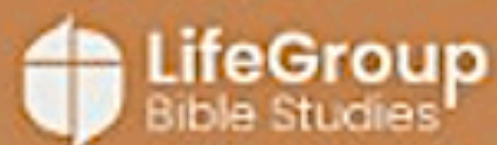




THE STORY
OF JESUS
IN THE
GOSPEL
OF MARK



FALL 2025
SPRING 2026

Author: Mark, coworker of Peter & Paul

- Acts 12:25; 13:13; and 15:36–41; 2 Timothy 4:9–13; and Philemon 1:24.
- Church tradition has attributed this Gospel to John Mark, who was a companion of Paul and Barnabas.
- Mark is first mentioned in Acts as the son of a woman named Mary, whose house in Jerusalem was used by the disciples to pray while Peter was in prison for his faith.

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- It was in Mark's mother's home that Peter appeared suddenly when the people thought he was still in prison.
- An angel had appeared to Peter; the chains fell from his wrists; the prison door opened; and he walked out.
- Mark knew firsthand about this miracle and the supernatural power of God.

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- Mark was involved in the earliest days of the church in Jerusalem, witnessing miracles and seeing the power of prayer (Acts 12:15–17). As one of the wealthier families, his family generously shared with the community (Acts 4:32–35).
- He went as a helper on Paul and Barnabas's first missionary journey. Barnabas, Mark's cousin, was a leader in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1; Colossians 4:10).

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- When the leaders of the church in Antioch were fasting and praying, the Holy Spirit told them to send Paul and Barnabas on this journey, and they chose to take Mark with them.
- But only a few stops into the journey, Mark returned to Jerusalem. We aren't sure how much time had elapsed, but it's just a paragraph into the story, so it seems early (Acts 13:13).

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- We don't know why Mark left.
- Perhaps, having grown up in a wealthy home in a large city, he wasn't used to the difficulties of this kind of travel.
- They'd just had opposition from a magician; it could have been fear.
- Whatever the reason, Paul saw his leaving as desertion.

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- When they were planning their second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take Mark, but Paul refused because he had deserted them before. They had such a sharp disagreement about it that they split up; Barnabas took Mark and Paul took Silas (Acts 15:36–41).
- It is sad they had this disagreement, but it resulted in two groups going out and the Gospel spreading even further.

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- About 13 years later, when Paul wrote Philemon from prison in Rome, he again called Mark one of “his fellow workers” (Philemon 1:24).
- About four years after that, when he wrote 2 Timothy near the end of his life, Paul asked Timothy to bring Mark with him to see Paul because Mark was helpful to him in his ministry.

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- It may have taken a while, but Paul eventually forgave Mark and saw him as a fellow apostle who was useful in ministry.
- Mark was also a coworker of Peter's, close enough that Peter called him "my son" (1 Peter 5:13).

Author: Mark, coworker of Peter & Paul

- Some scholars believe Mark was really writing Peter's version of the story of Jesus in his Gospel, basically acting as Peter's secretary.
- This was the view of the early church fathers Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome.

Author: Mark, coworker of Peter & Paul

- The style does fit Peter's personality; it's action packed; everything happens "immediately."
- But of all the Gospels, Mark offers the least flattering portrait of Peter (which could be Peter's humility in writing about himself), and it contains fewer stories about Peter or things he may have witnessed than the other Gospels.

Audience: Roman Christians

- Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:34
- Mark is writing to people who already knew the Gospel message and basic Christian theology but were Gentiles, not Jews.
- He assumed his readers regarded the Old Testament as the Word of God (7:8) and understood what it meant to say Jesus was the “Messiah” (8:29).

Audience: Roman Christians

- However, he seemed to feel the need to explain some of the finer points of Jewish matters, such as what the Sadducees believed (12:18) or what the Pharisees meant by eating with “defiled hands” (7:2–5).
- He assumed his readers already knew the meaning of Roman words such as *legion* (5:9), *centurion* (15:39), and *praetorium* (15:16).

Audience: Roman Christians

- He regularly defined Aramaic words and phrases such as *corban* (7:11), *Talitha koum* (5:41), and *Golgotha* (15:22);
- Aramaic was the language the Jews spoke at the time.
- This all points to a Roman Christian audience. Mark also used simple casual language that made it accessible for all people.

Audience: Roman Christians

- Mark's Gospel seems concerned with offering comfort, courage and counsel to people who were suffering persecution for their faith, which happened in Rome under Nero (AD 65–73) and explains why the Gospel writers felt the need to start recording the story of Jesus.
- The stories and teachings of Jesus had been passed orally by the disciples who had walked with Him.

Audience: Roman Christians

- Memorizing the teachings of the rabbi was part of the role of a disciple of any rabbi at the time. But at this point, many of those first-generation disciples who had walked with Jesus while He was on earth in His ministry were being killed.
- They weren't sure how long it would be before Jesus came back, and they wanted to preserve the Gospel for future generations.

Audience: Roman Christians

- Mark doesn't include much of Jesus' teachings.
- He wasn't writing a textbook for religious instruction.
- His story is mostly fast-paced action, emphasized by the repetition of the word immediately.
- It is the story of the power and authority of Jesus, the mighty Son of God.

Audience: Roman Christians

- Mark's Gospel is structured very simply, which keeps us focused on the forward-moving action.
- The other Gospels have Jesus going back and forth from Jerusalem to Galilee.
- Mark tells a single linear story from Galilee to Jerusalem to the Cross.

Audience: Roman Christians

- Like all the Gospels, the climax of Mark is the Cross and Resurrection.
- More than 35 percent of Mark's Gospel is focused on the passion, the last week of Jesus' life.
- This is the purpose of the story and why these books are called Gospels.

Audience: Roman Christians

- The Gospels are a unique genre of literature. They aren't just the narrative of Jesus. They are more like sermons; they have a persuasive purpose.
- Scholars call them *kerygma*, the Greek word for "proclamation," because their purpose is to preach or proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- Mark 4:35–41 and Mark 6:6–13
- Though the Gospels all preach the Good News of Jesus, each one tells the story from a slightly different perspective, just as four different preachers today preaching on the same topic or passage would each have a unique sermon.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- Though the message is the same, they each speak to a different audience and have different emphases.
- Mark's Gospel doesn't contain big blocks of teaching like Matthew's does; it's more focused on Jesus' actions.
- Mark didn't include anything about Jesus' birth or childhood because he wanted to get right to the action of Jesus' ministry.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- Mark's story is the shortest, most fast-paced, and most narrative, with the most casual language, so it is the easiest Gospel to read aloud in one sitting.
- Mark also wrote in the present tense to make it feel as though things were happening in the moment, as if his readers were in the middle of the story.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- Because of its fast-paced action, Mark's storytelling paints a picture of the power of Jesus as the mighty Son of God.
- Yet he also gave us the most human portrait of Jesus in the Gospels.
- In Mark's Gospel: Jesus got hungry; Jesus got tired.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- Mark showed Jesus exhibiting a full range of human emotions. Mark showed Jesus more as the suffering servant of Isaiah than a conquering hero.
- In addition to being 100-percent God, Mark helps us to understand that Jesus was also 100-percent human, a high priest who could empathize with our every pain.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- Mark's Gospel paints the disciples in an almost completely negative light.
- It is said that in Mark the only thing the disciples did right was to leave their nets to follow Jesus in the first place.
- After that, they disappointed Him at every turn.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- The other Gospels paint the disciples more positively as future leaders of the Church.
- Mark portrayed them only negatively, reminding us of an important theological fact consistent with the evangelistic nature of the Gospels – that none of us are “worthy” to be disciples, and yet Jesus loves us, forgives us, saves us, and uses us anyway.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- Mark's message is that all have fallen short of the glory of God, yet He came to die for us anyway.
- And no matter how much we fail, God can use us as His ambassadors to bring the message of grace and hope to a dark world.
- Mark's Gospel ends rather abruptly, but it fits Mark's emphasis on what we should do in response to Jesus.

Action: Ambassadors to the World

- With this abrupt ending, we are left with a feeling that we have a role in finishing the story.
- What happens next is up to us.
- Will we go and share the Good News with others?
- Will we go and live as Jesus lived and love as He loved?

Conclusion:

Animated Gospel of Mark

Mark

