**Introduction of the Book of Mark**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 1:1-3**

**Wednesday Evening**

**July 11, 2018**

**Purpose:**

To present the person, work and teachings of Jesus

**Author:**

John Mark. He was not of the original 12 apostles, but he accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey found in

Acts 13:13

**Audience:**

The Christians in Rome, where he wrote the Gospel

**Date Written:**

Approximately A. D. 55 and 65,

**Setting:**

The Roman Empire under Tiberius Caesar. The empire with its common language and excellent transportation and communication systems, was ripe to hear Jesus’ message, which spread quickly from nation to nation.

**Key Verse:**

**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."

**Key People:**

Jesus, The 12 Disciples, Pilot and the Religious Leaders

**Overview of the Book of Mark**

WE’RE number one! . . . The greatest, strongest, prettiest . . . champions! Daily such proclamations boldly assert claims of supremacy. Everyone wants to be associated with a winner. Losers are those who finish less than first.

Saints, in direct contrast are the words of Jesus:

**Matthew 10:44-45**

“And whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many”

Jesus is the greatest; he is God incarnate, our Messiah, but he entered history as a servant.

This is the message of Mark. Written to encourage Roman Christians and to prove beyond a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, Mark presents a rapid succession of vivid pictures of Jesus in action.

Mark reveals Jesus' true identity as revealed by what he does, not necessarily by what he says. It is Jesus on the move. Omitting the birth of Jesus, Mark begins with John the Baptist’s preaching. Then, moving quickly past Jesus’ baptism, temptation in the wilderness, and call of the disciples, Mark takes us directly into Jesus’ public ministry.

We see Jesus confronting a demon, healing a man with leprosy, and forgiving and healing the paralyzed man lowered into Jesus’ presence by friends. Next, Jesus calls Matthew (Levi) and has dinner with him and his questionable associates.

This initiates the conflict with the Pharisees and other religious leaders, who condemn Jesus for eating with sinners and breaking the Sabbath.

In chapter 4, Mark pauses to give a sample of Jesus’ teaching (the parable of the farmer and the illustration of the mustard seed) and then plunges back into the action. Jesus calms the waves, drives out demons, and heals Jairus’s daughter.

After returning to Nazareth for a few days and experiencing rejection in his hometown, Jesus commissions the disciples to spread the Good News everywhere. Opposition from Herod and the Pharisees increases, and John the Baptist is beheaded. But Jesus continues to move, feeding 5,000, reaching out to the woman from Syrian Phoenicia, healing the deaf man, and feeding 4,000.

Finally, it is time to reveal his true identity to the disciples. Do they really know who Jesus is? Peter proclaims him Messiah but then promptly shows that he does not understand Jesus’ mission. After the Transfiguration, Jesus continues to teach and heal, confronting the Pharisees about divorce and the rich young man about eternal life. Blind Bartimaeus is healed.

Events move rapidly toward a climax. The Last Supper, the betrayal, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection are dramatically portrayed, along with more examples of Jesus’ teachings. Mark shows us Jesus moving, serving, sacrificing, and saving! As you read Mark, be ready for action, be open for God’s move in your life, and be challenged to move into your world to serve.

**Mark 1:1-3**

**1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**

**2 As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." 3 "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "**

**Mark 1:1**

**1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**

Saints, the first verse, here begins the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, acts as both a title to the book and a summary of its contents.

No mention is made of the author, generally considered to be John Mark. Mark was not one of the twelve disciples of Jesus but probably knew Jesus personally.

While we generally call this book the Gospel of Mark, the title correctly penned by Mark was the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

The first name, “Jesus,” was a common name in Israel as the Old Testament form of the name Joshua (meaning “Yahweh saves”).

**Matthew 1:21**

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

**Luke 2:21**

“And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb”

The second name**,**

**“the Messiah,”**

is from the Greek word Christos meaning “the Anointed One.”

The Anointed One, the Messiah, would fulfill the Old Testament prophecies (see, for example, Genesis 49:10; Psalms 2; 110; Isaiah 9:1-7; 11:1-9; Zechariah 9:9-10).

**Genesis 49:10**

“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his”

**Isaiah 9:6-7**

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

**Zechariah 9:9-10**

9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'

Saints, Mark gave no genealogy because he presented Jesus as the servant. A servant needs no pedigree, but demonstrates his validity by the worth of the service he provides. The book portrays Jesus as a man who backed up his words with actions that proved he was the Son of God.

Because Mark wrote the Gospel for Christians in Rome, where many gods were worshiped, he wanted his readers to know that Jesus was the one true Son of God.

**Jesus is coeternal with God—and is himself God. He alone was fully man (Jesus), God’s Anointed One (the Messiah), and fully divine (Son of God).**

Mark’s Gospel fully develops Jesus’ claims to be the Christ and the Son of God by showing how he was anointed by God’s Spirit to carry out the divine plan of salvation.

**2 As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." 3 "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "**

Saints, Verses 2 and 3 are a composite quotation, taken first from Malachi and then from Isaiah. Malachi was a prophet to the Jews in Jerusalem who had returned to rebuild their beloved city after the exile.

**Malachi 3:1**

1 "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah was one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament and one of the most quoted in the New. The second half of the book of Isaiah is devoted to the promise of salvation. Isaiah wrote about the coming of the Messiah and the man who would announce his coming, John the Baptist (Isaiah 40:3).

**Isaiah 40:3**

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God”

Like Isaiah, John was a prophet who urged the people to confess their sins and live for God. Although quoting from two prophets (Isaiah and Malachi), Mark simply applied the words to Isaiah.

Saints, Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet who ever lived!

**Matthew 11:7-15**

7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 8 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces.

9 Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' 11 I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. 15 He who has ears, let him hear.

The theme in both references is the focus on a messenger who would prepare the way. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Mark understood the ministry of John the Baptist as fulfilling these promises.

This messenger considered himself a voice shouting out to the people of Israel, “Prepare a pathway for the Lord’s coming! Make a straight road for him!” How were they to do this? The picture could come from the Oriental custom of sending servants ahead of a king to level and clear the roads to make them passable for his journey.

The people in Israel needed to prepare their minds—clear away the spiritual debris and straighten any “crooked” moral paths—in eager anticipation of their King and Messiah.

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**