

AP 37

Mark / Κατα Μαρκον / According to Mark

The Gospel of Mark is thought by most to be first gospel written (60-70) yet it was the last gospel to have a commentary written about it. It is no longer considered the Rodney Dangerfield of the gospels; it likely the most studied gospel in the last 100 years. Today, most feel that Matthew and Luke relied on Mark, rather than the other way around. But it is written in a rough and unsophisticated style.

Early on this gospel was attributed to John Mark, the interpreter/translator of Peter, when Peter was in Rome.¹ Papias and Irenaeus² both wrote of the Gospel of Mark in the early second century. Mark is known for bailing on the first missionary journey. Paul would not allow him on the second journey, leading to a painful split between Paul and Barnabas. So that we read this gospel written by someone who failed is a testament to second chances, our worst moments don't have to define us.

Mark is almost certainly written to Gentile Christians, most likely in Rome³. Most likely as Nero is starting his persecution. Matthew, Luke, and John are all known for sermons/dialogues/parables. Mark tells the story – only four parables, but 20 some odd miracles. Though in the very first verse of the book he refers to Jesus as the Son of God, he more commonly refers to him as the Son of Man. The suffering servant of Isaiah – Mark 8:31 or 10:45 – the suffering servant fits with persecution context). Both these themes are important to Mark – the authority of Jesus is a major concern for Mark – note the abundance of miracles. But the earthiness of Jesus is obvious also

Clearly the earthiest gospel. It is also fast paced; Mark loves the adverb “immediately”⁴. In the Greek, many of the past tense verbs are written in the present tense.

There is also the ending to consider, in all the oldest manuscripts the 16th chapter ends abruptly with vs 8. Some think he was martyred before he finished. Since it is ironic to end a gospel with the word “afraid”, it seems the church has worked a less abrupt, if less authentic, ending. In most modern Bibles you will see double brackets appearing after verse 8, with a note that cautions the reader about this. I like it that in our Bible we admit the uncertainties.

If you have a short attention span, or suffer from ADD, or value deeds over words, or are experiencing suffering – Mark may be a gospel that speaks loudly to you.

¹ At the end of 1 Peter, Peter refers to Mark as his son. 5:13

² Papias 60-130, alive, though young, when Mark wrote. Irenaeus 130-202

³ He explains Jewish customs, translates Aramaic, and uses Latinisms.

⁴ In the Greek this word “immediately/ευθως comes up 42 times in the Gospel of Mark – In the whole NT it comes up 59 times – 71% of the usages of this word are found in the 16 short chapters of Mark!

- Sunday, Aug 7** Mark 1:1-39 - Beginnings
For Reflection: First Act - Baptism, First words - affirmation, First trip -wilderness, First Disciples - fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James and John, First day of ministry – long and hard. *How do you care for your soul after a hard day of work? Euthus* (often translated immediately) comes up 11 x in this chapter, 9 times in the first 39 verses.
Lagniappe: Psalm 5:1-3
- Monday, Aug 8** Mark 2:1-3:6 – Authority with Jews
For Reflection: *How does Jesus demonstrate his authority throughout this reading? How would you describe the authority Jesus has in your life? Who or what has authority in your life?* Notice conflict surrounds him from the beginning, by 3:6 they are planning to kill him.
Lagniappe: Exodus 20:8-11⁵
- Tuesday, Aug 9** Mark 4:35-5:20 – Authority with Gentiles
For Reflection: 5:7 is one of the strangest confessions of “faith?” in scripture. Who knew... demon(s) have a higher Christology than most believers today - wow. *Who is Jesus in your eyes?* (cf 8:27) Notice, conflict is absent with the Gentiles.
Lagniappe: Exodus 15:4-5 compare with 5:13
- Wednesday, Aug 10** Mark 6:30-56 – Moses Patterns?
For Reflection: *What and who feeds your soul? Vs 45-52:* It makes a big difference when Jesus is back in the boat. *Is Jesus in your boat today?*
Lagniappe: Exodus 16:1-4
- Thursday, Aug 11** Mark 8:1-26 – Moses Patterns?
For Reflection: *Vs 15 - What doesn't feed your soul?* Another confession of faith (29), though the Christology isn't quite as high. Son of the Most High God just sounds a bit more impressive than Messiah. 😊
Lagniappe: Exodus 16:19-20. (Moses is teaching on manna and trust in this passage)

⁵ Chapter 1's first day ends with Jesus seeking rest in prayer 1:35, Chapter 2 ends with teaching on Sabbath.

Friday, Aug 12

Mark 8:27 – 9:10; 30-37; 10:32-34; 41-45 – One w/ Authority Serves & Suffers

For Reflection: *What is Jesus teaching us with vss 34-38? Note: verse 38 is one of those passages that make people think this was written during Nero's awful persecution. After all these displays of power and authority, how would you feel if you were one of the disciples by this roller coaster of teachings and revelation?*

Lagniappe: Isaiah 53:4-6

Saturday, Aug 13

Mark 11:27 - 12:12 & 13:3-13; The Servant/Son/Cornerstone Rejected

For Reflection: The Parable of the Vineyard always leads me to worship and thank God whenever I read or remember it. *What leads you to worship?* All chapter 13 is given color, if you consider how relevant these words would be to Mark's original readers, one's suffering a persecution of the worst sort. This passage is really a call to not be distracted from the mission (13:10). *What distracts you from your mission? How are you enduring?*

Lagniappe: Esther 4:14 (Words of challenge during a different persecution)