# **The Gospel According to St. Mark**

**Concordia Commentary – Dr. James Voelz, 2013**

Introduction

* What is a “Gospel?”
	+ euvagge,lion (euangelion) Good News
* Authorship
	+ Early church fathers testify without question to Mark’s authorship
		- Papias (AD 130-140)
		- Irenaeus (Late Second Century AD)
		- Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215)
		- Origen (AD 185-253)
	+ Which Mark?
		- 1 Peter 5:13
		- John Mark
			* Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39
		- Philemon 24
		- 2 Timothy 4:11
		- Whoever it is, they have a close connection to Peter and the Twelve
	+ Does the exact identity really matter?
* Date
	+ Evidence places the dating prior to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.
		- Such a disaster would have been noted
		- Possibly late 50s/early 60s
* Recipients
	+ Evidence from the early church fathers points to those who heard Peter preaching in Rome.
	+ The Gospel According to St. Mark is one that emphasizes seeing and believing.
		- We do not have the privilege of seeing and then believing.
			* Neither did many of the Roman citizens who were beginning to be persecuted for the faith in the late 50s and early 60s.
		- A book of evidence
* Composition
	+ Unlike Luke’s Gospel, Mark does not give detail in regards to research.
		- Not investigative in nature
	+ The church fathers Papias and Clement state that Mark composed from memory.
		- Also done in the same style as Peter
	+ Debate as to Peter’s presence/editing in the writing of the Gospel
		- By the third century, Peter’s authority takes a greater role in the authorship.
			* Never questioned
* Genre
	+ Voelz compares Mark’s Gospel to not only the other three, but other writings of the time period.
		- Emphasizes a comparison to a Greek tragedy
			* Human beings in action
				+ Plot is important
			* The character of the protagonist is important
				+ Moral purpose
				+ Realistic
				+ Falls into some misfortune (not necessarily on his/her own account)
			* This will give insight to the Gospel’s abrupt end.
		- Views the Gospel to be written after Matthew’s and Luke’s
			* Follows the more conventional presentation of Matthew and Luke with their facts of Jesus’ life.
			* A drama tends to follow the basic presentation of the story
				+ Mark is to Matthew/Luke as *Jesus Christ Superstar* is to*The Greatest Story Ever Told*
* A Synoptic Problem
	+ Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very similar
		- At times tell the same accounts
			* But there are contradictions
		- Mark appears to be a balance point
			* Matthew and Mark will be on the same page when Luke contradicts.
			* Mark and Luke will be on the same page when Matthew contradicts.
				+ It is rare for Matthew and Luke to be similar while Mark contradicts.
	+ John takes a more spiritual account
		- But both Mark and John are concerned about seeing and believing.
			* Note the Jewish leaders demand of Jesus in 15:32 compared to Jesus response to Thomas in John 20:29.
				+ Mark treats the theme from below, while John views it from above.

The Beginning: The Ministry of John the Baptist (1:1-8)

* The beginning (1:1)
	+ The focus is on the delivery of the Gospel
		- The church father Papias stated that Peter would shape his teaching to the needs of his hearers.
		- The facts are not the focus here as the genealogy accounts in Matthew
		- Sets up to pull the hearer in for “What is next?”
	+ The Sonship’s importance
		- An affirmation of who Jesus is
			* Though the Gospel veils this
* An OT fulfilment (1:2-3)
	+ Exodus 23:20 and/or Malachi 3:1 over Isaiah 40:3
		- Who is Jesus compared to these passages?
			* He is the people of God
			* He is the Lord who comes to His temple
			* Jesus is the central player in the “drama”
			* Jesus is the OT fulfilment who will speak to them God’s Word
	+ The wilderness
		- The place where God’s people were formed after their exodus from Egypt
			* Precursor to their entrance into the Promised Land
	+ The way/road of the Lord
		- In Isaiah 40:3 “Lord” refers to Yahweh, but here refers to Jesus
			* This Guy is going to fulfill the prophecy!
			* One in the same, but different
			* A given insight to the hearer/reader
* Introduction to The Baptizer (1:4-8)
	+ He’s washing
		- OT washing with water is associated with renewal and purging people from guilt.
			* Ezekiel 36:25
			* Psalm 51:2,4,7
			* John was being the agent of washing and purging people of their sins in preparations for the One who is to come.
				+ A move of the non-literal OT to the literal NT
				+ No other Jewish baptism related to the new covenant is this way
		- Repentance: before or after the washing?
			* Greek grammar suggests repentance comes after
			* Baptism was a means to attain repentance
				+ Why is this important?
				+ God’s activity, not man’s

“God made for Himself a cleansed and repentant people, prepared for His visitation.”

* + - The Jordan
			* Naaman
				+ 2 Kings 5:12
			* Location of Israel’s new life as the crossed over into the Promised Land
				+ Joshua 3-4
	+ He’s different
		- 2 Kings 1:8
		- Diet
			* Grasshoppers
				+ They are clean

Leviticus 11:21-22

* + - * Wild honey
				+ 2 Chronicles 31:5
				+ How did God care for Israel in the wilderness?

Deuteronomy 32:13

Psalm 81:16

God is at work again in the wilderness.

* + - * + What is to come?

Numbers 14:8

Joshua 5:6

Isaiah 43:19

Amos 9:11-15

A renewal is coming

* + Not as strong as the next Guy
		- Elisha?
			* 2 Kings 2:9
		- Isaiah 40:10
		- Defender
			* Psalm 2
	+ Another baptism will come
		- Joel 2:28
			* The coming of Israel’s God as foretold by the prophets is near.
		- Is John’s baptism the same as a Christian’s baptism today?
			* No
				+ John’s did not bestow the Holy Spirit
				+ John’s was preparatory
			* Galatians 5:22-23
				+ A result of Christian Baptism