

The Gospel of Mark

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Synopsis:

Authorship: The second Gospel appearing in the New Testament canon, Mark, is attributed in its authorship to St. Mark, an associate of St. Paul and a disciple of St. Peter. As such Mark is apostolic as the source of his material is the apostle Peter and reflects his preaching and teaching. The Gospel is dated prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Scholars debate whether Mark or Matthew is to be “prioritized” as the first Gospel written. Some argue that Mark is the shortest and most concise Gospel and that the other Gospels borrow Mark as a sketch and fill it out according to their own editorial purpose. Others argue that Matthew was written first and Mark is the “Reader’s Digest” version. We affirm all four Gospels as inspired by the Holy Ghost, apostolic, and, therefore, authoritative and reliable for the church’s preaching, teaching and confessing.

One way in which Mark is unique is that it contains no reference to Jesus’ birth (nativity) as do the other Gospels. Yet Mark’s confession that Jesus is both Son of God and Son of Man emphasizes the salvation brought through Jesus from God to sinners and the fact that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament with its many references, especially in the prophet Ezekiel (the prophet is thus referred to over 90 times). This Gospel also draws heavily upon themes at the root of the Old Testament and the Exodus in the Pentateuch as well as the many prophetic promises throughout Israel’s history, preserved in God’s promises through both God’s patience and His chastening His people.

Content (outline):

- I. Theme or Title (1.1)
- II. Introduction: John, the Forefunner of Jesus (1.2-13)
- III. Galilean Period (1.14-9.50)
 - A. Around the Sea of Galilee (1.14-5.43)
 - B. In Galilee (6.1-9.50); note 8.29, Peter’s Confession.
- IV. Judean Period (10.1-16.8)
 - A. Pre-Passion (10.1-13.37)
 - B. Passion and Resurrection (14.1-16.16)

Title and Introduction (Mark 1.1-13)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

²As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. ³The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁴John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁶And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; ⁷And preached, saying, "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. ⁸I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

⁹And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. ¹⁰And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

¹¹And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

¹²And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. ¹³And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Read Isaiah 40 for context:

Who is God addressing in Is. 40?

Is this captivity reminiscent of Egypt?

What is meant by "making paths straight"?

What is God's purpose and what is He promising to reveal?

What was the effect of John's preaching?

What do John's clothes indicate of his office?

How is his message appropriate to a "forerunner?"

What is the greater promise John points to?

Where does Jesus come from?

Ps. 2: Whom is He declared to be? Into what office is He anointed?

How does this allude to the Exodus? Why is this significant? Whom is Jesus thus associated with (cf. Deut. 18) and what office is brought into His orbit?