

The Gospel of Mark

Introduction

As we already talked about Markan Priority and how liberal scholarship brought doubts into the church about when these gospels were written, we are not going to spend any time on it.

Author:

- **Church Tradition**

- Papias (Eusebius) and Clement of Alexandria (ca A.D. 180) connect Mark with Peter in Rome.
- Irenaus says Mark wrote this Book after the death of Peter, ca A.D. 65-68
 - Tradition insists on Rome as the place of origin.
 - This would make perfect sense as Peter was martyred in Rome.

- **Biblical Info on Mark**

- Not mentioned Specifically in the book of Mark [cf. “A Certain Young Man” (14:51-52)]
- Familiar personality in Scripture (John Mark; cf. Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37, 39; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phile. 24; 1 Pet. 5:13)
- His cousin, Barnabas, introduced him to Paul (Col. 4:10)
- He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5) but quit at Cyprus (Acts 13:13)
- His presence created a split between Paul and Barnabas before the start of the second missionary journey (Acts 15:37-39)
 - Following this, he disappears until (2 Tim. 4:11)
 - Peter calls him “my son” (1 Pet. 5:13)...left Paul for Peter and becomes attached
- Familiar with the Geography of Palestine (5:1; 6:53; 8:10; 11:1; 13:3)
- Understood Jewish Institutions and Customs (1:21; 2:14, 16, 18; 7:2-4)
- Aramaic Language Background (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22, 34)
- Connection with Peter – (Tradition says that early after Peter’s death, Mark was encouraged to write down what Peter preached. The vivid detail comes from Peter, because Mark was not an eyewitness)
 - Certainly, an emphasis on Peter...***some of the conversations recorded are between Jesus and Peter alone***; so Peter would have told Mark about them

Readers: Gentiles (Romans)

- No Mention of Law or its connection to New Covenant
- Jewish Customs Explained (7:2-4; 14:12; 15:42)

- This is b/c of his audience being Gentiles...so they needed to know why
- Aramaic Expressions Translated (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22, 34)
- Latin Terms Used (3:5; 4:21; 6:27 [executioner, *speculator*]; 12:14 [poll tax, *census*]; 12:42 [coins, *quadrans*]; 15:15 [flog, *flagellare*]; 15:39, 44)
- Roman Time Used (6:48; 13:35) (not in a Jewish sense)
- Sons of Simon of Cyrene (15:21; see Rom. 16:13) Rufus was apparently a well known Gentile

Date: A.D. 64-68

- Hard to date very early b/c of his credibility with Paul in Acts when he leaves him
 - Because he was writing to Gentiles *and* Paul was commissioned to Gentiles
 - Anti-Marcionite papers talk about Mark writing and his gospel being with Peter in Rome

A. Characteristics and Themes of Mark's Gospel

- The Kingdom of God (1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14, 15, 23, 24, 25; 11:10; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43)
 - Perhaps to tell the Gentile readers the difference between the Roman 'kingdom' and Caesar as its ruler.
- Son of God (8x – 1:1, 11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:6; 14:61; **15:39**)
 - This would have been profoundly counter-cultural as they saw Caesar as a god
- Presentation of Jesus' humanity (The Son of Man) (14x – 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62)
- More than any of the gospels, Mark may be said to be least like a modern biography; rather it is an historical narrative.
 - No info. on Jesus' birth or His parents.
- Mark is the gospel of Opposition to Christ
 - More pronounced in Mark
- The "Failure" of the Disciples
 - How to deal with failure
- The Gospel of Vivid Detail (1:16-20, 29-31, 35-45; 5:21-24, 35-43; 6:39; 9:14-15; 10:32, 46; 14:32-42)
- Mark is the gospel of action

- Euthus/eutheos...translated 'immediately' (1:10, 12, 29, 30, 43; 2:8, 12; 4:29; 5:2, 30, 42; 6:50, 54; 7:25; 8:10; 9:14–15, 20; 10:52; 11:2–3; 14:43, 45; 15:1)
- 18 out of possible 35 miracles
 - 18 Miracles Recorded
 - 15 Miracles Recorded in 1:14-8:30
- Considerably shorter than the other Synoptic Gospels. Mark eliminates all but two of Jesus' long discourses, and even these are considerably shorter than their corresponding accounts in Matthew (Mk. 4.1–34; 13:3–37)
- 151 uses of historic present and many uses of imperfect, both of which portray action in process rather than just an event
 - Mark takes you into the action by using present tense verbs when talking about past events.

The Purpose: Mark writes to Gentiles to demonstrate by His miraculous works and authority that Jesus is the Christ and ought to be followed.

The Literary Structure

- The Title: "The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1)
 - The Prologue: The Introduction to Jesus (1:2-13)
 - Mightier than John the Baptist (1:2-8)
 - The Beloved Son of God (1:9-11)
 - Tempted by Satan (1:12-13)
 - The Body: The Public Demonstration of the Reality of Who Jesus Was/Is (1:14-15:41)
 - The Galilean Ministry: Jesus Was/Is the Messiah (1:14-8:30)
 - The Commencement of the Ministry in Galilee: The Introduction to the Authority of Jesus (1:14-3:6)
 - The Climax of the Ministry in Galilee: The Full Extent of the Authority of Jesus (3:7-6:13)
 - The Ministry beyond Galilee: The Recognition of the Authority of Jesus (i.e. He Was/Is the Messiah) by His Disciples (6:14-8:30)
 - The Jerusalem Ministry: Jesus Was/Is the Son of God (8:31-15:41)
 - On the Way of Jerusalem: Jesus' Teaching on Discipleship while Predicting His Death (8:31-10:52)
 - At the Temple in Jerusalem: Jesus' Interactions Demonstrate His Godly Authority (11:1-13:37)
 - In and Around Jerusalem: Jesus' Death Shows He Was/Is the Son of God (14:1-15:41)
 - The Epilogue: The Resurrection of Jesus (15:42-16:8[20])

Selected Interpretive Problems

- The Purpose of Mark

- To Preserve the Apostolic Tradition
 - To preserve Peter's teachings as he was about or already did die
- To Encourage Christians to Follow Jesus in the Midst of Suffering
 - Help to hold fast to the gospel in the midst of persecution
- To Challenge Non-Christians to Believe in and Follow Jesus
 - From the prologue of Mark, less teaching than the other gospels
 - To present Jesus, and who He was, to the unbelieving world
- "The Messianic Secret"
 - A Literary Device to Account for the Absence of Faith in Jesus' Messiahship during His Lifetime (W. Wrede at the turn of the 20th century)
 - A Reflection of Jesus' Historical Ministry [GNTI, 97-100]
 - Demons (1:32-34; 3:11-12)
 - Healed Persons (1:44; 5:43; 7:36)
 - Disciples (8:30; 9:9-10, 31-32)
 - No textual basis for this, but it is now in the Markan theory.
 - They believe that the apostles knew who Jesus was but were unaware of His Messiahship.
 - Wrede claimed that Jesus did not ever think He was the Messiah and that Mark (and the rest of the New Testament authors) sensationalized Jesus and made Him into the Messiah. Wrede claims Mark added the Messianic Secret in an attempt to give a reason for why Jesus was not accepted by many as Messiah until after His death.
- The Beginning of Mark (1:1)
 - Mark quotes Exodus 23:20 AND Malachi 3:1
 - When they refer to *a* prophet, they are quoting a mixture of verses from various OT passages
 - He (and almost all others) quote from the Septuagint
- Not just a quote from Isaiah, but a theology of sorts or a theological theme
 - **Intertextuality**...how the writers drew these connections of various verses from different times
 - When God's people were in bondage, God prepared a way out for them (Exodus, Isaiah & Malachi)
- The Ending of Mark (16:9-20) [MSB, 1502; GNTI, 89-93]
 - Sinaiticus & Vaticanus...they are complete codices and don't include Mark 16:9-20
 - These verses have very early quotations (the first harmony of the gospels say they are there)
 - In addition, the fourth-century church fathers Eusebius and Jerome noted that almost all Greek manuscripts available to them lacked vv. 9–20, although they doubtless knew those other endings existed. In the second century, Justin Martyr and Tatian knew about other endings. Irenaeus, also, in A.D. 150 to 200, must have known about this long ending because he quotes verse 19 from it. So, the early church fathers knew of the

added verses, but even by the fourth century, Eusebius said the Greek manuscripts did not include these endings in the originals.

- Many other translations from the Greek don't have it
- The reason we have them today is b/c Erasmus included them and became part of the KJV
- Three points to a shorter gospel:
 - An abruptness to the end and the longer section is out of chronological order
 - More unique terms in the longer ending than the rest of Mark (vocab. Is not Markan)
 - The way verse 8 ends, punctuates Mark's key points (astonishment and saying nothing)

Commentaries for Mark:

Exegetical

- R.T. France (NIGTC)

English

- D. Edmund Hiebert
- Edwards (Pillar Series)

Expositional

- David Garland (NIV Application)
- English (Bible Speaks Today Series)
- Ray Stedman (2 vols)