

## *Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey*

Bible Survey Lesson 62: The Book of Mark

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MARK**

#### ***Introduction:***

Matthew wrote his Gospel with the purpose of convincing his primarily Jewish audience that Jesus was their long awaited Messiah. Mark, in contrast speaks to the pagan gentiles, primarily the Romans.

For this reason he omits:

1. A genealogy, *they wouldn't care*
2. Most references to the Old Testament, *they wouldn't know them*
3. The "Sermon on the Mount" which refers to the Law, *it's not their law*
4. Condemnation of the Jewish leaders, *they wouldn't understand*

He also tends to explain Aramaic and Jewish words, expressions and customs and often uses Latin words not used in any other Gospel.

Not only that, but the Romans were men of action rather than thought, deeds rather than words. The whole book speaks to that with energy, power, movement, conquest, and action. The word "and" is used incessantly and the word "immediately" occurs more than 40 times. It is centered around what Jesus did, rather than on what He said; miracles rather than parables; the servant acts rather than speaks.

Rome was the culmination of the rule of power in the world. Where as the Greeks had an ideal of culture and the perfection of man in mind and body, the Roman's ideal was wrapped up in developing the perfect state. They will have peace, safety, freedom, prosperity, trade, all by the power of Rome.

But power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, so, when you make the emperor your god you can expect corruption, cruelty, and injustice. What would the perfect ruler be for a nation that rewards physical service, honor and leadership? He would not be a self-indulgent, egocentric, tyrant. He would be a Servant Ruler. *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* Romans 10:45

But here for the Roman mind is the perfect answer, The Servant King.

#### ***Author:***

John, a Jew, whose Roman name was Mark, was the son of Mary, a wealthy and prominent citizen in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). Peter was a close friend of his family and was possibly the one who led Mark to Jesus (I Peter 5:13). It was Mary's house that Peter went to when released from prison.

Barnabas, my favorite apostle, was his cousin (Colossians 4:10), and young Mark was invited to go on he and Paul's first missionary trip (Acts 12:25). He deserted them in Perga and returned home

## Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey

(Acts 13:13), causing Paul to refuse to allow him to go on a second trip. Barnabas, the man who introduced the converted enemy Paul to the church, separated from Paul over this issue and took Mark with him on a separate missions trip to the Isle of Cyprus (Acts 15:38-40).

Mark obviously had matured and became an effective minister, since Paul later ministered with him (Col. 4:10, and Philemon 24), and called for him just before his execution in Rome saying, "*Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.*" (II Timothy 4:11)

Perhaps the fact that both Mark and Peter failed bound them together. It is generally accepted that Mark received most of his information about Jesus from Peter, since he never met Jesus himself.

In fact, there is so obviously an apostolic influence of Peter in this book that its inclusion in the canon has never been seriously challenged.

There is a long ongoing debate about the dating of Matthew and Mark. I personally place Mark as the first Gospel written some time in the 50's but many believe it was written after Peter died (67-70 AD.). It is a fact that all but 31 verses of the book of Mark are duplicated in the other Gospels.

So, lets take a roller-coaster ride of action-packed adventure (*can you say miracles*). The supernatural invaded the world of the natural and God "*emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men,...humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a [Roman]cross.*" -- Philippians 2:7 and 8

### OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF MARK

#### I.SERVANT SERVICE (Chapters 1-10)

Mark deals with one of the great paradoxes of Scripture. Matthew told us that Jesus said, "*...the rulers of the Gentiles lord over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. . . . but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be servant of all.*" (20:25-26)

What a puzzle for the Roman readers both believer and non-believer alike. How can a person who holds ultimate authority also be a servant? Jesus is going to show us how. The King of the universe will become the bond-servant. *Who is He and how will He operate?*

#### A. His Ways (1:1-13; 3:13-35; 9:2-50)

##### 1. Preparation (1:1-13)

The gospel (good news) is not new (v 1). It was written in Isaiah 40. A messenger will appear to announce the coming of the Lord. And John the Baptist came, preaching and saying, "*After me one is coming who is mightier than I, . . .*" (v 7)

And Jesus came into the Roman Empire, when the time was perfect, He was identified by John and by God, and He was tested by Satan. He was ready!

## *Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey*

### **2. Personnel (3:13-35)**

How would He accomplish His mission? By using people!

Out of the many, He called twelve ordinary men (vv13-19), condemned and rejected the experts in the Law (scribes) who thought He was from Satan, and then called others to be part of His spiritual family. *"For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother, and sister, and mother."* (v. 35)

Jesus would do the dying, only He could, but He would leave the spreading of His Kingdom to people. To us!

### **3. Previews (9:2-50)**

He can't expect His followers to go blindly into the mission so He gives them a vision of who He is and what is to come:

- 1) Peter, James, and John get a glimpse of His glory
- 2) His close disciples get a pre-warning of His death
- 3) The twelve get a lesson on humility and rewards, *"If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all."* (v. 35)
- 4) Just to motivate them, they get a view of how important one soul, even a child, is to Him. Do not hinder . . . Better a mill stone tied, no hand or no foot is preferred to spending eternity in hell.

**His personal ministry takes two forms, His words and His works:**

### **B. His Words (1:14-20; 4:1-34; 10:1-50)**

#### **1. Preaching (1:14-20)**

Jesus began His preaching ministry in Galilee and He has a two-fold message:

- 1) *"Repent and believe the gospel"* (v15)
- 2) *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."* (v 17)

#### **2. Parables (4:1-34)**

Jesus chooses to use a teaching method familiar in the Greek tradition used in Roman schools. A parable is a story with a moral, or lesson, or impact point. Knowing the Romans are people of action, Mark chooses to relate only a few stories. They refer to the importance of the gospel.

The gospel needs to be:

- 1) Sown far and wide

## *Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey*

- 2) Heard with a ready heart
- 3) Always presented, never hidden
- 4) Patiently awaited, tended, and harvested when it grows

### **3. Preaching in Perea (10:1-50)**

Mark relates several more of Jesus' sermons, seemingly those that especially apply to His audience. The subjects include Jesus' views of: divorce, children, eternal life, His own death and resurrection, and the problem of pride. Jesus Approached

The passage ends with His personal ministry to blind Bartimaeus.

### **C. His Works (1:21-3:12; 4:35-9:1)**

Because of the audience Mark chose to relate many supernatural examples of Jesus' power. These miracles were meant to be "signs" (define). A sign points us to something, leads us in the right direction. This pointed to the involvement of God in the world, and to support the fact that Jesus was, in fact, God.

#### **1. Power (1:21-3:12)**

The power of Jesus was complete including the mastery of the supernatural, disease, nature, and even the ultimate enemy, death. There are nine distinct miracles chronicled here including: casting out demons, healing diseases and physical handicaps, destroying the hold of habitual sins, forgiving sins, and breaking traditions.

#### **2. Power continued (4:35-9:1)**

This time Mark fills almost five chapters with non-stop activity that shows the power of Jesus relating seventeen separate events. They range from healing the sick, to multiplying food, to walking on water, to confronting His enemies, to affecting the lives of His followers including the impetuous loose cannon, Peter.

As we move through the first ten chapters we experience the servant as He serves God and His people. Now we see . . .

## **II.SERVANT SACRIFICE (Chapters 11-15)**

*Jesus came to serve, but His ultimate act of service was now just beginning, He would now "set His face to Jerusalem," to face persecution, and death.*

### **A. His Teachings (11:1-13:37)**

This time His teaching is not to encourage His followers, but to force His enemies to act.

#### **1. Triumph (11:1-11)**

Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a king might, but He knew this same crowd crying "Hosanna" would soon cry, "crucify Him."

## *Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey*

### **2. Temple (11:12-19)**

The Romans should have loved this. He purified the temple and it actually triggered the intense plot to destroy Him.

### **3. Topics (12:20-13:37)**

The more Jesus taught, the closer He came to death. The very teaching that should have made the religious leaders recognize Him as their Messiah only made them more hostile.

His teaching in the temple was confrontational as He discussed: His authority; Israel's rejection of God and now their Messiah; taxes; the resurrection of the dead; the great commandments; His deity; their pride; proper giving; and the future. It became a contest of wits. Could they entrap Jesus and bring Him before the people as a blasphemer and the Romans courts as a traitor? No, He knows their hearts!

### **B. His Testings (14:1-52)**

#### **1.Preparation (14:1-11)**

Mary anointed Jesus for His burial. Judas betrayed Him to the Chief Priests.

#### **2. Partaking (14:12-25)**

The disciples prepared for and shared the "Last Supper" (Passover Feast) with Jesus. He institutes the "Lord's Supper" (communion) to help. His followers remember what is about to happen.

#### **3. Prayer (14:26-52)**

The somber walk to Gethsemane led to Jesus' painful prayer and experience of His disciples' weakness, than culminated in His betrayal and arrest.

### **C. His Trials (14:53-15:47)**

There were three mock trials:

#### **1.Before Caiaphas (14:53-65)**

Jesus was tried by the chief priests and elders who used false witnesses and distorted His words. He admitted that He is the Christ, the Son of God and is "*condemned to be deserving of death.*" (v. 64)

Meanwhile, outside, Peter denies Him three times.

#### **2. Before Pilate (15:1-15)**

The Jews cannot execute Jesus, so they send Him to Pilate as an insurrectionist who claims to be "King of the Jews." Pilate washed his hands of the matter, let the mob decide and turned Him over to be crucified.

## *Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey*

### **3. Before People (15:16-47)**

The public humiliation of Jesus remains to this day one of the most heinous of all miscarriages of justice. He was mocked, beaten, crowned with thorns, and crucified as if He were a common criminal. He was, ". . . *pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening of our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.*" (Isaiah 53:5)

**So, at the depth and seeming failure of the servant to fulfill His mission, we find He has, in fact, conquered death forever. He won . . . we win!**

### **III. SERVANT SUCCESS (Chapter 16)**

We have three clear evidences of the servant's victory:

#### **A. His Acceptance (16:1-8)**

He is resurrected, raised from the dead, by the power of God. God accepted the substitute sacrifice for our sins and declared the payment made in full. The job is finished and Jesus can now go back to His father in triumph.

*Note:* In the earliest and most trustworthy manuscripts, verses 9-20 do not appear. It is possible that they were added later to "complete" Mark's thoughts. We need to consider them, as they do agree with other Scripture, but not base any strong doctrinal teaching on them alone.

#### **B. His Appearances (16:9-18)**

He was really alive. Hundreds of witnesses saw Him, many talked to Him, and some even touched Him.

#### **C. His Ascension (16:19-20)**

He returned to His Father to take up His new mission as our advocate and our mediator with God.

#### ***Lessons:***

1. The Jesus who confronts us in Mark can make us uncomfortable.

Mark challenges us to open our eyes and see who Jesus really is. He is God. He is supernatural. He is powerful. But He put all that aside to become the substitute sacrifice for our sins.

#### **He died for me!**

2. Mark challenges us to follow the example of this suffering, dying servant. Discipleship should be costly. We may have to give up family, hoarded resources, even our lives. We need to be servants.

3. Mark calls us to witness. We are to "fish for men." We must sow lots of seed and not hide our light. Perhaps Mark ended at the resurrection on purpose. Perhaps we are to flesh out the story as witnesses to the risen Lord.