

Mark Outline

Introduction: The Gospel of Mark is a kind of tale of two cities- for years the church considered it the worst of all Gospels due to its spare and enigmatic style, but in the last hundred years church scholars, believing Mark to be the first Gospel record, have considered it to be the best.

I think it's a good idea to go with the vast majority of scholarship which views Mark as the first written Gospel. When a story moves from an oral tradition to a written tradition (when we move from telling stories about Grandma to writing these stories down), we can imagine a predictable pattern of first generating simple, short, memorable moments, and only with time will these moments become organized into a more comprehensive narrative whole. Mark appears to be working from a collection of short sayings and actions by Jesus, which he doesn't put a whole lot of effort into organizing. Matthew, by contrast, takes many of the sayings that occur independently in Mark, and weaves them together to create "sermons", painting the picture of Jesus as more a rabbi.

But we shouldn't be deceived by Mark's seemingly simple approach. In many ways Mark is the most sophisticated of the Gospels precisely because of this simplicity- rather than shaping memories to create a more well framed picture of Jesus, Mark simply shows us these moments like pieces of art in a gallery, allowing us as the hearing community to draw our own conclusions. Why even the ending of Mark refuses to draw a conclusion for us, fiercely guarding our right and our responsibility to interpret for ourselves.

Section One: The Galilean Ministry

- Chapter 1: John the Baptist; baptism, temptation, Galilean ministry; calling disciples; Preaching and healing tour; healing leper
- Chapter 2: Healing of paralytic; calling Levi; question about fasting; words about sabbath
- Chapter 3: Healing man on Sabbath; crowd at seaside; Jesus appoints twelve; Beelzebul; Jesus and true family
- Chapter 4: Parable of sower; lamp and bushel basket; growing seed; mustard seed; Jesus Stills storm
- Chapter 5: Healing Gerasene demoniac; girl restored to life; woman with hemorrhage healed
- Chapter 6: Rejection of Jesus; mission of twelve; death of John; feeding of five thousand Jesus walks on water; healing of sick
- Chapter 7: Jesus attacks Pharisees; syrophoenecian woman's faith; healing of deaf man
- Chapter 8: Feeding of four thousand; Jesus attacks Pharisees again; blind man at Bethsaida Peter names Jesus as Messiah; Peter attacked by Jesus
- Chapter 9: Transfiguration; coming of Elijah; healing of boy; Jesus foretells death and Resurrection; who is the greatest; strange exorcist; temptation

Section Two: The Journey to Jerusalem

- Chapter 10: Teaching on divorce; blessing of children; rich young man; third prediction Request of James and John; healing of blind bartimaeus

Section Three: Jerusalem

- Chapter 11: Triumphal entry; fig tree; cleansing of temple; Jesus' authority questioned
- Chapter 12: Parable of wicked tenants; taxes; question about resurrection; greatest Commandment; Jesus attacks Scribes; widow's mite
- Chapter 13: Prediction of temple's destruction and "little apocalypse"
- Chapter 14: Plot to kill Jesus; anointing at Bethany; Passover and last supper; Gethsemene; Arrest of Jesus; Peter denies Jesus
- Chapter 15: Jesus and Pilate; Crucifixion and death; burial
- Chapter 16: Resurrection of Jesus; various endings

Stories to know: Gerasene demoniac (Chapter 5); Peter gets it right and wrong (Chapter 8); Mark's open ending (Chapter 16)