23-09-02

**BACKGROUND OF** MARK'S GOSPEL

**PURPOSE:**

Mark's purpose, as stated in 1:1, was to set down in writing and preserve "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (CSB). He did not attempt to compile a complete and detailed biography of Jesus. Instead, he wanted to demonstrate the basic elements of the good news.

**WRITER AND DATE:**

Technically, the Gospel of Mark is anonymous. Yet, the heading "Gospel According to Mark" was placed on the manuscript in the early church period. John Mark wrote the Gospel based on Peter's teaching and his own recollections. Traditionally, conservative scholars have dated Mark's Gospel from the mid 50s to the early 60s, though some argue for a date in the early 70s. Many consider his Gospel the first of the four biblical accounts of Jesus's life.

**ORGANIZATION:**

The Gospel of Mark can be divided into two general sections. First, Jesus is revealed as the wonderful Servant of the Lord, doing amazing deeds and teaching about God's kingdom (chaps. 1-10). Second, Jesus is the Savior who came as a servant to give His life on the cross so that many will be saved (chaps. 11-16).

**THEMES IN MARK**

**SON OF GOD/SON OF MAN:**

The phrase "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" points to Jesus's full deity. Throughout Mark's Gospel, the Lord demonstrated His power in numerous ways. But Jesus also referred to Himself as the "Son of Man" (see Mark 2:10), a title that emphasizes His full humanity. First-century readers, especially those familiar with Old Testament prophetic Scriptures, would also have connected this name with the Messiah through the writings of Daniel (Dan. 7:13).

**LORDSHIP:**

Each account of Jesus's acts demonstrates His lordship and authority. Jesus is Lord over Satan (1:12-13) and his demons (5:1-20). Jesus is Lord over sickness (1:29-31,40-44). Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath and is the foundation and fulfillment of the law (2:23-28). Although Mark did not include many of Jesus's sermons and teachings, the power of Jesus's authoritative message captivated the crowds (1:22).

**DISCIPLESHIP:**

From the calling of His first disciples (1:14-20) and appointing the twelve apostles (3:13-19) to the commissioning of the church (6:7-12; 16:15), Jesus invested Himself into the lives of believers who would carry on His mission. Jesus not only taught kingdom truths to the masses, but He also instructed committed followers by precept and example.

This article adapted from Snapshots: Bible Book Introductions from Explore the Bible (Nashville: Lifeway Christian Resources, 2022)

**ITEM**EXPLORE XX **THE BIBLE**

*Explore the Bible Adult Leader* Pack, Fall 2023 • Suggested Use: Sessions 1-13 • © Copyright 2023 Lifeway Christian Resources