

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: Introduction to Mark

Learning Goals: Students should understand the audience, provenance, circumstances, and basic features of the Gospel of Mark.

Question: What kind of power did Jesus have/demonstrate?

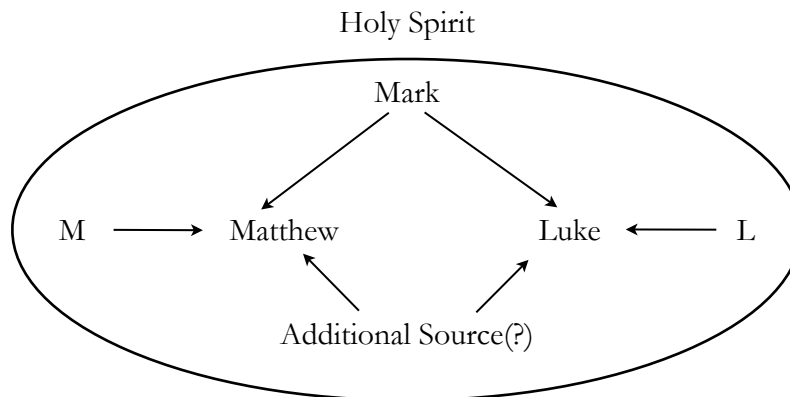
Prayer.

Why are Mark, Matthew, and Luke referred to as the Synoptic Gospels?

(Synoptic from two Greek words *syn* = “together” and *opsis* = “appear”)

They provide the same historical arrangement of the life of Jesus and share similar verbal agreement

How were the synoptic gospels written?



Mark was written first (around the mid 50s CE). Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source in compiling their gospel accounts.

What are the distinct features of the gospel of Mark?

1. He provides no account of the birth or childhood of Jesus (his gospel begins at Jesus' baptism)
2. He devotes 30-40% of his gospel to the last week of Jesus' life
3. It is very short
4. Some scholars think that Mark wrote his gospel from Rome, under the apostolic authority of Peter
5. Mark's gospel emphasizes the failures of Peter
6. It is a gospel of action and narrative (he uses the word “immediately” over 40 times)
7. Mark is the most blunt and to-the-point gospel
8. He emphasizes Jesus' role as teacher to the disciples (teaching by example)
9. It is a gospel of Jesus' power (stories of exorcisms, healing, and other miracles crammed on top of each other)
10. Mark places an emphasis on the “secrecy motif”
 - a. demons are unfit communicators of truth
 - b. Jesus did not want to be known simply as a miracle worker
 - c. Jesus did not want a premature confrontation with religious leaders

What do we know about John Mark?

He was a member of a leading family in Jerusalem and a cousin of Barnabas. He could be considered a failure in his early stages of ministry because he abandoned Paul and Barnabas in the middle of a missionary journey. His desertion was so severe that it caused Paul and Barnabas to split up and go their separate ways. Later Paul and John Mark reconciled and John Mark also became very close with Peter.

Provenance (place of origin):

Rome

Audience:

Gentile Christians in Rome

Date:

Mid to late 50s CE

Purpose:

1. Evangelism:
 - a. 40% of the gospel of Mark deals with the passion of Jesus. (Some have even called it a “passion narrative” with a long introduction.) The key verse for this point of view is Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
 - b. Through the tightly structured miracles, Jesus demonstrates Spiritual Power over Satan and this world. The key verse for this point of view is Mark 3:27, “But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.”
2. Discipleship: The 12 disciples are portrayed in a negative light to encourage us in our own Christian walk. Mark demonstrates the humanity of these 12 men and how Jesus trained them despite their failings and inadequacies.

Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- John Mark
- Synoptic
- How were the synoptic gospels written?
- Know distinctive features