

Bible Synthesis V
(Bible Survey)

INTRODUCTION TO
MARK

1. INTRODUCTION

- (1) Mark is the Gospel of Action. The words, “straightway,” “immediately,” occur 40 times in the book. Mark’s style is vivid, forceful, picturesque, and simple.
- (2) Mark is concerned mainly with the Galilean ministry of Christ and the “Passion Week” — It has been called little more than “a passion account with a prologue.”
- (3) In Mark’s Gospel miracles are much more numerous than parables.
 - In Mark 19 miracles to 4 parables
 - In Matthew 21 miracles to 15 parables
 - In Luke 20 miracles to 19 parables
- (4) The Worker is also presented as Teacher.
 - 1. Originality, methods, popularity, and fearlessness of the Teacher are presented.
 - 2. There is more summarizing of His teaching than is generally supposed.
 - 3. His works prepared for His words rather than His words preparing for His works.

2. WRITER

- (1) Mark, also called John, was not one of the Twelve Apostles. He was only an associate of the Apostles, a “minister” (Acts 13:5).
- (2) Mark, the son of Mary (Acts. 12:12)
 - 1. She was evidently a woman of influence and means among the early Christians.
 - 2. Her home was a rallying place for the early disciples (Christians).
- (3) He was a nephew of Barnabas (Col. 4:10).
- (4) He may have been a convert of Peter (I Pet. 5:13).
- (5) He went with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but he turned back (Acts 13:13; 15:37–38).

It is amazing that Mark, having failed badly as a servant, should have presented the Lord Jesus Christ as God’s perfect Servant. But it may be, as so often happens, his failure made him a far greater servant himself later on, and, as such, one who could very well present and interpret Christ’s servitude to mankind.

Mark's association with the leaders of the early Churches gave him exceptional opportunities to know about Christ. No doubt, what he wrote was from that knowledge, yet he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Clement of Alexandria, one of the early Church leaders, described the impression made by the graphic preaching of Peter, the eagerness of his hearers to possess in writing what had delighted them when they heard, and their coming to Mark, Peter's companion, to entreat him to put Peter's words into writing. He reports that Mark complied with their request, and that Peter has sanctioned the work. Justin Martyr referred to Mark as the "Memoirs" or "Gospel of St. Peter."

- (6) Paul refused to take Mark on the second missionary journey, and because of that, Barnabas and Paul divided. Mark went with Barnabas to Cypress (Acts. 15:39–40).
 - (7) Mark and Paul were reconciled later on (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24).
 - (8) He was with Peter, in "Babylon" (I Pet. 5:13). [Some think "Babylon" possibly refers to Rome. Was Peter ever in Rome? We don't know for sure.]
 - (9) He seems to have been with Timothy in Ephesus, and Paul called for Timothy to bring him (II Tim. 4:11). Paul was then in prison.
- **Note:** Mark's biography proves that one failure in a life does not mean the end — that there can be restoration and usefulness later.

3. RECIPIENTS

(1) For Gentiles in General

- 1. It omits practically all reference to Old Testament predictions, excepting that it quotes Christ's references to them.
- 2. It omits the genealogy, birth, and infancy of Christ.
- 3. It explains certain Jewish words and customs. Such explanations would be necessary for Gentiles, but not for Jews.

(2) For Romans in Particular

- 1. The Romans were a people of action and strong government. Mark is a book of action (see **Introduction**, above).
- 2. This Gospel sets forth Christ as the Servant of God.
 - (1. Christ is presented as a Man of mighty energy and power.
 - (2. He is presented as a Servant in a lowly sense.
- 3. Mark also presents Christ as a mighty Worker whose will is *law*.
 - (1. Christ is set forth as the Master over the kingdom of disease and death.
 - (2. In Mark's Gospel, Christ sets forth the laws of the invisible Kingdom which is founded on righteousness.

4. DATE

Date of writing — Probably 67 or 68 A.D.

Dr. Thiessen said it was written immediately after the death of Peter. That would have been after 67 A.D.

5. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

(1) The probable purpose of writing is evangelistic.

(2) It presents Jesus as the Servant.

(3) It places an emphasis upon the *works* rather than on the *words* of Jesus. It is a book of actions rather than words. [The Romans were a people of action.]

(4) It stresses the mighty power of Jesus. [The Romans respected power. They were a people of strong government.]

6. THEME

Christ as Servant

7. KEY PASSAGE

Mark 10:45

8. KEY TERMS

“straightway,” “immediately” — 40 times

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OUTLINE OF
MARK

- 1. Preparation of the Servant —1:1–13**
- 2. Ministry of the Servant in Galilee —1:14 — 7:23**
- 3. Ministry of the Servant North and East of Galilee —7:24 — 9:50**
- 4. Ministry of the Servant on the Way to Jerusalem —10:1–52**
- 5. Ministry of the Servant in Jerusalem —11:1 — 13:37**
- 6. Submission of the Servant to Death —14:1 — 15:47**
- 7. Triumph of the Servant —16:1–20**
(His resurrection and Ascension)