

Mark

- **Author**

- John Mark (Acts 13:5,13; 15:39, Col 4:10; Phil 124; 1 Pet 5:13).
 - Customary for Jews to have a Greco-Roman surname (e.g. Saul/Paul).
- His mother was named Mary, and had a house in Jerusalem. This was a meeting place for the early Christians. Peter went there after he was miraculously released from prison (Acts 12:12).
- Cousin of Barnabas.
- Went to Antioch with Barnabbas, and then went with Paul and Barnabas on first missionary voyage, but left them in Perge in Pamphylia and returned to Jerusalem. Paul did not like that and did not want Mark to accompany he and Barnabbas on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:37-40). Paul and Barnabbas have a sharp disagreement and go in different directions as a result. Barnabbas takes Mark to Cyprus (where Barnabbas grew up).
- Was later in Rome with Peter.
- Went to Asia Minor later at Paul's request (2 Tim 4:11).
- Probable that Peter baptized Mark, since he refers to him as his 'son' (1 Pet 5:13).
- Mentioned as Peter's interpreter (like a secretary or translator). These were essentially the memoirs of Peter. St. Justin Martyr (c. AD 150) refers to it simply as the 'Memoirs of St. Peter'.
- Notably devoid of anything that might redound to the glory of Peter in his gospel (e.g., walking on water, conferral of primacy, etc.) This gives further evidence that the material is traceable to Peter, who would most likely not draw attention to himself. It also contains a few negative details about Peter that were not recorded in the other gospels.
- Subject matter and general chronological arrangement follows St. Peter's discourse to Cornelius in Acts 10:36-43).
- Speaks in the 'historic present'. In giving an account of something it is common for us to slip into the present tense, to put the listener in the story (e.g., 'and when Jesus heard it, he says to them...' It is vivid and real in Mark's mind, as though it is happening before his very eyes. (The historic present tense he uses in Greek is not always brought into the English by the translator.)
- He also at times gives the specific Aramaic words of Jesus, 'talitha cum', 'Ephphatha', 'Abba, Father', which indicates a precise and accurate account by Peter as eyewitness.

- Papias (c. AD 120) writes *“This also the Elder (St. John) used to say, ‘Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, although not in an orderly arrangement, the sayings and deeds of the Lord, as far as he recalled them. For he himself neither heard the Lord nor was his follower, but he was later on, as I have said, a follower of Peter. The latter used to deliver his instructions as circumstances required, but not like one who draws up an orderly arrangement or our Lord’s activity. Hence Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down certain things as he remembered them. For his sole purpose was to omit nothing of what he had heard and to falsify nothing in recording this.’”*
- **Date**
 - Sometime between 55 and 62.
 - For the majority of the history of the Church it has been commonly held that he wrote second after Matthew and before Luke.
- **Destination**
 - Written primarily for pagans in Rome. Not as concerned with Hebrew elements to the story (e.g., messianic prophecy and doctrinal disputes over observance of the Law, etc.). Jesus portrayed more as the ‘Son of God’, ‘Wonder Worker’, ‘Conqueror of infernal powers’, and ‘Lord of Nature’.
 - There is a hint at the intended Roman Audience in the fact that Mark mentions Simon the Cyrenean’s son’s names as Alexander and Rufus. Matthew and Luke leave out this detail when they relate the story of Simon who helped Jesus carry his cross. Rufus and his mother are mentioned in Paul’s letter to the Roman’s (16:13). It seems evident that this is the same Rufus, and that he is a well respected member of the Church in Rome.
- **Structure**
 - Unsystematic. Elementary and plain Greek. Marked by realism and simplicity.
 - Not intended as a biographical account. More of a ‘historical preaching’.
 - Only 1/10th of the material is unique to it apart from Matthew and Luke.
 - Not as interested in showing fulfillment of Messianic prophecies.
 - Very few discourses and parables, but generally more detail and complete narrative than Matthew or Luke, even though it is significantly shorter in overall length.
 - 1-8 ministry and miracles leading up to Peter’s confession of faith (8:13).
 - 8-16 Prediction of Passion, Transfiguration, Journey to Jerusalem, Passion and Resurrection.

- Begins with simple declaration “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”. Two key points are Peter’s profession of faith at Caesarea Philippi (8:29), and the Centurion under the cross (15:39).
- **Themes**
 - Focuses on the divine power of Jesus. Much attention paid to his miraculous deeds.
 - Humanity of Jesus is emphasized. One who expresses human emotions: anger (3:5), grief (3:50), he sighed deeply in his spirit (7:34; 8:12), pity (6:34), indignation (10:14), love of children (10:16), he looked upon the rich young man with love (10:21), he marveled at the unbelief of some (6:6). He also asks questions, which indicate the limitations of his human knowledge. He experienced hunger (11:12), and fatigue (6:31).
 - Who is Jesus? Mark’s answer: The Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God.
 - ‘Messianic Secret’ 8 times Jesus insists that his divinity be kept secret.
 - A suffering Messiah who reigns from the cross. Not a political Messiah.