

The Gospel of Mark – An Introduction

Collect for Lent

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness. May obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

I. A Review of Critical Analysis – How do we do Bible Study

- A. The African Bible Study Method
- B. The Bible as an historical document
- C. The Bible as the Word of God written by divinely inspired men

II. Intratextual and Intratextual Critic

A. Intratextual refers to reading what Mark wrote and examining what is written using the best and most original text – the translation into English would reflect as accurately as possible that translation

This is the difference between listening to a speech or listening to an interpretation of the speech

B. Intertextual looks at the relationship between text and other sources such as archeological data. There is also the links between the text and other texts Sacred and others. Paul and the Greek prose styles, rhetoric etc. With Mark the key is the close connection to Old Testament Writings.

What Mark will do is demonstrate that the Old Testament is authoritative and that the promise is fulfilled in Jesus

II. For whom and when was Mark produced in a written form?

- A. A Christian Community suffering persecution probably Rome

B. 38 A.D. to 70 A.D.

1. Before Peter's death
2. Before the Fall of the Temple in Jerusalem

III. Mark and the Other Gospels

A. Historical Data

1. The Second Gospel - Matthew, Mark, Luke...
2. Augustine (354-430) wrote that Mark was only copying what Matthew had written – A poor substitute – 90% of Matthew appears in Mark
3. Following Augustine, the Patristic Period diminished not only Mark, but also Luke
 - a. John and Matthew were Apostles
 - b. Mark and Luke were men of the Apostolic Time

B. The Breakthrough in Modern Knowledge

1. 7th Century Monk Cahill was the author of the first independent commentary on Mark – his work is known to the Venerable Bede (673-735)
2. This long road leads to the scholarship of Scriptural Studies and Critical Analysis
3. No modern Scholar discounts the dialogue between Mark and the Other Gospels
4. Mark is the earliest Gospel and this leads to the source theory
 1. Two sources for Matthew and Luke
 - a. Mark
 - b. Q – the lost source
 2. The relationship between Mark and John is less clear

C. Similarities and Differences

1. Mark portrait of the disciples is negative – Matthew and Luke are most respectful and measured in their descriptions
2. Jesus is more human in Mark- his reactions are human – the higher Christology is demonstrated in the later Gospels building to John

High and Low Christology is a theological term to denote the origin of the Christological thought. Low Christology begins with the human Jesus who is revealed to be the Christ. The perspective of High Christology is the God who becomes human and then assumes his place at the right hand of the Father. Neither denies the divinity of Christ or the human nature of the Second Person of the Trinity. For quick reference note the beginning of the Gospel of John as High and Mark as Low, Matthew and Luke are moving from low to high

3. What is not in Mark
 - a. Infancy Narrative
 - b. Post-Resurrection Appearances
 - c. The Sermon on the Mount
 - d. The Lord's Prayer
4. What is in Mark but not in other Gospels?

There is a much richer narratives (more details) than the other synoptic Gospels. This would also support the two source theory. If Mark were a redaction of Mathew then how does he have more detailed accounts?

D. Mark and John - Three possibilities

1. John does not know Mark's Gospel
2. John does know mark, but uses the material in a different way
3. John and Mark share a common tradition and basic understanding of the Christ event

Personally (A Bart Ryan – I believe from reading primarily Fr. Ray Brown that John knew of Mark and that they used the same sources. The differences we see in the two Gospels are more about the development of Christian Thought over the two to three generations than about basic disagreements about the nature of Jesus or His ministry)

IV. Modern Thought about the Gospel of Mark

A. Mark was a collector of the eye witness accounts of the ministry of Jesus

1. Oral Traditions
2. Sermons – perhaps Peter's

B. He was the closest (In Time) to the events recorded in the Gospels

C. The human Jesus revealed in Mark set off the Quest for the Historical Jesus

1. Albert Schweitzer's book, so titled is the result of the modern Scripture study which placed Mark as the earliest Gospel
2. Adolf Von Harnack's, What is Christianity (1910) was a Scripture Scholar of note and worked with Critical Analysis of Scripture - This work notes the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man
3. WWI deflates this high view of human brotherhood

V. Other types of Critical Analysis

A. Form Criticism – begins after WWII – examines the perform of the text – from where did the text come and what other texts were the basis for this text

The Ancient Near East Creation Myths and the relationship with the O.T. is an example

B. Redaction Criticism - This is the study of basis for the author to write in the material. What was the motivation, what was the purpose, what was the ultimate goal?

An example of this was my comments on Sunday. Matthew is written from the Jewish experience. When he was seeking an outsider he used a Canaanite the mortal enemy of the Jews. Luke uses a Roman Soldier the oppressor of all who were not Roman Citizens. Most Gentile Christians of the era were slaves.

V. The Bible as Literature – Mark as Literature

A. Simple Greek the easiest to read in the New Testament

B. The Sentence Structure is school boy or as an uneducated man whole write

C. The Gospel as a Literary Form

1. Mark tells us Mark 1:1 that this is a Gospel (*euangelion*) the word is used in the era to mean an official pronouncement of importance

2. Mark is the only Evangelist to use the term

3. In contrast Paul uses the term 60 times

D. Mark's Literary Devices

1. Vivid and detailed narratives - Jairus Daughter – your are there feel

2. Rapid change of Events, scenes (*euthysGk for immediately*) used 42 times in Mark – 7 in Matthew once in Luke

3. Mark uses repetition

4. Framing or bracketing - curing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the Temple – the healing of blind people and the blindness of the disciples when Jesus teaches about the passion

5. Foreshadowing and Echo – Looking forward and back – linking to the history of Israel and the future with the Messiah