

The Gospel of Mark

The Beginning of the Gospel

Lesson #1 for July 6, 2024

Scriptures: Acts 13:1-5,13; 15:36-39; Mark 1:1-15; Isaiah 40:3; Daniel 9:24-27.

1. Who wrote the Gospel of Mark? Why was Mark written? One of the early church fathers, Papias, writing between A.D. 95-110, suggested that **Mark wrote out Peter's Gospel**. Do we have any evidence from the New Testament that this might be true?

2 Peter 1:12,15: ¹² So I will always remind you of these things.... ¹⁵I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.—*New International Version*.^{*} [How do you think Peter did that? Mark was with Peter near the end of his life, and Mark likely wrote what Peter told him about the life and ministry of Jesus.][‡]

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] No Gospel lists the name of the author. The one that comes the closest is John, with reference to the beloved disciple (see *John 21:20, 24*).

However, from early times, each of the canonical Gospels has been associated with either an apostle (Matthew, John) or with a companion of an apostle. For example, the Gospel of **Luke is linked with Paul** (see *Col. 4:14, 2 Tim. 4:11, Philem. 1:24*). **The Gospel of Mark is linked with Peter** (see *1 Pet. 5:13*).

Though the author of Mark never gives his name in the text, early church tradition indicates that the author of the Gospel of Mark was John Mark, a sometime traveling companion of Paul and Barnabas (*Acts 13:2, 5*) and later an associate of Peter (*1 Pet. 5:13*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Sabbath Afternoon, June 29.^{†‡§} [See Acts 13:2-5 as quoted in Item #3.][‡]

1 Peter 5:13: Your sister church in Babylon [Rome], also chosen by God, sends you greetings, and so does my son **Mark**.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*^{*} (2nd ed., 1 Peter 5:13). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡} [Footnote: *Babylon*: As in the book of Revelation, this probably refers to Rome.][‡]

2 Peter 1:12-15: ¹² And so I will always remind you of these matters, even though you already know them and are firmly grounded in the truth you have received. ¹³I think it only right for me to stir up your memory of these matters as long as I am still alive. ¹⁴I know that I shall soon put off this mortal body, as our Lord Jesus Christ plainly told me. ¹⁵**I will do my best, then, to provide a way for you to remember these matters at all times after my death.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Mark 14:50-52: ⁵⁰ [At the Garden of Gethsemane,] Then all the disciples left him and ran away.

⁵¹A certain young man, dressed only in a linen cloth, was following Jesus. They tried to arrest him, ⁵²but he ran away naked, leaving the cloth behind.—*Good News Bible*.^{*‡} [The earliest mention of Mark is probably this in Mark 14:51-52.][‡]

2. There are more details about Mark in the book of Acts which Luke wrote.

Acts 12:11-12: ¹¹ Then [after his miraculous release from prison] Peter realized what

had happened to him, and said, “Now I know that it is really true! The Lord sent his angel to rescue me from Herod’s power and from everything the Jewish people expected to happen.”

¹²Aware of his situation, **he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡} [Was this the “upper room” described in the Gospels?][‡]

3. It seems very likely that John Mark was the son of a woman named Mary who apparently was a wealthy woman living in Jerusalem. It was at her home that the disciples found a welcome place to stay and eat known in the Bible as “the upper room.” Mark, sometimes called John Mark, worked with Saul/Paul and Barnabas when Mark was relatively young.

Acts 13:1-5,13: ¹ In the church at Antioch there were some prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon (called the Black), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the governor), and Saul. ²While they were serving the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said to them, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul, to do the work to which I have called them.”**

³ They fasted and prayed, placed their hands on them, and sent them off.

[In Cyprus]

⁴ Having been sent by the Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Saul went to Seleucia and sailed from there to the island of Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues. They had **John Mark** with them to help in the work....

¹³ Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos and came to Perga, a city in Pamphylia, where **John Mark** left them and went back to Jerusalem.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] It was here that Mark, overwhelmed with fear and discouragement, wavered for a time in his purpose to give himself wholeheartedly to the Lord’s work. Unused to hardships, he was disheartened by the perils and privations of the way. He had labored with success under favorable circumstances; but now, amidst the opposition and perils that so often beset the pioneer worker, he failed to endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross. He had yet to learn to face danger and persecution and adversity with a brave heart. As the apostles advanced, and still greater difficulties were apprehended, Mark was **intimidated and, losing all courage**, refused to go farther and returned to Jerusalem.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*^{*} 169.3.^{†‡} [In short, things got hard; and so, Mark wanted out.][‡]

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4. We do not know how old John Mark was at that time; but, he must have been at least in his late 20s. However, the story of John Mark was not over. “Keep reading.” He was Barnabas’s cousin, or possibly his nephew.

Acts 15:36-39: ³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit our brothers and sisters in every town where we preached the word of the Lord, and let us find out how they are getting on.” ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, ³⁸but Paul did not think it was right to take him, because he had not stayed with them to the end of their mission, but had turned back and

left them in Pamphylia. ³⁹There was a sharp argument, and they separated: Barnabas took **Mark** and sailed off for Cyprus.—*Good News Bible*.*†

5. ***Was that God's way of doubling the number of evangelistic teams? Or, was that God turning Satan's evil and discouragement into something good? (See Romans 8:28.)***

6. Paul depended a great deal on his fellow missionaries to keep up with the heavy schedule that he maintained. Paul's schedule included a lot of very difficult situations. (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 and Acts 9:29.) He was disappointed in Mark's behavior on their first trip; he did not want to go through that again.

7. The important thing for us to realize is that Mark's ministry was not over.

Colossians 4:10: Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you greetings, and so does **Mark, the cousin of Barnabas**. (You have already received instructions to welcome **Mark** if he comes your way.)—*Good News Bible*.*†

2 Timothy 4:11: Only **Luke** is with me. Get **Mark** and bring him with you, because he can help me in the work.—*Good News Bible*.*†

Philemon 1:24: And so do my fellow-workers **Mark**, Aristarchus, Demas, and **Luke**.—*Good News Bible*.*† [See also 1 Peter 5:13 as quoted in Item #1 above.]‡

[BSG:] An amazing transformation seems to have occurred in Mark. In these passages, Paul indicates the value of Mark to him and to ministry. Paul counts him as one of his fellow workers and wants Timothy to bring Mark with him. The book of 1 Peter indicates that Peter as well had a close relationship with Mark. These books by Paul and Peter were written likely in the early A.D. 60s, some 15–20 years after the experience in Acts 15. Mark clearly recovered from his failure, almost certainly through the trust that his cousin, Barnabas, placed in him.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, July 1.‡

8. While John began his Gospel with the preexistence of Christ, Matthew and Luke talked about the childhood of Jesus. Mark jumped straight into the beginning of His ministry. He began with the story of Jesus's baptism by John. We see that not only Jesus was present but also the Father spoke, and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove. This Trinity appearance at His baptism was duplicated at the cross near the end of His earthly ministry.

9. Mark tied Jesus's baptism to several passages in the Old Testament. See Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; and Malachi 3:1. Notice that these three passages all talk about movement, about journeying, about being on the way. So, Mark introduced his Gospel, which is a Gospel full of movement and action. Mark's Gospel was addressed to a very active Roman audience.

10. You can be sure that Satan was there at Jesus's baptism! That was the event that marked the end of the 69 weeks prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27 and the beginning of that eventful 70th week which included the ministry and crucifixion of Jesus and ended with the termination of the special focus of God on the Jewish people with the stoning of Stephen and the spread of the Christians to many parts of the Mediterranean. (See Acts 7-8:1.)

11. The next event in the life of Jesus after His baptism was His time in the wilderness.

Matthew 4:1: Then was **Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil**.—*The Holy Bible: King James Version*.* (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Matthew 4:1). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.†

12. Did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness for the purpose of being tempted by the Devil?
13. Our Bible study guide mentions that Christ came to this earth primarily to save us. But, for those who understand the great controversy, there is a much larger picture! **Jesus came to this world for reasons far beyond our salvation! See the handout: “The Plan of Salvation in the Setting of the Great Controversy” posted on Theox.org.**
https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Plan_of_Salvation_in_the_Setting_of_the_Great_Controversy_05.pdf
14. **The plan of salvation involves the whole universe.**

Ephesians 1:7-10: ⁷ For by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven [and we are healed spiritually]. How great is the grace of God, ⁸which he gave to us in such large measure!

In all his wisdom and insight ⁹God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. ¹⁰This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is **to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

Ephesians 3:7-10: ⁷ I was made a servant of the gospel by God’s special gift, which he gave me through the working of his power. ⁸I am less than the least of all God’s people; yet God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News about the infinite riches of Christ, ⁹and of making all people see how God’s secret plan is to be put into effect. God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages, ¹⁰in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might learn of his wisdom in all its different forms.—*Good News Bible*.*

Colossians 1:19-20: ¹⁹ For it was by God’s own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God. ²⁰**Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself.** God made peace through his Son’s blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven.—*Good News Bible*.*† [What did/does the cross do for sinless angels?][‡]

[EGW:] **Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth.** Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* February 13, 1893, par. 12; *The Signs of the Times*,*€ December 22, 1914 par. 4; *The Messenger**€ June 7, 1893, par. 5; *Bible Echoes*,*€ July 15, 1893, par. 3; *That I May Know Him**€ 366.4.†

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[EGW:] **But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man.** It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the

law of God as it should be regarded; but **it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe**. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 68.2-69.0 [1890].^{†‡} Compare *Reflecting Christ* 50.3 [1985].[‡]

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.244&index=0>[‡]

[EGW:] **By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels.... Not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe.** God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look,” [1 Peter 1:12] and **it will be their study throughout endless ages**.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 19.2 [1898]; *The Truth About Angels** 155.1; *Reflecting Christ* 15.4*[†] [1985].^{†‡} Compare *Amazing Grace* 45.3; *Last Day Events* 31.1. [Will the entire universe be studying the great controversy?][‡]

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.23&index=0>[‡]

[EGW:] **To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, “It is finished,” had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished....**

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that **even holy beings had not understood his [Satan’s] principles**. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 758.2-3 [1898].^{†‡}

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15. See handout: *The Great Controversy Described in Scripture* posted on Theox.org.

https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Great_Controversy_Described_in_Scripture_16.pdf

16. **The security of the universe was even more important to God than the salvation of man.**

[EGW:] It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. **The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure, even tho the [human] race be wiped out, and another creation populate the earth. [Our salvation is NOT the main point!]** By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God’s government. The cross of Calvary would be looked upon by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen

race, and every mouth would be stopped....

Who is able to describe the last scenes of Christ's life on earth, His trial in the judgment hall, His crucifixion? Who witnessed these scenes?—**The heavenly universe, God the Father, Satan and his angels.**—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* July 12, 1899, par. 2-3.†‡ Compare *Manuscript 128*, 1897; *Lift Him Up* 257.2-3. [How many humans understood what was happening? **None!**]‡ [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p820.15949&index=0>]‡

17. Returning to Mark 1, after the arrest of John the Baptist, Jesus moved His ministry from Jerusalem and the rest of Judea to Galilee.

Mark 1:14-15: ¹⁴ After John [the Baptist] had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God. ¹⁵ “**The right time has come,**” he said, “and **the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!**”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

18. Notice particularly the three parts to Mark's message: (1) Prophecy was being fulfilled; (2) covenant promises were being fulfilled; and (3) this called Jesus's followers to discipleship.

19. Read **Daniel 9:24-27**. Review the 70-week prophecy. That prophecy began in the year 457 B.C., the seventh year in the reign of Artaxerxes. It extended down to A.D. 27 and then ended with that final “week” from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34. It was during that final “week” of 7 years that Jesus was baptized, carried out His ministry, was crucified, and returned to heaven. At the end of that week, Stephen was stoned, and the gospel spread to the Gentiles as Jews left Jerusalem and Judea because of intense persecution of Christians! (See Acts 8:1.)

Revelation 14:6-7: ⁶ Then I saw another angel flying high in the air, with an eternal message of Good News to announce to the peoples of the earth, to every race, tribe, language and nation. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Honour [*sic*-Br] God and praise his greatness! For the time has come for him to judge. Worship him who made heaven, earth, sea and the springs of water!”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

20. Mark 1 suggests that the time had come, and the kingdom was near. This shows a fulfillment of the time-prophecy and the covenant promise. Revelation 14:6-7 repeat the same idea: The judgment hour has come, and the everlasting gospel is to be proclaimed. People are to repent and believe, they are to be called to be disciples, and they are to worship God.

21. As we have noted in prior lessons, Revelation 13 talks about Satan's Trinity and his success at winning almost the entire world. Revelation 14 is God's response and why He challenges us to come out of Babylon and worship the true God.

22. Mark began his Gospel by talking about the “gospel of Jesus Christ.” By the time Mark was writing his Gospel, probably in the 60s A.D., many people were writing stories about the amazing life of Jesus. But, those stories were not inspired, and they are not to be believed.

23. Mark skipped over all the interesting details of Christ Jesus's early life and went straight to the time of His baptism in A.D. 27 and then to the beginning of His Galilean ministry in A.D. 29.

24. It would be well to pause for a moment or two and ask ourselves: What is the gospel?

[BSG:] With the exception of Mark, no other Gospel writer uses the expression “the gospel of Jesus Christ” [*euangeliou Iēsou*] (*Mark 1:1*) in his writings. This expression is found only in Mark. It tells us that Jesus and His gospel constitute the focus, and the essence, of Mark's narrative.

Thus, we would do well in our study of Mark’s Gospel to begin by asking, What is the gospel? From lexicographical studies, the Greek expression *euangelion*, commonly translated as “gospel,” has more than a single meaning. *Euangelion* refers to “God’s good news to humans, good news as proclamation.” It also pertains to “a book dealing with the life and teaching of Jesus, a gospel account.” The expression *euangelion* also is connected with the “details relating to the life and ministry of Jesus, [the] good news of Jesus.”—William Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 403. With these definitions in mind, we may reason that Mark uses the expression “gospel” to describe the merciful acts of Jesus during His ministry, as well as to designate the idea of the gospel itself as “good news” from God.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 14.†Ω§

25. Mark was written to a Roman audience. They were excited about movement and action. And so, Mark did not spend time focusing on long sermons or discussions. Instead, he wrote about the miracles and the active ministry of Jesus.

Mark 1:22,39: ²² The people who heard him were amazed at the way he taught, for he wasn’t like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority....

³⁹So he travelled all over Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and driving out demons.—*Good News Bible*.*

26. To Mark, the gospel was good news acted out in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He tried to put that information down as succinctly as possible in his Gospel. Mark was hoping that we will see the active life of Jesus through the words he wrote.

27. One of the biggest challenges for Christians right from the beginning has been to try to **understand how Jesus could be both fully human and fully divine at the same time.** Mark tried to deal with that by several verses in his Gospel.

[BSG:] Another key set of words at the beginning of the Gospel according to Mark is “Jesus Christ.” How does Mark portray Jesus?

Throughout his account, Mark depicts Jesus as the “**Son of God**” (*Mark 1:1*), “**the Son of Man**” (*Mark 9:31, NKJV*), and the “**Son of David**” (*Mark 10:47*). Of these three identities, Jesus’ divine credentials are presented at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 15.†‡§

Mark 1:1: This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, **the Son of God.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

Mark 9:30-31: ³⁰ Jesus and his disciples left that place and went on through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where he was, ³¹because he was teaching his disciples: “**The Son of Man** will be handed over to those who will kill him. Three days later, however, he will rise to life.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

Mark 10:47: When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus! **Son of David!** Take pity on me!”—*Good News Bible*.*†

28. To Mark, the appearance of Christ as a human being on this earth was the most exciting event that had happened in our world’s history. Mark wanted to tell us about each of the exciting events which took place.

29. Mark presents Jesus Christ as holy. What do we mean by *holy*? The word in Greek suggests that someone is set apart for a special purpose. That certainly applied to Jesus Christ.
30. After the brief introductory comments in Mark 1 that we have noted, Mark covers the baptism and temptations, the call of the four fishermen, the healing of the man with an evil spirit, and the healing of many others, in addition to preaching in Galilee. All that is in Mark 1.
31. Mark recognized that Jesus was a Teacher, a Preacher, and a Healer. Jesus did all those things many times, often in local synagogues.
32. No doubt, the local people recognized how different the teachings of Jesus were compared to the usual speeches of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
33. Try to imagine what it would have been like to live in the Palestine area in the days of Jesus. Very quickly, the word got around that this itinerant Preacher had the power to heal almost any kind of disease, even raising the dead. There were no hospitals or scientifically-trained physicians, and so, the sick and the demon-possessed flocked to Him. They came from hundreds of miles away, from Damascus in the north all the way to Idumea in the south.

Galatians 1:6: I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are accepting another gospel.—*Good News Bible*.* [Is there really any other “gospel”?]†

34. ***Since Mark made such an emphasis on the gospel, we need to be very clear about what the gospel is. What does “the gospel” mean to us in 2024? Why is that information important to me? Why do I choose to believe it?***
35. We live in a time of almost total dominance, especially the younger generations, by social media. How can we as Christians carry the gospel to this generation of social media addicts?
36. ***Can we convince them that God’s Word even though written so long ago is still relevant? Can you think of an example from the life of Jesus that has had a large impact on your personal life? Could you explain that to a friend?***
37. Consider these comments by William Barclay.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW:

The Earliest Gospel

When we begin to examine the matter more closely we begin to see that there is every reason for believing that *Mark* must have been the first of the [synoptic] gospels to be written, and that the other two, *Matthew* and *Luke*, are using *Mark* as a basis. *Mark* can be divided into 105 sections. Of these sections 93 occur in *Matthew* and 81 in *Luke*. Of *Mark*’s 105 sections there are only 4 which do not occur either in *Matthew* or in *Luke*. *Mark* has 661 verses: *Matthew* had 1068 verses: *Luke* has 1149 verses. *Matthew* reproduces no fewer than 606 of *Mark*’s verses; and *Luke* reproduces 320. Of the 55 verses of *Mark* which *Matthew* does not reproduce *Luke* reproduces 31; so **there are only 24 verses in the whole of *Mark* which are not reproduced somewhere in *Matthew* or *Luke*. It is not only the substance of the verses which is reproduced; the very words are reproduced. *Matthew* uses 51 per cent of *Mark*’s words; and *Luke* uses 53 per cent.**

Still further, both ***Matthew* and *Luke* as a general rule follow *Mark*’s order of events.** Occasionally either *Matthew* or *Luke* differs from *Mark* as to the

order of events; but they never in any case *both* differ against him; always at least one of them follows *Mark's* order of events.

Improvements on Mark

Since *Matthew* and *Luke* are both much longer than *Mark*, it might just possibly be suggested that *Mark* is a summary of *Matthew* and *Luke*; but there is one other set of facts which show that *Mark* is earlier. **It is the custom of *Matthew* and *Luke* to improve and to polish *Mark***, if we may put it so. Let us take some instances of that. **Sometimes *Mark* seems to limit the power of Jesus**; at least an ill-disposed critic might try to prove that he was doing so. Let us take three passages which are all accounts of the same incident:

Mark 1: 34: [Barclay's format for references to Bible texts is to list the chapter followed by a colon then have a space after the colon and before the verse number.] And He healed *many* that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out *many* devils:

Matthew 8: 16: And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed *all* that were sick;

Luke 4: 40: And He laid hands on *everyone* of them, and healed them.

Let us take other three similar examples:

Mark 3: 8 [sic] [10]: For he had healed *many*;

Matthew 12: 15: And he healed them *all*;

Luke 6: 19: He healed them *all*.

***Matthew* and *Luke* both change *Mark's* *many* into *all* so that there may be no suggestion of any limitation of the power of Jesus Christ.**

There is very similar change in the account of the events of Jesus' visit to Nazareth. Let us compare the account of *Mark* and of *Matthew*.

Mark 6: 5, 6: And *He could there do* no mighty work . . . and He marvelled [sic-Br] because of their unbelief;

Matthew 13: 57 [sic] [58]: And *He did not* many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Matthew shrinks from saying that Jesus *could not* do any mighty works; and changes the form of the expression so that there may be no possibility of any limitation of the power of Jesus.

Sometimes *Matthew* and *Luke* leave out little touches in *Mark* in case they could be taken to belittle Jesus. *Matthew* and *Luke* omit three statements in *Mark*:

Mark 3: 5: When He had looked round on them *with anger, being grieved* at their hardness of hearts;

Mark 3: 21: And when His friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on Him: for they said, *He is beside Himself*;

Mark 10: 14: He was *moved with indignation*.

***Matthew* and *Luke* hesitate to attribute human emotions of anger and grief to Jesus, and shudder to think that anyone should even have suggested that Jesus was mad.**

Sometimes *Matthew* and *Luke* slightly alter things in *Mark* in order to get rid of statements which might seem to show the apostles in a bad light. We may take but one instance, from the occasion on which James and John sought to ensure themselves of the highest places in the coming Kingdom. Let us compare the introduction to that story in *Mark* and in *Matthew*:

Mark 10: 35: And there came near unto him *James and John*, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him . . . ;

Matthew 20: 20: There came to Him *the mother of the sons of Zebedee* with her two sons, worshipping [*sic-Br*] Him, and asking a certain thing of Him.

Matthew hesitates to ascribe motives of ambition directly to the two apostles, and so he ascribes them to their mother.

All this makes it clear that ***Mark* is the earliest of the gospels. *Mark* gives a simple, vivid, direct narrative; but *Matthew* and *Luke* have already begun to be affected by doctrinal and theological considerations which make them much more careful of what they say.**

The Teaching of Jesus

We have seen that *Matthew* has 1068 verses; and that *Luke* has 1149 verses; and that between them they reproduce 582 of *Mark*'s verses. That means that in *Matthew* and *Luke* there is much more material than *Mark* contains and supplies. When we examine that material we find that more than 200 verses of it are almost identical. For instance such passages as Luke 6: 41, 42 and Matthew 7: 3, 5; Luke 10: 21, 22 and Matthew 11: 25–27; Luke 3: 7–9 and Matthew 3: 7–10 are almost exactly the same. But here we notice a difference. The material which *Matthew* and *Luke* drew from *Mark* was almost entirely material dealing with the events of Jesus' life; but the 200 common verses which *Matthew* and *Luke* have over and above that is entirely composed of *the teaching of Jesus*; these verses tell us, not so much what Jesus *did*, as what Jesus *said*. **Clearly in these verses *Matthew* and *Luke* are drawing from a common source-book of the teaching of Jesus.** That book does not now exist; but to it scholars have given the letter **Q** which stands for **Quelle**, which is the German word for **source**. In its day it must have been an extraordinarily important book, for it was the first handbook of the teaching of Jesus.—Barclay, W. (Ed.). (1975). *The Gospel of MATTHEW*, vol. 1, (xvii-xxi). *The Daily Study Bible*. Edinburgh, Scotland: The Saint Andrew Press.^{†§}

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