

## **The Gospel of Mark**

### ***The nature of the gospels***

**Origin** (revelation = God's action plus God's explanation)

Words and works of Jesus

Different types of material

**Process**

Oral tradition is the original content of gospel preaching

*2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. (see the great commission in Matthew 28)*

*1 Corinthians 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...*

Need for authoritative word led to writing down.

*Luke 1:1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,<sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye-witnesses and servants of the word.*

*Acts 1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach<sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*

**Purpose**

Preserve the truth:

To declare the gospel:

*John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

*Luke 1:4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

To bring faith and assurance:

*1 Corinthians 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*

## The distinctiveness of Mark

Synoptic – Matthew, Mark, Luke

John –

*Each writer is a theologian, and so the gospels are constructed according to the author's God given theology.*

### **Mark's Purpose:**

The Good News of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1

- Very little introduction, straight into the action
- Great sense of urgency – “immediately”, “straight away”, “at once”, e.g. ch1: 12, 20, 29
- Jesus’ predicts his death – 8:31, 9:31, 10:32
- Disciples and discipleship – very real

### **Mark the Author:**

John Mark (14:51?), companion of Peter and Paul (Acts 12:12, 2 Tim 4:11, 1 Pet 5:13), writing Peter’s account

*Papias (c69 -155AD), as quoted by Eusebius:*

*Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements.*

*Clement (88-97 AD), an early church father, writes concerning this gospel: "As Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered well what he had said, should write them out. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it. When Peter learned of this, he neither directly hindered nor encouraged it." (Fragments of Clement, Eusebius CH 6.14.5-7)*

## Mark's Structure

Mark 1:1 - The *good news* about Jesus the Christ, the Son of God

Mark 1:1 - 8:30 Jesus ministry in Galilee, asking question - who is Jesus

Mark 8:29 - You are the Christ

Mark 8:31 - 16:8 Jesus teaches about his death, resurrection and return

Mark 15:39 - Surely this man was the Son of God

*"A passion narrative with extended introduction"*

FIRST HALF: 1:1-8:30      **Question: Who is Jesus?**

Answer: 1:1,11,15 – Son of God, Messiah, bringing the kingdom of God.

Evidence: demonstrate kingly authority

1:17 over disciples  
1:25-27 over evil spirits  
1:29-34 over disease  
2:1-12 to forgive sins  
2:28 Lord of the Sabbath  
4:35-41 Lord over the storm / creation  
5:35-43 Lord over death

Reactions: 1:27; 4:41; 5:42; 6:56-57

False Trials: 2:7 Blasphemer      3:22 Possessed by Beelzebub  
6:3 Mere carpenter      6:14 John the Baptist      6:15 Elijah returned

Right Answers: 1:24; 5:7 from Demons – 'holy one of God'  
8:29-30 Disciples – Peter – the Christ  
15:39 Centurion - The Son of God

Illustration of the parable of the sower is the gospel up to this point.

SECOND HALF 8:31-16      **Questions: i What has he come to do?  
li what will following Christ involve?**

8:31; 9:31; 10:33,45; 13:9-13

Jesus suffering – because he came to seek and save the lost, to give his life as a ransom.  
Jesus fully human and fully God - and the cost of discipleship.

**Four key questions to ask in each passage we look at - what does this passage say about:**

1. who is Jesus?
2. what has he come to do?
3. what will following him look like?
4. how is this Good News?

*This will stop us going the way of 'open roof ministries international'.*

## Key features to look for

### 1. Sandwiches

*Just as a sandwich has two pieces of bread with a filling in- between, so Mark likes to tell a story with another story in the middle.*

**Mark 5**, Jairus, a synagogue ruler, begs Jesus to heal his twelve year old daughter (vs 21 – 24). A woman who has been haemorrhaging for twelve years interrupts Jesus while he is travelling to Jairus's house (vs25 – 34) and only after she has been healed does Mark continue with the raising of the girl who has since died (vs35 – 43). Mark tells stories like this in order to make a theological point with the middle of the sandwich being key to understand what goes before and after. This sandwich in chapter 5 is about faith.

### **LOOK UP: Mark 11:12-20**

What is the sandwich? (Bread - Filling - Bread)

How does the filling relate to the bread?

Other sandwiches: Mark 3:22-30; Mark 5:21-43; Mark 6:6-30; Mark 14:1-11; Mark 14:54-72

### 2. Old Testament relevance

### 3. Sets of three

*Mark also forms groups of three, often for emphasis:*

- *Three boat scenes with the disciples (Mk 4:35, 6:45, 8:14)*
- *Three predictions of the passion*
- *Three commands to "keep awake and watch" (8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34) matched by the three times the tired disciples are mentioned as sleeping*
- *Peter denies Jesus three times*
- *Pilate asks the crowd three questions*
- *Three time references at the crucifixion (the third, sixth, and ninth hours mentioned in Mark 15)*

*This seems to be a deliberate pattern of Mark to give emphasis and urgency to Jesus' task and mission.*

### 4. The 'unexpected' things about Jesus and his ministry:

#### ***Jesus keeps his identity a secret***

*Often Jesus commands his disciples, other people and even demons to be silent (1:25, 34, 44, 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26, 30; 9:9)*

#### ***Jesus has come to suffer and die***

*Many people followed Jesus especially when they realised he could be the Messiah, but as soon as Jesus started talking about being rejected, mocked, killed and raised from the dead, they deserted him. The death and resurrection of Jesus is a great surprise even for his disciples.*

#### ***The disciples are slow to understand***

*We know what happened to the disciples after Jesus returned to heaven: they received the Holy Spirit and were powerful witnesses of the gospel. However, Mark paints them quite differently. They are on Jesus' side, but often they fail to understand who he is and why he has come. They are hard-hearted (just like Jesus opponents) and even desert him at the end.*

## EXTRA NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

### Markan Sandwiches (<http://markgospel.blogspot.com/2007/02/markan-sandwiches.html>)

#### *Sandwich #1*

- a. Healing of Paralytic 2:1-5a
- b. Authority to Forgive Sin 2:5b-10a
- c. Healing of the Paralytic 2:10b-12

Toothpick: "he says to the paralytic" 2:5b  
"he says to the paralytic" 2:10b

#### *Sandwich #2*

- a. Withered Hand Miracle 3:1-3a
  - b. Sabbath Controversy 3:4-5a
  - c. Withered Hand Miracle 3:5b-6
- Toothpick: "he says to the man" 3:3  
"he says to the man" 3:5

#### *Sandwich #3*

- a. Rejection by Jesus' Family 3:20-21
  - b. Rejection by Jewish Leaders 3:22-30
  - c. Rejection by Jesus' Family 3:31-35
- Toothpick: "his family went" 3:21  
"his mother...went" 3:31

#### *Sandwich #4*

- a. Jairus' Daughter 5:21-24a
  - b. Issue of Blood 5:22-30
  - c. Jairus' Daughter 5:35-43
- Toothpick: "the girl is twelve years old" 5:42  
"the woman has been ill twelve years" 5:25

#### *Sandwich #5*

- a. Sending Out the Twelve 6:6b-13
  - b. Death of John the Baptizer 6:14-29
  - c. Sending Out the Twelve 6:30-31
- Toothpick: "he instructed them" 6:8  
"the apostles instructed him" 6:30

#### *Sandwich #6*

- a. Unwashed Hands 7:1-5
  - b. Corban Controversy 7:6-13
  - c. Unwashed Hands 7:14-23
- Toothpick: "defile" 7:2  
"defile" 7:15

#### *Sandwich #7*

- a. Blessing Children 9:36-50
  - b. Teaching on Divorce 10:1-12
  - c. Blessing Children 10:13-16
- Toothpick: "child" 9:36  
"children" 10:13

#### *Sandwich #8*

- a. Cursing of the Fig Tree 11:12-14
  - b. Cleansing of the Temple 11:15-19
  - c. Cursing of the Fig Tree 11:20-25
- Toothpick: "fig tree in leaf" 11:13  
"fig tree withered" 11:20

#### *Sandwich #9*

- a. False Christs 13:5-6
  - b. Jerusalem/Temple Destroyed 13:7-20
  - c. False Christs 13:21-23
- Toothpick: "will lead astray" 13:6  
"to lead astray" 13:22

#### *Sandwich #10*

- a. Plot to Kill Jesus 14:1-2
  - b. Anointing at Bethany 14:3-9
  - c. Plot to Kill Jesus 14:10-11
- Toothpick: "were seeking to kill" 14:1  
"was seeking to betray" 14:11

#### *Sandwich #11*

- a. Peter's Denial 14:53-54
  - b. Jesus' Trial 14:55-65
  - c. Peter's Denial 14:66-72
- Toothpick: "Peter had followed" 14:53  
"Peter was below" 14:66

#### *Sandwich #12*

- a. Women 15:40-41
  - b. Burial of Jesus 15:42-46
  - c. Women 15:47-16:1
- Toothpick: "Mary Magdalene" 15:40  
"Mary Magdalene" 16:1

### Messianic Secret (Werde 1901)

1. Commands to silence addressed to the demons which acknowledge his power: 1.34; 3.12.
2. Instructions not to make his healing-miracles public: 1.43-45; 5.43; 7.36; 8.26.
3. Teaching to the disciples in private: 4.34; 7.17-23; 9.28; 8.31; 9.31; 10.32-34; 13.3.
4. Commands to silence addressed to the disciples: 8.30 and 9.9.
5. The parable-theory, 4.10-13, by which the parables are said to be intended to obscure the message so that outsiders may not understand.

## Mark 8:27-33

**27** Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" **28** They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." **29** "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." **30** Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. **31** He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. **32** He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. **33** But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

### Step 1: What is the passage saying?

- **What type of literature is this passage?**

- |                                    |                                    |  |  |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> OT Story  | <input type="checkbox"/> OT Law    | <input type="checkbox"/> OT Prophecy     | <input type="checkbox"/> OT Poetry (Psalms & Wisdom) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NT Gospel | <input type="checkbox"/> NT Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> NT Story (Acts) | <input type="checkbox"/> NT Apocalyptic (Revelation) |

- **How would you split the passage into smaller parts?**

(i)

(ii)

- **What is said in each part? Explain it in your own words.**

(i)

(ii)

- **How does each of the parts fit together?**

**Summarize what you think the passage is saying in your own words**

## Mark 14:1-11

Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. **2** “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

**3** While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

**4** Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? **5** It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

**6** “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. **7** The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me.

**8** She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. **9** Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

**10** Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. **11** They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

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- **How does each of the parts fit together?**

Summarize what you think the passage is saying in your own words

## Step 2: Why is the passage saying it?

- **What goes before the passage and how does it help us understand the passage?**

*Mark 3:6; 12:12; 12:13-17 cf. 14:1*

The religious leaders have opposed Jesus throughout the gospel  
Now they are looking for 'some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him.'

*Mark 10:33 cf. 14:10-11*

Jesus has said that he will be betrayed. Now we learn his identity

The countdown to Jesus' death has begun (14:1) and Jesus is preparing for his death.  
The opposition against him is plotting his death, but his disciples remain unprepared.

- **What goes after the passage and how does it help us understand the passage?**

*Mark 14:12-16 cf. 14:1*

Jesus prepares for the Passover

*Mark 14:17-21 cf. 14:10-11*

Jesus predicts his betrayal

*Mark 14:22-26 cf. 14:8-9*

Jesus explains his death in terms of the New Covenant

Jesus explains more about the death he has just been prepared for by this woman. He is teaching his disciples that he will die soon and helping them to prepare for it, but they are struggling to understand it.

- **What are the key ideas or events of the book and how do they help us understand the passage?**

*Who is Jesus?*

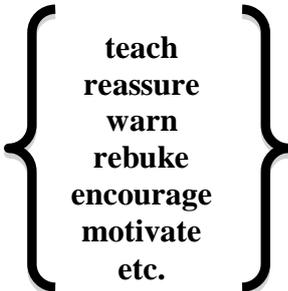
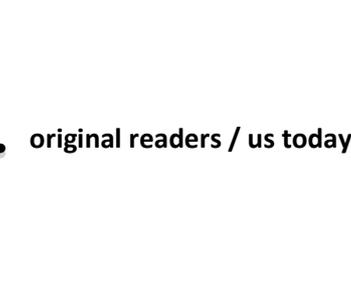
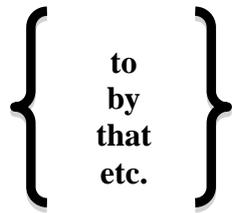
*Why has he come?*

*How should we respond?*

*How is this Good News?*

### Step 3: Summary Sentence

Complete the summary sentence:

These verses were written to the  **teach  
reassure  
warn  
rebuke  
encourage  
motivate  
etc.**  original readers / us today  **to  
by  
that  
etc.**

These verses were written to ...

## SMALL GROUP MEETING: Mark 2:13-17

**13** Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. **14** As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. **15** While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. **16** When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" **17** On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

### A. Key Question: What is the passage saying?

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- |   |                                    |  |  |
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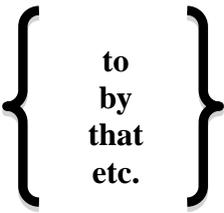


*How should we respond?*

*How is this Good News?*

### **c. Summary Sentence**

Complete the summary sentence:

These verses were written to the  original readers / us today 

**These verses were written to ...**