

Mark Bible Study - 2022

Jesus in Synoptic Gospels

- Luke - Jesus as up against the social system
- Mark - Jesus as up against the political system
- Matthew - Jesus as up against religious establishment

Facts about the book of Mark

- First Gospel written
- Probably dates to about 70CE during the exact time the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed by the Romans to stop a Jewish rebellion that had started in 66CE.
- The loss of the Temple means they have lost the central physical presence of God in their midst.
- The author is anonymous. We call him Mark for convenience.
- Central purpose is to help understand two historical realities – death of Jesus and the destruction of their Temple
- There is no infant narrative and there is no post resurrection in the original ending. Others added to the final chapter after it had been around for many decades.
- Additions include Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene, appearing to the disciples and commissioning them to continue the work, and his ascension.
- Shortest of the four Gospels. It is less complex than Matthew and Luke. And is less “talky” than John.

Stories that are Jesus' Greatest Hits but are NOT in Mark

- Birth story, Good Samaritan, prodigal son, Lord's Prayer, Beatitudes, Golden Rule, Zacchaeus, Mary and Martha, Doubting Thomas, woman at the well, raising of Lazarus, or changing water into wine. No teaching to love our enemies or God so loved the world.
- There are also a few gems in Mark – feeding the 5000, parable of the sower, and the encounter with the rich young ruler

Purposes of Mark

- Encouraging Roman Christians to persevere during persecution – as Jesus did.
- To show the readers how to live as disciples and how to do that considering his death.
- Focus is on doing.
- Fighting heretical teachings.

Mark for me

- Using clear and less elaborate language.
- Uses a lot of detail and immediacy to bring reader into the narrative.
- Uses “historical present” to put reader into the moment – narrative tells what “happens” not what “happened.”
- Focuses on action – 18 healing stories and 4 parables – more than teaching.
- Mark 8:31 and beyond, Jesus is “on the way” to the cross. Shows Jesus’ life as a passion narrative clearly.

Urgency and Uniqueness of Mark

- The word “immediately” (*euthys*) is found 42 times in the Gospel, 11 times in just the first chapter.
- Tells stories in brackets – story A/story B/story A – at times.
- Mark isn’t afraid to leave things unsaid, to end without clarity, and to let Jesus leave people in the dark.
- “Duh-sciples” and the Messianic Secret.