

Discuss gospel of mark

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In preparation for discussing the Gospel of Mark _____
 _____ THL 105, section _____ What s (names) are given to Jesus,
 by whom, and in what context?

In the Gospel of Mark Jesus is given several titles. In his opening verse Mark calls the rabbi

from Nazareth ' Jesus Christ, the son of God. The Messiah was the promised anointed one of God, but ' Son of God' is an even more elevated and unusual title for the monotheist Jews. John the Baptist describes him a 'One more powerful than I ' i. e. more than a prophet (Mark 1 v 7). He is called Jesus of Nazareth by someone from Capernaum who was possessed by an evil spirit (Mark 1 v 24). Nazareth was considered to be a negative place - John 1 v 46 has Nathanael saying ' Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' , so not everyone had positive opinions. In Mark 15 v 32 his enemies ironically refer to him as ' Christ , this king of Israel.' In 10 v 17 he is described as ' Good Teacher' by someone who wants to ask him questions.

2. How does Jesus identify himself? What titles/names does he use in relation to himself? Under questioning from Pilate Jesus answers to the title ' King of the Jews' , but Pilate was referring to an earthly kingdom and Christ to a heavenly one. In Mark 10 v 33 he is describing himself when he says ' The Son of Man'. The phrase come from Enoch 46 where ' the ancient of days' is also described as ' the Son of man'.

3. Write a brief " character sketch" (word picture) of Jesus as he is presented in the Gospel of Mark. Mark describes Jesus as a man of action anointed by God. (Mark 1 v 11) Words such

as ' sent ' and immediate' are used frequently. He is compassionate - Mark 2 v 5 and powerful (Mark 1 v 25). He is a prophet (14 v 27) and the

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overcomer of death (Mark 16 v 6).

4. Write a brief character sketch of the " disciples/apostles as a group" in Mark.

The apostles are portrayed as men who gave up much to follow Christ (Mark 1 v 18.)

Mark also describes how he appointed them - ' that they might be with him and that

he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out

demons.' (Mark 3 v 14, 15.) They are also described as being ordinary,

imperfect people -James and John the Sons of Thunder i. e. quick to anger'

and ' Judas Iscariot , who betrayed him.

5. Why are the disciples and others advised not to " tell anyone"?

This takes place in one instance after large crowds from distant places had begun to

collect around Jesus and those with evil spirits are calling out ' You are the Son of God.' (

Mark 3v11). This was very early in Jesus' earthly ministry. There was still a lot to do and

if the authorities were stirred to act at this point a lot less would have been achieved.

According to Mark at this point Jesus hadn't even chosen the 12 men who were to be central

to carrying on the faith after the ascension.

6. With what event in the life of Jesus does the gospel begin?

The gospel, begins with the baptism by John i. e. the time when Jesus was clearly stated to be God's beloved son who pleased him (Mark 1 v 11). This

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is different from the other evangelists. John begins before time ' In the beginning was the Word.' Both Matthew and Luke begin with the time of Jesus's birth or thereabouts. These three writers wanted readers to know who Jesus was. Mark is more concerned with what he did.

6. Cite and quote 10 passages from Mark's gospel which explicitly talk about the " Kingdom of God."

Mark 1 v 15 – ' The Kingdom of God is near.' The words of Christ right at the beginning of his ministry.

Mark 4 v 11 – something revealed or given to some, but incomprehensible to others. Mark 4

v 26 – ' This is what the kingdom of God is like- the introduction to a parable describing seed growing secretly.

Mark 4 v 30 Another illustration – something which starts small, but which soon grows and offers shelter.

Mark 9 v 1 Powerful and not something for the far future, but ' some who are standing will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.'

Mark 10 v 14 Something for those with simple faith like that of a child.

Mark 10 v 23 A hard place for the worldly to reach.

Mark 11 v 10 the cry of the crowds on Palm Sunday ' Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our Father David.' – so a time of restoration.

Mark 12 v 34 – very near.

Mark 15 v 43 Something to be sought - Joseph of Arimathea is described as '
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waiting for the kingdom.'

8. In light of what you said in # 7, what is the reign of God (kingdom of God) of which Jesus speaks? What are its characteristics?

The kingdom of God is frequently described as something secret - not understood by all, but suddenly revealing itself as in the parable of the growing seed (Mark 4 v 26) . It is not exclusive, but open to all with even simple faith (Mark 10 v 14).

9. Who is God for Marks Jesus? Name and describe the God to whom Jesus prays. Include specific quotes to substantiate your answer.

Mark begins his gospel at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He knew God as His Father who loves him and anoints him with the Spirit. - Mark 1v 11. He sees himself as belonging to a family of those who obey the will of God - Mark 3 v 35. In Gethsemane (Mark 14 v 36 he prays to God as ' Abba' i. e. Daddy', but also as someone for whom anything is possible. God was often someone he spoke to in private (Mark 1 v 35). In parables such as that of the Sower (Mark 4 v 20) God is seen as providing the means of salvation (the seed).

10. What do you find most perplexing/distressing about Marks gospel? Some believe that it originally finished in fear at 16 v 8. If it is Peter's description why would it end there?

11. What do you find to be the most interesting/surprising on reading this whole gospel?

The speed with which everything seems to happen - almost breathless.

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References

Bible, New International Version,(2008) London, Hodder and Stoughton.