



# New Testament

# Mark



## Book Outline

**Key theme:** *Jesus Christ the servant*

**Key verse:** Mark 10:45

- I. The Presentation of the Servant (1:1–13)
- II. The Servant’s Ministry in Galilee (1:14—9:50)
  - A. Period of popularity—1:14—6:29
  - B. Period of withdrawal—6:30—9:32
  - C. Period of completion—9:33–50
- III. The Servant’s Journey to Jerusalem (10)
- IV. The Servant’s Ministry in Jerusalem (11—16)
  - A. Public teaching and controversy—11:1—12:44
  - B. Private teaching and ministry—13:1—14:31
  - C. Arrest, trial, and crucifixion—14:32—15:47
  - D. Resurrection and ascension—16

## Overview

**M**ark wasted no time in announcing the theme and central person of his message, for it is found in the opening words of his book. Matthew, who wrote primarily for the Jews, opened his gospel with a genealogy. After all, he had to prove to his readers that Jesus Christ is indeed the rightful Heir to David’s throne. Since Luke focused mainly on the sympathetic ministry of the Son of Man, he devoted the early chapters of his gospel to a record of the Savior’s birth. Luke emphasized Christ’s humanity, for he knew that his Greek readers would identify with the perfect Babe who grew up to be the perfect Man.

John’s gospel begins with a statement about eternity! Why?

Because John wrote to prove to the whole world that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God (John 20:31). The subject of John's gospel is the deity of Christ, but the object of his gospel is to encourage his readers to believe on this Savior and receive the gift of eternal life.

Where does Mark's gospel fit in? Mark wrote for the Romans, and his theme is Jesus Christ the Servant. If we had to pick a "key verse" in this gospel, it would be 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 fact that Mark wrote with the Romans in mind helps us understand his style and approach. The emphasis in this gospel is on activity. Mark describes Jesus as He busily moves from place to place and meets the physical and spiritual needs of all kinds of people. One of Mark's favorite words is "immediately" or "at once." He uses the expression forty-one times. Mark does not record many of our Lord's sermons because his emphasis is on what Jesus did rather than what Jesus said. He reveals Jesus as God's Servant, sent to minister to suffering people and to die for the sins of the world. Mark gives us no account of our Lord's birth, nor does he record a genealogy, unnecessary in regard to a servant.

### **"Be Transformed"**

**I**n a remarkable way, the Gospel of Mark parallels the great "Servant passage" in Philippians 2:1-11. Jesus came as a servant (Phil 2:1-7; Mark 1-13). Jesus died as a servant on the cross (Phil 2:8; Mark 14-15). Jesus was and will be exalted to glory (Phil 2:9-11; Mark 16). Anyway we look at it, the life of Jesus has the power to transform. That is his ultimate service to us; empowering us to serve.

We meet Jesus in the Gospel of Mark as a full grown man, stepping into his ministry as a servant. The story moves quickly. Mark, the storyteller hardly gives us time to catch our breath. We have to run to keep up with Jesus, but the Jesus we meet in Mark's account is someone for whom we would drop everything and follow.

Reading the Gospel of Mark involves spending time with Jesus. Right from the start, we hear the same invitation the first disciples heard: "Follow me." The question to us is not what would we have done if we were in those disciples' sandals; the question is, have we listened to Jesus' invitation in our lives and are we following today? Are we following Jesus? Whatever else we are learning and pursuing in life, have we let Jesus show us how to fish for people? The ultimate transformation comes when the Servant changes us into servants like him.

**1. The Beginning of the Good News**

**I** This is the “Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began <sup>2</sup>just as the prophet Isaiah had written:

“Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way.

<sup>3</sup>He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming!

Clear the road for him!’ ”

<sup>4</sup>This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had <sup>b</sup>repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. <sup>5</sup>All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when

**1:1**  
<sup>a</sup>euangelion (2098)  
<sup>b</sup>Mark 1:14

**1:2-8**  
 //Matt 3:1-11  
 //Luke 3:1-16  
 //John 1:19-28

**1:2-3**  
<sup>a</sup>Isa 40:3  
<sup>b</sup>Mal 3:1  
 John 1:23

**1:4**  
 Acts 13:24; 19:4  
<sup>b</sup>metanoia (3341)  
<sup>c</sup>Luke 3:8

**1:6**  
 Lev 11:22  
 2 Kgs 1:8  
 Zech 13:4

**1:7**  
 Acts 13:25

**1:8**  
 Joel 2:28  
 Acts 2:4; 10:45;  
 11:16

**1:9-11**  
 //Matt 3:13-17  
 //Luke 3:21-22

**1:11**  
 Gen 22:2  
 Ps 2:7  
 Mark 9:7  
 2 Pet 1:17

they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. <sup>6</sup>His clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.

<sup>7</sup>John announced: “Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!”

**The Baptism of Jesus**

<sup>9</sup>One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. <sup>10</sup>As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup>And a



# Catalyst

Wilderness Lessons

In concise form, Mark presents us with two symbolic pictures in describing the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Our Lord’s forty days in the wilderness remind us of Israel’s forty years in the wilderness. Israel failed when they were tested, but our Lord succeeded victoriously. Having triumphed over the enemy, Jesus could now go forth and call a new people who would enter into their spiritual inheritance. Since the name Jesus is the Greek form of “Joshua,” we can see the parallel.

The second picture is that of the “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45). The first Adam was tested in a beautiful Garden and failed, but Jesus was tempted in a dangerous wilderness and won the victory. Adam lost his “dominion” over creation because of his sin (Gen 1:28; Ps 8), but in Christ, that dominion has been restored for all who trust him (Heb 2:6-8). Jesus was with the wild beasts and they did not harm him. He gave a demonstration of that future time of peace and righteousness, when the Lord shall return and establish his kingdom (Isa 11:9; 35:9). Indeed, he is a Servant with authority!

**Mark 1:1** John Mark, the author of the book, states boldly that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. It is likely that Mark was an eyewitness of some of the events that he wrote about, and though he does not mention himself directly, he is the first witness for Christ in this Gospel. Mark lived in Jerusalem with his mother, Mary, and their home was a meeting place for believers in the city (Acts 12:1-19). Several scholars believe that Mark was the young man described in Mark 14:51-52. Since Peter called Mark “my son” (1 Pet 5:13), it is probable that it was Peter who led Mark to faith in Jesus Christ. Church tradition states that Mark was “Peter’s interpreter,” so that the gospel of Mark reflects the personal experiences and witness of Simon Peter.

**Mark 1:1** The term “the good news” translates the traditional

term gospel. To the Romans, Mark’s special target audience, gospel meant “joyful news about the emperor.” The “gospel of Jesus Christ” is the good news that God’s Son has come into the world and died for our sins. It is the good news that our sins can be forgiven, that we can belong to the family of God and one day go to live with God in heaven. It is the announcement of victory over sin, death, and hell (1 Cor 15:1-8, 51-52; Gal 1:1-9).

**Mark 1:2-3** The second witnesses Mark calls to are the prophets. Mark cites two quotations from the Old Testament prophets, Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 (note also Ex 23:20). The words messenger and voice refer to John the Baptist, the prophet God sent to prepare the way for His Son (Matt 3; Luke 3:1-18; John 1:19-34). In ancient times, before a king

voice from heaven said, “You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.”

### *The Temptation of Jesus*

<sup>12</sup>The Spirit then compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness, <sup>13</sup>where he was “tempted by Satan for forty days. He was out among the wild animals, and angels took care of him. <sup>14</sup>Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God’s <sup>d</sup>Good News. <sup>15</sup>“The

**1:12-13**  
//Matt 4:1-11  
//Luke 4:1-13

**1:13**  
<sup>a</sup>peirazō (3985)  
\* Mark 14:38

**1:14-15**  
//Matt 4:12-17  
//Luke 4:14-15

**1:14**  
<sup>e</sup>euangelion (2098)  
\* Mark 1:15

**1:15**  
Gal 4:4  
Eph 1:10  
<sup>e</sup>euangelion (2098)  
\* Rom 1:1

**1:16-20**  
//Matt 4:18-22  
//Luke 5:1-11

time promised by God has come at last!” he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the “Good News!”

### *The First Disciples*

<sup>16</sup>One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. <sup>17</sup>Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” <sup>18</sup>And they left

visited any part of his realm, a messenger was sent before him to prepare the way. This included both repairing the roads and preparing the people. By calling the nation to repentance, John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah and Malachi join voices in declaring that Jesus Christ is the Lord, Jehovah God.

**Mark 1:4-8** John the Baptist is the next witness to identify Jesus as the Savior. Jesus called him the greatest of the prophets (Matt 11:1-15). In his dress, manner of life, and message of repentance, John identified with Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8; Mal 4:5; Matt 17:10-13; and note Luke 1:13-17). The “wilderness” where John ministered is the rugged wasteland along the western shore of the Dead Sea. John was telling the people symbolically that they were in a “spiritual wilderness” far worse than the physical wilderness that their ancestors had endured for forty years. John called the people to leave their spiritual wilderness, trust their “Joshua” (Jesus), and enter into their inheritance.

**Mark 1:7-8** John was careful to magnify Jesus and not himself (see John 3:25-30). John would baptize repentant sinners in water, but “the coming One” would baptize them with the Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). This did not mean that John’s baptism was unauthorized (see Matt 21:23-27), or that water baptism would one day be replaced by Spirit baptism (see Matt 28:19-20). Rather, John’s message and baptism were preparation so that the people would be ready to meet and trust the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Our Lord’s apostles were no doubt baptized by John (see John 4:1-2; Acts 1:21-26).

**Mark 1:9-11** The Father and the Holy Spirit are Mark’s final witnesses to the identity of God’s Servant. When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit came on Him as a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven and identified His beloved Son. The people who were there did not hear the voice or see the dove, but Jesus and John did (see John 1:29-34). The word beloved not only declares affection, but it also carries the meaning of “the only one.” The Father’s announcement from heaven reminds us of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1.

**Mark 1:12-13** Mark does not give as full an account of the Temptation as do Matthew (4:1-11) and Luke (4:1-13), but Mark adds some vivid details that the others omit. The Spirit “compelled him” into the wilderness. This is a strong word that Mark used eleven times to describe the casting out of demons. The word does not suggest that our Lord was either unwilling or afraid to face Satan. Rather, it is

Mark’s way of showing the intensity of the experience. No time was spent basking in the glory of the heavenly voice or the presence of the heavenly dove. Jesus, the Servant, had a task to perform and he immediately went to do it.

**Mark 1:14-22** If ever a man spoke God’s truth with authority, it was Jesus Christ (see Matt 7:28-29). It has been said that the scribes spoke from authorities but that Jesus spoke with authority. Mark was not recording here the beginning of our Lord’s ministry, since he had already ministered in other places (John 1:35-4:4). He is telling us why Jesus left Judea and came to Galilee: Herod had arrested John the Baptist, and wisdom dictated that Jesus relocate. By the way, it was during this journey that Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-45).

**Mark 1:14** Our Lord’s message was the gospel of the kingdom of God, or “the gospel of God” as some texts read. No doubt most of the Jews read “political revolution” into the phrase “kingdom of God,” but that was not what Jesus had in mind at all. His kingdom has to do with his reign in the lives of his people; it is a spiritual realm and not a political organization. The only way to enter God’s kingdom is by believing the good news and being born again (John 3:1-7).

**Mark 1:14** The gospel is called “the Good News of God” because it comes from God and brings us to God. It is “the Good News of the Kingdom” because faith in the Savior brings you into his kingdom. It is the “Good News of Jesus Christ” because he is the heart of it; without his life, death, and resurrection, there would be no good news. Paul called it “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24) because there can be no salvation apart from grace (Eph 2:8-9). There is only one gospel (Gal 1:1-9), and it centers in what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross (1 Cor 15:1-11).

**Mark 1:15** Jesus preached that people should repent (change their minds) and believe (see Acts 20:21). Repentance alone is not enough to save us, even though God expects believers to turn from their sins. We must also put positive faith in Jesus Christ and believe his promise of salvation. Repentance without faith could become remorse, and remorse can destroy people who carry a burden of guilt (see Matt 27:3-5; 2 Cor 7:8-10).

**Mark 1:17** Jesus did not invent the concept of “fishing for people.” In that day, it was a common description of