

MARK

- 1)--The earliest of the Gospels, perhaps just after the first serious persecutions by Nero after the great fire of 64 AD. Matthew and Luke borrowed extensively from it, for it was probably written for Christians of Jewish origin. Mark may be Peter's young associate (1 Peter 5:13), and also son of the Mary in whose house many gathered for prayer (Acts 12:12), and where Peter came after his imprisonment, and who accompanied Paul on his first missionary voyage, and was a cousin of Barnabas. He may also be the young man in Mark 14:51-52 who lost his clothes escaping the soldiers arresting Jesus. **But**, biblical scholars note that the author, for a Palestinian Jew, seems unfamiliar with Palestine geography, customs, and legal procedures. Mark uses "Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man" 14 times, Paul never. Also uses Aramaic 7 times -- 3:17, 5:41, 7:34, 10:46, 14:36, 15:34. Of Ezekiel's four symbolic animals, Mark is the winged lion because the lion made the desert echo with its roaring, and Mark begins with the preaching of John the Baptist in the desert. /// The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan recapitulates the experience of Elisha in 2 Kings 2:8. And, since Joshua and Jesus are the same, early Christians would not be surprised that Mark begins his Gospel with Jesus' baptism, recapitulating Israel's escape from slavery across the parted waters of the Red Sea. Furthermore, John is clearly Elijah as Elijah appeared in 2 Kings 1:8-12 (where he destroys the state's hostile troops). Anointing Jesus with the spirit re-enacts the climactic event of Passover and makes him the new Moses, new Joshua, new David.
- 2) 1:9 – No mention of Bethlehem or the Davidic line. See **Matthew note #17** for reasons why Jesus was baptized.
- 3) 1:14 – Mark skips the entire ministry of Jesus in Judea, about a year.
- 4) 1:16 – Not the first meeting, see John 1:35.
- 5) 2:10 – As used by Mark, is synonymous with Son of God.
- 6) 2:14 – This is Matthew the publican (see Matth 10:3). But was he a brother to James? (See Mark 3:18 and Matth 9:9).
- 7) 2:18-20 – Geza Vermes: The metaphor of the wedding is disturbing. Because the guests would not stop eating and drinking– showing gloom and sadness – after the bridegroom has left, nor will there be mourning and fasting after the “Messianic breakfast;” on the contrary, there will be “everlasting bliss and rejoicing.” One can only conclude that this was a later added Christian gloss.
- 8) 2:21 – What he taught could not be superimposed on Phariseism, nor contained in the old religion.
- 9) 3:5 – The only **clear** reference in scripture to Jesus's **anger**.
- 10) 3:17 – Greek transliteration of "benai regesh," Aramaic for "Sons of Anger." See Luke 9:54-56.
- 11) 3:18 – Bar-Tolma (Bartholomew), may be Nathaniel (See John 1:45-46).
- 12) 3:19 – Judas may be the son of Simon the Zealot?
- 13) 3:29 – See footnote at Matthew 12:3 for discussion of the unpardonable sin.
- 14) 4:25 – Referring to the person's ability and willingness to accept **truth**, not to physical possessions. "Use it or lose it."
- 15) 4:30 – Vermes: The mustard seed is Jesus. The grown bush is the envisioned growth of his Word.
- 16) 5:9-13 – Legion, a Latin word used in both Greek and Aramaic for a Roman Legion, 6,000 men. (JB: Was the owner of the swine compensated for his loss?)
- 17) 6:6b-13 – See Matthew 10:5 for the entire "first missionary sermon."

- 18) 6:14-18 – See footnote at Matthew 14:1 for entire "palace intrigue" that ended in John's death. This Herod is Antipas, son of Herod "the Great."
- 19) 6:27 – He **could** have quoted Leviticus 5:4-6, which absolves a man from his oath if it has been foolishly given, in which case he makes the proper sacrifice through a priest and is forgiven.
- 20) 6:48 – One explanation of his intention to pass by is that he intended only a theophany. His answer, "It is I," literally means, "I am," the same phrase used by God in Ex 3:14 when he tells the Israelites that "'I am' has sent me to you." In John's story of the walking on water, he makes no mention of Peter's attempt to do the same (Matth 14:29), probably at Peter's request!
- 21) 6:56 – See Numbers 15:37-41 for the significance of tassels.
- 22) 7:6-8 – Jesus accuses the Pharisees of hypocritically elevating their customs above the laws of God. Vermes considers this to be a caricature of the traditional teaching of mainstream Judaism, a gross distortion. But Jesus resolves it by his insistence on the superiority of moral over ritual duties.
- 23) 7:23 – Written long after Peter's vision of the rooftop (Acts 10:9).
- 24) 7:27 – He was speaking metaphorically -- "let the children of God be satisfied first" -- the Jews. She was from Phoenicia, a small nation NE of Palestine, within Syria.
- 25) 7:32-36 – Probably an allusion to Isaiah 35:5ff, a fulfillment prophecy. Jesus uses "Ephphatha" ("Be opened") in the same way that Isaiah did, alluding to the miraculous opening of the ears in the eschatological age. /// Placing saliva on his tongue was forbidden by rabbis in magical or curing acts: "He who whispers an incantation over a wound...and spits on it, has no portion in the world to come."
- 26) 8:1-9, 17-21 – Compared to the story in Mark 6:31ff, this is a different setting: the number of the crowd, number of loaves, vague reference to number of fish. The lesson in both cases is "faith."
- 27) 8:14 – Can be taken two ways: the yeast seen as an agent of life, raising the dough and turning it into bread, or as an agent of corruption, the leavened bread contrasted with the purity of the unleavened bread. Here it is a symbol for the false teachings of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians.
- 28) 8:27-38 – The turning point in Mark, the point where Jesus first indicates that his Kingdom is not of this world, that he and others must suffer.
- 29) 8:29 – Matthew has this in greater detail, Jesus telling Peter that he is the Rock, etc.
- 30) 8:35 – An anachronism – the gospels hadn't been written yet. Or does he simply mean "the good news?"
- 31) 9:11 – Quotes Mal 3:23 (4:5 in many translations). How was Elijah's appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration to be reconciled with the official doctrine of his return? In vs 12 Jesus says that Elijah does come first, but even so the Son of Man must suffer and die. He may have been thinking of Ps 22:1-18 and/or Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Then in vs.13 he says that Elijah **had** come. He must have been referring to John the Baptist -- his persecution and death. Just as Ahab and Jezebel had made life miserable for Elijah, so Herod and Herodias did for John. But it is clear in Matthew 11:14 that the nation had to believe that John was Elijah ("if you accept it"). Mark is the only writer to state that the scriptures foretold all this.
- 32) 9:14-27 – Mark admits that Jesus had to enquire what was going on, here and in 9:33-34, whereas by the time Matthew and Luke wrote, they could no longer admit an imperfection of this kind and omitted the questions. (See Matt 17:17, Luke 9:38.)
- 33) 9:38 – The only time in any of the Gospels that John speaks directly to Jesus!

- 34) 9:42 – “Millstone” is literally “donkey stone,” a large stone turned by a donkey. A smaller stone turned by a person was a “man stone.”
- 35) 9:49 – An allusion to Leviticus 2:13 “to all your offerings (to God) you will add salt.” /// See Matthew 5:13ff – “Salted with fire” – a reference to Mark 3:11 and Luke 3:16 – baptism with the Holy alludes to a healthy state of the spirit which enables you to coexist peacefully with your brothers. See Matthew 5:13 (Note #31) and Luke 14:34 for references to salt as a fertilizer.
- 36) 10:2-9 (see also Matt 19:3-8, Matt 19:9-11, Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:1, 1 Corinthians 7:10-15.) – Jesus’ teaching was intended for the new messianic age which would resemble the garden of Eden where there was just one man and one woman – the immediacy of the Kingdom of God made this imperative. Moses command is in Deut 24:1-4.
- 37) 10:19 – “Do not defraud” is not one of the 10 commandments – it comes from a Greek manuscript, the Codex Alexandrinus, a comment on Exodus 24:14.
- 38) 10:25 – Three explanations: a) A camel shuffling through a small postern gate. b) Read "kamilon," cable, instead of "kamelon," camel. c) Jesus is using a humorous illustration. Actually, there is a fourth, because Luke in 18:25 used the word "belones," which is a technical term for a surgeon's needle.
- 39) 10:30 – An addition only in Mark, whose readers were even then undergoing extensive persecution in Rome.
- 40) 10:41 – They had been goaded by their mother Salome -- see Matth 20:20-21.
- 41) 10:45 – This vs only in Mark, and is the summary of our faith.**
- 42) 10:51--"Master" in Aramaic is "rabboni," and is used only one other time in the Gospels, in John 20:16, where Mary Magdalene responds to Jesus at his tomb.
- 43) 11:7 – Mark and Luke (19:29) correctly seat Jesus on one donkey, whereas Matthew erroneously quotes Zechariah 9:9 to put Jesus on both the donkey and its foal.
- 44) 11:13 -- Josephus: fig trees bear fruit ten months of the year.
- 45) 11:27-33 – Since Jesus did no healing or exorcisms in Jerusalem, “these things” was probably the money-changers scene in the Temple. /// Jesus’ counter-questions and refusal to answer their questions probably “sealed his fate” because the priests could not safely ignore Jesus and incur the Romans’ wrath.
- 46) 12:1 ff – A fictional account inspired by Isaiah 5:1-7. Metaphorically, the vineyard is the Jews, the tenants their leaders. The landlord is God, the servant messengers are the prophets, the beloved son is Jesus. The tenants are destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE and the vineyard is inherited by the Gentile church. According to the laws of the time, if the owner and his heirs were dead, the tenants could claim the field.
- 47) 12:13 – The Herodians were a very liberal party, followers of Herod the Great, and content with Roman rule.
- 48) 12:18-27. The Sadducees were the "religious aristocrats" of Judaism, from the priestly families of Jerusalem. They believed only in the written law of Moses and rigorously opposed the oral tradition of the Pharisees. They did not believe in a resurrection (Pharisees did), nor in future punishment or reward, nor in angels. Their attack on Jesus was probably also an attempt to ridicule the Pharisees -- "Let's show them we can do better."
- 49) 12:29-33.– The Shema: vs. 29 from Deut 6:4,5. Vs 31 from Lev 19:18. The first word "hear" is "Shema" in Hebrew. The Pharisees had devised 613 commandments from the Mosaic Law, 365 negative and 248 positive. There was continuous argument as to which was the greatest. The quote from Leviticus is not properly part of the Shema but is often quoted with

it. The scribe's response to Jesus is a quote from Deut 43:35, "there is no one else beside him," and 1 Sam 15:22, Ps 51:16, Isaiah 1:10-17, Hosea 6:6, and Micah 6:6-8, when he added that "to love one's neighbor as oneself is more important than burnt offerings and sacrifices."

- 50) 12:35-37. Jesus quotes Psalm 110, the most quoted psalm in the OT. It was clearly Messianic (Acts 2:34-35, 1 Cor 15:25). Two persons: the Lord Jehovah speaks to the Lord Adonai and says that he is to sit at his right hand. Jesus declares that David himself called the Messiah "Lord," that is, God. Thereby David himself distinguished between his earthly sovereignty and the higher sovereignty assigned to the Messiah. The Messiah is not only "son of David," he is also his Lord. If he is indeed Lord (God), he is more than simply man. Jesus's point is that the Messiah was the God/Man. The son of David is the exalted Lord who reigns at the God's right hand.
- 51) 12:38 – Vermes believes that Jesus is a bit out of character here, accusing *all* scribes of being too arrogant, devouring widows' houses, etc, whereas the majority of them were respected experts in biblical and traditional law, organizing life, religious and secular. (He applies this criticism to all "woe" material in Matthew and Luke, esp. the hyperbole in Matthew, "You blind guides, straining at a gnat (from drinks) and swallowing a camel," thus overlooking the equally unclean camel.) But, Vermes says, "to point a finger at the Pharisees as though they were the only culprits in this domain (hypocrisy) is itself a signal of hypocrisy."
- 52) 12:42 – Originally "mites," or "lepla," each worth 1/12 of a cent.
- 53) 13:1 – Preceded in Matth 23 by a diatribe against hypocrites, in great detail.
- 54) 13:14 – The original "abomination of desolation" -- the slaughter of pigs on the holy altar -- was predicted in Daniel 12:11, and occurred during the Seleucid persecution of the Jews ordered by Antiochus IV, and which triggered the Maccabean uprising.
- 55) 13:26 – Not natural clouds, but "clouds of the presence," as in Exodus 34:5, Lev 16:2, Num 11:25, and a clear reference to Daniel 7:13.
- 56) 13:29 – See attempt at explanation at Luke 21:29-33.
- 57) 14:3 – See Matthew 26:6 for EXCURSIS comparing all the anointings of Jesus.
- 58) 14:4 – The original verb used is the same as the snorting of horses!
- 59) 14:12 -- – Maundy Thursday – from Old French "mandé," meaning "washing the feet," commemorating Jesus washing the disciples' feet the night before he was crucified.
- 60) 14:32 – See footnote at Matt 26:36 for discussion re: Gethsemane.
- 61) 14:47 – In John 18:10, the swordsman is Peter and the servant is Malchus, which is a Nabatean or Syrian (Arab) name.
- 62) 14:51– (A possible scenario): Jesus and his disciples were at John Mark's for the Passover supper. When they left, Mark went to bed, covered only by a linen sheet. When Judas and the mob came to his house looking for Jesus, Mark tried to run ahead of them to warn Jesus, not taking time to dress. He was too late and was almost apprehended himself. This episode appears only in Mark and is probably his way of letting everyone know that he too was present and that he, too, ran away.
- 63) 15:7 – See footnote at Matthew 27:16 re: Barabbas.
- 64) 15:38 – Barbieri explains the significance of the rending of the veil, which was the curtain between the "holy place" where the priests went every day, and the "holy of holies" where the chief priest went once a year: the glory of the Lord representing his presence left the temple before its destruction in 586 BC (Ezek 10:18-19, 11:22-25). The glory of the Lord will not return until the millennial age (Ezek 43:1ff). The significance of this sign (rending

of the veil) is stated in Heb 10:19-20, where it is clear that Jesus Christ's sacrifice has inaugurated for all mankind access to the presence of God.

65) 15:40 – Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also there, perhaps earlier? John 19:26.

66) 16:8 – This is the end of the original ms. The early church composed at least three conclusions, two of which are reproduced here.

67) 16:12 – Cleopas and his wife Mary on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-35

68) 16:18 – Origin of the snake handling cut, and also the “salvation-cocktail” cult who used strychnine.