b) The other apostolic offices were not filled upon the death of their original holders.

C. The textual problem of Mark 16:9-20.

1. These verses are missing from some of the oldest Greek manuscripts available to us.
2. This is why some translations omit, print in small type, or otherwise indicate a textual problem here.
3. Whether these verses belong to Mark or not, there is nothing about our faith or practice which stands or falls on these 12 verses; everything taught in them is found in numerous other passages.



GENERAL OUTLINE OF MARK

A. The preparation of the Servant. 1:1-13

1. The opening verses tell of John's preparatory work. 1:1-8
2. Jesus' baptism by John. 1:9-11
3. The temptation in the wilderness. 1:12-13

B. The Servant's ministry in Galilee. 1:14-9:50

1. The calling of four disciples marked the beginning of His ministry in Galilee. 1:14-20
2. Day of teaching and healing in Capernaum. 1:21-24
3. An early preaching tour. 1:35-45
4. Back at Capernaum, a series of events began and intensified conflict between Jesus and the scribes. 2:1-3:35
5. Mark relates a series of Jesus' parables and miracles. 4:1-5:43
6. At Nazareth, He was rejected by the people of His home town. 6:1-6
7. In rapid succession, the following events are told:
 - a) Sending out the Twelve. 6:7-13
 - b) Herod's estimate of Jesus. 6:14-29
 - c) Some miracles. 6:30-56
 - d) A clash with the Pharisees. 7:1-23
 - e) More miracles. 7:24-8:10
 - f) Another run-in with the Pharisees. 8:11-21
 - g) Then comes the watershed event of Peter's confession. 8:27-30
 - h) The final events of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. 8:31-9:50

C. The Servant's ministry in Jerusalem. 10:1-13-37

1. As He journeyed toward Jerusalem, Jesus answered a question about divorce. 10:1-12
2. Showed His attitude toward children. 10:13-16
3. He had His encounter with the rich young ruler. 10:17-31
4. Jesus made His third prediction in this Gospel of His death. 10:32-34
5. James and John requested places of honor. 10:35-37
6. Jesus taught that greatness comes in service. 10:38-45
7. At Jericho, Jesus healed Bartimaeus. 10:46-52
8. After arriving at Jerusalem Jesus cleansed the temple for a second time. 11:1-19
9. His comments about a withered fig tree are recorded. 11:20-26

10. After a number of controversies with His enemies the Olivet Discourse is recorded. 11:27-13:1-37

D. The death, burial, and resurrection of the Servant. 14:1-16:20

1. After relating the conspiracy to kill Jesus, 14:1-2, Mark tells of His anointing at Bethany. 14:3-9
2. Judas' bargain to betray Jesus. 14:10-11
3. The Last Supper is recorded. 14:12-25
4. Jesus makes a prediction about Peter. 14:26-31
5. After His agony in Gethsemane, 14:-32-42, Jesus was betrayed and arrested. 14:43-52.
6. Caiphas saw Jesus. 14:53-65
7. Peter denied Jesus. 14:66-72
8. Pilate condemned Jesus to die. 15:1-15
9. The Son of God died and was buried. 15:16-47
10. The following Sunday morning, Jesus rose from the dead. 16:1-8
11. He began making appearances to witnesses. 16:9-13.
12. Finally, Jesus appeared to the apostles and gave them the Great Commission. 16:14-18
13. Jesus ascended back to heaven. 16:19
14. The book closes with a summary statement of the apostolic ministry. 16:20



MARK'S MESSAGE

Jesus: the Son of God

Mark starts with the words: "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" 1:1

Jesus: the Son of Man

Mark also shows us the humanness of Jesus:

He is grieved. 3:5

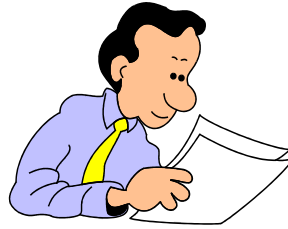
He has compassion on the crowds. 6:34

He is troubled. 14:33

Mark uses the title "Son of God" fourteen times; this is his preferred title for Jesus.

The Kindness of Jesus

Mark records Peter's memory of Jesus' special kindness to him and Peter's awareness that he did not deserve it.



APPLICATION OF MARK

Mark shows us the following:

1. The importance of right doctrine:
 - a) It couldn't come from demons even though they had to submit to His power.
 - b) It couldn't come from those who had been healed even though they were grateful.
 - c) It couldn't come from the apostles until they had been taught.
 - d) Christian doctrine is not common sense but divine wisdom.

2. That miracles are natural with God:
 - a) Mark never apologizes for a miracle and never attempts to explain it away.
 - b) Jesus' miracles point to his nature. Take away His miracles and you cast doubt on His deity.
 - c) Miracles were amazing and always will be to the reader. Mark repeatedly follows up the story of a miracle with the observation that the people were amazed, filled with awe.
 - d) Notice particularly the collection of miracles in chapter 5 which show Jesus' power over:

Demons 1-20
Disease 24-34
Death 35-43

3. That opposition often comes from religious people:

The Scribes 2:6
The Pharisees 2:24
The Herodians 3:6
The Chief Priests 11:18
The Sadducees 12:18



Walking the Walk

- A. Try to read through the gospel of Mark in one sitting. Let yourself be carried along by the power of the story. Write down some of your impressions when you finish. What do you remember most about Jesus from Mark's account?

- B. Ask someone important to you—your spouse, a friend, your parents—what you can do to help him or her this week. If you aren't normally the "servant" in the relationship, make sure the person is sitting down when you volunteer! Do whatever that person asks with a willing spirit and don't look for praise or applause. You are following Jesus when you serve others. Don't you think this would really help to change the world if everyone tried to serve?

- C. Determine to look at people around you differently. Focus on their needs and ask yourself how you can be an agent for good in their lives. An attitude like this may transform your marriage or your family life or your work environment beyond recognition.