

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Introduction

The theme of the gospel of Mark is the person of Jesus more than his teaching: the mystery of Jesus, the mysterious Jesus. A perspective that dims out leading to a dramatic confrontation. Jesus teaches but his followers do not understand him. Jesus is the Messiah that has to suffer. By the time of the final triumph, Mark is again bare: the confession of the centurion contrasting with the fearful silence of the women.

It seems that Mark writes for a pagan or mixed community; probably a poor and persecuted community. A very old tradition asserts that Mark writes his gospel in Rome, putting in writing the preaching of Peter.

Mark invites for an easy, superficial reading, but the challenge is to read Mark in depth.

1 ²¹They went into the town of Capernaum and Jesus began to teach in the synagogue during the sabbath assemblies. ²²The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law.

²³It happened that a man with an evil spirit was in their synagogue ²⁴and he shouted:

—What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: You are the Holy One of God.

²⁵Then Jesus faced him and said with authority:

—Be silent and come out of this man!

²⁶The evil spirit shook the man violently and, with a loud shriek, came out of him.

²⁷All the people were astonished and they wondered: ‘What is this? With what authority he preaches! He even orders evil spirits and they obey him!’ ²⁸And Jesus’ fame spread throughout all the country of Galilee.

Healings

²⁹On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to the home of Simon and Andrew with James and John. ³⁰As Simon’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with fever, they immediately told him about her. ³¹Jesus went to her and taking her by the hand, raised her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

Election of the Twelve

3 ¹³Then Jesus went up into the hill country and called those he wanted and they came to him. ¹⁴So he appointed twelve to be with him; and he called them apostles. He wanted to send them out to preach, ¹⁵and he gave them authority to drive out demons.

¹⁶These are the Twelve: Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter; ¹⁷James, son of Zebedee, and John his brother, to whom he gave the name Boanerges, which means ‘men of thunder;’

¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alpheus, Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

In the synagogue of Nazareth

6 ¹Leaving that place, Jesus returned to his own country, and his disciples followed him. ²When the Sabbath came, he began teaching in the synagogue, and most of those who heard him were astonished. They commented:

—How did this come to him? What kind of wisdom has been given to him that he also performs such miracles? ³Who is he but the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joset and Judas and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here among us?

So they took offense at him.

⁴And Jesus said to them:

—Prophets are despised only in their own country, among their relatives and in their own family.

⁵And he could work no miracles there, but only healed a few sick people by laying his hands on them. ⁶Jesus himself was astounded at their unbelief. Jesus then went around the villages teaching.

Against ambition

10 ³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him:

—Master, we want you to grant us what we are going to ask of you.

³⁶And he said:

—What do you want me to do for you?

³⁷They answered:

—Grant us to sit one at your right and one at your left when you come in your glory.

³⁸But Jesus said to them:

—You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized in the way I am baptized? ³⁹They answered:

—We can.

And Jesus told them:

—The cup that I drink you will drink, and you will be baptized in the way I am baptized.

⁴⁰But to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to grant. It has been prepared for others.

⁴¹On hearing this, the other ten were angry with James and John; ⁴²Jesus then called them to him and said:

—As you know, the so-called rulers of the nations act as tyrants and their great ones oppress them. ⁴³But it shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever would be first among you shall make himself slave of all. ⁴⁵Think of the Son of Man who has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many.

The widow's offering

12 ⁴¹Jesus sat down opposite the Temple treasury and watched the people dropping money into the treasury box; and many rich people put in large offerings. ⁴²But a poor widow also came and dropped in two small coins.

⁴³Then Jesus called his disciples and said to them:

—Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all those who gave offerings. ⁴⁴For all of them gave from their plenty, but she gave from her poverty and put in everything she had, her very living.

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