

Mark

Summary

The Gospel of Mark is one of four books in the Bible that records the life of Jesus while He walked on the earth. It is believed that this Gospel was written for a Roman, or at least for a Gentile (non-Jewish), audience because the author makes an effort to explain Jewish customs and traditions. While the Gospels of Matthew and Luke start with the birth of Jesus, the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John focus on Jesus as an adult. The Gospel of Mark describes the life, work, and teachings of Jesus in a concise manner. Yet, the author records many of the same miracles performed, parables told, and places visited as the writers of the other Gospels. The Gospel of Mark concludes with Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven.

Author

Most scholars agree that the Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, an associate of Peter. John Mark was not one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus but he is mentioned several times in the New Testament in connection with Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. It is believed that much of what John Mark wrote came from listening to Peter recount the time he spent with Jesus.

Date

The Gospel of Mark was written either in the A.D. 50s to the early 60s or possibly closer to A.D. 70, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem. The earlier date supports the notion that Matthew and Luke used John Mark's Gospel as a source for their Gospels.

Primary Characters

God (Mark 1-16)

Jesus (Mark 1-16)

John the Baptist (Mark 1, 6)

The Twelve Apostles Simon (later called Peter), James (son of Zebedee), John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Andrew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon (the Zealot), and Judas Iscariot (Mark 3–16)

Pilate (Mark 15)

Historical Moments

Jesus Begins His Ministry (Mark 1)

Jesus Calls His Disciples (Mark 1-3)

Jesus Travels and Ministers Throughout the Region of Galilee (Mark 1-9)

Jesus Ministers in Judea and Perea (Mark 10)

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and Cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11)

Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples (Mark 14)

Jesus' Arrest and Trial (Mark 14–15)

Jesus' Crucifixion and Death (Mark 15)

Jesus Is Resurrected (Mark 16)

Major Theological Themes

The Necessity of the Cross - The Gospel of Mark teaches that Jesus came from God but was rejected by those to whom He was sent. Jesus was tried and convicted even though He was without sin. His crucifixion and resurrection was the price that had to be paid for our salvation and it could not have been achieved by other means.

The Humanity of Jesus - John Mark records that Jesus experienced the same emotions that we feel including compassion, temptation, anger, frustration, and hunger. If Jesus Christ was to be a perfect substitute, He had to experience full humanity. Not only was His life crucial for salvation, but it was also a way of tangibly showing humanity what God is like.

The Deity of Jesus - The Gospel of Mark begins by identifying Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of God but is also called that by men and evil spirits alike throughout the Gospel. Although more explicit in the Gospel of John, all the Gospels point towards the divinity of Christ.

The Call to Discipleship - Jesus calls men and women to follow Him but warns that it will not be easy. We will have to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and even suffer for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.

Lessons Learned from Mark

Jesus Was Fully Divine and Fully Human - Jesus was the Son of God. He came from the Father, lived among us, healed the sick, blind, and lame, raised people from the dead, and cast out demons. But He was also human, experiencing joy and sorrow, pleasure, and pain. And because He lived His life without sin, He became the atoning sacrifice for us. His crucifixion and resurrection made a way for us to have eternal life with God.

Following Jesus Is Not Without Cost - Jesus experienced persecution and ridicule while on this earth. He told his disciples, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)*. In other words, we must be willing to suffer and make sacrifices for God. Those sacrifices, however, will pale in comparison to the eternal reward that awaits those who have entrusted their lives to God through Jesus Christ.