

## The Gospel of Simon Peter

### Mark Introduction – 1:3



~ **O**ur *Spiritual Safari* takes a wildly sharp and sudden turn in the road on our expedition through the entire Word of God as we pull away from Exodus and head into the Gospel written by our brother John Mark. Mark, chronologically, was the first person to write a Gospel; and his Gospel is the second book of the New Testament, of course. John Mark was not an apostle, though. He was the nephew of Barnabus; and he began with Paul and Barnabus on Paul's first missionary journey, you may recall. It didn't end well, with Mark abandoning Paul and Barnabus and running home when things turned darkly Satanic.

John is His Jewish name while Mark is his Latin surname. Luke writes, in the Book of Acts, "... and when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." And this is the first historical reference to Mark we have in Scripture when Peter is released from prison. Mark's mother was a wealthy and prominent Christian in the early Jewish church and the church, evidently, met in her home. Mark was, apparently, the spiritual son of Simon Peter who says, "... the church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son." And the Gospel of Mark has often been viewed as the Gospel of Simon Peter. We'll see some evidence of that as we go along.

Mark joins Paul right before Paul leaves on his first missionary journey. Paul doesn't want anything to do with Mark after that for a while. We'll see complete failure by Mark on that first journey. Mark had second thoughts and jumped ship and went back home. Later, we will see Mark make good and reconcile with Paul. I think Mark had his own reasons for abandoning the first missionary journey that were perfectly legitimate to him. Someone has said Mark got his facts of the Gospel from Peter and his explanation of

the Gospel from Paul; and I suppose I can go along with that - because it clarifies the need for all four Gospels.

Matthew was written for the nation Israel and to religious people. Mark is written, very specifically, for the Roman man. This Gospel is geared completely towards the Roman mind. It is written for the strong man because the man of strength ruled the world when Mark wrote and did so for the next millennium. The Romans had subjugated the world at that time and had brought peace, for the most part, and safety of living, justice and law and order; but it was forced on the people with an iron heel that came down on their necks; and the price that was paid was total brokenness. We're talking about a super strong dictatorship.

Dr. Gregory expressed it as such, "... the Roman was trying whether human power, taking the form of law regulated by political principles (of which a regard for law and justice was most conspicuous) could perfect humanity by subordinating the individual to the state and by making the state universal." And that is an extremely tremendous statement, by the way.

Culver, in his book on Daniel, has this paraphrased statement: The Romans gave to the world the kind of peace that the current United Nations assembly is attempting to offer the world. Well, the world has seen peace pushed down on them by some very strong men and we still have what we have today – no peace! So, the world is currently looking for that strong man to appear again. Rome represented human power and might in the ancient world. Because the world was looking for that power at that time it led nicely to dictatorship; the power vested in one man. This is the danger of the hour today and that's the direction we're moving in.

Gregory, again, in this connection says, "... the Roman was the mightiest worker, conqueror, organizer and ruler; the man who was Cesar and who swayed the scepter over a universal empire brought Cesarism, which was the last inevitable result of Roman development. And when he had been made to feel most deeply that natural justice in the hands of a human despot is a dreadful thing for sinful man, the Holy Spirit proposes to commend to man's acceptance Jesus of Nazareth as his Sovereign and Savior; the expected Deliverer of the world."

We will, inevitably, come to an ultimate police state with one satanic man ruling over the entire world of sinful man. Mankind will cry out for deliverance at that time. The only One that will be able to deliver will be the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns to establish His Kingdom. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, friends. That power alone can extend mercy. The Romans cried out for mercy - but all they got was more power! It was a lopsided day when no man dared resist that power! To resist was fatal and to flee was futile. In this impossible day, God sends a message to this Roman segment of the population; and he chose John Mark to do the writing.

Simon Peter's position on the Gospel is how most of the early church felt. Most believe today that Mark took his Gospel from Simon Peter. Papius, an early church father states, "... Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote down carefully all that he recollected; but not according to the order of Christ speaking or works." Eusebius says, "... such a light of piety shown into the minds of those who heard Peter that they were not satisfied without a written account of his doctrine. They earnestly besought Mark that he would leave the preaching of Peter for them in a written account."

Here we have that Gospel presented and it is a Gospel of action. Simon Peter was a man of action, too; so, here in Mark we're going to move very fast. Christ lays aside the robes of Royalty we saw in Matthew. The Lord Jesus girds Himself in a towel and moves in to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Mark will present Christ as the servant. Yes, Christ was the King in Matthew, but He is seen as the servant here. NOT the servant of man, however, the servant of GOD the Father!

For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. Isaiah tells us that God says, "behold my servant in Whom My soul delighteth; I put My Spirit upon Him." Bernard, in his 1864 lectures, said of Mark, "... St. Peter's sayings to Cornelius has been well noted as a fit motto for this Gospel." God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with Power and Christ went about doing good works and healing all who were oppressed of the devil.

In a book it says that a man called Christ went about doing good things. The author says, "... it's disconcerting to me that I am satisfied with just going about." What are you doing today? Are you protesting with politicians that are part-time preachers? I noticed they're all talking about doing good things - but they're just going about. As they go about, they aren't doing any good. Jesus came in all the fullness of His humanity and yet in His deity and doing good things. But that only sets up the possibility for the Gospel at this point. After the resurrection they must go into the entire world and preach the Gospel.

Mark's style is going to be brief and blunt, pertinent and piffy, short and sweet and stripped of all excess verbiage rendering the point bare at all times. Action and accomplishment are what we shall see in this leg of our expedition. Jesus isn't adorned with words and narrative here; no, He is stripped and girded for action. The writing style is simplistic, too. The writings are designed for the masses on the street.

The word "and" occurs one thousand three hundred thirty-one times; if you doubt that - count them! Quite frankly, if you turned in a paper in college with this ratio of "and" to nouns and adjectives you would fail the course. "And" is a very potent word when used right and it is a word of action. "And" means something has to follow. That may be why my mom named me Andy. The minute you say "and" you're obligated to keep talking. You can't stop with that and that suits me well. You can't end a sentence with the word "and." Or maybe I just did! ~

***1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;***

***2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.***

***3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.***

~ We don't have a genealogy as we have in Matthew and Luke because a servant needs references, not a pedigree. All we're concerned with in this Gospel is: can the Lord Jesus Christ do the job? That's where we go in this

portion of our safari. I don't stress a division for this book of the Bible - but Mark is filled with more miracles than any other, so I make a few. There are a few parables, but not many. There are quite a few unique teachings and accounts we will see. A beautiful word illustration will culminate in a supernatural resurrection!

So, as we pick up in our safari here is also where we have to leave off in this report. In this brief first chapter, Jesus will be baptized and announced by John the Baptist; approved of by the Father, tempted by Satan and He begins His ministry in Galilee. Jesus calls four disciples, casts out demons, heals Peter's wife's mother, prays and heals a leper – and that seems to be just one days work! We have more content in a single chapter in chapter one of Mark than any other in the Bible – even Genesis chapter one. This chapter covers the ministry of John the Baptist and calls back the prophecies of Malachi and Isaiah.

Well, as always, we are going to be looking for the Lord Jesus Christ. When we finally see Him, we need to remember, the look saves but the gaze sanctifies! Here, we have another beginning in a Gospel. This is not the beginning of Jesus and it's not the beginning we have in the other Gospels, of course. The beginning here is different from most of the other beginnings we have in the Bible. This marks the beginning of Christ's public ministry; and we'll see more of that than we did in Matthew. Mark, like Simon Peter, will bring us about as close to Jesus as we are going to get regarding knowing Him in the flesh; but, of course, we know Him no longer after the flesh today. That means anything is possible in this Gospel ~

