

The Gospel According to Mark - The Introduction

Today, we begin a New Teaching series on **The Gospel According to Mark**. In the Introduction, we will get to know more about who Mark was, his background, and his tremendous contribution to the New Testament Gospel Narratives.

Mark provides a unique, simple, significant, and vivid account of Yeshua's Ministry. Mark gives an insightful focus into the Ministry of the Messiah and what He did.

We will discuss the purpose and why Mark felt the need to write his Gospel, the means by which he collected his information, when he wrote it, and who his intended audience was.

Who was Mark?

The Bible gives us much information about Mark.

Mark is mentioned by three different names in the Bible.

John, derived from his Hebrew name. Mark, his Greek name. Marcus, his Latin name.

Mark – 3138 Μάρκος Markos {mar'-kos}

Meaning: Mark = "a defense" 1) an evangelist, the author of the Gospel of Mark. Marcus was his Latin surname, his Jewish name was John. He was a cousin of Barnabas and a companion of Paul in some of his missionary journeys

Usage: AV - Mark 5, Marcus 3; 8

Mark is believed to be mentioned in his Gospel, but not by name.

Mk 14:50 And they all forsook him, and fled.

Mk 14:51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him:

Mk 14:52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

Mark's Background

John Mark's mother's name was Mary.

Mark lived in Jerusalem.

John Mark's mother's home was a gathering place for prayers.

Ac 12:11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

Ac 12:12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Ac 12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

Mark was a disciple of Peter.

Mark travelled with Peter and Peter called Mark his son.

1Pe 5:13 The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you*, saluteth you; and *so doth* Marcus my son.

Mark was Barnabas' nephew.

Col 4:10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

Mark travelled with Paul and Barnabas.

Ac 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Phm 1:24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Mark departed from them and returned to Jerusalem.

Ac 13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

Paul and Barnabas disputed over Mark and went their separate ways.

Ac 15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Ac 15:36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.

Ac 15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Ac 15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who **departed** from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

Paul's issue with Mark was that Mark deserted them in Pamphylia.

Departed – 868 ἀφίστημι ahistemi {af-is'-tay-mee}

Meaning: 1) to make stand off, cause to withdraw, to remove 1a) to excite to revolt 2) to stand off, to stand aloof 2a) to go away, to depart from anyone 2b) to desert, withdraw from one 2c) to fall away, become faithless 2d) to shun, flee from 2e) to cease to vex one 2f) to withdraw one's self from, to fall away 2g) to keep one's self from, absent one's self from

Usage: AV - depart 10, draw away 1, fall away 1, refrain 1, withdraw self 1, depart from 1; 15

Ac 15:39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

Ac 15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Paul and Mark appeared to reconciled as Mark is mentioned by Paul in his letters to the Colossians, Timothy, and Philemon.

Col 4:10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

2Ti 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

Phm 1:19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it*: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

Phm 1:20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

Phm 1:21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

Phm 1:22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Phm 1:23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Messiah Yeshua;

Phm 1:24 **Marcus**, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

According to **Foxe's Book of Martyrs** :

Mark was born of Jewish parents of the tribe of Levi. He is supposed to have been converted to the Messianic faith by Peter, whom he served as an amanuensis, (amanuensis – one employed to write from dictation or to copy manuscript) and under whose inspection he wrote his Gospel in the Greek language. Mark was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria, at the great solemnity of Serapis their idol, ending his life under their merciless hands.

Why Mark felt the need to write this Gospel

According to Papias, a 1st Century disciple of John, it is recorded:

PAPIAS of Hierapolis was an early church leader of Hierapolis; chronicler of early Messiahianity. The information we have about Papias (AD 60–130) and his work was given by Eusebius of Caesarea and Irenaeus of Lyons. Irenaeus stated that Papias had heard the Apostle John preach and also knew Polycarp.

Papias claimed that Mark, the Evangelist, who had never heard Messiah, was the interpreter of Peter, and that he carefully gave an account of everything he remembered from the preaching of Peter.

Papias (along with his friend and contemporary, Polycarp) was a disciple and personal acquaintance of the Apostle John because Irenaeus wrote that Papias was “the hearer of John.”

Papias, who quotes an even earlier source as saying:

- (1) Mark was a close associate of Peter, from whom he received the tradition of the things said and done by the Lord;
- (2) this tradition did not come to Mark as a finished, sequential account of the life of our Lord, but as the preaching of Peter--preaching directed to the needs of the early Messiahian communities;
- 3) Mark accurately preserved this material. The conclusion drawn from this tradition is that the Gospel of Mark largely consists of the preaching of Peter arranged and shaped by John Mark.

When was Mark written?

There are variations concerning the date Mark was written. Some sources, believe that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a major source in their writings, and have suggested that Mark may have been composed in the 50s or early 60s.

Other sources believed that the content of the Gospel of Mark and statements made about Mark by some early church fathers suggests that the Book was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Here is a chart from a Bible software by Zondervan called Pradis.

Dating the Synoptic Gospels

MARK	MATTHEW	LUKE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
<p>ASSUMPTION A Matthew and Luke used Mark as a major source</p> <p>View No. 1 Mark written in the 50s or early 60s A.D. (1) Matthew written in late 50s or the 60s (2) Luke written 59–63</p> <p>View No. 2 Mark written 65–70 (1) Matthew written in the 70s or later (2) Luke written in the 70s or later</p>			<p>ASSUMPTION B Matthew and Luke did not use Mark as a source</p> <p>View No. 1 Mark could have been written anytime between 50 and 70</p> <p>View No. 2 Mark written 65–70 (1) Matthew written in the 50s (see Introduction to Matthew: Date and Place of Writing) (2) Luke written 59–63 (see Introduction to Luke: Date and Place of Writing)</p>		

According to (Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria) early church tradition, Mark was written "in the regions of Italy" or, more specifically, in Rome. These same authors closely associate Mark's writing of the Gospel with the Apostle Peter.

According to **Foxe's Book of Martyrs**, Peter was in Rome during the last days of his life and was martyred there. There is Biblical evidence that Mark also was in Rome about the same time and was closely associated with Peter, 1 Peter 5:13, where the word "Babylon" is probably a reference to Rome.

Peter

Among many other saints, the blessed Apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof. Hegesippus saith that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city.

Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Messiah come to meet him, to whom he, worshipping, said, "Lord, whither dost Thou go?" To whom He answered and said, "I am come again to be crucified." By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city.

Jerome saith that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.

^{1Pe 5:13} The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you*, saluteth you; and *so doth* Marcus my son.

Babylon – 897 Βαβυλών Babulon {bab-oo-lone'}

Meaning: Babylon = "confusion" 1) a very large and famous city, the residence of the Babylonian kings, situated on both banks of the Euphrates. Cyrus had formerly captured it, but Darius Hystaspis threw down its gates and walls, and Xerxes destroyed the temple of Belis. At length the city was reduced to almost solitude, the population having been drawn off by the neighbouring Seleucia, built on the Tigris by Seleucus Nicanor. 2) of the territory of Babylonia 3) **allegorically, of Rome as the most corrupt seat of idolatry and the enemy of Messianic faith**

Usage: AV - Babylon 12; 12

Who was Mark's intended audience?

The evidence points to a non-Hebrew audience and potentially to the church at Rome or at least to Gentile readers because he explains Jewish customs which would not have been necessary to do if written to a Jewish audience, translates Aramaic words, and seems to have a special interest in persecution and martyrdom, subjects of special concern to Roman believers.

See:

Mark 7:2-4; 15:42

Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22

Mark 8:34-38; 13:9-13

As we go through Mark's writing, we will discover that Mark appears to focus on

- 1. The Cross.**
- 2. Yeshua's Ministry of *Discipleship*.**
- 3. Yeshua as a *Teacher*.**
- 4. Yeshua's emphasis on people keeping their *miracles a secret*.**
- 5. Yeshua as the *Son of God*.**

Mark wrote more about what Yeshua did than what He said.

Although Mark records far fewer actual teachings of Yeshua than the other Gospel writers, there is emphasis on Yeshua as teacher. The words "teacher," "teach" or "teaching," and "Rabbi" are applied to Yeshua in Mark 39 times.