

JESUS OF MARK'S GOSPEL

Repentant Life



**ROD
ADAMSON**

MARK'S GOSPEL



Jesus presented himself as the Son of Man, the disciples came to know Him as the Son of God, the crowds wanted a celebrity healer and judge, the religious and political leaders eliminated him – or so they thought! Modern spiritual leaders want Jesus only as another wise global sage, but Jesus offers inclusive repentance above culture.
Who do you follow?

Jesus of Mark's Gospel: Repentant Life

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Use of Support Resources:

It is recommended that only a Bible faithful Jesus DVD is used as audio-visual support for any study of the gospel:

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1. MARK 1.1 – 1.13 REPENTANT LIFE ANNOUNCED

Jesus was Hebrew of obscure origin in the time of Roman domination of the Jews. He ministered largely among the Jews. Jesus presented himself as the Son of Man. The disciples came to know Him as the Son of God, the Hebrew crowds wanted a celebrity healer liberator, the religious and political leaders wanted to eliminate him. God brought forth his unique ministry of repentance and healing to salvation, his unique death for the forgiveness of the world, and his unique futurology - including Jesus resurrected, disciples who became apostles, and a Spirit-filled Church as gospel keeper and mission commissioned to take the gospel faithfully to all nations.

Mark's gospel tells this simply, and is regarded as the earliest of the gospels upon which Matthew and Luke's gospels relied for most of their presentation and detail. The gospel does not record it's author. Church history notes him as John Mark, whom the New Testament details as cousin of Barnabas who was nephew to Mark's mother Mary (Acts, 12.12/Col 4.10), and who has history as the interpreter of Peter from Hebrew/Aramaic, and recorder of Peter's preaching, particularly in Rome.

(Please see Appendix 1 – Peter, John Mark, and the Authorship of Mark.)

Mark 1.1-13 – The Beginning of the Gospel

1.1 Jesus Christ is the gospel.

The introduction is short and sweet – *The beginning* - of which each phrase has specialist theological use:

ευαγγελιου *of the gospel* – the good news, which Mark will tell.

ιησου χριστου *of Jesus Christ* – presented as 'Y'shua haMessiach' (Messiah) - Jesus the 'anointed', who fulfilled the Hebrew expectation of 'one like Moses and King David's offspring' coming to establish the New Covenant of God with his people.

υιου θεου *Son of God* – also a messianic title, but used with Hebrew and Christian layers of theology. It originally denoted the messiah in his human prophetic and Davidic line relation to God who as the 'anointed' was the 'Son of God'. Post-resurrection New Testament theology expanded the title to include the layer of 'in trinity God'. God has revealed himself fully in Jesus - in his life and teaching, his once for all death for humans, his resurrection and ascension, and his giving of the Holy Spirit by whom Jesus continues in His Church and to redeem the sinners of the world.

[See comment at Mark 15.39]

A. SPECIAL FOCUS: JEWISH MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

Unique to Jews, Hebrew expectation of 'one like Moses and King David's offspring' coming to establish the New Covenant of God with his people in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, was positively but vaguely upheld among the majority Jewish leadership and people in the Greek and Roman era. Not all were positive.

The **Sadducee** minority dominated the Jerusalem priesthood, secure by material wealth and power collaboration with foreign domination, and holding to Torah primacy alone over oral or prophetic rabbinism, thus rejecting messianism. They opposed messianic individuals as threatening their vested interests. **[See comment at Mark 12.18]**

The **Pharisees**, originators of Talmudic Judaism of 'oral Torah tradition explains written Torah', were positively inclined only to a messiah upholding this 'tradition Torah' as a non-violent 'separated' lifestyle teaching leader, while God initiated political liberation. Their majority leadership gave governance involvement.

[See comment at Mark 2.16]

The **Essenes**/Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls group 'separated' by withdrawing into 'true Israel remnant' community in the Judean desert, as their self-identification verse using Isaiah 40.3 (1QS 8.15) and upholding their method of study of Hebrew Scripture as the path preparing God's way. By their 'Teacher of Righteousness' messiah, God would meet them in the desert, give the final overthrow of Gentile oppressions, and deliver Israel. *[The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1948, are now fully published]*

Sadducee and Essene Judaism were eliminated in the Jewish-Roman Wars and fall of Jerusalem, AD 66-70. Pharisaic Judaism regrouped into Rabbinic-Talmudic Judaism, by hindsight regarding political messianism of that time as discredited scripture teaching, and messiah claimants as failed tragic Zionist nationalists. Jesus' Jews and Gentiles, alone, still claim that the gospels give the historic account of the only successful non-Zionistic messiah, *Y'shua HaMessiach, Jesus Christ*.

1.2-8 John the Baptist was the Forerunner of the Messiah

Mark's is a ministry action gospel - the gospel of repentant life in Jesus had historical first step with John the Baptist, Mark begins from the witness of John the Baptist. John's gospel also gives the witness of John the Baptist as historical first step, but with a much expanded prologue. *[Mt 3.7-12,14/Lk 3.7-18/Jn 1.15-36 give detail of John the Baptist's preaching, along with detail of Jesus' birth and early life, not in Mark.]*

1.2-3 The Expectation of the Forerunner – the Voice calling in the desert:

Mark uses Ex 23.20 modified by the Mal 3.1 Elijah forerunner expectation to ground John the Baptist's self-identification verse used in common by all four gospels - Isaiah 40.3. John the Baptist fulfilled forerunner prophecy as the voice calling in the desert that the cause of the Lord needs a straight worship path/road for God to be made. For John, it was life repentant befitting the one to come, whom he identified as Jesus.

1.4-8 John's Ministry: The publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls showed that John's self-identity use of Isaiah 40.3 matched the self-identity use by the Qumran Community. Also similar was that they used ritual washing, he baptised. The differences were more significant, however:

- John came out of the desert and among the Jews to minister
- John preached a once off baptism, not regular washing
- John preached repentant life – repentance for the forgiveness of sins
- John self-identified as the forerunner of one greater than himself
- John preached that the 'greater one' would baptise in the Holy Spirit.

1.4 A Baptism of Repentance for the Forgiveness of Sins: While Essenes linked ritual ablution/water-washing with cleansing from sin, John's one-off baptism set forgiveness not by the water, but the inner spirit of repentance. Repentant life was life choice to be offered to the greater one. Jesus took over and developed John the Baptist's call for people to

- 1.5-6 repent for the forgiveness of their sins. **[See comment at Mark 2.17]**
John the Baptist like Elijah: John's popularity is noted, his righteousness is given gospel support in his confrontation of Herod, and backed by non-biblical historian Josephus (*Ant XVII.v.2*). Mark further sets the Elijah-like personality and lifestyle with which John the Baptist entered ministry, even to the common Jordan 'crossing' venue (2 kings 1.8/2.7-8).
- 1.-7-8 John the Baptist's Prophetic Objective – 'Identify the Greater One': This is prophetic confession by John "of the vast superiority of the coming one over himself. While John administers the eschatological sacrament of baptism, the coming one will actually bestow the eschatological gift of the Spirit." (Cranfield, CEB. The Gospel according to St. Mark.) Academic words point to spiritual truth: physical baptism enacts a destiny-determining spiritual transformation as is part of the messianic expectation, central to the messiah's work, and vital to each individual to be a disciple of God. (Is 11.1-3;42.1-2;61.1-2/Jer 31.31-34/Ez 36.25-27/Joel 2.28-29). The messiah's gift orders the destiny of discipleship.

1.9-13 The Son, the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, has come:

Mark then moves from John the Baptist to the fulfilment of his forerunner prophetic ministry – John's baptism of the greater one who came.

[Mark and Mt 3.13-17/Lk 22 agree that Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist, he came up out of the water, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended and rested on him like a dove, and God's voice spoke that Jesus was his beloved Son. Jn 1.31-34 focusses on the Spirit anointing Jesus, and rather gives John the Baptist's witness that the Spirit anointing on Jesus like a dove was the fulfilment and end of his forerunner ministry for the Son of God (testimony which initiated the discipleship transfer of Andrew and presumably John the fisherman to follow Jesus). The sources for the event and for John the Baptist's witness were thus John the Baptist himself, Jesus himself, and the two disciples.]

- 1.9 *ἰησοῦς ἀπο ναζαρετ* **Jesus from Nazareth** – scepticism that Jesus is an unhistorical fictional myth is ignorant **[See Special Focus – Jesus is Historical Truth, and Appendix 1]**, though Mark gives no details of Jesus' past in Bethlehem or Nazareth. Again Mark's is the action account with little embellishment – Jesus came into God's ministry through John, was baptised in the Jordan, and took over the ministry as the greater one.
- 1.10-11 Mark presents John and Jesus as the witnesses of the baptism event:
 - *heaven being torn open* – Mark's account includes a direct revelatory interface between self-revealing Spirit God and humanity by which Spirit God reveals for redemption. Test tubes were not in existence for empirical analysis at that time.
 - *the Spirit descending on him like a dove* – with OT link to Gen 1.2, the Spirit of God imaged as a 'female bird hovering/brooding' over creation, and the Gen 8.11 dove returning new life promise to Noah's ark after the flood, the Spirit is upon Jesus for life deliverance to come at the cross.
 - *a voice came from heaven* - the Father's voice affirms Jesus' sonship. "His Messianic dignity is openly declared at the outset of His ministry. The baptism is not to be viewed as a self-dedication of Jesus to the office of Messiah; here, at the beginning of his book, Mark makes it clear to us that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5.19). Lohse, E. Mark's witness to Jesus Christ. p50). Jesus' baptism did not initiate his adoption as the Son in royal Davidic manner, but revealed him as the Son already pre-existent. God's voice confirms Jesus' Sonship, the

words given in OT link to Is 42.1/Ps 2.78, which explore the Spirit-anointing and sonship of God's servant. **[See also Appendix 1 on the Hebrew Gospel]**

- 1.12-13 το πνευμα αυτον εκβαλλει *the Spirit sent Him out* - with OT link to Ex 24.18/Deut 9.9-19 and to 1 Kgs 19.8, the Son the greater one is sent by the Spirit to go through preparation for covenant leadership like Moses and Elijah. Of forty days, the number indicates a full period of discipline through temptation, temptation which Matthew and Luke's gospels show as messianic.

Mark then moves to the opening of Jesus' ministry as the greater one.

B. SPECIAL FOCUS – JESUS IS HISTORICAL TRUTH

Jesus was born before 4 BC, was raised and ministered in Hebrew Palestine, and crucified at the Jerusalem Passover for the political expediency of Jewish and Roman leadership at the time. **(See Appendix 4: Probable Chronology).**

Christian, Jewish-Rabbinic, Roman and other sources that attest to Jesus:

- over 5300 manuscripts/fragments of the Greek New Testament (many with early dating validity thus accuracy),
- over 8000 Latin manuscripts of the New Testament,
- over 1000 other NT manuscripts in other contemporary languages,
- hundreds of references in letters of Apostolic and Church fathers,
- references in Talmudic Jewish writings,
- references in non-Christian historians of Jewish, Roman, Syrian and other sources contemporary to the apostles,
- hundreds of archeological inscription and other verifications,

Manuscript quantity and reliability (closeness of manuscript date to original event) put the figure of Jesus crucified as fact, by reference and evidence unparalleled for ancient time. To regard Jesus born, ministering and crucified as a myth or unhistorical, needs to be seen as ignorance. Jesus born, ministering and crucified as the founder of Christianity is a fact of history. The claims of miracles, his resurrection, ascension, giving the Holy Spirit, and coming again, are the further issue that the gospels give witness to.

Manuscripts also predate Muhammad (b.570-d.632AD) and the 23 years till the caliph Uthman determination of the 655AD final version of the Qur'an, after which all differing versions were destroyed. Neither Muhammad nor the Qur'an are, nor had or have, accurate historical source material about Jesus.

Discussion:

- **Please read Appendix 1 – Peter, John Mark and the Authorship of Mark.**
- **John the Baptist announces 'Jesus the greater one' as a new ministry distinct from the Hebrew spiritualities of that time. Why is this important in understanding Jesus?**
- **Why is John the Baptist's focus about Jesus that 'He baptises in the Holy Spirit' so important in understanding Jesus?**