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MARK

*Jesus is the Lord's suffering servant*

WRITTEN

60-70 AD

KEY VERSE

*"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

10:45

Last updated May 19, 2023

Show Jesus' authority and call to discipleship

PURPOSE

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a tradition going back to the earliest church that John Mark wrote this Gospel. He was part of Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13) and is said to have since become one of Peter's co-workers (1 Pet 5:13). The Gospel of Mark has been called a summary of Peter's preaching about Jesus.

Several things indicate that Mark wrote to the Gentiles. For example, he explains Jewish customs (7:2-4, 15:42), and he translates some Aramaic words into Greek (e.g., 5:41 and 7:11). Tradition says that the Gospel of Mark was written to Christians who were being persecuted by Emperor Nero after Rome was burned in the year 64. The Christians were blamed for starting the fire and were persecuted for approximately four years. According to tradition, both Peter and Paul were killed in these persecutions. Many, therefore, believe that Mark was written in the 60s to encourage the Christians in Rome.

**Distinctive for the Gospel of Mark:**

* The shortest gospel
* Often held to be the oldest of the gospels
* "The secret Messiah": In the first half, Jesus will not be known as the Messiah, but a turning point occurs when he asks the disciples, "*Who do people say that I am*" in 8:27-29.

Action (*“immediately”* 41 times)

2 speeches & 20 miracles

To Gentiles: Explains Jewish customs (7:2-4, 15:42):

*“and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.”* Mark 7:2-4

*“It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath).”* 15:42a

To Gentiles: Translates Aramaic words (e.g., 5:41, 7:11)

*“He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).”* 5:41

*“But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)”* 7:11

### WHO WAS MARK?

Wide support in the early church: John Mark wrote down Peter's teaching about Jesus.

One of Peter's co-workers (1 Pet 5:12-13)

*“She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.”* 1 Pet 5:12

They used to gather at Mark’s mother's house (Acts 12:12)

*“When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.”* Acts 12:12

Participated in parts of the 1st mission trip (Acts 13:13)

*“From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.”* Acts 13:13

Perhaps the cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10)

*“My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)”* Col 4:10

One of Paul's close associates (Col 4:10, Philemon 24, 2 Tim 4:11)

*“And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.”* Philemon 24

*“Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my* *ministry.”* 2 Tim 4:11

The Gospel is usually dated to approx. 65 AD

Written from Rome according to Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria (2nd century)

To Christians in Rome who were persecuted by Nero in AD 64-68?

*“All manner of mockery was added to their death. Covered with animal skins, they were torn to death by dogs, or they were nailed to crosses, or they were condemned to the flames and burned to serve as lights at night when daylight was gone. Nero had offered his gardens for this... But despite the guilt that had deserved to be punished to set an example, compassion arose from the impression that they were sacrificed not for the good of the state, but for the cruelty of a single man.”* Tacitus the historian

### STRUCTURE

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Intro**  1:1-15 | *“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”* 1:15b | Secret Messiah |
| **Part 1:**  In Galilee  1:16 8:26 | **Who is Jesus?** Demonstration of Jesus' authority in teaching, over evil spirits, sin, the Sabbath, Israel, nature, sickness, and death. |
| **Part 2:**  On the way to Jerusalem  8:27 10:52 | Teaching about a suffering Messiah. Jesus speaks three times about his suffering, death, and resurrection, followed by instructions on discipleship. |
| **Part 3:**  In Jerusalem  Chapters 11-16 | Jesus as the suffering Messiah. Royal entry, cleanses the temple and predicts its destruction, questions about his authority, confronts the authorities, suffering, death, and resurrection. | Revealed Messiah |

### PURPOSE: SHOW JESUS' AUTHORITY AND CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

*"The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" — “a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”* 1:1-3

Christ = Messiah = King

Son of God: Messiah & divine

Connection to GT:

Mal 3:1: *“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.”*

Isaiah 40:3: *"A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and Yahweh!

## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS ​​(1:9-11)

*"You are my son; today I have become your father."* Psalm 2:7

*“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.”* Isaiah 42:1

*"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."* 1:11a

Jesus is both King and the Lord's servant in Isaiah. He is confirmed as the Messiah and equipped by the Spirit to begin his ministry. After 400 years, the Spirit is finally back!

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor”* Is 61:1a

## SECRET MESSIAH

Evil spirits, those being healed, and the disciples are told not to say anything (1:25, 1:34, 1:44, 3:12, 5:43, 7:36, 8:26, 8:30, and 9:9).

*“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!”* 1:25

*“and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.”* 1:34

*“See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.”* 1:44

*“But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.”* 3:12

*“He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.”* 5:43

*“Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.”* 7:36

*“Jesus sent him home, saying, “Don’t even go into the village.”* 8:26

*“Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.”* 8:30

*“As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.”* 9:9

1:45 Couldn't move freely

*“Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.”* 1:45

Historical situation:

* The Jewish historian Josephus says there were great expectations of a liberator at this time.
* It was far too easy to make things explode due to the political climate. People had a plan for the Messiah that Jesus then had to fit into. This could lead to rebellion against the Romans and end disastrously (as in AD 70 and 135).

9:9 They must first understand what kind of Messiah he is, and that includes his suffering and death.

*“Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.”* 9:9b

## CHAPTER 2

vv. 1-12: Heals a lame man and forgives his sins (→ God)

Knows what the scribes think (→ God)

“What is the easiest thing to say?” “Do you think I just say this and pretend that I have this authority? Let me demonstrate…”

vv. 13-17: Calling Levi → follows immediately. Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners.

vv. 18-22: Who is Jesus? Something new and unique that doesn't fit into old forms.

vv. 23-28: Jesus has authority over the Sabbath.

Conflict with the scribes and the Pharisees all the time.

## CHAPTER 3

vv. 1-6: Heals a man with a withered hand.

Jesus only speaks; if any work is done, it is the man with the hand who does it.

On the Sabbath Jesus gives life to a dead hand and the Pharisees plan to kill Jesus. Ironic (and ridiculous) that Jesus is the one who gets into trouble.

vv. 7-12: A crowd from all over the country and beyond follows him. Jesus heals many and casts out evil spirits.

vv. 13-19: Points out 12 apostles (a new Israel → authority):

1. That they should be with him
2. That he might send them forth a) to preach and b) to have the power to cast out evil spirits

vv. 20-30: Scribes say he has Beelzebub/Satan in him → illogical and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

vv. 31-35: The disciples are Jesus' true family.

Conflicts with the Pharisees, Herodians, and Scribes (and the family).

## 1. SPEECH: PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (4:1-34)

The Sower: The Kingdom of God has varying responses

The seed: God's kingdom grows by itself

The mustard seed: God's kingdom begins small but grows in secret

Jesus IS the Messiah, but not the kind people expected.

*“In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”* (Matt 13:14-15, from Isa 6:9-10 LXX)

The parables made the message available to those who were open to it before Jesus' death and resurrection.

SANDWICHES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK (A-B-A)

* 3:20-21, 22-30, 31-35
* 4:1-9, 10-13, 14-20
* 5:21-42
* 6:7-32
* 11:12-25
* 14:1-2, 3-9, 10-11
* 14:17-21, 22-26, 27-31
* 14:53-54, 55-65, 66-72
* 15:40, 16:8

A connection between the parts and the whole sandwich makes a new point.

## CHAPTER 5

vv. 1-20: Jesus heals a man with an evil spirit.

* Great authority: 2000 pigs
* If one is more concerned with unclean pigs than with Jesus, Jesus sees no point in explaining more.

vv. 21-43: Sandwich: Jairus' daughter, the woman who touched Jesus' cloak, Jairus' daughter

* Women, "daughter", 12 years, opposition from people, impurity, faith...
* “Who touched my clothes?”
* Tells that it happened because of faith and not magic
* Because he is not satisfied with the miracle alone, he wants to meet the person.

Jesus cares about the insignificant in society (women, children, the sick, outcasts...)

All three were without hope before they met Jesus.

Discipleship: Faith and the relationship with Jesus are more important than healing.

## CHAPTER 6

vv. 1-6: Jesus is rejected in Nazareth.

v. 5: And he did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief (Matt. 13:58)

vv. 7-32: The apostles are sent out, John the Baptist is killed, and the apostles return.

* The link between John and Jesus in chapter 1 → John's death points toward Jesus' death?
* Discipleship is risky.

vv. 33-44: Feed 5000.

vv. 45-52: Walking on water → authority over nature

vv. 53-56: Jesus heals many people.

## 7:1-8:21

7:1-23: Impurity does not come from without but from within.

v. 24: Travel directly to the Gentiles!

7:24-30 (Tyros): Heals the daughter of a pagan woman.

7:31-37 (Decapolis): Heals a deaf-mute.

8:1-10: Feed 4000.

8:11-21 (Dalmanuta/Magadan): Conflict with Pharisees + talk about bread/leaven dough

vv. 17-18, 21: The disciples still do not understand who Jesus is (4:13, 4:40-41, 6:52).

*“Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?”* 4:13

*“He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”* 4:40-41

*“for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.”* 6:52

v. 21: “Do you still not understand?” Is this also a question for the readers?

1. That they don't have to worry about bread?
2. That they do not understand that this means that Jesus is Lord?
3. That 12 and 7 are symbolic numbers for something divine?

*“When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” “Twelve,” they replied. “And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” They answered, “Seven.”* Mark 8:21

## JESUS ​​HEALS A BLIND MAN IN TWO STAGES (8:22-26)

*“They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man’s eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?” He looked up and said, “I see people; they look like trees walking around.” Once more Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home, saying, “Don’t even go into the village.”* 8:22-26

* This story is only found in the Gospel of Mark.
* Part 2 from 8:27-10:52 ends with the healing of Bartimaeus.
* 8 words for *“see”* in 9 occurrences in 5 verses
* Jesus usually speaks with authority; here he asks a question.

v. 23 *“Do you see anything?”* is parallel to v. 17. *“Do you still not see or understand?”*

* Jesus can help the disciples go from blindness to seeing who he is.
* Points forward to what happens next.

## “WHAT HAVE YOU CONCLUDED”? (8:27-38)

*“Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.” Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 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 concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”* Mark 8:27-38

## THE DISCIPLES GET TO SEE JESUS' GLORY (9:2-13)

v. 3: *"His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them."* → *"white as snow"* (God in Dan 7:9)

v. 5: rather *"tent"* than *"shelters"*, like the tent of meeting in Exodus, where God met the people.

v. 7: Repetition of 1:11 *“This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”*

The presence of Moses confirms that Jesus is the Prophet from Deuteronomy 18:15 (*"hear him!"*, v. 7).

The presence of Elijah confirms that Mal 3 and 4 have happened and that the Messiah has come (vv. 11-13)

Moses at Sinai (Exodus 33): God passed by Moses and revealed his glory but not his face.

Elijah at Horeb (Sinai)(1 Kings 19:8-12): God passed by Elijah, but Elijah covered his face.

Finally gets to see the face of God → Jesus is the glory of God → who will suffer and die for his people.

This event, where Jesus is revealed as a heavenly being and gets God's approval, is a demonstration of the authority Jesus has shown so far in the Gospel. It is an allusion to the resurrection to encourage the disciples to follow him to the cross.

## KEY VERSE 10:45

*“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* 10:45

The climax of part 2: Jesus is the Lord's suffering servant in Isaiah 53

Similarities with Isaiah 53: Servanthood, atoning death, and the servant giving his life voluntarily.

*"Ransom"* → *"guilt offering"* in Isa 53:10.

Both use the expression *“for many”* (as in 14:24)

*"'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,' he said to them."* 14:24

Isa 53:12 is quoted in 15:28: *“And He was numbered with the transgressors.”* KJ21

Following Jesus does not mean status but rather death.

## CHAPTER 11

11:11 Temple

11:12-14 Fig tree

11:15-19 Temple

11:20-26 Fig tree

Sandwich: The fig tree represents the temple/Israel, which is without fruit. Jesus predicts

the destruction of the temple in chapter 13.

11:27-33 Temple

The temple is in focus in chapters 11-13.

## THE VINEYARDS AND THE HEIR (12:1-12)

Audience: The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders

Where: The temple square

Context: After the question about authority

Vineyard (Is 5:1-7):

* The vineyard is *"the house of Israel"* and the vines are *"the people of Judah"*. (v. 7)
* A picture of Israel. Also elsewhere in the OT and rabbinical literature.
* God has done everything he can to get a crop. When nothing works, he decides to destroy it.

## 2. SPEECH: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND THE RETURN OF JESUS ​​(CHAP. 13)

v. 4: *"When will this happen, and what is the sign that all this will be fulfilled?"*

vv. 5-23: Signs leading up to the destruction of the temple in the year 70 (“you” indicates that the listeners will experience it.)

v. 10: The gospel was to go out throughout the Roman Empire before the year 70 (Acts 2:5; 2 Tim 4:17; Col 1:6, 23)

*“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”* Acts 2:5

*“But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth.”* 2 Tim 4:17

*“that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.”* Col 1:6

*“if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.”* Col 1:23

v. 14: the abomination that causes desolation = Jerusalem surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20)

vv. 24-27: Signs in connection with Jesus' return ("they" indicates that the listeners will not experience it themselves), which will not happen until the temple is destroyed.

vv. 28-32: The signs in vv. 5-23 will tell them when the temple will be destroyed, within a generation, and that means the return can happen at any time. But unlike the fall of the temple, no one knows when the return will occur.

vv. 33-36: The main point of Jesus is *"Watch!"*

## DANIEL 7:13-14

*“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”* Dan 7:13-14

## PSALM 110

"The Lord says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”... “Rule in the midst of your enemies!”... The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations..."

## 14:62

“And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” 14:62

Jesus combines Dan 7:13-14 and Psalm 110:1 in his answer.

*“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”* Dan 7:13-14

*“The Lord says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”* Psalm 110:1

Both of these seem to go against the basic idea that God does not share his glory with anyone (Is 42:8, 48:11).

*“I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.”* Is 42:8

*“For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.”* Is 48:11

There is little trace of a "messiah" at that time who claimed to be the fulfillment of Dan 7 or Psalm 110, and there is more or less no trace of anyone before Jesus who claimed to be the fulfillment of both.

The high priest is right to accuse Jesus of blasphemy if he is not God...

## CHAPTER 15

Darkness:

From Exodus, before the Passover lamb is slaughtered and salvation (the exit) occurs?

Amos 8:9 is a sign of judgment

*“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.”* Amos 8:9

Jesus dies in the dark, rejected by his people, mocked by those watching, and abandoned by those closest to him.

v. 39: Surprisingly, the first person who "understands" who Jesus is is a Roman soldier. He is the only human character who calls Jesus *"son of God."* (But perhaps ironically?)

## APPLICATION

1. The disciples needed time to understand who Jesus is. Have we understood who Jesus is or do we need more time?

2. Jesus calls disciples to be with him and to be sent out. Do we remember both parts?

3. Have we completely surrendered to Jesus? Have we left anything out? Have we taken up the cross, ready to follow him anywhere?

4. How has the Gospel of Mark encouraged you to be a disciple of Jesus?