

# *Mount Pisgah A.M.E Church*

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**Bible Study, Wednesday, April 15, 2015**

**Survey of the Bible**

**Lesson 43: The Gospel According to Mark**

## **The Name "Mark"**

Mark is probably the surname of the writer. His full name is John Mark. The name shows the impact of culture on the people of Jewish decent, because John is a name that is of Hebrew origin, and Mark is a name that is of Latin (Roman) origin. It is possible that John Mark was of mixed background (Hebrew and Roman). The name John comes from the Hebrew word *Yochanan*, which means Yahweh (God) is gracious; the name Mark comes from the Latin name *Marcus* which means hammer (or tool). The name is descriptively accurate, as Mark's gospel depicts Jesus as an instrument in the hand of a gracious God.

## **The Times of Mark**

As mentioned in the lesson on the gospel according to Matthew, Mark was probably the first gospel written, and a source document used in the compilation of Matthew and Luke. Mark would have been written prior to the eventual destruction of the Jerusalem temple (70AD), and also prior to the estimated date of Peter's death (64 AD). Most scholars suspect that it would have been written between 55 AD and 65 AD.

Mark was apparently directed to a Roman audience and early tradition indicates that it originated in Rome. This may be why Mark omitted items that would not have been relevant to Gentiles (particularly Romans) such as Jesus' Jewish genealogy, statements related to the fulfillment of prophecy, references to the law, and certain Jewish customs that are found in the other gospels.

## **Author**

The author of this gospel is thought by most traditional scholars to be *John Mark*. John Mark was a special assistant to Peter. According to Acts 12:12, his mother Mary had a large house that was used as a meeting place for believers in Jerusalem that Peter frequented, and it is suspected that Peter led him to Christ (in 1 Peter 5:13, Peter refers to "Mark" as his son in the gospel). It has also been suggested that Mark was referring to himself in his account of "a certain young man" in Gethsemane (Mark 14:51,52). In its urgency and sense of immediacy the book is similar in character to Peter's impetuous personality.

John Mark was an early assistant to Barnabas (perhaps his cousin (Colossians 4:10)) and Paul on their travels and first missionary journey. However, his sudden departure for Jerusalem in the middle of the journey eventually caused a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas concerning his John Mark's further involvement. This caused Paul and Barnabas to part ways, with Silas accompanying Paul to Asia Minor and John Mark accompanying Barnabas to Cyprus. Eventually, it seems that there was reconciliation with Mark since Mark apparently visited Paul during his Roman imprisonment, and at the end of his life Paul refers to Mark as being "helpful to me in ministry."

## **Overview**

Mark is the shortest and simplest of the four gospels, and gives a crisp and fast-moving look at the life of Christ. With few comments, Mark lets the narrative speak for itself and tells the story of the Servant who lives to minister through preaching, healing, teaching and ultimately, sacrificing his life. Mark

traces the steady building of hostility and opposition to Jesus as He moves toward the fulfillment of his earthly mission. The gospel moves quickly through his life and ministry, but slows down and gives painstaking detail of the last eight days of Jesus' life, climaxing in his resurrection. The Lord is portrayed in this book in two parts: to serve (chapters 1-10) and to sacrifice (chapters 11-16).

Mark passes over the birth and early years of Jesus' life and begins with the events that immediately precede the beginning of his public ministry - His baptism by John and His temptation by Satan. The first four chapters emphasize the words of the Servant while chapters 5-7 emphasize his work. Even so, in both sections there is a frequent alternation between His messages and miracles in order to reveal His authority, person and power. Though He has come to serve others, His authority prevails.

Mark allots an over abundant space to the last weeks of Jesus' life and ministry. It's almost as if he is rushing to get there. During the last seven days in Jerusalem, hostility from the chief priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees reaches a crisis point as Jesus publicly opposes them in the temple. After his last supper with the disciples, Jesus offers no resistance to his arrest, abuse, and crucifixion. His willingness to bear countless human sin is the indicator of his being a servant, an instrument of redemption.

## Outline

- I. The Appearance of God's Servant (1:1-1:45)**
  - A. Preparing the Way (1:1-1:8)
  - B. The Baptism of The Servant (1:9-1:11)
  - C. The Testing of The Servant (1:12-1:13)
  - D. The Mission of the Servant (1:14-2:12)
    1. Described (1:14-1:15)
    2. Staffed (1:16-1:20)
    3. Exemplified (1:21-1:45)
  
- II. The Opposition to God's Servant (2:1-9:1)**
  - A. Initial Opposition (2:1-3:35)
    1. Conflicts Over Authority (2:1-3:6)
    2. Jesus' Work Speaks For Him (3:7-3:12)
    3. Jesus Selects the Twelve Apostles (3:13-3:19)
    4. Misunderstood Authority and Mission (3:20-3:35)
  - B. Countercultural Teachings (4:1-4:34)
  - C. Miracles of Power (4:35-5:43)
  - D. Increasing Power and Opposition (6:1-9:1)
    1. Rejection at Nazareth (6:1-6:6)
    2. Power Modeled but Misunderstood (6:7-6:31)
    3. 5000 Fed (6:32-6:44)
    4. Walks on Water (6:45-6:52)
    5. Healing of Crowds (6:53-6:56)
    6. The Pharisees and Defilement (7:1-7:23)
    7. Faith of Syrophenician Woman (7:24-7:30)
    8. Healing of Deaf and Mute Man (7:31-7:37)
    9. 4000 Fed (8:1-8:13)
    10. Understood/Misunderstood Mission (8:14-9:1)

### **III. Instructions By and Examples of The Servant (9:2-10:52)**

- A. Revelation of The Servant ((9:2-9:13)
- B. Demon Possessed Son Is Delivered (9:14-9:29)
- C. Jesus' Mission Revealed (9:30-9:32)
- D. Preparation of The Disciples (9:33-10:45)
- E. Blind Bartimaeus Is Healed (10:46-10:52)

### **IV. Rejection of The Servant - (11:1-13:37)**

- A. Formal Presentation of The Servant (11:1-19)
- B. Instruction on Prayer (11:20-11:26)
- C. Opposition by the Leaders (11:27-12:44)
- D. Signs of What Is To Come (13:1-13:37)

### **V. The Passion of The Servant (14:1-15:47)**

- A. Leaders Plot to Kill Jesus (14:1-14:2)
- B. Mary Anoints Jesus (14:3-14:9)
- C. Judas Plans to Betray Jesus (14:10-14:11)
- D. The Lords Supper (14:12-14:26)
- E. Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (14:27-14:31)
- F. Jesus Prays at Gethsemane (14:32-14:42)
- G. Judas' Betrayal (14:43-14:52)
- H. Jesus' Trial (14:53-15:15)
- I. Crucifixion, Death and Burial (15:16-15:47)

### **VI. The Servant Rises (16:1-16:20)**

- A. The Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-16:8)
- B. The Appearance of Jesus (16:9-16:18)
- C. The Ascension of Jesus (16:19-16:20)

### **Some Keys to understanding Mark**

- In Mark, Jesus is presented as an active, compassionate, and obedient Servant who constantly ministers to the physical and spiritual needs of others, and sacrifices Himself for their good. Because this is the story of a Servant, Mark omits Jesus' ancestry and birth and moves right into His busy public ministry.
- Like the other gospels, Mark is not a biography but a topical narrative. Mark places Jesus' teachings over against his works to show how they validate each other. Miracles demonstrate Jesus' power but also his compassion.
- Mark's use of the words "immediately" (KJV) or "at once" (NIV) (Gk.: *euthus*) are characteristic of his "compact" message that Jesus is constantly moving toward an important goal. He uses the term 42 times, more than in the rest of the entire New Testament.
- Jesus' mission as a servant is hidden to most, who misperceive his mission to simply be an agitator.
- Although the disciples are loyal, Marks gospel depicts them for the most part as misunderstanding his mission and often too dull to really "get it" as it relates to his teaching. He continually has to use object lessons to paint the picture of what he is trying to do.
- Marks intent is to show Gentile (perhaps Roman) readers how the Son of God - rejected by His own people - achieved ultimate victory through apparent defeat.
- The notion of "authority" is emphasized repeatedly in Mark. The Roman audience that Mark would have been writing for understood this concept. The new learning for them is that authority comes from servant hood, not from the assertion of power

### **Some Lessons From Mark's Gospel**

- Mark's concise messages shows the urgency of the Christian mission of service and sacrifice. At times we become so engrossed in our definitions of success, that we lose sight of the power of these two ends that Jesus' ministry emphasized and prioritized.
- Mark's emphasis on "immediacy" reminds us that God does expect God's will to be done with a sense of urgency. Often we do the things that God wants done on OUR time schedule, "when time permits." But incomplete obedience, and delayed obedience is not really true obedience - timing is important. When God commands, that's when we should respond...immediately.
- Because other things in our lives tend to distract us, God often has to not only TELL us but SHOW us principles of the kingdom. Sometimes we think we are "quick studys" but God often has to slow us down, pull us aside, and repeatedly show us HOW The Word works in our live before we "get it."
- Mark shows us the importance of prayer and spiritual preparation for the work that we have been given to do. Even in its brevity, it did not neglect the importance of Jesus' "solitary time," and the power that is made available as a person makes that a priority.
- That fact that "one's own" misunderstands what one is called to be about is no reason not to persist in "pressing toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus."
- Signs and wonders will always accompany the preaching of the true and living Word of God.
- Jesus has passed "the power of service and sacrifice" on to us in order to compassionately impact the world for Christ. There is no greater power on earth to change lives.