

Mark Dispensationally Considered

Introduction to Mark



Author

- Mark's Gospel, like the other Gospels, is technically anonymous in that the author does not identify himself.
- Based on the testimony of the Church Fathers the book was written by John Mark.
 - Mark 12:12
 - Acts 12:25, 13:13—Mark was a companion of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey.
 - Acts 15:37-38—Paul refused to take Mark on his second journey
 - Colossians 4:10—Mark was later reconciled to Paul
 - I Peter 5:13—it appears that Mark was saved under Peter's ministry
- While there are many problems with the Church Fathers it seems there is universal acceptance that John Mark is the Author: Scofield, Bullinger, and Baxter all teach this position.

Date and Readers

- Last week we touched on the so-called documentary theories which maintain that Mark was written first and used as a source for Matthew and Luke to write their gospels.
- Mark 13:2—because of the prophecy about the destruction of the temple we know the book should be dated before 70 AD.
- Scofield says the book was written between 57-63 AD
- The bottom line is this, it was written within 35 years of the death of Christ and events recorded within the book. No other book for religious book can make such a claim.
- *Eye Witness Testimony*—The New Testament writers were either eyewitness themselves or interviewed eyewitness to the events they recorded.
 - Luke 1:2
 - I Corinthians 15:4-8
 - II Peter 1:16—we convict people in a court of law everyday in this nation based on the testimony of eyewitnesses.

Date and Readers

- *Good Eyewitness Testimony*: The New Testament documents are written within 35 of the events recorded. No other religious or secular document from antiquity can make such a claim.
 - Luke 1—Acts 1—Acts 28
- *Short Time Gap*—many other religious documents have tremendous time spans between when they were transmitted orally and when they were eventually written down. For example, the sayings of Buddha were not recorded until five hundred years after his death.
 - Use charts to map comparisons.
 - The New Testament documents unlike other ancient works whether secular or religious, not enough time elapsed between when Jesus spoke and when his words were recorded to allow for misrepresentation or the development of legendary material about him.

AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	NO. OF COPIES
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs.	643
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480–425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460–400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs.	200
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100–44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C.–A.D. 17	4th cent. (partial) mostly 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs. c. 1,000 yrs.	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus	<i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61–113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50–100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	+ 50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366 5

Date and Readers

- Much is made in the commentaries about Mark directing his gospel towards Gentile/Roman readership. Early church tradition indicates that it originated in Rome. This is offered as an explanation for why Mark does not include details such as genealogies, references to Law, and Jewish customs found in Matthew and Luke.
- This type of thinking misses the divine purpose we outlined last week.



Themes and Literary Structure

- Mark structures his Gospel around various geographical movement of Jesus, which are climaxed by His death and resurrection.
 - Public ministry in Galilee (1:14-8:30)
 - Public ministry on the way to Judea (8:31-10:52)
 - Public ministry in Jerusalem (11:1-13:37)
 - Details surrounding the Death (14:1-15:47)
 - Resurrection and Post-Resurrection instructions (Cp. 16)
- Almost 40% of Mark is devoted to a detailed account of the last eight days of Jesus life.
- The shortest and simplest of the four Gospels, Mark gives a vivid and fast moving account of the ministry of Christ.
- Mark's goal is to present Jesus at work. What Jesus *did* proves who He *was*. What he *wrought* authenticates what He *taught*.

Themes and Literary Structure

- Thus the key word of the book is the Greek word *euthios*.
 - Immeditatley—17 times in 17 verses
 - Straightway—19 times in 19 verses
- This is in line with the divine purpose of the book to present Christ as the servant. Characteristically, Mark is a gospel of deeds, rather than of words.
- Mark 10:45—could be seen as a fitting key verse for the book of Mark.

