

Mark

Original Historical Setting

Author: John Mark

Written: ~55-65 A.D.

Audience: Gentile Christians perhaps living around Rome

Occasion: Perhaps the book was written in order to encourage Christians who were being persecuted under Emperor Nero. Since their Master had victoriously faced unjust religious and political persecution, they too could triumph no matter what they had to suffer.

Timeline:

~6-2 BC – Jesus is born

~5-1 BC – King Herod dies

~27 AD – Jesus begins His ministry

~30 AD – Jesus is crucified

70 AD – Temple is destroyed

World Events that occur simultaneously

1 A.D.–Trial by combat used among German tribes

30 A.D.–Cremation-preferred burial method of wealthy Romans

37 A.D. –Nero is born

Features and Structure

The book of Mark can be divided around the two main parts of verse **10:45**.

OUTLINE

1:1-8:30 The Son of Man -- the Servant

8:31-16:20 The Son of Man -- the Ransom

Genre/Literary style

A Gospel composed in ordinary (Koine) Greek

Memory Verse: Mark 10:45

Key text(s)

1:17 – I will make you fishers of men

10:31 – The first shall be last

10:45 – Son of Man came to serve

12:17 – Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's

What to look for

- Notice the many times Jesus asked His disciples or someone for whom He worked a miracle to keep secret about His identity or what He had done (1:34, 44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36-37; 8:26, 30; 9:9) so that He could accomplish His primary mission of dying for sin rather than becoming a political deliverer like some wanted Him to be.
- Mark frequently uses the present tense giving the book an action-packed feel jumping from one scene to the next
- The style is consistent with someone who is writing down the memories of another as they are recounted to him. Thus many feel that Mark wrote from Peter's eyewitness recollections. Mark's outline is almost identical to Peter's sermon outlines of Acts 3:13-15 and 10:36-41.
- Jesus uses the term "Son of Man" 14 times in Mark suggesting He intends to fulfill the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14 "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, *One* like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds..."

Interesting facts

- The author was most likely John Mark. John was his Hebrew name. Mark was his Roman name. Thus Mark was a Roman writing primarily to Romans.
- The oldest Greek manuscripts end at **16:8** with the women too afraid to tell anyone about the empty tomb. More recent manuscripts add an ending that better matches the other Gospels and may have been added later. Good Bibles make note of this for the reader.
- John Mark is infamous for deserting Paul and Barnabas (Mark's cousin) on their first missionary journey. He later won back Paul and became an asset to the church-planting missionary.