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Jesus: The Suffering Servant

A Series On The Gospel Of Mark

Series Introduction: As you know, when you open your New Testament, the first four books you encounter are the Gospels. The word "**Gospel**" means "**Good Tidings**" or "**Good News**" and these four books are designed to give mankind the heavenly good news concerning Jesus and Who He is. These four books paint for us a clear portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each of the Gospel writers approaches Jesus from a different perspective and each presents Him in a different way. Matthew presents Jesus as **The King of the Jews**. Luke presents Jesus as **The Son of Man**. John presents Jesus as **The Eternal Son of God**. Mark presents Jesus as **The Suffering Servant**.

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and deals mainly with the ministry of Jesus. Mark does not focus heavily on the words of Jesus; his emphasis is the works of the Lord. Mark shows Jesus as the King Who came to serve others.

The **Key Verse** of this book is **Mark 10:45**, "**For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.**"

The **Key Words** of this Gospel are "**straightway, immediately, anon and straitly**". All of these English words translate the Greek word "**ευαγγελισμός**" which speaks of "**immediate action**." Mark's Gospel is the Gospel of action. It shows Jesus as He moves from one act of service to another.

The **Key Doctrines** of Mark are the **humanity of Christ** and the **servant hood of Christ**. These themes quickly become evident as the book unfolds.

The **Human Author** of this book is a man known as John Mark, **Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39**. His mother was a believer and her house was used as a meeting place by the early church, **Acts 12:12**. Mark was a cousin of Barnabas, **Col. 4:10**. Mark went with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, **Acts 12:25; 13:5**. He abandoned them before the trip was over and returned to Jerusalem, **Acts 13:13**. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark on their second missionary trip but Paul did not want him to go. The division between Paul and Barnabas was so great that they parted ways, **Acts 15:38-40**. Barnabas took Mark with him, while Paul took a man named Silas.

As Mark matured he proved himself to be a faithful servant of the Lord. Even Paul later spoke of him in the most positive of terms. Paul calls him a "**fellow labourer**" in **Philemon 24**. When Paul was in Rome, just before his death, he requested that Mark come to him. He was, as Paul said, "**profitable to me for the ministry**", **2 Tim. 4:11**.

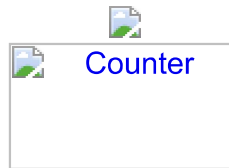
Simon Peter may have had a hand in Mark's rehabilitation. Peter calls him "**Marcus my son**" in **1 Pet. 5:13**. Who better to restore a fallen brother than one who has already been there himself?

Mark's target audience was probably Gentiles. More precisely, he seems to have been writing to a Roman audience. This can be seen in several ways.

- Mark uses several Latin expressions instead of their Greek equivalents, **Mark 5:9; 6:27; 12:15, 42; 15:16, 39**.
- Whenever Mark uses an Aramaic expression, he always translates it for his readers, **Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 11:36; 15:22, 34**.

- Mark uses Roman time, **Mark 6:48; 13:35**.
- He carefully explains Jewish customs, **Mark 7:3-4; 14:12; 15:42**.
- Mark omitted details that would be of interest to a Jewish audience, such as genealogies, Old Testament quotations and details about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The Gospel that bears Mark's name was written about 50 AD. This was a mere 15 or so years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.



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