

“Equipping believers for growth and service by encountering God through his word.”

The Bible for Today
January 13, 2010



Mark in the Synoptic Gospels

- About 52% of the actual verses of Lk and Mt are mostly from Mark
- Mt and Lk mostly follow the order of Mk; if there is a difference, it is in one or the other, but never both against Mark
- Mark is the foundational narrative of the four gospels; the closest eyewitness account of Jesus' life and ministry; emphasis on the kingdom of God—a disciple takes up the cross

Mark: the writer of the Gospel

- Most scholars agree: Mark the writer of the gospel
- Mark, the nephew of Barnabas (Acts 12:12, 12:25, 13:13, 15:37-40)
- Tradition notes him as the founder of the church in Alexandria Egypt
- Paul talks of him in his own letters
- Papias (2nd Cent) said Mark wrote down the words of Jesus as remembered by Peter
- Written ca. AD 65—martyrdom of Peter in AD 64 (in Rome)

Characteristics of the Gospel of Mark

Characteristics that help us read the story:

1. Nearest writing to the life of Jesus/ biography
2. Starts and continues throughout telling the divinity of Jesus (Jesus is amazing, wonder of God in humanity)
3. The most human picture of Jesus/ emotions-passion
4. Little details that an eyewitness would include
5. Simple style and realism: “and”; “straightway” “immediately”; historic present=says not said (not translated well into English); uses Aramaic that Jesus spoke at a moment

Historical Context of Mark

- Roman persecution under Nero—way of the cross
- Urgency of keeping faith in persecution— 41 times “immediately” 27 times “and again”
- Peter remembers the good and the bad—realism of the narrative

Critical Point for Mark: Jesus as Messiah

Essential to see in the narrative from beginning to end

Mark writes of Jesus as the Messiah through:

- Kingship
- Suffering Servant
- Keeps identity secret— “messianic secret”
mystery of the kingdom; Jesus knew he was destined to suffer for the sake of the people (Jewish Messiah was a warrior king—people try to force Jesus to be king in Lk and Mt)

The New Exodus

Isaiah's statements of the Messiah throughout Mark

- The Messiah will lead the new exodus (as Moses led the first exodus out of Egypt)
- The Messiah will lead the final exodus to God's restoration of humanity to relationship in him
- Gentiles are now in the exodus also (Mk 6:53-9:29) abolish of dietary laws/ Temple a house of prayer for all nations (also 13:10)

Discipleship is connected with cross bearing, as the Messiah will bear the cross

Overview of Mark's Gospel

Prologue and then four parts:

1. Announcement of the kingdom—ushered in with healing/ people amazed but establishment plots Jesus' death
2. Develops roles of the crowds, disciples, and opposition
3. Focus on the disciples— the way of the cross is discipleship (which is not understood); first discipleship teaching after explanation of death (servanthood and cross mark authentic discipleship)
4. Climax of the story— “Jesus is risen” (16:1-8)

An Outline of Mark

The Prologue: An Introduction to Jesus and the kingdom (1:1-15)

Part One: The Kingdom Goes Public— Disciples, Crowd, Opposition (1:16-3:6)

- Disciples and the Crowd (1:16-45)
- The Opposition (2:1-3:6)

Part Two: Mystery of the Kingdom— Faith, Misunderstanding, and Hard Hearts (3:7-8:21)

- The Mystery of the Kingdom (3:7-4:34)
- The Kingdom Present in Power—Blindness of the World (4:35-6:6a)
- The Kingdom Extends to the Gentiles—Blindness of the Disciples (6:6b-8:21)

An Outline of Mark con't...

Part Three: The Mystery Unveiled— The cross and the way of discipleship (8:22-10:45)

- The first passion prediction and its aftermath (8:22-9:29)
- The second passion prediction and its aftermath (9:30-10:31)
- The third passion prediction and its aftermath (10:32-45)

Part Four: The King Comes to Jerusalem to Die (10:46-15:47)

- The King comes to Jerusalem— A house divided (10:46-13:27)
- The King is crucified (14:1-15:47)

The Epilogue: The story is not over (16:1-8)

The Prologue: An Introduction to Jesus *and the kingdom (1:1-15)*

- Vs 1: simple opening—Jesus is the good news of God (gospel= good news)
- Vss 2-11: Introduction of John and his ministry
 Vss 2-3: texts from Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3 (not both from Isaiah; Mt/ Lk use the texts differently in their gospels) Mal. 3:1—a threat, the messenger was to cleanse and purify Israel before the Anointed One appeared; straight road—done for monarchs as they traveled (Alexander the Great)

The Prologue con't

Vss. 2-8: The ministry of John

- Josephus (Antiquities) says John a good man, commended the Jews to virtue/ righteousness toward each other and God, called Jews to baptism.
- Simple appearance: camel hair cloth/ leather belt (like Elijah 2 Kings 1:8) locust & honey– common for poor, locust could also be carob nut; mightier– associated with great supernatural being (Mk 3:27; Rev. 10:1, 18:21, 18:8); baptism by immersion– Jewish baptism a ritual, Gentiles had to confess (calling all to confess)

The Prologue con't

Vss 9-11: Baptism of Jesus

- Begins the public ministry of Jesus
- Difficult section, “Why was Jesus baptized?” Matthew addresses this, but early church did not; later an announcement of Jesus’ public ministry.
- Voice from heaven— in GK, only Jesus heard this voice (Mt/ Lk say crowd); John did not know Jesus is the Messiah (Mt. 11:2-6, Lk 7:18-23)—the hidden messiah
- Heaven opened— in Gk, a violent term meaning ‘split apart’
- Voice to Jesus— not to bystanders; connected with Ps 2:7 king enthronement and Isa. 42:1 consecration of God’s servant

The Prologue con't...

Vss. 12-13: Temptations:

- A time of tempting (implied to not carry the good news); wilderness not named— a place where evil spirits reside; '40 days'— a fairly long period of time (not precisely); Mt and Lk expand this episode

Vss. 14-15: Beginning of ministry:

- End of John's ministry, beginning of Jesus (John's gospel says overlaps); 'Preach the gospel' favorite phrase (1:1, 8:35, 10:29, 13:10, 14:9)— Jesus overpowers our enemy for us; believe the gospel— the heart of Mk, believe Jesus' word that God sent a rescuer in Christ; repent— *metanoia* 'to change one's mind' sorry for consequences of sin AND hate the act itself.

The Bible for Today

- ❖ Discipleship means taking up one's cross to follow Christ in his teachings and life.
- ❖ We are called to repent– to not sin and have a mind that does not have bent to sinning.
- ❖ We are a part of the kingdom of God ushered in by Christ; “for all people.”
- ❖ We are bearers of the good news today: Christ is Risen! God has rescued humanity in Christ!