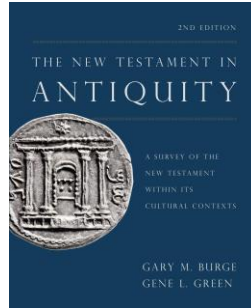


Chapter 9-The Gospel According to Mark



Key Terms Messiah, anchor parable, Mandeans, messianic secret

Key Locations and People Galilee, Judea, Capernaum, Jordan River, Papias

Key Points

- According to tradition, Mark's gospel is largely based on Peter's eyewitness testimony.
- Mark's gospel is a fast-paced dramatic portrayal of Jesus's ministry.
- Structurally, Mark can be divided into two sections—Jesus's public and fruitful ministry in Galilee and Jesus's rejection and eventual death in Jerusalem.
- Jesus redefines what it means to be the Messiah by reigning in the midst of defeat.

Noteworthy Background(s) Sketch of a Capernaum synagogue, picture of a residential area in Capernaum, fishing on the sea of Galilee, picture of a first-century fishing boat

Chapter Summary

The second gospel was written by (John) Mark and may have been written in Rome perhaps sometime in the 60s. Whatever the case may be, Mark's gospel seems to be intended for an audience that apparently had little or no knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic, since several Hebrew and Aramaic names are translated. In addition to its universal appeal, Mark's fast-paced drama is remarkable. Jesus is seen bounding to and fro, healing the sick and casting out demons. Recently, scholars have suggested that Mark's gospel easily lends itself to an oral presentation.

The first half of the book mainly concerns Jesus's movement to the north in Galilee. Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark does not include a genealogy or a birth narrative. The book opens with John the Baptist readying Israel for the arrival of the Lord, much like Elijah who commanded Israel to repent of her idolatrous ways. After John baptizes Jesus, the Spirit "casts out" Jesus into the wilderness, where he will overcome temptation and defeat Israel's ultimate enemy, the devil.

Mark divides the ministry of Jesus into three phases in Galilee. It is there that Jesus has a fruitful ministry. For the most part, he is well-received, particularly by the gentiles. Demons are cast out and conquered; the lame walk and the blind see. The long-awaited kingdom has indeed arrived! At Caesarea Philippi, the story takes a dramatic turn—Jesus is explicitly labeled as the "Messiah" (i.e., "the Christ"). Immediately, Jesus begins to head south to Jerusalem—the place of hostility and death. On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus makes three Passion predictions: the Son of Man will suffer and die.

The radical nature of Jesus's identity explains the peculiar "messianic secret" in the second gospel. Throughout the first half of Mark, Jesus commands various people, including the Twelve, to remain quiet and not to tell what they have seen and heard. The significance of these events is bound up with Jesus's reworking of his messiahship. His kingship is not marked by political victory but by defeat and humiliation. The same can be said for the nature of the kingdom. It is no coincidence that Mark presents a Roman centurion declaring that Jesus is the "Son of God" *while Jesus is on the cross*.

Chapter 9 – The Gospel According to Mark

The students will be able to:

1. Discuss the elements of Mark's gospel that reflect Hellenistic theater.
2. Identify the audience of Mark.
3. Identify the three confessions of Jesus's identity that structure Mark's gospel.
4. Describe Mark's prologue.
5. Describe events and teachings in the first phase of the Galilean ministry.
6. Describe events and teachings in the second phase of the Galilean ministry.
7. Describe events and teachings in the third phase of the Galilean ministry.
8. Describe Jesus's suffering in Jerusalem and Mark's use of irony.
9. Identify and discuss the textual problem of Mark 16:9–20.
10. Identify Mark, the author, and the location of his writing.
11. Identify the date of this gospel.