

Introduction to Mark's Gospel - JESUS THE MESSIAH, THE SERVANT

“The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God....” (1:1)

“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.” (10:45)

Author, Date and Place of Writing

There is no direct internal evidence that indicates who the author of this gospel is. But early church tradition holds that it is John Mark.¹ He was the son of Mary whose home in Jerusalem was a meeting place of the disciples (Ac 12:12). He was the cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10), and accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Ac 12:25; 13:5). But he left them in the midst of the journey, which later led to a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas (Ac 13:13; 15:37-40). Mark seems to have come under Peter's influence and been discipled by him (1 Pe 5:13). Later, he regained Paul's trust (Phm 24; 2 Ti 4:11). According to early church tradition,² Mark went to Alexandria and became bishop of the church there, where he was martyred.

Indirect, internal evidence seems to reflect that Mark wrote this gospel based on the eyewitness account of Peter. The author vividly depicts incidents surrounding Peter. It presents the weaknesses of Peter, as well of all the disciples. It is interesting that Mark does not include Jesus' recognition of Peter as the rock on which he would build his church, or that he received the keys of the kingdom (Mt 16:17-20). Due to the unusual and intimate nature of the story, it has been surmised that Mark was the young man who fled naked on the night of Jesus' arrest (Mk 14:51-52). If so, this may be his personal testimony. Early church tradition³ suggests that Mark wrote this gospel in Rome around the time of Peter's death (A.D. 64).

Recipients

This gospel may have been written specifically for Gentiles in Rome. There are not many quotations from the Old Testament. The author pays special attention to explaining Jewish customs (Mk 7:2-4; 15:42), and translates Aramaic words (3:17; 5:41; 7:11,34; 15:22,34) so that Gentiles could understand the context of Jesus' life and ministry.

Purpose of Writing

The author wrote to share the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God (1:1). By the time of writing, most of the apostles had died. The author wanted to preserve the gospel

¹ This was affirmed by Papias (70-155 A.D.), who had been a disciple of John the Apostle, was the bishop of the church at Hierapolis. He wrote a book called "Explanation of the Lord's Discourses." In it he wrote: *"The Elder also said this: Mark, having become the Interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he remembered—not however, in order—of the Words and Deeds of Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor was he a follower of His, but later on, as I said, he attached himself to Peter, who would adapt his instruction to the need of the occasion, but not teach as though he were composing a connected account of the Lord's Oracles; so that Mark made no mistake in thus writing down some things as he remembered them. For one object was in his thoughts—to omit nothing that he had heard, and to make no false statements."*

² See the works of Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome

³ See the works of Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

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message they had proclaimed in written form so that it may be shared with future generations. In the first half of the book, the good news about the Messiah, the Son of God, began with his proclamation that the kingdom had come. It continued through Jesus' preaching, teaching, healing, driving out demons, and calling his disciples. Jesus revealed himself to his disciples until they confessed him as the Messiah. In the second half of the book (8:31-16:20), Jesus repeatedly predicts his suffering, death and resurrection to his disciples. He demonstrates how to live a gospel centered life of prayer, humility, and servanthip. He also emphasized his Lordship so that his disciples could humbly submit to him as Lord. The last three chapters of the book describe Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. Then he sent his disciples to preach the gospel to the whole world. This gospel could be of great help to people in times of persecution and martyrdom. It would help them understand the meaning of their sufferings in light of Jesus' life and ministry, and to persist in faithful discipleship.

Characteristics

A short and vivid gospel: Mark's gospel is simple and succinct, unadorned, and yet a dramatic account of Jesus' ministry. It seems to be arranged chronologically as an eye-witness account, pointing out the names of people and places.

A focus on Jesus' actions, rather than the content of his teaching: In contrast to Matthew's gospel, which presents five discourses detailing the contents of Jesus' teaching, Mark focuses on Jesus' ministry in action: Preaching and teaching, healing and driving out demons. All the while, Jesus is training and raising his disciples. Action-oriented words like "immediately" (12 times) and "at once" (7 times) give a dramatic sense of urgency to the stories.

Disciple raising ministry: One strong emphasis in Mark's gospel is Jesus' disciple-raising ministry. From the beginning, he called ordinary people from various backgrounds to be his disciples. Jesus formed a team of twelve and specially appointed them. The purpose of Jesus' calling was that they might be with him so that they may know who he is and be transformed through life together. There is also a progression in his disciple-raising. After they came to confess that he was the Messiah, he began to teach them the work of the Messiah: that he must suffer, die and rise again. This was the Biblical truth about the Messiah. But they opposed it, did not understand it, and were afraid to talk about it. Nevertheless, Jesus taught them this truth persistently. It was to be the main point of their faith, life and ministry. Though they did not fully accept it, even up to the time of the Last Supper, eventually, when Jesus rose again, they could accept it. Then they could proclaim this message to the whole world.

Jesus' authority: Jesus' authority as the Messiah was revealed in his preaching, teaching, healing, driving out demons, forgiving sins, calling his disciples, control of nature, raising the dead, and even conquering the power of death through his resurrection.

Teaching and preaching ministry: The words "teach," "preach," and "proclaim" or variations of them are used in relations to Jesus' actions 16 times. Jesus taught various kinds of people: crowds, his disciples, individuals who came to him, and even those who opposed him. He also taught in different ways: from the boat, using parables, by analogy

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Healing ministry: The words “healing” or a variation appears 19 times in this short gospel. Mark records many stories of Jesus’ healing ministry (17 distinct events). Many of these are healings of individuals out of his Messianic compassion.

Crowds: The word “crowd” or a variation appears 34 times in Mark’s gospel. Jesus is described as ministering to a crowd in 18 different events. The raising of his disciples often took place in the context of serving crowds.

The Messianic Secret: On several occasions Jesus warned his disciples and others to keep silent about what he had done (1:34,44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; 9:9). It was because he did not want people to misunderstand him based on the popular notion that the Messiah would be a political, economic and military deliverer. When demons exposed his identity, Jesus sternly rebuked them to be quiet (1:24-25,34; 3:11-12).

Theme

1:1 declares that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. His first message is: “The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” Through several events Jesus showed his absolute authority over man and nature. Although Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, whom every being should serve, he did not come to be served, but to serve (10:45). Wherever he went, he served people who were harassed and helpless by teaching the words of God as of first importance. He also healed their sicknesses and drove out demons. He raised disciples who could preach the word and serve the needy as he had done. In order to raise them he was with them and taught them the words of God in season and out of season, and bore all of their weaknesses. Finally Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many through his death on the cross. But his serving did not stop there. After his resurrection, he commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. In this way Jesus served God’s world salvation purpose and advanced his kingdom.

Purpose of Our Study

Mark’s gospel clearly declares that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. However, he did not come to be served, but to serve all kinds of people and give his life as a ransom for sinners. In essence, Mark’s gospel reveals the character of Jesus as the Servant. Through this study, we want to know Jesus better, especially his servanthip: his humility, compassionate heart, diligence to teach the words of God, care for the needy, wisdom in raising disciples and self-sacrifice to the point of death. This knowledge transforms our lives and makes us more like Jesus as his disciples. Then we can grow to be good disciple makers who can serve needy people in our time as shepherds.

Outline

- I. The Beginning of the Good News about Jesus the Messiah (1:1-15)
 - a. The Ministry of John the Baptist (1:1-8)
 - b. Jesus’ Baptism and Temptation (1:9-13)
 - c. Jesus Begins Proclaiming the Kingdom of God (1:14-15)

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- II. Jesus is the Messiah (1:16-8:30)
 - a. Jesus Calls His First Disciples (1:16-20)
 - b. Jesus' Authority to Drive out Demons and Heal the Sick (1:21-34)
 - c. Jesus Sets His Ministry Direction through Prayer (1:35-39)
 - d. Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy through His Compassion (1:40-45)
 - e. Jesus' Authority to Forgive Sins (2:1-12)
 - f. Jesus Came to Call Sinners (2:13-17)
 - g. New Wine and New Wineskins (2:18-22)
 - h. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (2:23-28)
 - i. Jesus Demonstrates What Is Lawful on the Sabbath (3:1-6)
 - j. Jesus Appoints Twelve to Serve the Crowds (3:7-19)
 - k. Jesus Defends Himself and His Ministry (3:20-35)
 - l. Jesus Teaches in Parables (4:1-34)
 - m. Jesus' Authority over Nature (4:35-41)
 - n. Jesus Heals a Demon Possessed Man (5:1-20)
 - o. Jesus Heals a Sick Woman and Raises a Dead Girl (5:21-43)
 - p. Jesus Is Rejected in His Hometown (6:1-6a)
 - q. Jesus Sends out the Twelve to Practice What They Learned (6:6b-13)
 - r. Herod Beheaded John the Baptist (6:14-29)
 - s. Jesus Feeds Five Thousand with Five Loaves and Two Fish (6:30-44)
 - t. Jesus Walks on Water (6:45-56)
 - u. Jesus Teaches What Really Defiles Human Beings (7:1-23)
 - v. Jesus Blessed a Greek Woman's Faith (7:24-30)
 - w. Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man (7:31-37)
 - x. Jesus Feeds Four Thousand (8:1-21)
 - y. Jesus Heals a Blind Man (8:22-26)
 - z. Peter Confesses, "You are the Messiah" (8:27-30)
- III. Jesus' Way of Becoming the Messiah and Discipleship (8:31-10:52)
 - a. Jesus' First Prediction of His Suffering, Death and Resurrection (8:31)
 - b. Jesus Teaches the Way of Discipleship (8:32-9:1)
 - c. Jesus' Transfiguration (9:2-13)
 - d. Jesus Heals a Demon Possessed Boy and Plants Faith (9:14-29)
 - e. Jesus' Second Prediction of His Suffering, Death and Resurrection (9:30-32)
 - f. Jesus Teaches His Disciples: Humility, Servantship, Seriousness of Sin (9:33-50)
 - g. Jesus' Teaching on Marriage and Children (10:1-16)
 - h. Jesus Teaches a Rich Young Man How to Enter the Kingdom of God (10:17-31)
 - i. Jesus' Third Prediction of His Suffering, Death and Resurrection (10:32-34)
 - j. Jesus Teaches His Disciples Servantship (10:35-45)
 - k. Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar Bartimaeus (10:46-52)
- IV. Jesus' Lordship (11:1-13:37)
 - a. Jesus Prepares and Enters Jerusalem as Lord and King (11:1-11)
 - b. Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Clears the Temple (11:12-26)
 - c. Jesus Replies to a Question about His Authority (11:27-12:12)

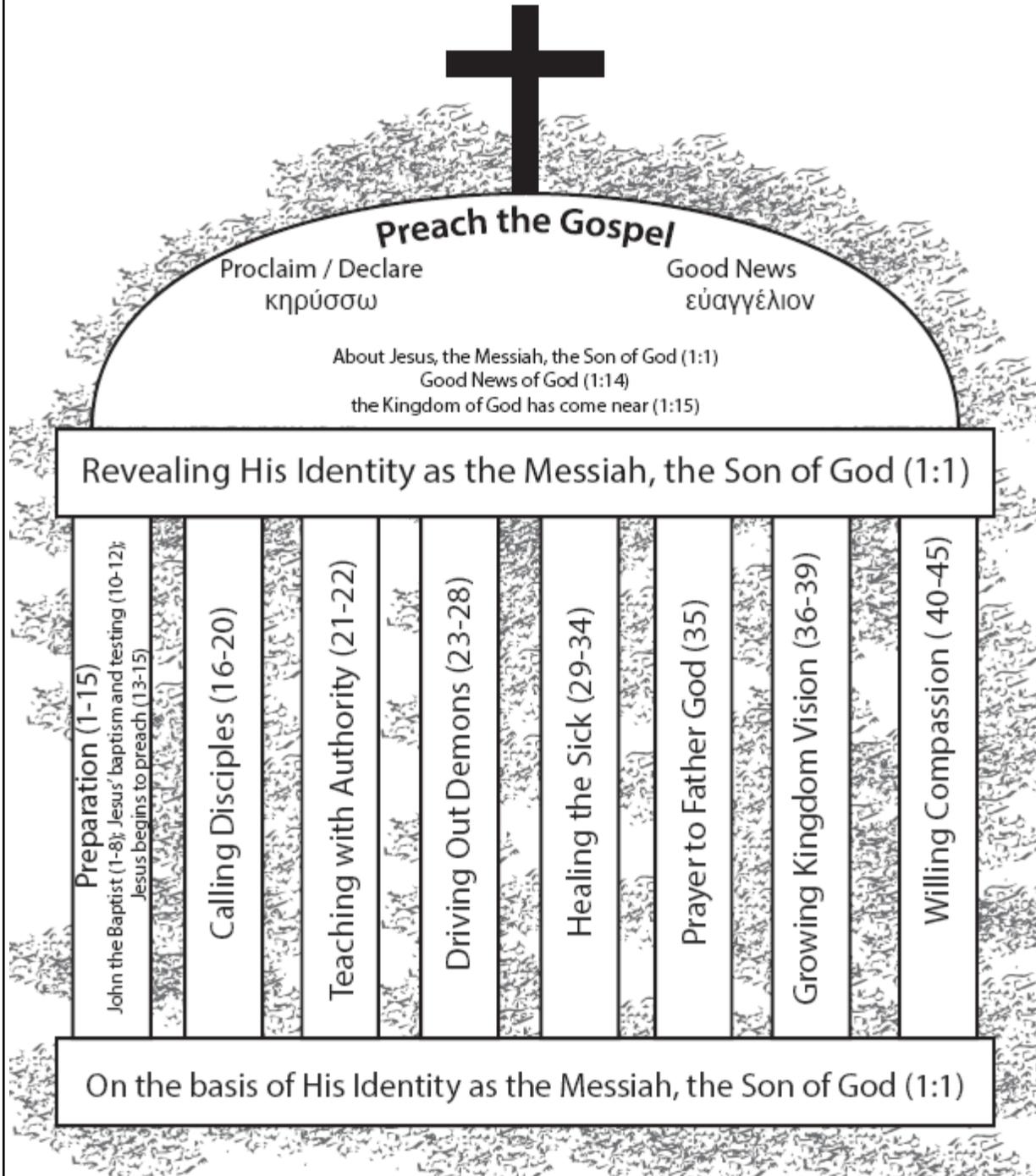
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- d. Jesus Answers the Religious Leaders with God's Wisdom (12:13-34)
 - e. Jesus revealed himself as David's Lord (12:35-37)
 - f. Jesus Warns Religious Leaders and Values a Widow's Offering (12:38-44)
 - g. Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times (13:1-37)
- V. Jesus Death and Resurrection (14:1-16:20)
- a. Jesus Is Anointed at Bethany (14:1-11)
 - b. Jesus Establishes Communion Based on the Passover Meal (14:12-26)
 - c. Jesus Predicts His Resurrection and Peter's Denial (14:27-31)
 - d. Jesus Prays to Obey the Father's Will at Gethsemane (14:32-42)
 - e. Jesus Is Arrested and Tried by the Sanhedrin (14:43-65)
 - f. Peter Disowns Jesus Three Times and Peter Weeps (14:66-72)
 - g. Jesus Is Tried by Pilate, Flogged, Condemned and Mocked (15:1-20)
 - h. Jesus Is Crucified, Dies and Is Buried (15:21-47)
 - i. Jesus Is Risen (16:1-8)
 - j. Jesus Plants Resurrection Faith in His Disciples (16:9-14)
 - k. The Great Commission and Jesus' Ascension (16:15-20)

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Mark 1:1-45 Diagram

THAT IS WHY I HAVE COME



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JESUS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD				
Mark 1:1 - "The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God..."				
1:1 1:15	1:16 8:30	8:31 10:52	11:1 13:37	14:1 16:20
The Beginning of the Good News about Jesus the Messiah	Jesus is the Messiah	Jesus' Way of Becoming the Messiah and Discipleship	Jesus' Lordship	Jesus' Death and Resurrection
<p>- Declaration: <u>Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God (1:1)</u></p> <p>"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (1:11)</p>	<p>- Peter's Confession of Faith: <u>"You are the Messiah" (8:29)</u></p>	<p><u>"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" (9:7)</u></p> <p>- Jesus predicts his suffering, death and resurrection (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34)</p>	<p>- "The Lord needs it" (11:3)</p> <p>- "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (11:9)</p> <p>- Jesus is the Cornerstone (12:10)</p> <p>- Jesus is the Lord of David (12:36)</p> <p>- Jesus will come again with great power and glory (13:26)</p>	<p><u>Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One (14:61-62)</u></p> <p>Centurion's confession of faith: <u>"Surely this man was the Son of God!" (15:39)</u></p>
<p>Jesus' authority as the Messiah, the Son of God was revealed in his preaching (1:22), driving out demons (1:27), healing (1:31, 34, 42), forgiving sins (2:10), calling his disciples (1:17, 20; 2:14; 3:13-15), control of nature (4:39, 41), raising the dead (5:41-42), cursing a fig tree and clearing the temple courts (11:14-15), conquering the power of death through his resurrection (16:6), and the Risen Jesus commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation (16:15).</p>				

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JESUS THE SERVANT			
Mark 10:45 - <i>“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.”</i>			
1:1 1:13	1:14 10:52	11:1 15:47	16:1 16:20
Preparation	Jesus came to serve	Jesus gave his life	Jesus has risen!
Jesus as servant		11:1 13:37 Jesus as Lord	14:1 15:47 Jesus as sacrifice Jesus as the Living One
1:1 9:50		10:1 10:52	11:1 16:20
Galilean Ministry - Gerasenes (5:1), Tyre, Sidon (7:24, 31), Decapolis (7:31)		Judean Ministry	Jerusalem Ministry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jesus served many harassed and helpless people by teaching them the words of God (1:21, 38-39; 2:2, 13; 4:1, 2, 33; 6:2, 6, 34; 10:1; 12:35, 38) - Jesus served many sick and tormented people by healing them and driving out demons (1:25-26, 31-34, 39, 40-42; 2:5; 3:5, 10; 5:1-15, 21-42; 6:5; 55-56; 7:24-37; 8:22-25; 9:25-27; 10:46-52) - Jesus served hungry people by feeding them (6:30-44; 8:1-9) - Jesus served his disciples by being with them and bearing all their weaknesses, raising them to preach the word and serve the needy as he had done (1:16-20; 3:13-15; 6:7-12, 50; 8:14-21; 10:35-45; 11:22-25; 13:1-36; 14:12-31; 16:14-20) 			