

Mark as biography

A biography is a narrative devoted exclusively to the portrayal of the whole life of a particular individual perceived as historical .

What is a “Gospel”?

From the Greek *euaggelion* meaning *good announcement*

“The birthday of the god(emperor) was for the world the beginning joyful tidings which have been proclaimed on his account” (9BCE discovered at Priene in Asia Minor).

Gospel

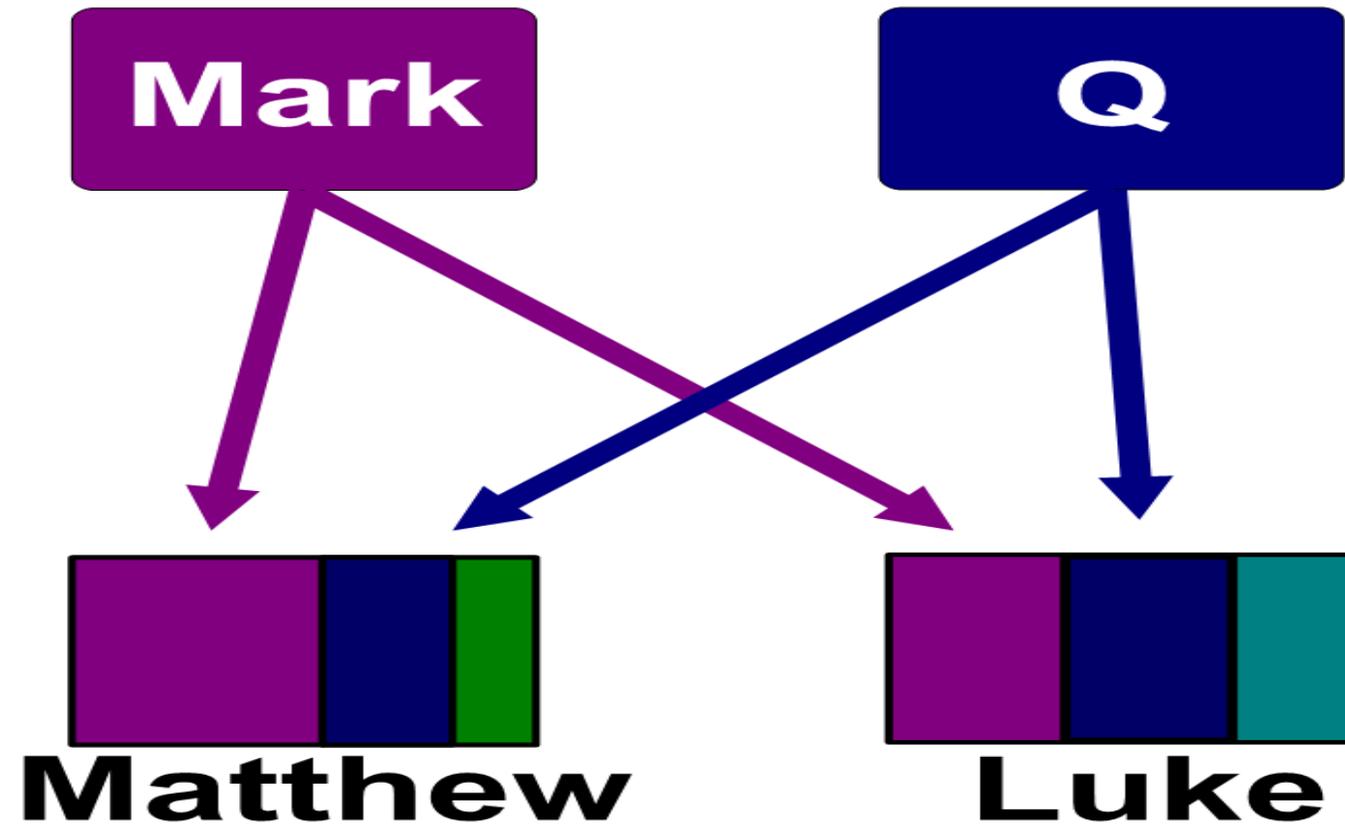
- In Mark it is more than a proclamation of a fact - it is a call to a response in faith to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ as the risen Lord, which will change our lives.

How did Mark come to be written?

- Under the influence of Augustine, who stated that Mark was a follower and lackey and digester of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark was seen as being derived from Matthew and that Matthew was the first Gospel to be written.
- During the 18th and 19th centuries under the influence of the Enlightenment and scientific method scholars began to question this and the historical truth of the gospels .
- Historical criticism Mark came to be regarded as the first Gospel to be written.

Two source Theory

Two-source Hypothesis



Nineteenth Century Biblical Criticism

- G.E. Lessing introduced the Two Source Hypothesis: Matthew and Luke used as a written source the gospel of Mark and another source called Q (Quelle meaning source). 355 verses used by Matthew and Luke but are not found in Mark.
- Each had their own special source for individual material.
- Mark simply assembled in an undigested way pre-existing traditions.
- This led to the Quest for the Historical Jesus(Albert Schweitzer)

Form Criticism

- Form Criticism: analysis of the typical forms by which human existence is linguistically. Traditionally this examined pre-literary oral traditions such as legends, hymns, curses, and laments. (*Richard Soulen*).
- *Implied in this approach is the assumption that some elements of the gospel narrative did not capture the Historical Jesus but were created by the early church in the service of proclamation and preaching.*

Redaction Criticism

- An examination of the editorial activity of Mark and how Mark's use of the common material compares with that of Matthew and Luke.
- An examination of the theological intentions of the writer of Mark through the use of literary and narrative devices.
- Locations can have theological implications.

Target audience for Mark

- Pagan converts to Christianity who were experiencing persecution.
- Evidence see Mark 7:1-13 and
- Mark 13:14 “But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up when it ought not to be let the reader understand, then those in Judea must flee to the mountains”

When was Mark Written

- Consensus is between 60 and 70 CE – probably late 60's.
- Irenaeus says it was after the deaths of Peter and Paul
- Mark wrote for the Church in Rome
- References to suffering of Jesus Followers:
 - John is “handed over” (*paradidonai*) after preaching (1:2-15)
 - Jesus preaches and is handed over (9:31, 10: 33) over 13:9-13)
 - *Evidence from Tacitus etc fo Christians suffering persecution after the great fire of Rome n 64 C.E.*
 - *Others see a background in the Jewish Revolt prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. Was it written for Palestinian Christians?*

Marcan Prologue: 1:1-13

- A Superscript and Preparation for Ministry of Jesus by God (1:2-3), and by John (1:4-8)
- B Messianic Preparation of Jesus by Baptism (1:9-11) and by Testing (1:12-13)

Marcan Prologue 1:1-13

- The prologue is written from the perspective of faith to equip the reader to understand the rest of the Gospel and the significance of Jesus when so many of the actors in the Gospel did not understand.
- John the Baptist presented as looking forward to Jesus
- Jesus referred to as Son of God - the only editorial statement that identifies Jesus
- Quotations from Malachi and Isaiah

Marcan Prologue

- Johns garment of camel skin refers to Elijah

Marcan Prologue

- Baptism of Jesus:
- “Heavens torn apart” -This phrase prepares for a direct communication between God and human beings - Ezek:1:1
- Isaiah 64:1 “Oh that you will open the heavens and come down.”
- Mark 15:38 “And the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom.”

Marcan Prologue

- Testing in the Desert:
 - Wilderness – where Israel was tested
 - The tradition of God testing the Just Person who does not succumb. See Job.
 - 40 days refers possibly to the fasting of Moses Deut 9:18
 - Prepares the reader for the Discipleship of the Cross
 - See Wisdom 2:12-20.
 - The struggle between Good and Evil is introduced here in Mark and is a constant theme through the Gospel.

The Gospel of Mark

Mark2

- Mark 8:27-10:52

The Pivot of Mark's Gospel

- Two healing miracles that involve the giving of sight to the blind look back to the first section and forward to the Passion Narrative
- Within this section:
 - The Transfiguration and its blinding light (9:1-13)
 - Three predictions of Jesus' Passion
 - Peter's confession of faith as Messiah (8:27-30)
 - The failure of the disciples to understand who Jesus truly is.
 - The teaching on riches, the nature of discipleship
 - Marriage and the welcoming of children as part of the servant motif.

Healing of the Blind Man of Bethsaida

Discipleship and discerning who Jesus is is a journey of discovery.
Hence the two attempts to cure the blind man

Note the command not to go into the village. No focus on the crowd's amazement.

Peter's Profession of Faith

- The term Christ or Messiah is not a univocal term in Hebrew
- Kings and prophets were anointed in the Old Testament as in the anointing of David by Samuel.
- Once Peter identified Jesus as the Christ Jesus gave orders not to anyone about him why.

Messianic Secret

- Jesus' command to silence is a theological device introduced by the author Mark to account for a problem – why did Jesus not wish to be recognized publicly as Messiah.
- Wrede, who originated the theory in his book published in 1901, saw the need to resolve a tension between the Early Church's belief in the Risen Jesus as Messiah and the fact (as Wrede saw it) that Jesus made no such claims during his lifetime.
- What are the implications of this approach?

The Transfiguration

- Note the significance of the Mountain
- Greek word for Transfiguration has more in common with the word “Metamorphose”
- Significance of “This is my Beloved Son”
- Significance of the booths/tents

Healing of a Possessed Boy

- The language used by Mark is that of demonic possession
- A recurring theme is the need for faith as a pre-requisite for healing
- The importance of prayer

The Second Passion Prediction

- The whole of this pivotal section focuses on the nature of leadership for Jesus and how this contrasts with the expectations of the disciples
- The significance of the image of the child.
- The teaching focuses on key words: scandal, fire and salt

Riches and Poverty

- The Rich Young Man cannot accept the radical invitation of Jesus
- Instruction on how hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom
- The Promise of Jesus to his disciples

Third Passion Prediction

- Compare and contrast the notion of discipleship of Jesus and that of the disciples
- Jesus as the Suffering Servant
 - I have offered my back
 - To those who struck me
 - My cheeks to those
 - Who plucked my beard;
 - . (Isaiah 50)
 - As a Ransom – the price for releasing a captive.

Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

- Compare with the healing of the Healing of the Blind Man at Bethsaida.
- Note the theological importance of “Let me see again”
- Note also the theological significance of the blind man’s response to the healing.