

# **Jesus – Son of God, Son of Man**

## **Studies in the Gospel of Mark**

**Author-** John Mark. He is an ordinary follower of Jesus and servant in the early church. He was not a church leader, but rather a helper of both Peter and Paul. John Mark is first mentioned in connection with his mother Mary's home in Acts 12:12 where the believers had gathered to pray for Peter's release from jail. When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from Jerusalem after the famine visit, Mark accompanied them (Acts 12:25). Mark then appears as a helper to Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but he deserted them at Perga in Pamphylia, to return to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Paul was obviously disappointed by Mark's action because when Barnabas proposed taking Mark on the second journey, Paul flatly refused, a refusal that broke up their working relationship (Acts 15:36-39). John left with Barnabas to Cyprus and is not mentioned again in the book of Acts. Apparently by the time Colossians is written, Paul and Mark are working together again as Paul sends a greeting from Mark and tells them to welcome him. The early church fathers plainly acknowledge this stating that Mark wrote the book from Rome (Irenaeus and Clement) and that much of its content was recorded from the preaching of Peter in Rome at that time. Paul later writes in 2 Timothy 4:11, "**Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.**" This is the John Mark, author of this Gospel account.

**Background** – Mark is simple account of the life and ministry of Jesus. He does not seek to include every detail he can find about Jesus, rather he seeks to give a short, accurate testimony of the Gospel. Thus, the first verse of the book,

**Mark 1:1** – "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark omits any ancestry or accounts of Jesus birth, but begins where Jesus public ministry begins with His baptism by John in the wilderness. Mark does not give the large discourses that are present in Matthew and Luke, nor is it filled with the detailed Christology present in the book of John. Rather it records brief accounts of many the things Jesus did and the places He went. Mark's Gospel is a vivid account of the life of Jesus emphasizing much of what Jesus did, it seems, more than what He said. One key word often used is "immediately" whereas Mark keeps the story moving and rarely stops to ponder the significance of the events. Mark's Gospel is also the shortest being only 16 chapters total. One important note is that most modern English bibles include chapter 16:9-20, but most conservative evangelical scholars reject those verses as being authentic to Mark's account, and therefore reject those verses as part of the canon of the Holy Bible. Mark

succinctly records the most important events of Jesus life, death, and resurrection which do indeed make it complete Gospel account. As such, Mark is considered to be one of the four “Evangelists” along with Matthew, Luke and John, faithfully reporting the most important biography ever written in history, the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

**Themes present in Mark:** The main theme stated in the first verse,

**Mark 1:1** - 1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” It appears that Mark has not only Jews but Gentiles, probably in Rome as his audience, as he carefully explains Jewish customs (7:2-4, 15:42), translates Aramaic words (3:17, 5:41, 7:11,34, 15:22), and seems to have a special interest in persecution and martyrdom (8:34-38, 13:9-13). Mark most definitely portrays the **humanity of Christ** as he mentions His human emotions (1:41, 3:5, 6:34, 8:12, 9:36), and His human limitations (4:38, 11:12, 13:32). He is seen as the physical descendant of David, and uses the title “Son of Man” to refer to Himself, an obvious reference to the man who is the Messiah from the Old Testament. But the **Deity of Jesus** is also portrayed, even in the first verse He is called the “Son of God.” Mark is careful to record Jesus’ miraculous deeds and leaves no doubt as to His supernatural power, but also records His supernatural wisdom and powerful insight, even predicting His own death and resurrection. The **cross** is clearly in view with both the human cause (12:12, 14:1-2, 15:10) and the divine necessity (8:31, 9:31, 10:33) being explained, and a fairly detailed account of the plot to kill Him and the judicial proceedings at His trial. Jesus close daily relationship with His followers highlights the ministry of **discipleship** that was so essential to His way of life and ministry. His call to discipleship recorded at Peter’s confession is monumental (8:34-38). Jesus is pictured as a tireless **teacher** and although much detail is omitted, He is called “Rabbi” 37 times and seen constantly instructing others with profound wisdom about His Kingdom. Several other features are present in this brief but powerful book such as the **Messianic Secret** (1:34, 44, 3:12, 5:43, 7:36-37, 8:26,30) where Jesus warns people to keep silent about who He is or what He has done. The book also records a major part of the Olivet Discourse (13:1-37) and therefore gives **prophecy** and **eschatology** a prominent place in its account of Jesus teaching. Even though there is not much emphasis with quotes from the Old Testament, the key elements showing Him to be the promised Messiah are present. All of these characteristics combine to make the Gospel of Mark a brief yet powerful testimony to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is in fact the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe.