

Mark's Gospel

Background

You may want to consult a study Bible or Bible dictionary for help with these questions.

1. Who is the human author of this book?
2. What do you know about him? (his background, his ministry, his culture)
3. Where was he when he wrote this book?
4. How would you describe the intended audience for this book?
5. Why was this book written? (Is the author addressing problems? Is his tone encouraging or confrontational? Does the author seem to have a primary purpose?)

Major Themes

To prepare to answer these questions, you may want to set aside time to read the book in a single sitting.

6. List some overall themes you found in the book.
7. What do you see as the primary theme?
8. What questions do you have after reading through this book?

Structure

Below is an outline showing the overall structure of Mark's gospel.¹

THE FIRST HALF OF MARK'S GOSPEL: JESUS AS THE POWERFUL MESSIAH (1:1–8:26)

- I. Preparation for Jesus' Ministry in the Wilderness (1:1–13)
 - A. Opening (1:1)
 - B. The Preaching of John the Baptist in the Wilderness (1:2–4)
 - C. The Baptizing Work of John in the Jordan (1:5–8)
 - D. The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan (1:9–11)
 - E. The Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness (1:12–13)
- II. Jesus' Initial Ministry in Galilee (1:14–3:35)
 - A. Summary and Initial Response (1:14–45)
 - B. Controversy with Religious Leaders (2:1–3:6)
 - C. Summary and Initial Decision (3:7–35)
- III. Jesus' Ministry on and around the Sea of Galilee (4:1–8:26)
 - A. Cycle 1: Calming of the Sea (4:1–5:20)
 - B. Interval: Faith and Unbelief (5:21–6:29)
 - C. Cycle 2: Walking on the Sea (6:30–56)
 - D. Interval: Matters of the Heart (7:1–37)
 - E. Cycle 3: Conversation on the Sea (8:1–26)

THE SECOND HALF OF MARK'S GOSPEL: JESUS AS THE SUFFERING SON OF GOD (8:27–16:20)

- I. Jesus' Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52)
 - A. Cycle 1: Prediction and Response (8:27–38)
 - B. Interval: Jesus as Powerful Son of God (9:1–29)
 - C. Cycle 2: Prediction and Response (9:30–50)
 - D. Interval: Jesus as Authoritative Teacher (10:1–31)
 - E. Cycle 3: Prediction and Response (10:32–45)
 - F. [Transition] Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52)
- II. Jesus' Ministry at the Temple (11:1–13:37)
 - A. First Trip to the Temple (11:1–11)
 - B. Second Trip to the Temple (11:12–19)
 - C. Third Trip to the Temple (11:20–13:37)
- III. Jesus' Death on the Cross and Resurrection (14:1–16:20)
 - A. Anointing at Bethany and Betrayal Plot (14:1–11)
 - B. The Last Supper (14:12–25)
 - C. Prayer and Arrest at Gethsemane (14:26–52)
 - D. Trial before Sanhedrin and Denials by Peter (14:53–72)
 - E. Trial before Pilate and Mocking by Soldiers (15:1–20)
 - F. Crucifixion and Burial (15:21–47)
 - G. Resurrection (16:1–8)
 - H. Appearances to Disciples (16:9–20)

¹ Adapted from Joel Williams, "Does Mark's Gospel Have an Outline?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 3 (September 2006): 523–525.