

Through the Bible Book by Book

New Testament

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MARK

Theme: Written for a military people (the Romans), the Gospel of Mark gives a brief narrative of that three years' campaign of the Captain of our salvation, carried on and completed for the deliverance of our souls and the defeat of Satan, by His (Christ's) labors, sufferings, death, resurrection and final triumph. In this narrative, Jesus is set forth as the mighty Conqueror.

Author: Mark was the son of Mary, a woman of Jerusalem, whose house was open to the early Christians. Acts 12:12. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary tour. The contemplation of the dangers facing the party as they journeyed to unknown regions. seems to have unnerved him so that he returned to Jerusalem. Acts 13:13. Later, Barnabas' proposal to take Mark with him on their second tour brought about a sharp contention between him and Paul. The apostle, viewing the matter from the standpoint of good judgment, thought it best not to take with them one who had proved himself to be a "slacker." The sympathetic Barnabas thought that Mark should have an opportunity to redeem himself, so separating himself from Paul he took him with him to Cyprus. Acts 15:36-41. John Mark justified the confidence of Barnabas in him, for later records show that he made a success in the ministry. Peter makes favorable mention of him (I Peter 5:13) and Paul changed his opinion concerning him to the extent of writing: "**Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.**" II Timothy 4:11.

The abundant testimony of the Church Fathers makes it fairly certain that Mark accompanied Peter to Rome as his interpreter, and that he compiled this Gospel from Peter's preaching. His Roman name - Mark - seems to point to the fact that he was brought up in Roman circles. These facts would make him peculiarly fitted to write a Gospel for the Romans.

To Whom Written: The following facts will indicate how the Gospel is adapted to the Romans in particular:

1. The briefness of the Gospel, its vivid depicting of scenes marked by energy and movement reveal it as peculiarly adapted to such an active, energetic people as the Romans. The main characteristic of this book is the constant recurrence of the words "**straightway**," and "**forthwith**," conveying the idea of military activity and promptness. One writer has remarked that the style of Mark resembles that used by Julius Caesar in his history of some of his campaigns.
2. Money is reduced to Roman currency.
3. Roman division of time is used.
4. Explanation of Hebrew customs are given (7:3, 4). This shows, at least, that the book was written to Gentiles.
5. There are practically no references to O. T. prophecies after Chapter 1. The Romans, who were unacquainted with those Scriptures would not be likely to understand them.

Contents:

Since Mark contains the same matter as Matthew (though in different arrangement), we will not give an extended outline. We suggest that the student read the entire book and then learn the following analysis: Keeping in mind that Mark is portraying Christ as the mighty Conqueror, let us go through the Gospel and see how this thought is carried out.

First of all, Mark describes the coming of the great Conqueror by recording -

1. His name and heralding. 1:1-8.
2. His initial victory over Satan. 1:9-13.
3. The first proclamation of His kingdom. 1:14-20.
4. His first works of power. 1:21 to 2:12.

He describes the conflict of the mighty King by exhibiting Him as -

1. Enlisting subjects for His kingdom - apostles, publicans and sinners, the sick and needy. 2:13 to 3:35.
2. Explaining the growth of His kingdom. 4:1-34.
3. Conquering nature, demons, disease and death. 4:35 to 5:43.
4. Opposed by the people (6:1-6), Herod (6: 14:29), and by the scribes and Pharisees (7:1-23; 8:10-21).

He exhibits the Conqueror claiming His right to the kingdom of power and presents Him -

1. Teaching His followers how victory was to be won in His kingdom - by suffering and death. 8:31-38; 10:28-45.
2. Claiming His right to the kingdom, in Jerusalem,
 - By His triumphal entry (11:1-11),
 - By His cleansing of the temple (11:15-19),
 - By His defeat of those leaders who questioned His authority (11:27 to 12:44),
 - By the prophecy of His coming again in glory (13:1-37).

Mark shows how Christ prepares for the setting up of His kingdom by His -

1. Preparing for death. 14:1-72.
2. Yielding to death. 15:1-47.

Finally he shows Jesus taking the kingdom (spiritual) by His -

1. Conquering death. 16:1-14.
2. Sending His followers to proclaim His triumph. 16:15-20.

~ end of Mark ~

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