

Studies in Mark

Introduction:

Authorship: Among the evidence which points to John Mark as the author is (1) the uniformity in the testimony of writers; (2) absence of doubt among both ancient and modern scholars; (3) if the early church had attempted to pass off this document as inspired they would have chosen someone of greater prominence; (4) see additional remarks by McGarvey, pages 7-8, Commentary on Matthew and Mark. As to the qualifications of the writer: (1) Mark was not an apostle; nor is there any evidence that he was at any time a personal attendant of Jesus; (2) Not an eye witness, but rather much like Luke - a historian; (3) So far as Mark's inspiration, and thus place him in the canon, consider the following taken from McGarvey (C48):

"John Mark was the son of a woman named Mary, evidently a prominent woman in Jerusalem during the death of James and imprisonment of Peter. Study Acts 12:12-17. When Peter was released he went to the house of John Mark, indication that it was a popular place of resort for the Christians in that area. Mary was also a cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). Barnabas, at an early point in the history of the church, became one of the most noted men in the Jerusalem church. It would appear that during the time of the early church, John Mark and his family were intimately acquainted with the apostles, even having them in their home where their conversations about Jesus would have been heard quite frequently. One must also consider the fact that John Mark spent some time with Paul and Barnabas, laboring as their 'minister' during those missionary journies in Acts. During these associations he must have heard the inspired preachers telling the story of Jesus on many an occasion. Surely, of all men who DID NOT know Jesus personally, here was a man qualified to write the story of Jesus. Why would not God choose this man to record the life of Jesus? Consider also the fact that, through the close association with Paul, it is altogether possible and probable, that John Mark could have received the spiritual gifts through the laying-on of the apostle's hands. It was so with Philip, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Silas, Judas, and Timothy (Acts 8:6; 13:1; 15:32; 2 Tim. 1:6). To assume that Mark, a companion and fellow laborer of two apostles, was somehow overlooked in the distribution of these gifts seems unwarranted. Mark was especially fitted for these labors, chosen by Paul" (McGarvey, Commentary on Matthew and Mark, introduction).

As to the man: John (Hebrew name) Mark (Roman name) is mentioned in the New Testament ten times: Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37, 39; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; 1 Peter 5:13. From these references we know that Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). We also know that Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:5), but returned to Jerusalem before the completion of the work. Paul considered this a defection and refused to allow Mark to accompany him on the next journey (Acts 15:36-41). Mark recovered from this setback and was later a coworker with Paul (Col. 4:10; Philem. 24), and was in fact considered "useful" to Paul (2 Tim. 4:11). Biblical evidence, as well as information from early church fathers, demonstrates a close connection between Peter and Mark. In 1 Peter 5:13, Peter calls Mark "my son." This may refer to Mark being Peter's "spiritual son in the faith" if Peter brought Mark to faith in Christ. Or it may refer to the close, intimate relationship between the two men. In any case, there was a tight bond between Peter and Mark. Church fathers refer to Mark as "Peter's interpreter," and it is probable that Peter's preaching and eyewitness testimony were the primary sources for Mark's Gospel. It is interesting that these two men shared a common experience of failure and restoration. Believers today can be

encouraged that through Christ we can find forgiveness and restoration to usefulness. [taken from Believer's Study Bible, Quick Verse notes]

PLACE AND DATE OF COMPOSITION: Rome, c. A.D. 65-68: Several writings of church fathers (Anti-Marcionite Prologue, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria) affirm that Mark's Gospel was written in Rome. The exact date of composition is not clear. Some early church sources (Anti-Marcionite Prologue, Irenaeus) state that the Gospel of Mark was written after Peter's death (A.D. 67-68) while others (Clement of Alexandria, Origen) state that Mark wrote while Peter was still alive. A date prior to A.D. 70 is probable since Mark makes no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

The "**synoptic problem**" is dealt with in my commentary on Matthew

The Book Itself: "The book is characterized by brevity, yet it is very vivid, in its pictorial descriptions. Notice the looks of the Lord (Mark 3:5, 34; 10:23; 11:11). His gestures (10:16), His emotions (6:34, 7:34, 8:12, 10:14, 21). he also describes those people who interacted with the Lord (3:6; 11:11, 21; 13:3; 14:65, 68; 15:21, et al.). Whereas the other records omit numbers of some persons, or animals, or things, Mark often mentions them and also gives times in detail. Notice the emphasis upon His interaction with humanity. Does this not also show an independence in authorship?" (pages 25-26, *Spiritual Sword Lectures on Mark*, Curtis Cates). Mark alone tells of the "green grass" when the 5,000 were fed. He tells of Christ in the wilderness "with the wild beasts" (Mark 1:13). Such details set Mark's account apart from the others.

RECIPIENTS: Roman Christians: Evidence from the book verifies that it was written for a Roman audience. Mark explains Jewish customs (7:2-4; 15:42); translates Aramaic words and phrases into Greek (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22); and uses Latin terms rather than Greek equivalents (5:9; 12:15, 42; 15:16, 39). "The emphasis to the Romans is that Christ is the Son of God, rather than to the Jews, the '*Son of David, son of Abraham*' (Matt. 1:1). And, he does not appeal to the Old Testament, except in the case of Isaiah's prophecy about John the Baptist, nor to the doctrines of Judaism as does Matthew" (Cates, page 27). Mark also emphasizes Christ as a servant, and servants do not publicize their genealogies. The Romans called for action, not lineage. They were more interested in what a man could or had accomplished.

Curtis Cates provides the following homiletic outline on the servant-hood of Christ:

1. Christ was a servant;
2. Christ was a humble servant;
3. Christ was a human servant;
4. Christ was an active servant;
5. Christ was a hard working servant;
6. Christ was a compassionate loving servant;
7. Christ was a suffering servant - God's suffering servant;
8. Christ was the powerful, authoritative servant.

PURPOSE: Encouragement for Persecuted Believers: Mark's audience of Roman Christians living A.D. 67-68 found themselves facing bitter persecution. The Roman emperor Nero had blamed the Christians for starting the fire which burned the city of Rome in A.D. 64. Christians were arrested, tortured, and killed. Mark wrote to encourage those Christians who were facing these difficult circumstances. His book portrays Jesus as the "Suffering Servant" (cf. Isa. 53) who was Himself falsely accused of wrongdoing, and who suffered and gave His life for them. These Roman Christians (as well as believers today) needed to recognize that being a disciple of

Jesus Christ is costly, but that they were facing no more than their Master had already faced for them. Curtis Cates had this note: "The book is compact, emphasizing less the teaching of Jesus than the *action* of Jesus. Though Mark contains far fewer parables than Matthew and Luke and fewer discourses, the book contains many of Christ's miracles, often in greater detail than in Matthew and Luke" (Spiritual Sword Lectures on Mark, page 25). Hence the title of this commentary, "The Miracles Of Jesus"

Skeleton Outline

- I. Preoperatory Remarks, 1:1-13
- II. The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee, 1:14 - 9:50;
- III. The Judean Ministry, 10:1 - 13:37;
- IV. Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, 14:1 - 16:20

Detailed Outline

- I. Preoperatory Remarks, 1:1-13
 - A. Introductory statement, 1:1;
 - B. Ministry of John described, 1:2-8;
 - C. The Baptism of Jesus, 1:9-11;
 - D. The Temptation of Jesus, 1:12-13;
- II. The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee, 1:14 - 9:50;
 - A. Jesus begins His preaching, 1:14-15;
 - B. Call of the four fishermen, 1:16-20;
 - C. A series of miracles, 1:21-45;
 - 1. A demon cast out, 21-28;
 - 2. Cure at Simon's house, 29-34;
 - 3. Prayer and departure, 35-39;
 - 4. A leper cleansed, 40-45;
 - D. Discussions with the Scribes and Pharisees, 2:1 - 3:6;
 - 1. About the power to forgive sins, 2:1-12;
 - 2. About eating with publicans and sinners, 2:13-17;
 - 3. About fasting, 2:18-22;
 - 4. About plucking grain on the Sabbath, 2:23-28;
 - 5. About healing on the Sabbath, 3:1-6;
 - E. The Great Multitude, 3:7-12;
 - F. Selection of the Twelve, 3:13-19;
 - G. Further discussions, 3:20-35;
 - H. A series of parables, 4:1-34;
 - I. A series of miracles, 4:35 - 5:43;
 - 1. Stilling of the tempest, 4:35-41;
 - 2. A legion of demons cast out, 5:1-20;
 - 3. The Ruler's Daughter and the bloody issue, 5:21-43;
 - J. Opinions of men and more miracles, 6:1 - 7:23;
 - 1. Opinion of the Nazarenes, 6:1-6;
 - 2. First mission of the twelve, 6:7-13;
 - 3. Opinions of Herod and Others, 6:14-29;
 - 4. Return of the Apostles, and Rush of the People, 6:30-34;
 - 5. Feeding of the Five Thousand, 6:35-44;
 - 6. Walking on the water, 6:45-62;

- 7. Cures in Gennesaret, 6:53-56;
 - 8. Opposition of Pharisees and Scribes, 7:1-13;
 - 9. Christ's law of Uncleaness, 7:14-23;
 - K. Tour to Tyre and Sidon, 7:24 - 8:12;
 - 1. Cure of the Gentile Woman's Daughter, 7:24-30;
 - 2. A Deaf Stammerer Healed, 7:31-37;
 - 3. Feeding of the Four Thousand, 8:1-9;
 - 4. In Dalmanutha, 8:10-12;
 - L. Tour to Caesarea Philippi, 8:13 - 9:50;
 - 1. The leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod, 8:13-21;
 - 2. Cure of a blind man at Bethsaida, 8:22-26;
 - 3. Conversation near Caesarea Philippi, 8:27-30;
 - 4. First prediction of his death, 8:31-33;
 - 5. Necessity for self-sacrifice, 8:34 - 9:1;
 - 6. The transfiguration, 9:2-13;
 - 7. An obstinate Demon cast out, 9:14-29;
 - 8. Return through Galilee, and second prediction of death, 9:30-32;
 - 9. Dispute about who shall be greatest, 9:33-37;
 - 10. John's jealousy, and remarks about offenses, 9:38-50;
- III. The Judean Ministry, 10:1 - 13:37;
- A. Events in Perea, 10:1-52;
 - 1. Question about divorce, 10:1-12;
 - 2. Blessing little children, 10:13-16;
 - 3. The rich moralist, 10:17-22;
 - 4. The danger of riches, 10:23-27;
 - 5. Reward of self denial, 10:28-31;
 - 6. Dread of Jerusalem, and third prediction of death, 10:32-34;
 - 7. Ambition of James and John, 10:35-45;
 - 8. Healing of blind Bartimeus, 10:46-52;
 - B. Incidents and discussions in Jerusalem, 11:1 - 12:44;
 - 1. Public entry into Jerusalem, 11:1-11;
 - 2. The barren fig tree cursed, 11:12-14;
 - 3. The temple cleared, 11:15-19;
 - 4. The fig tree found withered, 11:20-26;
 - 5. His authority demanded, 11:27-33;
 - 6. Parable of the wicked husbandman, 12:1-12;
 - 7. Question about tribute to Caesar, 12:13-17;
 - 8. Question about the resurrection 12:18-27;
 - 9. The Great Commandment, 12:28-34;
 - 10. The Lordship of the Christ, 12:35-37;
 - 11. Ostentation and avarice of the scribes, 12:38-40;
 - 12. The widow's mite, 12:41-44;
 - C. The Destruction Of The Temple Foretold, 13:1-37
 - 1. Occasion of the prediction, 13:1-4;
 - 2. False Christs, wars, earthquakes, and famines, 13:5-8;
 - 3. Persecution of the disciples, 13:9-13;
 - 4. The last sign, and the time for flight, 13:14-20;
 - 5. Other warnings against false Christs, 13:21-23;
 - 6. Coming of the Son of Man, 13:24-27;
 - 7. Parable of the fig tree, 13:28-31;

8. Uncertainty of the day, 13:32-37;

IV. Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, 14:1 - 16:20

A. Preparations for the death of Jesus, 14:1-52;

1. Council of the Chief Priests and Scribes, 14:1-2;
2. The anointing at Bethany, 14:3-9;
3. The agreement with Judas, 14:10-11;
4. The Passover prepared, 14:12-16;
5. The betrayal predicted, 14:17-21;
6. The Lord's Supper instituted, 14:22-25;
7. Desertion and denial foretold, 14:26-31;
8. The agony in Gethsemane, 14:32-42;
9. The arrest, 14:43-52;

B. The trial and sentence of Jesus, 14:53 - 15:15;

1. Trial by the Sanhedrim, 14:53-65;
2. Peter's denial, 14:66-72;
3. Jesus accused before Pilate, 15:1-5;
4. Barabbas preferred, and Jesus rejected, 15:6-15;

C. The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus, 15:16-16:20;

1. Jesus mocked and led away by the soldiers, 15:16-21;
2. The crucifixion, 15:22-28;
3. Reviling by the people, 15:29-32;
4. The darkness, and the end, 15:33-41;
5. His burial, 15:42-47;
6. The visit of the women to the sepulcher, 16:1-8;
7. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, 16:9-11;
8. Jesus appears to the two in the country, 16:12-13;
9. Jesus appears to the Eleven and gives the commission, 16:14-18;
10. The ascension, 16:19-20;