

Revealed

The Wonder
of Christ in Mark

DOROTHY DAVIS

Revealed: The Wonder of Christ in Mark

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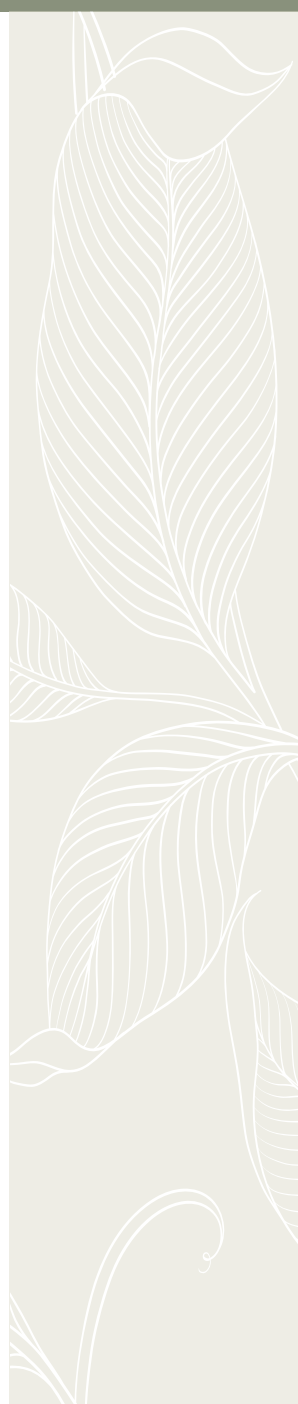
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Preface

What catches your eye and captures your attention? Some early winter mornings as I enter my kitchen, what I see stops me in my tracks. The view out my window presents a spectacular sunrise, bursting with brilliant light and vivid colors. As I gaze, my heart lifts with wonder and praise!

In this world innumerable objects vie for our attention and interest. Some are worthy; some are not. The human eye is always roving, searching for whatever seems to satisfy the cravings of the soul. But perhaps, like me, you are finding that the things of this world appeal less and less to the heart's desires. There is, however, One Who more and more captures my "inward gaze of the soul" (Tozer). He is all Radiance and Glory. He is God the Son. The Father is pleased when we exalt His Son and desire to know Him. And as I meditate on Him in the Word, I grow to be more like Him.

The Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, a follower of Christ and an associate of the apostle Peter. In fact, many scholars believe John Mark's account is based on Peter's teachings and interaction with the Lord. And, of course, the Holy Spirit oversaw John Mark as he wrote this gospel account (2 Timothy 3:16).

Mark's Gospel is unique, as each Gospel is, and it is frequently studied within the framework of presenting Christ as a servant. That theme certainly runs throughout the Gospel. Further, as a prism

shines forth varied hues, Mark presents our Lord's various attributes and qualities: He is the friend of sinners, the great physician, the master teacher, and much more. In so many respects we are able to gaze on Jesus' glory in this powerful record of His life and ministry.

As I thought about an overview of the book of Mark, I thought about a road trip. There are two kinds of road trips: one whose goal is to get quickly and efficiently to the destination, and one that meanders off road, onto scenic side roads as it eventually makes its way to the finish. The Gospel of Mark is like the first road trip. Reading through Mark is like getting on an interstate highway and moving right along to the desired destination. Mark frequently used words like *immediately* and *after that*. He also quoted less of the Old Testament than Matthew did in his Gospel and included less metaphysical discoursing than Luke and John did in their Gospels. Of the four gospel writers, Mark concentrated more on Jesus Christ's works than His words.

Every recorded event, word, and detail in the book of Mark is intended to reveal the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you read and gaze upon Him, may your heart be lifted with wonder and praise. No one is like our God and Savior. As you learn of Him, He will not only capture your soul but also change you into His likeness!



Introduction

Background of the Gospel of Mark

WRITER

The Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark. His mother was a believer named Mary (Acts 12:12), and Barnabas was his cousin (Colossians 4:10).

He was a Jew living in Jerusalem. A church met in his mother's home (Acts 12:12).

Mark became a companion to the apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:13), who referred to him as "my son."

The early church leader Irenaeus (100 AD) affirmed that after Peter's death, John Mark (a.k.a. Marcus) handed down Peter's preaching in writing.

The writer showed detailed familiarity with Jerusalem and Israel and knew the Aramaic language. He was also acquainted with Jewish customs and institutions.

The testimony of the early church is that John Mark's authorship was widely accepted and not in dispute.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The Gospel of Mark was written primarily to Christians in Rome.

DATE WRITTEN

While some view Mark as the earliest Gospel, written prior to AD 55, the consensus is that it was written about AD 65–67.

PLACE OF WRITING

Peter spent his final days in Rome, from where John Mark would have written this account.

STYLE

The style is terse and vigorous, while the Gospel is brief and concise.

The main focus is facts and action. (Action appealed to the Romans.)

The Gospel gives more attention to what Jesus did than to what He said.

One-third of the book deals with Christ's last week.

This Gospel emphasizes persecution and suffering, which would have interested Roman Christians, since under Nero, persecution was intensifying (it began in AD 64).





The Sunrise of Glory

MARK 1:1-28

1

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

Darkness. Oppression. Despair. With its iron fist, Rome reached out to grasp nations, holding them tightly in its grip. The empire brought the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea under its domination. Roman emperors claimed the glory of divinity, and the empire grew into “the grandeur that was Rome” (Edgar Allan Poe), exhibiting the height of man’s might and splendor.

But what of God’s power and glory? God had once displayed His glory through the nation of Israel. Under kings David and Solomon, the tiny nation had its own splendor, spiritual and God-bestowed. But the people gradually forsook the Lord and turned to idolatry. Because of their sin, God allowed darkness, captivity, and oppression to overtake them. The glory departed, and for centuries God was silent, sending no word through His prophets.

In 63 BC, God’s people, the Jewish people, were conquered by the Romans. Under Roman rule, the Jewish people walked in spiritual twilight. The Jewish religious leaders taught a form of God worship that offered little real light and life to the people. Yet God had sent word through His prophets that He would send a mighty savior, a Messiah, to deliver them. Would God keep His promise? And if so, when would this One come to restore glory to God’s people? This was the Jews’ long-pondered question as Mark opened his gospel account.

Scripture Study

A Glimmer of Light

READ MARK 1:1–8.



With his very first sentence, John Mark got right to the point. He began with a bold, stunning declaration. He immediately got the reader’s attention!

1. With what grand announcement did Mark begin?
2. According to your dictionary, Bible dictionary, or Bible note, what does the word *gospel* mean?
3. How might the claim that Jesus is God’s Son grab the attention of the reader, Jew or Gentile (“non-Jewish”)?



4. In verses 2–3, Mark introduced John the Baptist. Mark referenced two Old Testament prophecies: Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:1–5. Why would he quote them as the introduction to John the Baptist?

5. Describe John's ministry (Mark 1:2–8).

a. What was John's message (1:7)?

b. What did John say about the One Who was coming (1:8)?



READ MARK 1:9–13.

6. The Lord Jesus Christ made His first public appearance in the area where John was baptizing in the Jordan River. How was Jesus' glory revealed at this event (1:10–11)?

7. After His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tested forty days in the wilderness. Why was this testing necessary? (See Hebrews 4:15.)

Day Dawns!

READ MARK 1:14–28.

After being baptized by John and being tested in the wilderness by Satan, Jesus of Nazareth began a preaching ministry in the area northwest of the Sea of Galilee. (See the map on page 180.)

8. What does Mark 1:15 record as Jesus' startling pronouncement to the Jews as He began His public ministry?

9. What did Jesus tell the people to do to receive the kingdom of God?

10. The Lord had previously met the men mentioned in verses 16–20 (John 1:35–42). In what way did Jesus radically change their lives, as recorded in Mark 1?



Healing Rays

The Lord established His ministry headquarters in the town of Capernaum. On the Sabbath Day, He and His disciples went to the synagogue. There Jesus was invited to teach, as visitors sometimes were.

11. How was Jesus' teaching amazingly different from what the people were used to hearing (1:21-22)?

12. What "sign" did Christ do to authenticate His authority to preach in God's name (1:23-27)?



13. Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of the Light in a time of darkness. Read Isaiah 9:1-2.

a. What area would see this great Light?

b. In what area did Christ begin His ministry (Mark 1:14, 16, 28)?



APPLICATION: Direct Your Gaze

14. Something about Christ compelled four fishermen to follow Him.

a. What has compelled you to seek/follow the Lord Jesus Christ?

b. Has your decision to seek/follow Jesus brought change to your life? If so, in what ways?

15. John was a witness for Christ, a “voice ... crying in the wilderness” (Mark 1:3). Does every believer have a similar ministry? Explain.

16. In his Gospel, Mark wanted to portray Jesus as a man of action.

a. What mindset made Jesus a person of action (e.g., Luke 2:49)?

b. In what way should you have the same mindset?

17. By what means did Mark seek to show Jesus’ glory and give evidence to the reader that Jesus was truly the Christ, God’s Son?