



## Introduction to the Four Gospels (Class 2 - MARK)

### General facts

Probably composed between 65 and 70 AD in Rome.

No author is mentioned in the text, but church tradition holds the author is John Mark. (Acts 12:25, 15:36-40; II Tim. 4:11; I Peter 5:13)

Likely the first gospel written.

It is also the shortest gospel (11,304 Greek words).

### Style

Mark moves quickly from story to story and is often called the action Gospel!

Everything happens "Immediately"!

Mark also switches tenses often and uses HUGE run-on sentences.

Originally meant to be listened to, and even memorized.

### Themes

*Jesus as Teacher (Mark 14:49)*

There are at least 13 references to Jesus teaching and He is called "teacher" 12 times.

BUT... there are very few teaching discourses recorded. Instead, Mark wants to show us what Jesus taught with his actions.

Jesus teaches the word of God and shows us the power of God.

*Jesus as the Suffering Servant (Mark 10:45)*

This is first declared to us at Jesus' baptism (1:11) by quoting from Isaiah 42:1, which is the first of five servant "songs" in Isaiah.

There are more miracles than teaching in Mark. 19 miracles in 16 chapters.

Most miracles involve feeding the poor and healing the sick.

Jesus constantly teaches and shows the disciples the cost of discipleship.

Jesus predicts his death three times. Jesus shows us He is incredibly powerful, yet He submits to serving and suffering.

*Following Jesus (Mark 8:34)*

Mark emphasizes it is not enough to just believe in Jesus. Believers **MUST** follow the way of Jesus.

"Follow" is mentioned 17 times and "the way/road" is mentioned 15 times.

## **General Outline**

I. Who is Jesus? (1:1 – 8:26)

II. Peter's confession (8:27-30)

III. What does it mean to be a disciple? (8:31 – 15:47)

IV. The Resurrection (16:1-8)

V. The "Longer Ending" of Mark (16:9-20)

## **Walk through Mark**

*Jesus is the "Son of God"*

Inclusio (1:1 and 15:39)

The only people in the narrative who truly know and understand Jesus' identity are outsiders: demons (3:11, 5:7) and gentiles (15:39).

*Jesus' baptism (1:9-11)*

Voice from heaven quotes portions of Psalm 2:7 (enthronement of the anointed King) and Isaiah 42:1 (1<sup>st</sup> servant song).

In v. 10, the heavens split apart. Compare with Isaiah 64:1

*Capernaum*

Central hub for Jesus' Galilean ministry.

Casts out an unclean spirit in the synagogue (1:21-28). How did they not know there was a demon-possessed man among them?!

Healings at Simon and Andrew's house (1:29-34). Why did the people wait until evening to bring the sick and demon-possessed to Jesus? Because it was the Sabbath. Jesus corrects this thinking in 3:1-6.

There is no opposition here to Jesus' preaching and healings. Instead, He grows in popularity.

### *Controversies and Opposition*

Mark groups together five controversies with Jewish authorities (2:1 – 3:6):

1. Healing a paralyzed man (2:1-12)
2. Eating with sinners (2:13-17)
3. Not fasting (2:18-22)
4. Working on the Sabbath (2:23-28)
5. Healing on the Sabbath (3:1-6)

Now we see opposition to Jesus' work.

Appointing of the Twelve (3:13-19). Their purpose was to be with him, preach, and have authority to cast out demons. Followers of Jesus are to do what Jesus does.

Sandwich:

A: Jesus' family comes to restrain him

B: "A house divided against itself cannot stand"

A': Jesus' family arrives

Connection: His "true family" are those that follow Him.

### *Parables & Miracles*

Mark groups together four parables and four miracles in Chapters 4 & 5.

Four parables are:

1. Parable of the sower
2. Parable of the lamp
3. Parable of the growing seed
4. Parable of the mustard seed

THEME: The Word of God (symbolic of Jesus' teaching ministry)

Four miracles are:

1. Quieting of the storm
2. Healing of the Gerasene demoniac

3. Healing of the bleeding woman
4. Healing of Jairus' daughter

THEME: The power of God

### *Sending out the Twelve*

Sandwich:

A: Sending out the Twelve (6:7-13)

B: Death of John the Baptist (6:14-29)

A': Return of the Twelve (6:30-31)

Connection: The cost of being a disciple

### *Confusion of the Disciples*

Mark portrays the disciples as remarkably stupid. They are the insiders; they should understand Jesus the most, but they don't.

For example, in 7:14-23 Jesus explains that it is not certain foods or unwashed hands that make a person unclean, but the sin that is our hearts. Jesus speaks very clearly, but the disciples don't understand; they think he's telling a parable.

The Syrophenician woman understands Jesus' parable, responds correctly, and Jesus heals her daughter (7:24-30)

Sailing across the Sea of Galilee Jesus tells the disciples to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (8:14-21). Jesus now speaks metaphorically and the disciples take him literally; they think they're in trouble because they forgot to bring bread.

He accuses them of being deaf and blind.

### *The Disciples (Kinda) Understand who Jesus is*

A blind man is brought to Jesus and is healed in two stages (8:22-26)

Stage 1 - He is healed and can see, but not completely (v. 24)

Stage 2 - Jesus places his hands on him again and then sees everything clearly (v. 25)

Jesus asks the Twelve two questions in 8:27-30:

1. "Who do people say that I am?" (a question for outsiders)
2. "Who do you say that I am?" (a question for insiders).

Peter answers, "You are the Christ."

Sandwich:

A: Though you have eyes, don't you see? (8:14-21)

B: Two-stage healing of a blind man (8:22-26)

A': Peter sees who Jesus is (8:27-30)

Connection: "Seeing" = understanding who Jesus really is.

The two-stage healing of the blind man in 8:22-26 symbolizes how the disciples are learning how to "see" Jesus. BUT...what stage are they?

Peter "sees" who Jesus is and confesses he is the Christ. Then Jesus begins to teach what that will entail. Peter emphatically tells Jesus he is wrong and Jesus strongly reprimands Peter for trying to dictate the direction of Jesus' life. This is not following! It seems the disciples are only in Stage 1 of their "healing".

### *Following Jesus (8:34-38)*

Immediately after Peter's confession and correction, Jesus begins to teach the crowd and his disciples what it means to be a one of his followers.

Jesus starts out strongly saying that following him will cost everything. (8:34-38)

### *The Transfiguration (9:2-13)*

Jesus leads three disciples up the mountain and he is transfigured. They are able to see him in his full glory, and they also see Moses (The Law) and Elijah (The Prophets).

Peter still doesn't fully understand who Jesus is because he says, "Let us make three shelters – one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. His mistake is that he is treating them all as equals."

The voice from cloud repeats the first part of what was said at Jesus' baptism ("This is my son"), but then adds, "Listen to him!", which is a reference to Deuteronomy 18:15. This OT passage describes God's promise of a prophet like Moses who the Israelites should listen to because he will speak the words of God.

As they leave, Jesus, once again, predicts that he will rise from the dead and the disciples, once again, don't understand what he means (v. 10).

### *Teaching What a Follower is Like*

Jesus corrects three mistakes the disciples make in their thinking:

1. "I am the greatest!" (9:33-37)
  - a. Actually, servicing and sacrifice are the hallmarks of greatness.
2. "We are the only ones!" (9:38-41)
  - a. Actually, we should be open to anyone who follows Jesus.
3. "Sin doesn't matter" (9:42-50)
  - a. Actually, sin is VERY serious!

Jesus teaches about three areas followers must be different

1. Attitude toward marriage (10:1-12)
  - a. Divorce may be permitted, but it is always goes against God's original and best plan for marriage. A follower of Jesus must NEVER marry thoughtlessly, and for the follower of Jesus, marriage is for life.
2. Attitude toward children (10:13-16)
  - a. Followers of Jesus must welcome children and other people society has branded as insignificant.
3. Attitude toward possessions (10:17-27)
  - a. The man thinks he is sure of his good status with God because of his obedience and his stuff.
  - b. For some people, they will see the cost of following Jesus as too high and will walk away.

BUT, there are rewards for following Jesus (10:28-31)

### *James and John -- Blind Bartimaeus (10:35-52)*

James and John want Jesus to do something for them. Jesus says, "What do you want me to do for you?" They want to have a great reward in heaven with no cost to them here on Earth.

Blind Bartimaeus cries out for Jesus to have mercy on him. Jesus says, "What do you want me to do for you?" He wants to "see"! Jesus heals him because of his faith.

And immediately he sees and follows Jesus on the way (10:52).

### *Triumphal Entry*

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, people lay down their cloaks and palm branches on the road. Recall Mark 1:2-3!

### *Cleansing of the Temple and Arguments with Opponents (11:12 - 12:44)*

Jesus enters Jerusalem, which is the city of his enemies. Mark compares the unfruitfulness of the fig tree with the unfruitfulness of the temple.

Religious leaders of all kinds challenge Jesus with different questions and scenarios. The purpose of all these challenges is to gain honor.

### *The Little Apocalypse (13:1-37)*

Jesus begins by predicting the destruction of the temple (which happened in 70 AD). The disciples ask when will this happen and what will be the signs. Verses 5-37 are Jesus' answer to their questions.

He makes two clear prophetic statements:

1. The temple will be destroyed.
2. He will return to this world in glory at the end of history.

The difficult part in interpreting this portion of Mark, is that it's not always clear at any given point which event Jesus is talking about.

Verses 5-13 appear to be clearly about the temple.

Verses 14-23 could be about both.

Verses 24-27 are clearly about Christ's return.

Verses 28-31 seem to be about the temple again.

Verses 32-37 seems to focus on Christ's return, but also relates to the near future. You don't know when it will happen, so stay alert and don't fall asleep!

### *Betrayal/Devotion Sandwich (14:1-11)*

A: Jesus is hated by the Jewish leaders (v. 1-2)

B: A woman shows Jesus love and devotion (v. 3-9)

A': Judas betrays Jesus to the Jewish leaders (v. 10-11)

Connection: True followers show sacrificial love

### *Gethsemane (14:32-42)*

Jesus is scared and wrecked. (v.33)

He tells the disciples to "stay alert!"

Three times Jesus goes off to pray and three times he returns to find them asleep.

### *Trial & Denial (14:53 – 14:72)*

Sandwich:

A: Peter follows Jesus from a distance (v. 53-54)

B: Jesus doesn't defend himself (v.55-65)

A': Peter doesn't defend Jesus (v.66-72)

The Twelve have moved beyond misunderstanding Jesus, to completely abandoning Him. They have ceased to "be with him" (3:14).

### *The Crucifixion and Death (15:21-41)*

Mark doesn't explain the theology of the death of Christ but has the physical world reflect the seriousness of what Jesus' death means.

1. Darkness comes over the land
2. The temple curtain is split

### *The Resurrection (16:1-8)*

A group of women go to Jesus' tomb the morning after the Sabbath is over.

Go tell the disciples and Peter (Mark isn't going to include the story of Jesus restoring Peter so maybe this is how he's showing us Peter is forgiven)

Mark gives NO resurrection appearances!



*The "Longer Ending" (16:9-20)*

In the earliest and best Greek manuscripts, verses 9-20 are missing.

Two theories:

1. The rest of the original ending was lost.
2. The longer ending was added years later to fill out Mark's abrupt and awkward ending.