**The Gospel According to Mark**

*Jesus, the Suffering Servant*

**Introduction**

1. Mark’s gospel, because of its brevity and the fact that most of its content is contained in the synoptic gospels, is often overlooked.
   1. The scholar, Augustine said of Mark, “[he] [is] a follower and abbreviator of Matthew” (Hastings III:249). (Therefore, thought it of little importance to pay much attention to the gospel of Mark.)
   2. “A commentator and compiler of the fifth century, Victor of Antioch, complained that a number of expositors had written on Matthew and John and a few on Luke but that ‘his utmost efforts had failed to detect a single commentary upon St. Mark’ (Swete 34).” (Truth Commentary on Mark, L.A. Stauffer)
2. This attitude toward Mark changed upon more modern times.
   1. While before, some viewed Mark as an abridgment of the other gospels, many scholars now view it as the eldest of the four gospels.
   2. While it is the shortest, and does not add a great deal to the other gospels, most consider it worthy of serious study and consideration.
3. Mark’s gospel, as we know, is inspired scripture. This by itself is enough for us to thoroughly, and seriously study it.
4. Authorship
5. Title – The Gospel According to Mark
   1. “According to Mark,” later expanded to “The Gospel according to Mark,” are titles that appear in early literature and documents of the second century.
   2. This has convinced all but a few scholars that the name which the gospel bears is indeed its author – Mark.
6. Author (not an apostle)
   1. **Mother – Mary** – **Acts 12:12** (Peter after being released from prison) – ***“John whose surname was Mark”*** – **John** (*Hebrew name*), **Mark** (*Roman name*).
      1. Evidently, Mary was well known to disciples, and her place offered for disciples to stay in.
      2. *Some have conjectured that the upper room that Jesus and the apostles ate the Passover in belonged to Mary.*
      3. **Mark 14:51-52** (After leaving the upper room, and Jesus being arrested in the garden) – *Along with such, some suppose the young man who fled naked while following Jesus after He was arrested could have been Mark.*
   2. **Traveled with Paul and Barnabas on 1st missionary journey – Acts 13:5**
      1. **Acts 13:13** – after some time, Mark departed from them which later caused a slight problem between Paul and Barnabas when deciding who to take with them on their 2nd journey (**cf. Acts 15:37-41**).
      2. **However, Paul and Mark later grew close:**
         1. Called Paul’s fellow laborer (**cf. Philemon 24**).
         2. ***Mark has “proved to be a comfort to me” (Colossians 4:11)***.
         3. ***Told Timothy, “Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11).***
   3. **Validity of his writing – inspired.**
      1. The apostles imparted spiritual gifts to believers, and especially to those who traveled with them ministering in the gospel.
      2. **It is not difficult to believe that Mark would have been the recipient of such, thus inspired, and used by God to write one of the four gospels.**
7. Content, Recipients, Purpose
8. Content, Recipients, Purpose
   1. **Content:** ***“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1)***.
      1. Mark’s writing is about the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
      2. ***“The beginning”*** – that is, of Mark’s particular record.
         1. **Matthew** – starts with genealogy, records His birth.
         2. **Luke** – starts with John’s birth being announced.
         3. **John** – starts with the beginning, before creation. (Jesus’ pre-incarnate state – the Word)
         4. **MARK** – starts with John, quickly moves to Jesus’ baptism, then to Jesus’ bout with Satan (little detail), then His Galilean ministry.
      3. **More fast paced, and succinct than the other gospels.**
   2. **Recipients:** *No address in Mark’s gospel.*
      1. **Generally thought to be a Gentile Christian audience**. (Jewish customs explained, etc.) (No evidence that excludes the possibility of a Jewish/Gentile mix.)
         1. **Matthew** – Jews (Genealogy of Christ, and numerous prophecies mentioned as fulfilled – providing evidence for Jesus as the Messiah of God)
         2. **Luke** – Theophilus (Common Greek name) (Friend of God – possibly any Christians, specifically originally to Gentile Christians)
         3. **John** – to Christians in general to deepen their faith.
      2. **Tradition** – *written to* ***Roman Christians***.
         1. Nothing to prove conclusively that such is the case – ALTHOUGH THERE ARE CONSISTENCIES WITH SUCH A VIEW OF A ROMAN AUDIENCE. 🡪
         2. **Rufus** – **Mark 15:21** – Son of Simon of Cyrene (Only Mark mentions the sons of Simon).
            1. **Romans 16:13** – Greet Rufus.
            2. Possibly the same Rufus.
            3. **Perhaps Mark mentioned Simon’s son, Rufus, because the audience of his gospel knew him. THUS, A ROMAN AUDIENCE.**
         3. *The majority also believe Mark wrote to Christians who were suffering. (Which would be consistent with a Roman audience.) 🡪*
   3. **Purpose:** *Not as clear cut as the other gospels.*
      1. **Matthew** – prove that Jesus is the Messiah of God (Jewish audience – internal evidence, genealogy, prophecy)
      2. **Luke** – Orderly account to Theophilus, ***“that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed” (Luke 1:4).***
      3. **John** – Recorded signs ***“that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).***
      4. **Mark** – *seems by some to be a mere abridgment of the other synoptic gospels.*
      5. **However, some have suggested:**
         1. *Focus on Jesus as the PERFECT SERVANT – focus more on deeds of Jesus than words. (Example of servitude)*
         2. **Written to Roman Christians suffering during Nero’s rule of oppression and persecution. 🡪**
9. ***If the audience was indeed Christians in Rome suffering for their faith at the hands of the notorious Nero, it may have been Mark’s aim to provide:***
   1. **Validation for their faith in Christ –** ample proof that He is the Son of God.
   2. **Thus, encouragement to maintain their faith in such trials.**
      1. By giving a fast pace, succinct look at **the One with the greatest of faith, and endurance, Jesus the Christ.**
      2. He lived to serve God, and others, **and continued to do so despite the immense opposition He faced.**
      3. **Cf. Hebrews 12:3-4 *–*** Like the Hebrews, the audience of Mark’s gospel would do well to ***“consider Him…lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”*** 
         1. ***“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22 – Paul after being stoned).***
         2. ***“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). 🡪***
10. Jesus, the Suffering Servant
11. Identity of Jesus (Galilean ministry)
    1. *What does it take for one to endure suffering as a Christian, i.e. for Christ? 🡪*
    2. **Validated Faith:**
       1. ***“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1).***
          1. Not an empty statement.
          2. **One with much proof, which Mark sets out to show.**
       2. **Jesus’ baptism** – **Mark 1:9-11** – Jesus baptized, and shown to be the Son of God with a sign, and God’s own voice.
          1. Fulfilled prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah – Spirit of the Lord upon Him… (Mark not concerned as much with that.)
          2. **(v. 11)** – God identifies Him!
          3. **Jesus would go on to prove such in His life.**
       3. **Casts out unclean spirit** – **Mark 1:21-28** – Jesus shows the authority He wields, and His fame is spread.
          1. **(vv. 21-22)** – Taught as one having authority.
          2. (**vv. 23-24)** – Unclean spirit in man – spirit knew Jesus’ identity.
          3. **(vv. 25-27)** – **Shows authority over spirit, and people witness such power displayed.**
          4. **(v. 28)** – The news of such spread, and Jesus’ fame grows.
       4. ***Continues to perform works which prove His Deity. 🡪***
       5. **Calms storm, Feeds 5,000, and walks on water – Disciples don’t make the connection.**
          1. **Calms storm** – **Mark 4:35-41** – By His word, Jesus causes the storm to cease.
             1. **(vv. 35-38)** – In a great storm, His disciples are afraid.
             2. **(v. 39)** – Jesus causes storm to cease with His power.
             3. **(v. 40)** – Jesus impressed by disciples’ lack of faith. (**Already given much proof of Jesus’ Divinity.**)
             4. **(v. 41)** – Still do not make connection despite the evidence.
          2. **Feeds 5,000** – **Mark 6:38-44** – With His Creative power, feeds 5,000 with very little.
             1. Jesus taught great multitude in ***“deserted place,”*** hour grew late and the crowd needed to eat.
             2. **(vv. 38-41)** – Only 5 loves and 2 fish. Blessed, and divided.
             3. **(vv. 42-44)** – **Not only were all filled, but 12 baskets of left overs!**
          3. **Walks on water** – **Mark 6:47-52** – Sent disciples away, went to pray, then went to them on the water.
             1. **(vv. 47-48)** – Sees them struggling in the boat against wind.
             2. **(vv. 49-50)** – See Jesus, afraid, but He identifies Himself.
             3. **(vv. 51-52)** – Marveled, **but still did not make the connection because did not understand about the miracle of feeding 5,000 – nor about walking on sea.**

**NOTE: Wind ceased when He got in the boat – remind them of what happened before?**

**This time it was Jesus’ mere presence that made the wind stop.**

* + 1. **Jesus alone with disciples, Peter makes confession** – **Mark 8:27-30** – After feeding another crowd (4,000), and healing blind man.
       1. **(vv. 27-28)** – Who do others say that I am?
       2. **(v. 29a)** – What about you – my disciples?
       3. **(vv. 29b-30)** – Peter’s confession.
       4. **It took them awhile, but the evidence of Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God was ample!**
    2. ***How can we maintain faith in the midst of persecution? KNOW THAT YOUR FAITH IS LEGITIMATE, NOT A SCAM!***
  1. **An Example of Opposition Despite Doing Good: (Jesus)**
     1. ***What happened when Jesus gave immense proof of His Divinity, and Messiahship?*** (*Just because He did God’s will, and was proving His divine identity did not mean all would be well for Him*.)
     2. **Forgives sins, and heals paralysis** – **Mark 2:4-12** – first forgives sins, but scribes say He blasphemes. Proves His authority with miracle.
        1. **(vv. 4-5)** – Paralyzed man brought for healing, but JESUS HEALS HIM SPIRITUALLY.
        2. **(v. 6)** – Scribes claim He blasphemes. ONLY GOD CAN FORGIVE SINS!
        3. **(vv. 8-11)** – To prove He had the power, and right, Jesus performs miracle.
        4. **(v. 12)** – Majority are amazed, but WHAT ABOUT THE SCRIBES? 🡪
        5. **This was enough proof, but they rejected it 🡪**
     3. **Heals on Sabbath, does good deed** – **Mark 3:1-6** – Despite the good deed done on Sabbath, Pharisees plot to destroy Him.
        1. **(vv. 1-3)** – Man with withered hand needs healing, and Pharisees watch to see if He’d perform work on Sabbath – to accuse Him.
        2. **(v. 4)** – Jesus knows their thoughts, **and asks if it would be lawful to let this man suffer, or heal Him – even on Sabbath**.
           1. ***“And he said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath’” (4:27-28).***
           2. *Not only was He Lord of Sabbath, but it was lawful to avoid harm, or help another on Sabbath.*
        3. **(v. 5)** – He was ***“grieved”*** because of their hardness, and healed the man.
        4. **(v. 6)** – Despite His good doing, and sound teaching on the subject, THEY CONSPIRED TO KILL HIM!
     4. **All that Jesus did was good, and all that He taught (even on this Sabbath situation) was TRUTH. THAT DID NOT EXEMPT HIM FROM PEOPLE’S HATE, AND THE REALITY OF SUFFERING.**
     5. *What did Jesus do about conspiracies against Him? Give up? Stop? No. 🡪*

1. Death of Jesus (Events at Jerusalem)
   1. **Christ – Expected Death, but Continued to Submit to God’s Will:**
      1. *Jesus was not ignorant of the plots against Him. He also knew it was God’s will that He die, and this for being the promised Messiah.*
      2. **Jesus Predicts His death after Peter’s confession** – **Mark 8:31-33**
         1. **(v. 31)** – Jesus taught it, and saw it as a MUST – ultimately because it is God’s will.
         2. **(vv. 32-33)** – Peter and the others have finally made the connection (HE IS THE CHRIST), and cannot believe his ears.
            1. Jesus does not allow this to sway Him.
            2. **He resists Satan’s ploy!**
      3. **Two more times Jesus takes His disciples aside and explains/predicts His death (3 if considering the end of the Transfiguration)** – **Mark 9:30-32; Mark 10:32-34 (READ).**
         1. He knew these things, and knew He would be doing this in service (**Mark 10:45**) – **Even for them that would kill Him**.
         2. **However, He did not become discouraged and waiver, but RESOLVED TO DO GOD’S WILL! 🡪**
   2. **Christ – Died Willingly:**
      1. **Jesus was not forced into His death, but went willingly.**
         1. ***“No one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father” (John 10:18).***
         2. His suffering, and death was a result of His submission to God’s will – **He was glad to submit to it**.
      2. **Jesus prays in the garden** – **Mark 14:32-42** – He submitted to God’s will, even when it meant an excruciating death!
         1. **(v. 34)** – He is experiencing the anxiety of the cross.
            1. **NOTE: He knew the EFFICACY OF PRAYER IN TIMES OF TRIAL, AND TRIBULATION. (v. 32)**
         2. **(v. 36)** – He is fully willing to submit to God in death.
         3. **(v. 42)** – He willingly went to His BETRAYER, UNJUST TRIAL, AND DEATH.
      3. **Jesus is crucified, breaths His last** – **Mark 15:33-39** – After Jesus died, the Centurion made a similar confession to Peter’s.
         1. **(vv. 37-39)** – Mark’s gospel began with this truth, continued with it, showed those who rejected it, and approaches the end of his writing with a confession from an unlikely man.
         2. **Jesus’ claims, words, and works were all true, and according to God’s will.**
         3. **This was abundantly clear at the end where even a Roman centurion confessed the truth.**
         4. ***Jesus suffered, even to death 🡪***
   3. **Cf. Hebrews 12:3-4** – Jesus’ life, and death is an example to follow, and encouragement to continue even in suffering and persecution, to submit to God. 🡪
2. A Message to His Disciples (Transition from Galilean ministry to Jerusalem ministry)
   1. **Desire to Save Your Life by Suffering for Christ:**
      1. **How should disciples of Christ view persecution, and suffering, or even dying for His sake? What does Christ expect of us?**
      2. *After firmly establishing His identity as the Christ of God, and before going to His own death on the cross in submission to God’s will, Jesus teaches an important principle to His disciples who are commanded to follow Him. 🡪*
      3. **Jesus calls for commitment even to the point of suffering and death** – **Mark 8:34-38** (after Peter’s confession) – We must, as Jesus, be willing to suffer for God’s cause:
         1. **(v. 34)** – Discipleship requires:
            1. **Self-denial** – No longer WHAT I WILL, but WHAT GOD WILLS – IN TOTALITY.
            2. **Assume the cross of shame and pain** – the cross is a symbol of pain, shame, and death. (**Jesus bore His, and His disciples MUST bear their own as they follow Him.**)
         2. **(v. 35)** – **REASON** – If you save your PHYSICAL LIFE at the EXPENSE OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL, you will LOSE YOUR ETERNAL LIFE – SOUL.
         3. **(vv. 36-37)** – What gain is there on this side of eternity which makes an ETERNAL LOSS WORTH IT?
            1. *Takes it a step further than simply sparing your physical life to…*
            2. GAINING IMMENSE TEMPORAL WEALTH, PLEASURE, ETC.
            3. **IS IT WORTH YOUR SOUL?**
         4. **(v. 38)** – Those who do not have the faith to suffer, bear shame and reproach, and die for Christ will not have Christ’s backing:
            1. To crumble under persecution is to be ASHAMED OF CHRIST.
            2. **To be ashamed of Christ is to have HIM BE ASHAMED OF YOU.**
   2. **Victory in Christ – He has Power Over Death:**
      1. ***Why should one be so devoted to Christ that he should lose his own life?***
      2. **Jesus overcame His own death:**
         1. ***“and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. AND THE THIRD DAY HE WILL RISE AGAIN” (Mark 10:34)***.
         2. **Mark 16:6** – Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome go to anoint Jesus’ body in the tomb, find it empty, and are informed by an angel that He is risen.
            1. The angel spoke a most important truth – ***“HE IS RISEN!”***
            2. **The empty tomb was evidence to the fact!**
         3. **Because Jesus overcame death, we can as well – WE MUST TRUST IN HIM, AND BE WILLING TO DIE FOR HIM – He will deliver us from death 🡪**
         4. ***“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s, at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).***
   3. ***A possible reason Mark wrote his gospel is to strengthen the faith of disciples, and encourage those who were facing persecution, even to death. LOOK TO JESUS, AND FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE – HE WILL DELIVER YOU IN THE END!***

**Conclusion**

1. **Only those who put their trust in Jesus will have the hope of eternal life.**
2. **One accomplishes such by submitting in faith to Christ’s conditions of salvation.**
3. **Verses 9-20 of Mark 16:**
   1. **The last 12 verses of Mark’s gospel have been disputed as to their authenticity to the original gospel.**
   2. **Some of the earliest manuscripts end Mark’s gospel with 16:8.**
   3. *However, the consistency of sentiment of the final 12 verses with the other gospels, and the content of the New Testament is not disputed.*
   4. Also, the evidence for the inclusion of these verses is almost as universal as the rejection of them.
      1. Some of those who reject the authenticity of these final 12 verses admit that such is not conclusive.
      2. Alfred Plummer (who rejects the final 12 verses as authentic) said, “When we examine the external evidence, the question seems at once to be decided in favor of the disputed twelve verses…This external testimony to the genuineness of the twelve verses seems to be not only conclusive, but superabundant” (xlv).
4. **What must you do to have eternal life? – Mark 16:15-16 – Do what Jesus said!**