

Quarter Three: The Book of Mark

Jill Morikone

Lesson 1—The Beginning of the Gospel

Sunday: The Failed Missionary

June 30, 2024

- **Last Quarter:** “The Great Controversy”
 - By Elder Mark Finley

- **This Quarter:** “The Book of Mark”
 - By Dr. Tom Shepherd
 - Senior research professor of NT at the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews

 - **The gospels**
 - Find salvation

 - Find & experience Jesus
 - Perfect life of ministering – teaching, healing, loving, serving
 - Perfect substitutionary sacrifice – on the cross for our sins
 - Resurrection & ascension

 - **The gospels**
 - 3 synoptic gospels (from Gk word, meaning “see together”)
 - Gospels of Matthew, Mark & Luke – more historical; describe similar stories / miracles, from different points of view

 - John – covers a different time span, more theological discourses, much of Jesus’ ministry is in Judea

 - **The gospels:**
 - **Matthew**
 - Written for Jewish audience (even though written in Greek)
 - Does not explain Jewish customs

 - **Mark**
 - Written for Gentile audience
 - Explains Jewish customs

 - First of the gospels written (Matthew & Luke drew from his material)

 - Shortest gospel (16 chapters)

 - More action-packed than other gospels
 - Brief on teaching
 - Full of miracles

 - **Luke**
 - Written for Gentiles
 - Uses Roman dating
 - Explains Jewish customs & geography

- Possibly written for Jews outside of Palestine, as well
- 2 Volume work:
 - Jesus life on earth (Luke)
 - Jesus' work through His followers (Acts)
- **John**
 - Written for 2nd generation of believers
 - Transition between 1st generation who knew Jesus personally
 - 2nd generation who knew Him through testimony of others
 - For instance, “touching” is absent in the miracles of Jesus (prevalent in Matthew, Mark, Luke)
- **Mark**
 - No introduction to Jesus Christ
 - No genealogy, no discussion of His pre-incarnate state
 - No story of His birth (like Matthew & Luke)
 - Opening statement assumes knowledge of who He is:
 - Mark 1:1- “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
 - Begins with John the Baptist & beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry
 - Much of His Galilean ministry
 - Almost nothing of final Judean ministry in AD 30
 - Focus on suffering: written to those enduring persecution
 - Half of Mark is devoted to Jesus teaching on the suffering Messiah (& suffering of His followers)
 - Final 1/3 dedicated to the last week of Jesus' life on earth
 - Focus on Great Controversy theme:
 - Jesus in a constant battle with forces of evil
 - Satan himself
 - Demon possessed persons
 - Forces of nature
 - Religious leaders
 - His own family
 - Revelation / Secrecy Motif
 - Jesus commands demons & those He heals to keep quiet about who He is
 - Why?
 - Why would a gospel want to keep quiet about who He is?
 - Called “Messianic Secret” (in scholarship)
 - At the end, the secrecy is replaced with a powerful revelation of Jesus

- Two divisions of Mark:
 - **Who is Jesus?**
 - Chapt 1 – Chapt 8
 - Answer given in His miracles & teaching
 - Toward the middle of the book, someone *not demon possessed* answers that question
 - Peter in Mark 8:29 – “You are the Christ”
 - **Where is Jesus going?**
 - Chapt 9 – 16
 - Answer: He’s going to the Cross
 - Not expected for the Messiah who was supposed to conquer the Romans
- From the Lesson: “It is a most remarkable story, told in a terse, fast-moving style with little commentary from the Gospel writer himself. He simply tells the story, and then lets the words, the deeds, the actions speak for themselves regarding the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth.”
- **This Week: “The Beginning of the Gospel”**
 - Who wrote the gospels?
 - None are specifically mentioned – John comes the closest
 - 2 Associated with an apostle
 - Matthew
 - Written by Matthew, the apostle & tax collector
 - John (brother of James)
 - After returning from the Isle of Patmos
 - Last book written in the NT
 - 2 Associated with companion of an apostle
 - Luke
 - Companion of Paul
 - John Mark
 - Companion / follower of Peter
 - Peter called John Mark “his son” (1 Pet 5:13)
 - Early tradition holds that Mark was an interpreter of Peter in Rome
 - Cousin of Barnabas – accompanied Paul on first missionary journey
 - This week:
 - Study life of John Mark
 - Early failure & eventual recovery
 - Opening section of Mark

Memory Text: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.’” (Mark 1:14, 15, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Failed Missionary (Jill)
 - Acts 12:12; Acts 13:1 – 5, 13 – John Mark as a missionary with Paul & Barnabas; discouraged, worn out & quit
- 2. **Monday:** A Second Chance (Ryan)
 - Acts 15:36 – 39 – disagreement between Paul & Barnabas over Mark – Barnabas took Mark on a missionary journey; reconciliation between Mark & Paul & Mark & Peter worked closely together, too
- 3. **Tuesday:** The Messenger (SQ)
 - Mark 1:1 – 8 – John the Baptist, preparing the way for Jesus / call for repentance
- 4. **Wednesday:** Jesus' Baptism (Daniel)
 - Mark 1:9 – 13 – Jesus' baptism (all 3 of the Godhead present); the temptation of Jesus
- 5. **Thursday:** The Gospel According to Jesus (James)
 - Mark 1:14, 15 – Jesus' 3-fold gospel
 - Fulfillment of 70 week prophecy; repentance

Sunday: The Failed Missionary

Acts 12:12; Acts 13:1 – 5, 13

- Introduction to John Mark (Acts 12)
 - Peter's miraculous release from prison (mid AD 40's)
 - Peter released & brought out of the prison & angel left him
 - Acts 12:11 – "...Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people."
 - Acts 12:12 – "So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together prayer."
 - Mary was a wealthy supporter of the church
 - Prayer meeting for Peter held at her home
 - Knocked on the door & Rhoda left him standing at the door
- Missionary work of John Mark (Acts 13)
 - First missionary journey of Saul / Paul & Barnabas (About AD 46)
 - Covered 1,235 miles
 - Set up:
 - Acts 12:25 – "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark."
 - Returned back to the Antioch as the base for their Christian mission
 - Finished giving the donations from the church in Antioch to the church in Jerusalem
 - Brought Mark with them – young man

- Setting apart for mission
 - Acts 13:1 – “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”
 - No apostles at the church in Antioch (unlike the church at Jerusalem)
 - 5 prominent leaders:
 - Barnabas – son of encouragement – an evangelist, full of the Spirit, acted as a representative of the church in Jerusalem
 - Barnabas = cousin of John Mark (Col 4:10)
 - Simeon (or Simon) also called Niger (black) – possible Simon of Cyrene (from Mark 15:21)
 - Lucius of Cyrene – from a Roman colony on the African coast
 - Manaen – high-level Jewish aristocrat – childhood friend of Herod Antipas. Showed that the gospel could reach the upper social class
 - Saul (Jewish name) turned Paul (Roman name)
 - Acts 13:2, 3 – “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ (3) Then, having fasted & prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”
 - **Takeaway: Fasting & prayer precedes any significant work for God**
 - Fasted & prayed & received direction
 - Fasted & prayed & went forward with anointing those prepared for mission
- John Mark’s role
 - Acts 13:5 – “And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also have John as their **assistant**.”
 - Assistant = helper or servant
 - Acts 13:13 – “Now when Paul and his party (leadership switch) set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.”
 - They had to cross over the mountains of western Taurus, the passes of which can be as high as 5,000 feet. In that region, the weather is cold & dry much of the year.
 - Traveling on foot over unsafe roads while seeking to evangelize was not for the faint of heart
 - John Mark deserted the work
 - Paul so upset over this – he & Barnabas quarreled over it (Ryan’s day)
 - AA, p. 169 – “Mark, overwhelmed with fear and discouragement, wavered for a time in his purpose to give himself wholeheartedly to the Lord’s work. Unused to hardships, he was disheartened by the perils and privations of the way.”

- **Failure as a Christian**
 - **#1: Failure is not final**
 - Prov 24:16 – “For a just man falls seven times and rises up again...”
 - **#2: Failure doesn’t define who you are**
 - Mark later proved to be a blessing to both Paul & Peter in the work
 - **#3: Failure is a door**
 - Learning opportunity
 - Shows our faults, pride, selfishness, etc - & our need to grow & change
 - **#4: Failure teaches dependence on Christ**
 - When everything is stripped away, who do we have but God?

Lesson #2: A Day in the Ministry of Jesus