**The Gospel of Mark**

**Notes**

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Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Q: What was Jesus’ purpose?

Q: Did his life agree with his stated purpose/mission?

Q: What is your mission statement?

Q: Does your life agree with your mission statement?

Basic Outline of Mark:

I Mark 1:1-13 Prologue: Preparing for Jesus’ ministry

II Mark 1:14-8:26 Galilean ministry

III Mark 8:27-16:8 (or 16:20) Passion and Death of Jesus

I & II in my Bible 17 pages III 19 pages

Q: What jumps out to you?

a. Great emphasis on the suffering and death of Jesus for our salvation.

b. Emphasis on Jesus raising up the disciples.

Notice the transition verses:

Mark 8:31-38 As I will serve and suffer, so will you, as disciples serve and suffer.

Jesus’ purpose is our purpose. Jesus lifestyle is our lifestyle.

More detailed Outline:

I Mark 1:1-13 Prologue: Preparing for Jesus’ ministry

II Galilean ministry

1. Mark 1:14-3:12 The Kingdom of God
2. Mark 3:13-6:6 Jesus disciples versus outsiders
3. Mark 6:7-8:26 Jesus’ mission

III Passion and death of Jesus: The suffering servant dies for mankind.

1. Mark 8:27-10:45 Jesus, the Servant of mankind
2. Mark 10:46-Mark 10:46-13:37 The Son confronts the Jews
3. Mark 14:1-15:47 Trial and death of Jesus
4. Mark 16:1-8 Resurrection of Jesus

[Note: The consensus of scholars is that Mark 16:9-20 was not in the original. Reasons include:

1. It is not found in Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and the most of the most authoritative very early manuscripts.

2. The change from 16:8 to 16:9 is too abrupt, even for Mark!

3. The vocabulary and style are VERY different.

4. Other Mark manuscripts have a different, shorter ending, providing evidence that others saw a need to provide an ending to Mark.

Explanations:

1. There was an original ending to Mark which was subsequently lost. (more likely)

2. Mark ended at Mark 16:8 (less likely)

Comment: No important doctrine is added or removed by this passage (although I sure wish I could use Mark 16:16]

Features of Mark

Probably the first of the gospels written.

Was Mark a source (along with oral tradition and personal experience) for Matthew?

The unanimous tradition of the early Church fathers (Irenaeus, Eusebius [quotes Papias, from very early second century “the interpreter of Peter”] for example) is that Mark was a scribe for Peter and that his gospel reflects the teaching of Peter. This is supported by 1 Peter 5:13 “my son Mark.” Is Mark the anonymous witness in Mark 14:51?

Date of writing? 50s AD or (less likely if Mark was a companion of Peter) late 40s AD

[aside: Note the new find of a small piece of Matthew from AD 80-90 found in a funerary/mummy mask!!!]

Quite a bit shorter than the other gospels.

Mark 1:1-4 Q: What significant content in the other synoptics is notably missing in Mark?

John the Baptist’s birth, Virgin birth, dedication, travel to Egypt, youth of Jesus, genealogy.

Jesus’ visits to Jerusalem

Very truncated post-resurrection accounts.

Q: Any theologically significant things missing? Virgin birth

Why? My guess. In the late 40s, there were sufficient eye-witnesses and sufficient group memory that Mark did not feel the need to cover these points. This knowledge was common knowledge.

Style of Mark:

Vivid, fast-paced, action-packed narrative, with an authoritative Jesus completely in control.

1. Very simple Greek—a small vocabulary. Clearly Mark’s first language is not Greek.

2. Fast-paced: Greek *euthys* immediately 42 times (Matthew 5, Luke 1 time)

Ex: Mark 1:10,12,18,20,21,23,28,29,30,42,43 Q: What impression about Jesus does this create?

Illustration: John Madden Boom!!! (tough actin’ Tinactin) Jesus: a man with a mission.

Q: Are you a man or a woman with a mission.

The point of Mark in showing Jesus as a man of action is that disciples, too, are called to a radical lifestyle of service and suffering.

3. Use of historical present (past action in present tense) (151 Mark, 93 Matthew, Luke 11 times)

Present tense puts you in the action. You are walking with Jesus. You are in the huddle. You are one of the disciples.

Illustration: Early radio broadcasts of baseball games in the 30s. Broadcasters made a fake live broadcast, complete with fake fan noise, etc. Why? So people feel part of the action.

Example Mark 1:21

Things to look for in Mark:

1. Authority of Jesus emphasized. Mark 1:25 The miracles mentioned are the ones which point particularly to his authority (power over nature (storms, etc.), demons, etc.)

2. People are amazed by Jesus. Mark 1:27 Awe: Who is this? 4:41, 8:27.

This action-packed, authoritative leader of whom people are amazed is one reason that Mark has been characterized as the gospel for the Romans. [plus the fact that Mark was probably in Rome with Paul and Peter]

My response: Well, it may play well with the Romans and people of their sort, but in AD 50 outreach to Latin-speaking, Roman people had not even begun.

[Note: Robert Carrillo disagrees with me and believes it was in fact written with a specifically Roman audience in mind]

3. Attacks by Satan on Jesus and the disciples. 1:21-24, 1:34, 3:11, 5:7, 6:7,13

4. Jesus’ suffering, even before Jerusalem.

5. Outsiders becoming insiders (kind of like Luke—hints that Gentiles will become Christians) Ex: only the Centurion, in all the gospel, truly understands Jesus (Mark 15:39) Levi, a tax collector responds 2:13-17, Syrophoenician woman believes (7:24-30).

6. Small characters (not the apostles) are heroes. Woman with bleeding (5:25-34) Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52 a blind man sees while the seeing are blind), a woman anoints Jesus for burial (14:3-9) and a poor woman gives much (12:41-44)

7. Apostles put in a relatively negative light. 4:13,40, 6:37,52, 7:18, 8:4,32, 9:19,32,38, 10:13,37,41 and many, many more. They fail to understand, they are surprised at his power, they miss that he is Messiah, they are prideful and self-focused, and Jesus rebukes them. They totally miss that Jesus must suffer, so that he has to remind them repeatedly. Note, in Mark, the restoration of the apostles is not mentioned. The last thing we see of them is running away at Jesus’ hour of greatest need.

The point to take from this is that in Mark, the apostles are stand-ins for us. We can see us responding as they did and can reflect on how we are like them. “There, but for the grace of God, go I.”

8. Material about authentic discipleship.

9. Mark’s Jesus is more “human”—more emotional. Compassion 1:41, 6:34, grief (3:5) indignation 10:14, anger (3:5), deep anxiety at nature of his death (14:33-34). He is less “powerful” in that he does not know the time of his return (13:32) and his ability to do miracles is limited by the faith of his hearers (6:5)

Literary style:

1. Topical rather than chronological (John is even more so, Luke is less so)

Examples: 1:21-45 demons being cast out.

2:1-3:6 controversy/authority emphasized

4:1-34 kingdom parallels

2. Intercalation (sandwiching)

Mark begins a story, inserts an event which also illustrates the point, then finishes the story.

Mark 3:20-35 v. 20-21 rejected by family v. 22-30 rejected by religious leaders v. 31-35 rejected by family.

Mark 5:21-43 v. 21-24 Jarius v. 25-34 woman healed v. 35-43 Jarius (cont.)

Mark 11:12-25 v. 12-14 fig tree v. 15-19 Clears temple/judgment of God’s people v. 20-25 fig tree (cont.)

Assignment: Find another example of intercalation

Another feature:

3. Triads

3 boat scenes 4:35-41 6:45-52, 8:14-21

3 predictions of his death 8:31-38, 9:31-37, 10:32-45

3 denials

Assignment: Find another triad.

This raises a question: If Mark rearranged material chronologically, does this raise questions about inerrancy?

Chicago Statement:

* **Article XIII.**
* *WE AFFIRM*  the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.
* *WE DENY*  that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

4. Use of irony. Whereas John use verbal irony (When I am lifted up.. Jn 3:14)

Mark uses situational irony.

Mark3:22f Teachers of the Law accuse Jesus of serving Satan, but in the process they prove that they are servants of Satan.

Mark 15:31-32 “He saved others, let him save himself.” When Jesus is purposefully NOT saving himself so that he can save others.

A harder assignment: Find another situational irony.

**The Text**

**I. Mark 1:1-13 Preparation for Jesus’ ministry**

1:1 The beginning of the gospel…. Mark gets right down to business. Thepreceeding 30+ years were relatively insignificant. Now the story gets started.

Mark begins by quoting Malachi 3:1 (and Isaiah 40:3)

Mark (and God) sees the Gospel to be in complete coherence with the Old Testament. v. 2 Like the prophets said….

“Behold, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way…. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple.”

Interesting that he does not quote Malachi 4:5 I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. (Matthew 11:10, 14 John is the Elijah who is to come Luke 1:17 in the spirit and power of Elijah)

[this explains why in Mark 8:28 (and more famously Matthew 16:14) some thought that Jesus might be Elijah.

Why does Mark begin here?

Because this is the connection with the OT. The OT ends by God saying the next thing you will see is the messenger who will prepare the way for the Messiah.

Proclamation: There is a prophet among you for the first time since Malachi. The kingdom of God is coming. The Messiah is here.

Like JTB says in the parallel Matthew 3:2 “The kingdom of God is at hand.”

Q: What was John’s baptism about? Were people saved by this baptism?

Answer: No! But isn’t forgiveness equal to salvation? No

Like it says in Luke 7:28, the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist. Why? Because we have what he did not have. We have the Holy Spirit, and that is what the baptism of John did not include. (Acts 19:3 then whose baptism did you receive?)

Why did John baptize? “To prepare the way” Q: How? By calling to repentance.

How to prepare to receive the message of Jesus? Repentance.

Mark 1:9-13 Jesus baptized. Jesus went into the desert to prepare.

1:11 Like John the Baptist (v. 7,8) God puts his stamp on the event. The fulfillment of the ages is upon us.

Then… boom! (v. 12 at once…)

Notice: Jesus went into the desert for 40 days to prepare to come and save God’s people from slavery to sin.

Moses went into the desert for 40 years to prepare to come and save God’s people from slavery.

Notice: Mark does not mention the specific temptations by Satan.

**II The Galilean Ministry Mark 1:14-3:12 The Kingdom of God is here.**

Mark will hit on his main themes immediately!

Mark 1:14-20 The calling of the first disciples. Note, we are hitting the theme of raising up the disciples immediately.

v. 14 JTB already said the time has come (v. 7-8). God has already said the time has come (v. 11), now Jesus is saying the time has come. Do you get the message? The time has come. (2 Corinthians 6:2…. Urgency)

Q: What is the first point Mark is having Jesus make about discipleship?

v. 17 Now is the time to come. v. 20 They came without delay. Q: What is the message?

Was this the first time he had met James and John? No! (John 1:35-42)

Note: At once (v.18) Without delay (v. 20) Jesus is a man of action who is calling us to be people of action.

The point: The kingdom of God has come. All that worldly stuff is now of much less importance. He may not literally be asking us to physically do what they did, but he definitely is asking us to, in our minds and hearts, do what they did.

Mark 1:21-34, 40-45 The power and authority of Jesus over both spiritual and physical illness.

1:21-24 Note the amazement (v. 22) and the authority (v. 22)

And notice also the irony (v. 24) the demons are the first to acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah.

v. 25 Jesus tells a demon to be quiet and the demon obeys.

v. 43 Jesus tells the man healed of leprosy to go and show himself to thepriest and he disobeys.

The point: Hey, even the demons obey, so why don’t you obey.

v. 28 quickly v. 29 immediately. Jesus is about his mission. He is urgent.

v. 35-39 Jesus may be a powerful man of action with great authority, but even he needed to pray.

v. 38 Why did Jesus come? To preach. What about you? (note: Mark 10:45 we know that this is not the only reason he came…. Suffering, serving and dying to save us)

Mark 2:1 This thing is cranking. Things are happening fast. There is already such a crowd that people cannot even get into the house.

Mark 2:1-12 Jesus’ authority. Q: How much authority does Jesus have? He can even forgive sins!!!

By the way, which is easier? (v. 9) I have always wondered….

2:12 The people were amazed.

Q: Are you amazed by Jesus? We tend to lose our amazement over time.

Mark 2:13-17 Back to the theme of the call to discipleship. The calling of Matthew.

The point: Your past does not matter. Jesus is turning things upside down. All that matters is your answer to this question: Will you answer the call to “come, follow me.”

Mark 2:18-28 How much authority does Jesus have? “The Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath.” He has authority, even over the Sabbath. This is blow-away for a Jew.

v. 28 I am the Lord of the Sabbath! Imagine the people’s jaws dropping to the floor. They don’t even know what to day. They are beyond amazed.

Jesus: Now that I am here, everything is new. I am not improving things. I am starting from scratch. Get on board.