



The Gospel of Mark

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1st page of Mark in Lindisfarne Gospels, c. AD 715.

Latin: "Initium evangelii Jesu Christi, filii Dei"

("The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God").

What Where and When was Lindisfarne?

Lindisfarne, also known as "Holy Island", is a jewel in the sea off the east coast of Northumberland in northern England. Around AD 635, the Irish missionary Aidan founded the Lindisfarne community as a mission center on the island.

He had been sent by King Oswald of Northumbria from the island of Iona to preach the gospel to the pagan Anglo-Saxons. By the time of Aidan's death in 651, the Gospel was bearing fruit and increasing throughout Northumbria.

Author and Audience and Date

As the eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry began to pass away, it became needful to write down the events of Jesus' life from an apostolic source

- written in Rome, from the remembrances of the apostle Peter, as his death drew near (2 Peter 1.14 LSB)
- Peter relayed to Mark what he had experience walking with Jesus for 3 years
- Testimony of Papias (c. A.D. 120) cited by Eusebius, who says of Mark:
 - he was not an eyewitness, but had an earnest desire not to misrepresent anything
 - he was the writer for Peter and recorded Peter's words
- recognized by many fathers from the earliest days of the church
- Mark's Gospel mirrors Peter's sermon in Acts 10.34-43 LSB

Who was Mark?

- John Mark, companion of Paul and Barnabas on Paul's 1st missionary journey (Acts 12.25 LSB)
- He was the cause of division between Paul and Barnabas. They were later reconciled.
- His mother was Mary of Jerusalem, who hosted gatherings of believers in her house (Acts 12:12)
- In 1 Peter 5:13, Peter calls him "my son," in 1st Peter 5.13 LSB<> suggesting a close

spiritual relationship.

- He served as Peter's interpreter and wrote down his recollections of Jesus, forming the basis of the Gospel.

Audience and Date

- primary audience was the Gentiles, especially Romans
- but also for all the people groups throughout the Roman Empire.
- Most likely the earliest of all the Gospels, c. AD 60
- There are many *Latinisms*, written from Rome, where Peter was soon to be martyred
 - Frequent use of **καὶ εὐθύς** ("and immediately") resembling Latin "et statim" — giving a brisk, action-oriented style characteristic of Roman rhetoric.
 - Transliteration of Roman names and titles (e.g. Pilatus, Herodes Antipas, Caesar).

Some Examples of Latinisms

- **κεντυρίων** (kentyriōn) – **centurion** - Latin origin: *centurio* (e.g. 'century')
Other Gospels use the Greek form ἑκατόνταρχος (hekatontarchos).
Mark uses the Latin military term for a Roman officer in charge of 100 soldiers.
- **λεγεών** (legion) – **legion** - Latin origin: *legio*
Roman military unit of several thousand soldiers. The "Legion" of demons in the Gerasene demoniac story evokes Roman power imagery.
- **πραιτώριον** (praitōrion) – **praetorium** - Latin origin: *praetorium*
Official residence or headquarters of the Roman governor (praetor).

These are just a few of many

Structure

- Simpler and less tightly structured than Matthew
- Reads like an action-packed, fast-moving, dramatic narrative, a highlight reel
- If Matthew focuses on the words of Jesus, Mark focuses on His deeds
- Recounts little extended teaching of Jesus like Matthew
- shortest Gospel - moves the quickly through the ministry of Jesus.
- εὐθύς (euthus) "immediately" occurs 42 times, to keep the action moving

Why do you think Mark choose to keep the narrative moving at such a quick pace?

What is the benefit of moving action along from scene to scene in a rapid manner?

- Mark is writing the first Gospel and likely feels the pressure of getting events written so that the good news of Jesus will be preserved.
- Rather than recounting large blocks of teaching and other things, Mark moves the story along.
- This rapid pace is also helpful in keeping the attention of the reader / hearing
- It's like an exciting story, a "page-turner"

Outline

Part 1 — The Powerful Ministry of Jesus (1.1-8.26)

Part 2 — The Suffering Ministry of Jesus (8:27–16:20)

Transition

And He continued asking them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” And He warned them to tell no one about Him. (Mark 8:29-30 LSB)

the Gospel moves forward from here into Part 2 with Jesus facing increasing hostility leading up to the crucifixion.

The Endings of Mark

- The earliest manuscripts end at 16.8

And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment were gripping them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (Mark 16:8 LSB)

The Shorter Ending

But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

- Only found in a few very late manuscripts (8th century and later)
- Practically no one considers this ending to be original
- Included in only a very few English translations, always in brackets

The Longer Ending (16.9-20)

- Codex Alexandrinus (c. AD 400–440) has the longer ending without any notation.
- Other manuscript evidence from the same time and later
- Writings of church fathers Irenaeus and Tatian show the longer ending was in circulation by the late 2nd century
- Practically no modern scholars consider it original
- Most translations still include it, though usually bracketed or commented to indicate that it is not part of the original text

Likely Solution

- The original ending is lost (wouldn't it be great if it was found?)
- Well-meaning scribes constructed the longer ending, using material from the other 3 gospels
- This ending agrees with the other gospels, and nothing in it contradicts apostolic teaching
- "Amending" the text happens elsewhere, especially in the Byzantine text type, e.g. The Lord's Prayer in Luke 11.2-5 KJV is made to match the form in Matthew 6.9-13 KJV

The Takeaways

- Be aware of the issue - don't try to avoid it if someone brings it up
- Know that in no way does it change or compromise the Gospel proclamation
- It is not an essential matter, and should not be a cause for division or contention

Themes

The Gospel of God

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Mark 1:1 LSB)

To be preached!

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 LSB)

Now after John had been delivered up into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, (Mark 1:14 LSB)

- κηρύσσω "to proclaim as a herald" - occurs 14 times
- kerygma, proclamation with authority, herald's announcement from the Imperial Palace
- "charismatic" is subservient to "kerygmatic"

Son of God

Confessed 3 times - each one is crucial

By the Preacher

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Mark 1:1 LSB)

By the devils

And whenever the unclean spirits were seeing Him, they would fall down before Him and cry out, saying, "You are the Son of God!" (Mark 3:11 LSB)

By the Gentile soldier

When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39 NASB95)

Other verses showing Jesus as the Son of God

and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." (Mark 1:11 LSB)

And immediately there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Jesus the Nazarene? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:23-24 LSB)

And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; and crying

out with a loud voice, he *said, “What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? (Mark 5:6-7 LSB)

Suffering Servant

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31 LSB)

For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise again three days later.” (Mark 9:31 LSB)

“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will deliver Him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.” (Mark 10:33-34 LSB)

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45 LSB)

Discipleship

Disciples display many failures and weaknesses

- They are hard of heart (e.g. Mark 6:52 LSB)
- They are spiritually weak (e.g. Mark 14:32–42 LSB)
- They are quite dim-witted (e.g. Mark 8:14–21 LSB)

Sounds like us, doesn't it? But take heart, these are the kind of people the Lord calls, and everything changes after the resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit!

Disciples give up everything else for Jesus

Those who are called leave everything to follow Jesus (occupation and family)

He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” **And immediately they left their nets and followed Him.** And going on a little

farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. And immediately He called them; and **they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.** (Mark 1:16-20 LSB)

And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax office, and He *said to him, “Follow Me!” **And he stood up and followed Him.** (Mark 2:14 LSB)

- See also Mark 8:34–9:1 LSB, Mark 10:17–31 LSB

“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it (Mark 8:34-35 LSB)

Assignment

Respond to the following:

Knowing

1. Who is the primary source for Mark's writing?
2. Who is Mark's main target audience?
3. What word does Mark use repeatedly to keep the action moving?

Reflecting

Choose two or three of the following:

1. Write a one paragraph summary of the Gospel of Mark
2. Write a one sentence summary of the Gospel of Mark. (probably harder)
3. If you were to name one personal takeaway from the Gospel of Mark, what would it be?

Communicating

In Mark we see how often the disciples see God do amazing things, but then later fail to trust Him. We can probably all recall times when we have acted this same way. As you are sharing the gospel with some folks you just met, one asks you to talk about some specific wonderful

thing the Lord has done in your life, and how it changed you, What would you say?

Preparing for Next Class

- **Read** chapter 5 of *Introducing the New Testament* (Luke)
- **Read** Luke chapters 1, 15, 24
- **Watch** The Bible Project [Luke Part 1](#) and [Luke Part 2](#) below

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