

THE BIG READ (2)

Jesus in Mark

A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:45-47)

2. The New Testament begins with the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

These four books tell the story of Jesus’ earthly life.

Whilst they all focus on different aspects of Jesus’ life and ministry, each account has the same basic themes about the identity, mission, and message of Jesus.

Together they paint a beautiful portrait of who Jesus is.

3. Although Matthew’s Gospel comes first in the New Testament, Mark’s Gospel was the first of the four Gospels to be written.

Mark’s Gospel is surprisingly short – it can be read in about an hour.

Mark’s Gospel was probably written in Rome around 60AD for a Gentile audience.

Mark’s Gospel tells us nothing about Jesus’ birth and childhood.

Mark’s Gospel focus is more about what Jesus did rather than what Jesus said (actions over teaching).

B. Mark the Man

1. A church kid.

John Mark’s (John being his Jewish name and Mark his Roman one) family was part of the early church in Jerusalem.

The early church gathered in his mother Mary’s house to pray for Peter when he was in prison.

“When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.” (Acts 12:12)

Barnabas was his cousin (Colossians 4:10).

2. An eyewitness.

Living in Jerusalem, Mark most likely was an eyewitness to many of the events that surrounded Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Mark certainly would have seen what happened at Gethsemane.

"A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind." (Mark 14:51-52)

3. A failed missionary.

He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey but deserted them.

"The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper." (Acts 13:4-5)

"From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem." (Acts 13:13)

"Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.' Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work." (Acts 15:36-38)

4. A man who was given a second chance.

He would later become a companion of both Paul (see Philemon 24) and Peter.

"Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry." (2 Timothy 4:11)

"She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark." (1 Peter 5:13)

While Mark was with Peter in Rome, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write his Gospel based on Peter's recollections.

Papias: "*Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately all that he remembered...*"

The structure of Mark's Gospel follows the preaching of Peter.¹

Acts 10	Mark
"good news" (v36)	"the beginning of the gospel" (1:1)
"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit" (v38)	the coming of the Spirit on Jesus (1:10)
"beginning in Galilee" (v37)	the Galilean ministry (1:16-8:26)
"He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil." (v38)	Jesus' ministry focuses on healings and exorcisms
"We are witnesses of everything he did... in Jerusalem" (v39)	the ministry in Jerusalem (11-14)
"They killed him by hanging him on a tree" (v39)	focus on the death of Christ (15)
"God raised him from the dead on the third day" (v40)	"He has risen! He is not here" (16:6)

5. A great storyteller.

His Gospel is fast moving – 'and' or 'immediately' appear frequently.

His Gospel is full of extra details not found in the other Gospels.

"Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat." (Mark 3:20)

"Then Jesus told them to make all the people sit down in groups on the green grass." (Mark 6:39)

C. The Story of Mark (or rather The Story of Jesus in Mark)

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15)

"Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34)

D. Jesus in Mark

1. Mark explains what it means for Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God by recalling two Old Testament figures.

The first is the son of man of Daniel 7:13-14.

The second is the suffering servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

These two figures come together in Mark 10:45 when Jesus says "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."

2. Jesus is the Son of Man.

An image of glory.

The son of man came with the clouds of heaven – a symbol of God's presence.

The son of man received authority, worship, everlasting rule and an unshakeable kingdom.

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)

Jesus demonstrated his authority as a teacher (Mark 1:22), over evil spirits (Mark 1:27), over people (Mark 1:16-20), to heal (Mark 1:30-32), over nature (Mark 4:39), over death (Mark 5:41-42) and to forgive sins (Mark 2:10).

Jesus speaks of His resurrection and return as judge.

"As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead." (Mark 9:9)

"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)

"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens." (Mark 13:26-27)

"Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14:61-62)

3. Jesus is the Suffering Servant.

An image of shame.

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like

sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:3-6)

"Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." (Isaiah 53:10-11)

The servant in Isaiah would suffer terribly, be tortured and killed.

On three occasions, Jesus warned His disciples that this is what would happen to Him.

"He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again." (Mark 8:31)

"He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." (Mark 9:31)

"Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise." (Mark 10:32-34)

4. By fusing these two figures together, the glorious son of man and the suffering servant, Jesus was teaching His disciples that He would be victorious only after apparent defeat.

It wouldn't be until after His death and resurrection that His disciples understood this.

E. Conclusion

1. Mark's Gospel is the good news ('gospel') of:

Who Jesus is? The Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1 cf. Mark 8:29 & Mark 15:39).

Why Jesus came? To suffer and die (Mark 8:31).

Why Jesus died? For the sins of many (Mark 10:45).

2. Our response is to repent and believe this good news (Mark 1:15) and follow Jesus by denying ourselves and taking up our cross (Mark 8:34).

ⁱ Taken from 'An Introduction to the New Testament' by D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo & Leon Morris