

The Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is an exciting, fast-paced account of the things Jesus did and said. It is one of four books that are called the Gospels. Out of the four Gospels, Mark's Gospel was written first and is also the shortest. You will find most of the stories that are in Mark in the other Gospels. Mark begins his book by saying, "the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." This first verse is the only time that Mark tells us what he thinks. After this first verse, Mark doesn't share his own ideas or explanations but simply tells the story of what Jesus did and said.

Writer: John Mark, who was a friend of Paul, cousin of Barnabas, and writer for Peter.

Date of writing: Between 60-69 AD

Original Audience: Non-Jewish people who were followers of Jesus. Maybe to the church in Rome.

Main Purpose of the Book:

Mark wants people to know that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Mark begins his book with his testimony that Jesus is the Messiah (1:1). In the middle of the book, Peter answers Jesus' question and proclaims, "you are the Messiah" (8:29). Finally, at the end of the book, a Roman soldier witnessing Jesus' death proclaims, "surely this man was the Son of God!" (15:39).

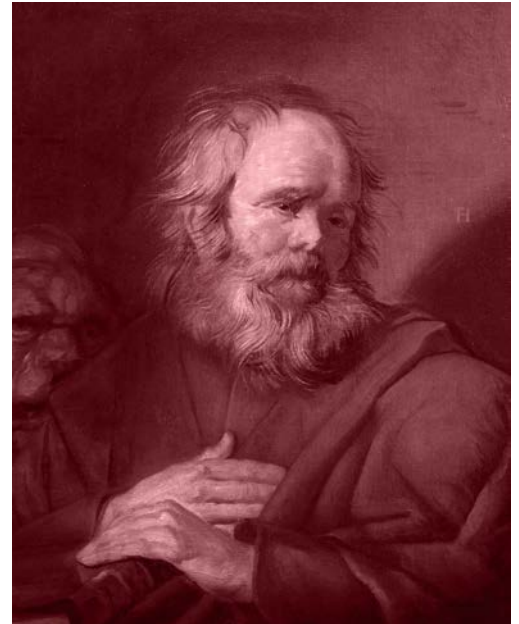
Mark also wants his readers to know what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Mark's story teaches us what God wants for His people: to be transformed and be new creations, to cross ethnic and social boundaries, have compassion for the poor, have faith that can move mountains, endure persecution, and persist in prayer. Important to all of this is to take up our cross and follow Jesus in humble service (8:34).

Mark's Gospel can be outlined in three large sections:

1. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (1:1-8:26)
2. Traveling to Jerusalem (8:27-10:52)
3. Jesus teaching, death, and resurrection in Jerusalem (11:1-16:8)

The Ending of the Mark's Gospel

Mark's Gospel seems to end very quickly. The earliest copies of Mark do not have verses 9-20 of chapter 16. This means Mark probably didn't write these verses but they were added later. It is possible that we have lost the original ending, but more likely that Mark ended his Gospel with verse 16:8. Maybe Mark ended his story very quickly to leave the readers asking questions like "what happened next?" Or more importantly, "what do I do now?"



Material Unique to Mark's Gospel

- Parable of seed growing secretly (4:26-29)
- Healing of man who is deaf and mute (7:31-37)
- Healing of blind man of Bethsaida (8:22-26)
- Sayings on salt (9:49-50)
- Escape of young man in the garden (14:51-52)

Story Momos

Mark starts to tell a story that gets interrupted by another story before finishing the first story. That happens four different times in his gospel. These are like story momos. There is one story on the outside wrapped around another story on the inside. This style makes the reader look more closely at the two stories and compare and contrast them.



Jesus' family sets out to take control of him (3:21).

Religious leaders accuse Jesus of using the power of Beelzebul (3:22–30).

Jesus's family arrives and is rebuffed by him (3:31–35).



Jesus goes to heal the daughter of a Jewish leader named Jairus (5:22–24).

A woman with hemorrhages is healed by touching Jesus's garment (5:25–34).

Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead (5:35–43).



Jesus sends his disciples out on a mission (6:7–13).

Mark gives an account of how Herod killed John the Baptist (6:14–29).

The disciples return with a report of their mission (6:30).



Jesus curses a fig tree for not bearing fruit (11:12–14).

Jesus attacks the temple, calling it a "den of robbers" (11:15–19).

The fig tree that Jesus cursed has withered and died (11:20–21).

The Way of the Cross

Three times on the way to Jerusalem Jesus predicts his death. All three times the disciples misunderstand and then Jesus teaches them how to walk the way of the cross. Before the first time, Jesus heals a man of blindness and after the third time, Jesus again heals another man of blindness. These passages make another Story Momo.



Jesus heals blindness (8:22-26)

Jesus predicts his death	8:31	9:30-31	10:32-34
The disciples misunderstand	8:32-33	9:32-34	10:35-40
Jesus teaches the way of the cross	8:34-38	9:35-37	10:41-45

Jesus heals blindness (10:46-52)

Study each of these passages when Jesus predicts his death, the disciples misunderstand, and then Jesus teaches them the way of the cross.

1. What do you learn about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus from these verses?
 2. Why do you think he starts this section with the healing of a blind man and ends the section with the healing of a blind man?
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