



# MINISTER OF ACTION

A Quick Look At Jesus, from the Gospel According to Mark

By: Josh Franklin

## Fast Facts on Mark

**1. Who?** Mark (John Mark) wrote down what Peter *personally remembered* about the life of Christ.

**2. When?** 60-63 AD

**3. Why?** To present Jesus as God's Servant who was actively helping people.

**5. Key Phrase:**  
*Jesus Christ is SERVANT*

## Quick Facts

- More miracles in this book (even though shorter)
- "immediately" used 42x (showing action)
- to ROMANS
- PETER preached ONLY what he personally saw (that's why no birth or childhood)
- 5 SERMONS put in writing (try reading the whole book out loud.)
- Never intended to be a gospel.

Answer key: Miracles; Reaching, Preaching; Died, Rose; Servant

## Introduction to Mark

Mark, the shortest and simplest of the four Gospels, gives a crisp and fast-moving account of the life of Christ. Mark tells the story of the SERVANT who is constantly on the move preaching, healing, teaching, and finally dying for sinful men. The Lord is presented as an active, compassionate, and obedient Servant who constantly ministers to the physical and spiritual needs of others. Because this is the story of a Servant, Mark omits Jesus' birth and moves right into His busy public ministry. The word "immediately" appears 41 times in this compact gospel to show Jesus moving quickly serving mankind.

All of these point to the same conclusion:

**Jesus Christ is God's ACTIVE SERVANT.**

## Reading Mark You'll See Jesus Christ ...

### ...Performing *(Jesus Has Power)*

There are more miracles recorded in this small gospel than any other. Mark emphasized Jesus' power over demons, disease and death. Jesus is clearly a man of power and action, not just words. Jesus did miracles to convince the people who he was and to teach the disciples his true identity as God. Jesus is still in the miracle-performing business, and we should never try to fix a problem without first asking God to get involved. (SEE MARK 5)

### ... and *(Salvation is for everyone)*

Jesus crossed national, racial, and economic barriers to spread his Good News. Jesus' message of faith and forgiveness is for the whole world -- not just our church, neighborhood, or nation. We must reach out beyond our own people and needs to fulfill the worldwide vision of Jesus Christ that people everywhere might hear this great message and be saved from sin and death. (SEE MARK 16)

### ... and *Again (We can entrust our lives to Him)*

In Mark, Jesus demonstrates his divinity by overcoming disease, demons, and death. Although he had the power to be king of the earth, Jesus chose to obey the Father and die for us. When Jesus rose from the dead, he proved that he was God, that he could forgive sin, and that he has the power to change our lives. By trusting in him for forgiveness, we can begin a new life with him as our guide.

### ...as God's *(We should follow His example)*

Jesus helped mankind by telling them about God and healing them. Even more, by giving his life as a sacrifice for sin, he did the ultimate act of service. Because of Jesus' example, we should be willing to serve God and others. Real greatness in Christ's kingdom is shown by service and sacrifice. Ambition or love of power or position should not be our motive; instead, we should do God's work because we love him.

**Key Verse in Mark: "I came here not to be served, but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many."(10:45)**

## WHO WAS JOHN MARK?<sup>1</sup>

1. He was the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10).
2. He lived in Jerusalem with his mother, Mary (Acts 12:12). The church met in his home.
3. He went with Paul and his cousin on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5).
4. Mark left the others after their time in Cyprus (which was the homeland of Barnabas, Acts 4:36), perhaps because he did not approve of Paul taking over the leadership, or perhaps because he lost heart with the journey.
5. He went back to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13).
6. In Jerusalem he would have had plenty of opportunity to talk with Peter.
7. It might even have been Peter who first brought Mark to faith in Jesus: Peter calls him “my son Mark” in 1 Peter 5:13.
8. It is sometimes suggested that Mark was the young man mentioned in Mark 14:51-52, but there is no way of proving this.

## SCHOLARLY MATERIAL ON MARK:

1. The evidence for the connection between Mark and Peter is both external and internal. Eusebius quotes Papias as saying that Mark wrote down what Peter had remembered of the things said and done by the Lord. The style of the book compares closely with the sermon of Peter as recorded in Acts 10:36-41. Details favorable to Peter often are omitted from this Gospel while unfavorable events are included!
2. Mark’s gospel is the most graphic – with emotion and vivid details not found in other gospels. Mark is the gospel of action, utilizing the word “immediately” 41 times. Not much of Jesus’ teaching is found in this gospel – mostly events. Mark’s gospel records 27 of the 37 miracles ever recorded, and he devotes more space, proportionately, to miracles than the other gospels.
3. Only in Mark’s gospel are we told that Jesus was a “carpenter” (6:3).
4. Special attention is given to the call to discipleship (Mk. 8-10).
5. Mark’s Gospel has a number of significant omissions given his emphasis on the activity of Jesus.
  1. No genealogy given
  2. No miraculous birth recorded
  3. No mention of Bethlehem shepherds
  4. No visit of the wise men
  5. No childhood at Nazareth
  6. No subjection to parents
  7. No growth in wisdom and stature noted
  8. No reference to pre-existence
  9. No Sermon on the Mount
  10. No lengthy discourses and few parables
  11. No discourse on woes to Pharisees
  12. No mention of wise or foolish virgins
  13. No mention of Kingdom to dying thief
6. Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, writing about a.d. 140, noted: And the presbyter [the Apostle John] said this: **Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered.** [From the Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord (6)]
7. Justin Martyr, writing about a.d. 150, referred to the gospel of Mark as “the memoirs of Peter,” and suggested that Mark wrote his gospel while in Italy. This agrees with the uniform voice of early tradition, which regarded this gospel as having been written in Rome, for the benefit of Roman Christians. Irenaeus, writing about a.d. 185, called Mark “the disciple and interpreter of Peter,” and recorded that the second gospel consisted of what Peter preached about Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Balchin, John. *Opening Up God’s Word: The Compact Survey of the Bible*, page 195.

**8. Mark's gospel was written to a Roman audience, and the last human to speak in this Gospel was the Roman centurion who proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God (15:39).**

**9. QUOTE: There is a freshness about this gospel... Here we find rapid action, vivid detail, picturesque language. Many a preacher might be jolted out of his rut by letting the impact of Mark really hit him. [RALPH EARLE]**

10. QUOTE: This gospel emphasizes what Jesus did rather than what He said. [CHARLES RYRIE]

11. INTERESTING FACT: Since Peter refers to John Mark as "Mark my son" in his first epistle, many people believe that Mark was converted and disciplined under Peter's ministry. If this is true, something else that these two held in common was their well-known moments of failure. Peter's came when he denied the Lord three times (Matthew 26), while Mark's came when he abandoned Paul and Barnabas during their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). The lives of both men remind us that the Lord is a God of second chances.

**12. In the most ancient text to discuss expressly the order of the composition of the four Gospels (*Ecclesiastical History 6.14*), Clement of Alexandria [A.D. 150-215] is quoted as saying that the Gospel of Mark came after two Gospels with genealogies and that it resulted from public lectures given by Peter himself to a Roman audience, which, as Clement informs us elsewhere (*Adumbrationes in epistolas canonicas* on 1 Peter 5:13), contained a number of Caesar's "knights." Clement also added (*Ecclesiastical History 6.14*) that the large audience begged Mark to write down what Peter had said, and that Mark, after some persuasion, yielded to their request. Clement concluded his account by relating that when Peter found out about this, he made no effort either to forbid or to promote its circulation.<sup>2</sup>**

13. Mark can be divided up into five lectures Peter gave in Rome on the life of Christ, each lasting 25-45 minutes each:<sup>3</sup>

- 1. THE PROCLAMATION OF JESUS - Mark 1:2-3:19**
- 2. THE OPPOSITION OF JESUS - Mark 3:20-6:13**
- 3. THE PREPARATIONS OF JESUS - Mark 6:14-10:1**
- 4. THE CONFRONTATIONS OF JESUS - Mark 10:2-13:37**
- 5. THE PASSION OF JESUS - Mark 14:1-16:8**

#### **TIMELINE INFO ON MARK:**

1. During his Roman detention in 60-62, Paul asks Peter to check and authorize Luke's Gospel so that it can be published for use in the Gentile churches.
2. Peter's response is given in a series of lectures before a distinguished Roman audience.
3. These lectures are recorded by John Mark, Peter's secretary, and are issued privately in written form to members of the Roman church at their request.
4. Luke's text is published in 62 as the authoritative "Gentile edition" of the Gospel.
5. After the death of Peter in 66/67, the "Gospel according to Mark" is published, Mark himself adding the last twelve verses to provide a fitting conclusion to Peter's reminiscences.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Black, David Alan, *Why Four Gospels*, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 80-83.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92