

Mark

Genre | GOSPEL, HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Jesus is the enigmatic Messiah and Son of God who is leading the people of God in an exodus into a new stage of God's kingdom, as evidenced by his teachings, healings, and exorcisms and confirmed by his death and resurrection.

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR The Gospel of Mark is anonymous. Eusebius, the early church historian, writing in AD 326, preserved the words of Papias, an early church father. Papias quoted "the elder," probably John, as saying that Mark recorded Peter's preaching about the things Jesus said and did, but not in order. Thus Mark was considered the author of this Gospel even in the first century.

BACKGROUND According to the early church fathers, Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome just before or just after Peter's martyrdom. Further confirmation of the Roman origin of Mark's Gospel is found in Mark 15:21, where Mark noted that Simon, a Cyrenian who carried Jesus's cross, was the father of Alexander and Rufus, men apparently known to the believers in Rome. Most Bible scholars are convinced that Mark was the earliest Gospel and served as one of the sources for Matthew and Luke.

MESSAGE AND PURPOSE Mark's Gospel is a narrative about Jesus. Mark identifies his theme in the first verse: "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." That Jesus is the divine Son of God is the major emphasis of his Gospel. God announced it at Jesus's baptism in 1:11. Demons and unclean spirits recognized and acknowledged it in 3:11 and 5:7. God reaffirmed it at the transfiguration in 9:7. Jesus taught it parabolically in 12:1–12, hinted at it in 13:32, and confessed it directly in 14:61–62. Finally, the Roman centurion confessed it openly and without qualification in 15:39. Thus Mark's purpose was to summon people to repent and respond in faith to the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:1,15).

SUMMARY Mark's Gospel emphasizes actions and deeds. Jesus is on the go—healing, casting out demons, performing miracles, hurrying from place to place, and teaching. In Mark everything happens "immediately." As soon as one episode ends, another begins. The rapid pace slows down when Jesus enters Jerusalem (11:1). Thereafter, events are marked by days, and his final day by hours.

STRUCTURE Mark's Gospel begins with a Prologue (1:1–13), which is then followed by three major sections. The first (1:14–8:21) tells of Jesus's Galilean ministry. There Jesus healed and cast out demons and worked miracles. The second section (8:22–10:52) is transitional. Jesus began his journey that would take him to Jerusalem. The final section (11:1–16:8) involves a week in Jerusalem. From the time Jesus entered the city he was at odds with the religious leaders, who quickly brought about his execution. A brief appendix (16:9–20) records some of Jesus's appearances, his commissioning of his disciples, and his ascension.

Outline

I. **Prologue to the Gospel (1:1–13)**

II. **Jesus's Ministry in Galilee (1:14–8:21)**
- A. Events in and around Capernaum (1:14–45)
- B. Five conflict stories (2:1–3:6)
- C. Jesus appoints twelve apostles (3:7–19)
- D. Charges about Jesus's mental state (3:20–30)
- E. Jesus's spiritual family (3:31–35)
- F. Jesus speaks in parables (4:1–34)
- G. Jesus's authority revealed (4:35–5:43)
- H. Rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6)
- I. Jesus sends out his twelve disciples (6:7–13)
- J. Death of John the Baptist (6:14–29)
- K. Jesus feeds 5,000 people (6:30–52)
- L. A third summary of Jesus's ministry (6:53–56)
- M. God's word or the traditions of the elders? (7:1–23)
- N. Ministry beyond Galilee (7:24–8:21)

II. **On the Way to Jerusalem (8:22–10:52)**
- A. The blind man at Bethsaida (8:22–26)
- B. "You are the Messiah." (8:27–9:1)
- C. Transformation on the mountain (9:2–13)
- D. The disciples' failure to cast out an evil spirit (9:14–29)
- E. Jesus's second prediction of his death (9:30–32)
- F. Who's the greatest? (9:33–50)
- G. Jesus teaches about divorce and remarriage (10:1–12)
- H. Jesus blesses little children (10:13–16)
- I. The rich man and possessions (10:17–31)
- J. Jesus's third prediction of his death (10:32–34)
- K. James and John make a request (10:35–45)
- L. Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52)

III. **A Week in Jerusalem (11:1–16:8)**
- A. The royal procession (11:1–11)
- B. A barren tree (11:12–26)
- C. A series of conflict stories (11:27–12:44)
- D. Jesus predicts the temple's destruction (13:1–2)
- E. Jesus's Olivet Discourse (13:3–37)
- F. The Sanhedrin's plot to kill Jesus (14:1–2)
- G. Jesus anointed at Bethany (14:3–9)
- H. Judas makes a deal (14:10–11)
- I. The Passover meal (14:12–31)
- J. Jesus in Gethsemane (14:32–42)
- K. Jesus's arrest, trial, and crucifixion (14:43–15:47)
- L. An alarming visit to the tomb (16:1–8)

[IV. **Appendix: Jesus's Appearances (16:9–20)**]

apostolos

Greek pronunciation: [ah PAHSS tah lahss]

CSB translation: apostle

Uses in Mark's Gospel: 2
Uses in the NT: 80

Focus passage: Mark 3:14

The Greek noun ***apostolos*** comes from the common verb *apostellō* and literally means "one sent forth with a message." The noun did not attain the significance of being sent with authority until its adoption by Jesus and the NT writers. The original twelve disciples were chosen and named *apostles* by Jesus (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13); they were trained by him (see Acts 1:15–26) and were invested with his authority to lead the church to accomplish the task he gave it (Matt 28:18–20). Apostles had to be eyewitnesses of Jesus's resurrection (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8–9). Together with prophets, apostles were foundational for the early church (Eph 2:20), particularly in being responsible for giving divine revelation to God's people (Eph 3:5). Only 15 people are clearly referred to as *apostles* in the NT: the original Twelve, Matthias (Acts 1:26), Paul, and Barnabas (Acts 14:14).

sōzō

Greek pronunciation: [SOH zoh]

CSB translation: save

Uses in Mark's Gospel: 15
Uses in the NT: 106

Focus passage: Mark 13:13

The Greek verb ***sōzō*** literally means "to preserve" or "to keep safe" with an underlying idea of "making whole." The term can refer to saving someone from physical harm (Matt 8:25) or death (Matt 14:30; 15:30–31; Acts 27:20,31), healing (Mark 5:23,28; 6:56), exorcism (Luke 8:36), or deliverance from a severe ordeal (John 12:27; Heb 5:7; Jude 5). The most common use of *sōzō* in the NT, especially in Acts and the Epistles, is to describe the various aspects of salvation. Two important nouns are derived from *sōzō*: (1) *sotēria*, which means salvation (in the redemptive sense) or *deliverance* from physical death or danger (see Acts 7:25; 27:34); (2) *sotēr*, which means "Savior" and is always a reference to either the Father or Jesus Christ in the work of redemption.

enkataleipō

Greek pronunciation: [en kah tah LAY poh]

CSB translation: abandon

Uses in Mark's Gospel: 1
Uses in the NT: 10

Focus passage: Mark 15:34

The Greek verb ***enkataleipō*** is a double compound that produces an intensive form of a verb meaning "to lack or leave" (*leipō*). With one exception (Rom 9:29), each occurrence of the term in the NT means "forsake" or "abandon." In Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46, *enkataleipō* is used to translate the Aramaic word *sabach*, which in turn translates the original Hebrew *'azab* in Psalm 22:1. Jesus's quoting of this verse occurred toward the end of three hours of darkness (Mark 15:33) during which he endured God's wrath by being separated from the Father as payment for the sins of mankind. The word *enkataleipō* also occurs in Hebrews 13:5: "I will never . . . abandon you." Since this promise is addressed to believers, it indicates that while God was willing to *abandon* Jesus on the cross in order to redeem us, he is not now willing to *abandon* those whom he has redeemed.

Mark Timeline

75–50 BC

73
The Hittites destroy Babylon.

63
Pompey conquers Jerusalem.

58–51
Rome's Gallic wars begin after Julius Caesar becomes Roman governor of Gaul.

55
Pompey builds first stone amphitheater in Rome.

55–54
Julius Caesar invades Britain.

50 BC–AD 9

50
Circus Maximus is built in Rome.

44
Mark Antony controls Rome; Julius Caesar is assassinated.

40–37
Parthians conquer Jerusalem.

37
Herod becomes "king of the Jews."

31
Qumran is abandoned as a result of an earthquake in the vicinity of Jericho.

27
Octavian becomes Augustus Caesar.

AD 9–30

9
Jesus visits the temple at the age of 12.

14–37
Tiberius, Rome's second emperor

18–36
Caiaphas, Jewish high priest

29
Jesus is baptized and begins calling disciples.

29–30
Jesus's early ministry in Judea (John 2–4)

AD 30–33

30–32
Jesus's Galilean ministry (all four Gospels)

32
Jesus travels with disciples and engages in intensive training (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

32
Jesus's later ministry in Judea (Luke and John)

33
Jesus's Perean ministry (Luke and John)

33
Jesus's crucifixion, resurrection, exaltation (all four Gospels)

Places in Jesus's Ministry



Passion Week

SATURDAY

- Jesus anointed by Mary at Bethany (John 12:1–8; cp. Matt 26:6–13)

SUNDAY

- Jesus's "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem on a donkey (Matt 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–40; John 12:12–18)
  - *Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44)*

MONDAY

- Jesus cleansed the temple of money changers and those selling doves (Matt 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–17; Luke 19:45–46; cp. John 2:13–22)

TUESDAY

- Jesus taught in the temple (Matt 21:23–23:39; Mark 11:27–12:44; Luke 20:1–21:4)
  - *Jesus wisely answered the entrapments of the Jewish leaders in the temple*
  - *Jesus lamented over Jerusalem's rejection of God's will*
- Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple and then taught the disciples about the signs of the end of the age on the Mount of Olives (Matt 24:1–25:46; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 21:5–36)

THURSDAY

- Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples (Matt 26:20–35; Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–38)
  - *Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1–20)*
  - *Jesus reinstituted the Passover as the Lord's Supper, which now proclaims his sacrificial death*
  - *Jesus taught his disciples in the upper room and prayed (John 13:31–17:26)*
- Jesus predicted Peter's denials and the disciples' abandoning him (Matt 26:31–35; Mark 14:27–31; Luke 22:31–34)
- Jesus was deeply troubled as he prayed in Gethsemane for the cup of God's wrath to pass from him, but he committed himself to the Father's will (Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46)
- Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested (Matt 26:47–6; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:1–12)

FRIDAY

Jesus was put on trial before Annas, Caiaphas the high priest, and the Sanhedrin (Matt 26:57–75; Mark 14:53–72; Luke 22:54–71; John 18:13–27)

- *Peter denied Jesus three times*

- Jesus was put on trial before Pilate (Matt 27:1–2, 11–14; Mark 15:1–5; Luke 23:1–5; John 18:28–38)
  - *Judas hanged himself (Matt 27:3–10)*
- Jesus was taken before Herod (Luke 23:6–12)
- Jesus was taken back to Pilate (Matt 27:15–26; Mark 15:6–15; Luke 23:13–25; John 18:38–19:16)
  - *Barabbas was released*
- Jesus was mocked as a king and then crucified as "the King of the Jews" (Matt 27:27–56; Mark 15:16–41; Luke 23:26–49; John 19:16–37)
  - *Jesus cried out, feeling abandoned by the Father*
  - *Jesus cried out, entrusting his spirit to the Father*
- Jesus was buried (Matt 27:57–66; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42)

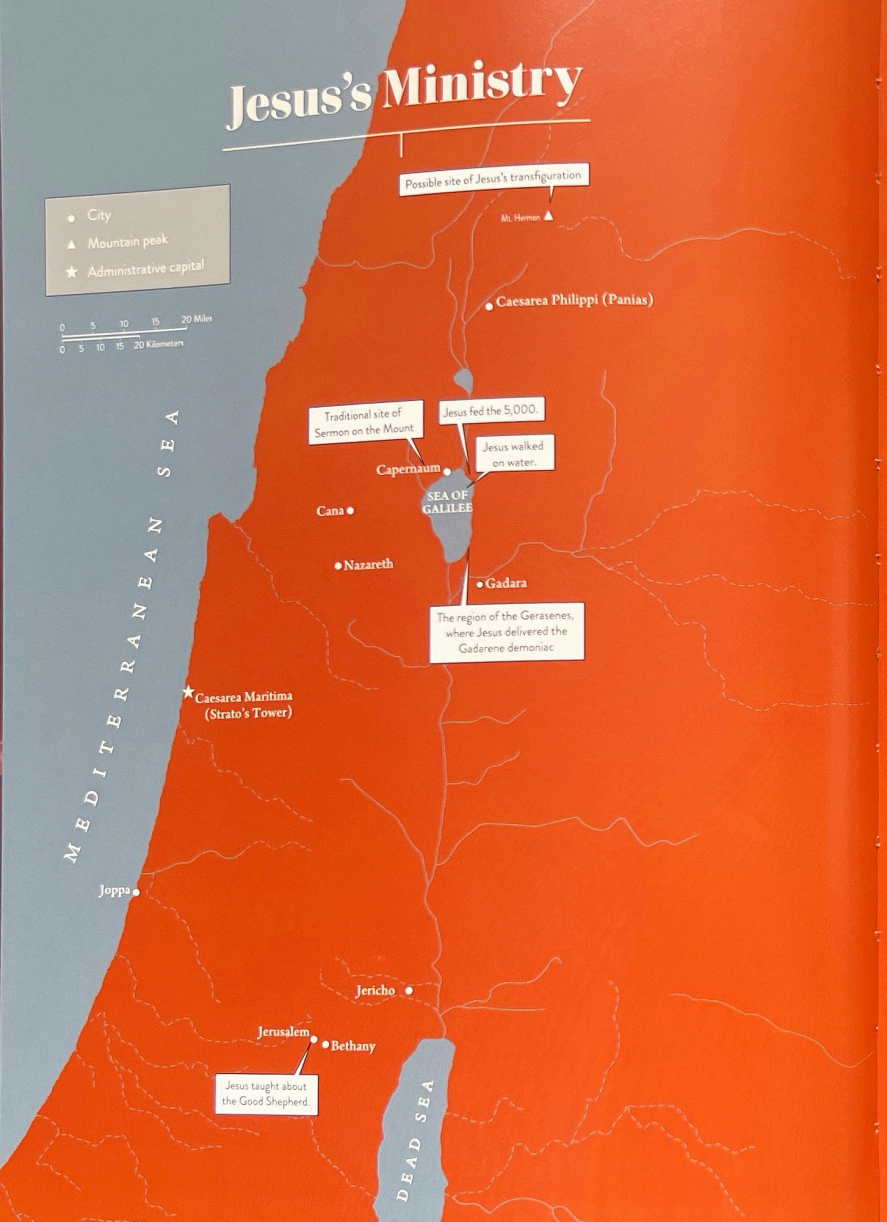
SUNDAY

- Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to some of his followers (Matt 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–49; John 20:1–23)
  - *To the women leaving the empty tomb (Matt 28:9–10; cp. John 20:11–18)*
  - *To Simon Peter (Luke 24:34)*
  - *To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–31)*
  - *To the disciples (without Thomas) in a locked room in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36–49; John 20:19–23)*

Cross Connections

PSALM 22	MARK 15
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" *(Ps 22:1)*	Jesus cried out with a loud voice, . . . "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" *(Mark 15:34)*
"Everyone who sees me mocks me; they sneer and shake their heads" *(Ps 22:7)*	• Passersby insulted Jesus on the cross and shook their heads *(Mark 15:29)* • Chief priests and scribes mocked Jesus on the cross *(Mark 15:31)* • The two criminals crucified with Jesus taunted him *(Mark 15:32)*
"He relies on the LORD; let him save him" *(Ps 22:8)*	Passersby, chief priests, and scribes taunted Jesus to "save himself" *(Mark 15:29–32)*
"Many bulls surround me. . . . They open their mouths against me. . . . Dogs have surrounded me; a gang of evildoers has closed in on me" *(Ps 22:12–13,16)*	• The crowd of Jews shouted, "Crucify him!" (Mark 15:11–14) • A whole company of Roman soldiers gathered to mock Jesus and then crucify him *(Mark 15:16–20)*
"You put me into the dust of death" *(Ps 22:15)*	Jesus died on the cross and was buried in a tomb *(Mark 15:37,42–46)*
"They pierced my hands and my feet" *(Ps 22:16)*	Jesus was crucified *(Mark 15:24–25)*
"They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing" *(Ps 22:18)*	Roman soldiers divided Jesus's garments and then cast lots to see who would get them *(Mark 15:24)*

Jesus's Ministry



Jesus's Ministry in Jerusalem

