

Introduction to the Gospel of Mark

- Generally considered to be the first Gospel – the written account of the Good News
- Written approximately 70 CE
- Written in narrative form
- Written to a community in the Galilee of northern Israel largely rural with small villages – heavily taxed by Rome
- Written by a person of faith to persons of faith
- Not an eye witness account
- The shortest gospel
- Mark calls itself a gospel - *euangelion* – Good News
- A gospel is not a biography, an historical report or a chronological report.
- It is primarily theology – the events talked about are selected and arranged in a way that most clearly makes the theological points each writer wants to make.
- Purpose is to bear witness to Jesus Christ as proclaimer and embodiment of the kingdom of God.
- At least one third of the book is dedicated to the last week of Jesus on earth
- Mark's unique narrative techniques:

- o Suddenness and immediacy -word for immediately occurs more than 40 times
- o Use of mighty acts to highlight a powerful deed-oriented Jesus, rather than a creed oriented Jesus
- o Vivid , concrete and detailed and slightly clumsy prose.
- o Occurrence of titles for Jesus and who uses them – “Son of David, Son of God, Messiah” by others; Jesus uses almost exclusively “Son of Man”
- Messianic secret – no full understanding of Jesus is possible prior to the resurrection
- Mark emphasizes the miracles, healings and exorcisms of Jesus more than the other three gospels
- A third of the verses recount miracles – primarily in the first 8 chapters
- Miracles bear witness to a kingdom that is greater than the natural order
- Two distinct endings to the gospel.