

Mark

I. Introduction.

- A. Theme of Mark: Christ is the Servant of Jehovah.
- B. Introductory Notes. Some people may disagree with the theme stated above. Mark does not use the specific title Servant of Jehovah for Christ. However, there are many allusions to it as Mark draws from Isaiah, even though he does not quote directly.

II. Background and General Information.

- A. The Author. Mark was the nephew of Barnabas, who was Paul's co-laborer during his first missionary journey. Mark's mother, named Mary (one of many Marys in the NT), probably owned the house with the upper room where the prayer meetings of Acts 1 took place. He was probably converted under the apostle Peter's preaching, hence Peter's reference to him as his spiritual son.
- B. The Authorship.
  - 1. The gospel of Mark was written under the apostolic authority of Peter. (Apostolic authority is one of the marks and requirements of canonicity; i.e., rightfully holding a place in the NT.) Clement of Alexandria and other early church fathers testify that Mark wrote down Peter's preaching and record of Jesus' ministry.
  - 2. It was perhaps written at Rome during Peter's and Paul's ministry there, just prior to both their deaths. Cf. 15:21 and its reference to Rufus, who was in Rome, according to Paul's greetings in Rom. 16.
  - 3. It was written to Gentiles. It includes explanations of Jewish customs and translates some Jewish Aramaic words for the benefit of those who were essentially unfamiliar with the history of Israel and Jewish ways. Therefore, it does not quote the OT as Matthew does. Therefore also, it does not focus on teaching, wisdom, and discipleship as the outgrowth of

faith, which would be effective ways of reaching Jews. But it focuses on the actions of Jesus and faith itself as a proper response to what Jesus' actions show.

4. It is particularly suitable for Roman readers and Gentiles in the Roman Empire who were accustomed to demonstrations of power.

a. Mark emphasizes Jesus' works of power and miracles that demonstrate Jesus' Deity and show Him to be a Servant, and yet a divine Servant. This revelation of Him was calculated to grab the attention of Gentiles in the Roman Empire; either of those who were enslaved by Rome as a matter of empathy, or of those who were in power who would at first be shocked by the idea of Jesus as a slave. But then, they would be captivated by a Servant with divine power to save.

b. It is also a book of action, that would appeal to the Roman mindset. It does not have accounts of Jesus' birth or youth. It uses the word "immediately" 42 times.

C. The Main Purpose. Its main purpose is the evangelism of Gentiles. Therefore, there is little emphasis on teaching, but there is much emphasis on the narrative of action and works of power leading to an extensive, voluminous (percentage wise) account of the greatest work of power, the death and resurrection of Christ that secures the forgiveness of sins for all of His people. Therefore, the story has an abrupt ending at 16:8.

D. The Textual Question. Is the passage in 16:9-20 original? It is very difficult to tell. In some ways it doesn't seem to fit. It is missing in some manuscripts (hand-written copies in Greek and other early translation languages). But it has been accepted as original by the church since the early days of the church; this is a strong argument for its inclusion in the canon.

E. The Presentation of Jesus. Jesus is presented as the Servant/worker with the power and mercy of One who is divine and yet human to serve Jehovah's purpose of the salvation of multitudes so that it is no small thing limited only to Jews, but sent forth to Gentiles also (Isa. 49).

### III. Outline.

A. The preaching of Peter to Cornelius in Acts 10 provides a basic outline common to all the synoptic

gospels. But it is very basic and very broad.

1. The Ministry of John (Acts 10:37).
2. The Ministry of Jesus (Acts 10:38).
3. Crucifixion (Acts 10:39).
4. Resurrection (Acts 10:40-41).
5. The Great Commission (Acts 10:42).

B. Basic Analytical Outline. This is similar to the outline of the other synoptics, Matthew and Luke.

1. Introduction of the Servant. Chapter 1:1-13.
  - a. The forerunner (John the Baptist).
  - b. Official induction of Jesus into His ministry.
  - c. The testing of the Servant. Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness.
2. The Ministry of the Servant. Chapters 1:14 - 5:43.
  - a. The call of His disciples and works of power, both public and private, individual and corporate.
  - b. The call of Levi (Matthew), and defense and ordination of the disciples.
  - c. Parables: about the Word of God, the witness of the disciples, their effect to expand the kingdom of Jehovah.
  - d. Works of power.
3. Opposition to the Servant. Chapters 6:1 - 8:26.
  - a. Unbelief.
  - b. Threatened violence by His enemies.
  - c. Legalism of the Pharisees.
  - d. The false teaching of the Pharisees.
  - e. All of the above interspersed with works of power. Thus, the Servant continued to serve Jehovah and others, opposition notwithstanding.
4. Instruction by the Servant. Chapters 8:27 - 10:52.

5. Presentation and Rejection of the Servant. Chapters 11:1 - 12:44.
6. Prophecy by the Servant. Chapter 13.
7. Passion (Suffering and Death) of the Servant. Chapters 14-15.
8. Resurrection. Chapter 16.