

What is Distinctive About the Book of Mark Compared to the Books of Matthew, Luke and
John?

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Thesis Statement

The Book of Mark is distinctive in comparison to the other three New Testament Gospels because it is the earliest and shortest written account about Jesus in which it is the primary source of information about the ministry of Jesus.

Introduction

The Gospel is originally meant as the Christian message itself, which is the teaching or revelation of Christ. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the four books of the Bible that record almost everything in recount about Jesus. These accounts are ancient texts, believed to have been written by eyewitnesses or people who spoke with them during the first century. While Jesus probably spoke Aramaic, the New Testament was written in Greek. The English term Gospel comes from the old English *gospel*, a translation of the Greek noun *euangelion*.

Matthew also known as Apostle Matthew or St. Matthew was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ. He is traditionally regarded as the author of the Gospel of Matthew. St. Mark the Evangelist is regarded as the author of the Gospel According to Mark. St. Luke the Evangelist in Christian tradition is regarded as the author of the Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. St. John the Apostle also known as St. John the Evangelist is the author of the Gospel According to John and also a disciple of Jesus.

Apostle Saint Mark was one of Christ's 70 disciples and also one of the four evangelists. St. Mark was born in Cyrene, Libya but his date of birth is unknown. The Gospel of Mark is the shortest and the earliest of the four Gospels, presumably written during the decade preceding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Most scholars agree that it was used by St. Matthew and St. Luke in composing their accounts; more than 90 percent of the content of Mark's Gospel appears in Matthew's and more than 50 percent in the Gospel of Luke. Although the text lacks literary polish, it is simple and direct, and, as the earliest Gospel, it is the primary source of information about the ministry of Jesus. He died circa April 25, 68 A.D. in Alexandria, Egypt. In the 9th century, his relics were relocated to Venice.

Who Was Matthew, Luke and John?

The Apostle Matthew also known as Saint Matthew and Levi was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ. He is traditionally regarded as the author of the Gospel of Matthew. When Jesus called Matthew to follow him, he was a tax collector. This was one of the most reviled professions in ancient Judaism. As a tax collector, he was collecting duties on goods brought by farmers, merchants, and caravans. Under the Roman's Empire's system, Matthew would have paid all the taxes in advance, then collected from the citizens and travelers to reimburse himself.

Tax collectors were known for lying about how much people owed and pocketing the difference. In many ways, tax collectors were synonymous with sinners, in Matthew 9:12, Jesus lumps Matthew with other sinners. As one of the Jesus' 12 disciples, Matthew witnesses more of his life and ministry than anyone else besides Peter, James, and John. As one of the four Gospel writers, Matthew is called one of the Four Evangelists. The title comes from the Greek word *evangelion* meaning "good news".

St. Luke also called Saint Luke the Evangelist in Christian tradition, the author of the Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, was a companion of St. Paul the Apostle, and wrote the most literary out of the New Testament writers. Information on Luke's life is scanty but tradition based on references in the Pauline letters has regarded him as a physician and a Gentile. Paul refers to the Luke as a doctor in Colossians 4:14. Throughout his writings Luke uses precise medical terms to describe people's afflictions. Luke wasn't a eyewitness to Jesus ministry, but he lived during the first century, and according to his own writings, he "carefully investigated everything from the beginning" (Luke 1:1-4). As a traveling

companion of Paul, he also likely had direct access to the apostles and other accounts of Jesus' life and ministry (such as the Gospel of Mark).

Luke is celebrated as one of the church's earliest historians. His methodical, detailed writings give the world the only thorough record of what happened after Jesus ascended to heaven. Without his account it's hard to imagine how Christianity would have expanded to what it is today. The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are generally considered a two-volume set because they're both addressed to Theophilus, in which appear to be written by the same person. They have common themes and language, so they're often referred to as Luke-Acts. Between these two books, Luke wrote 27.5 percent of the New Testament which more than anyone else, including Paul.

The Apostle John also known as Saint John was one of Jesus Christ's 12 disciples, and a prominent leader in the early Christian church. Along with James and Peter, John was one of Jesus' closest confidants, so he appears in more biblical accounts than the other disciples. John is traditionally regarded as the author of five books of the New Testament: The Gospel of John, The Epistles 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John, and the Book of Revelation. He is also believed to be the only disciple who died of old age. In Christian tradition St. John is known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" in the Gospel of John.

When Jesus first met John, he was with his brother St. James fishing in which they were fishermen. His mother was among those women ministering to the circle of disciples. James and John were called *Boanerges*, or "Sons of Thunder" by Jesus. John's authoritative position in the church after the Resurrection is shown by his visit with St. Peter to Samaria to lay hands on the new converts there. It is Peter, James (not the brother of John but "the brother of Jesus"), and John that St. Paul successfully submitted his conversion and mission for recognition.

What Was Mark's Origin and His Role in the New Testament?

Saint Mark the Evangelist (Acts: 12:12; 15:37), an associate of St. Paul and a disciple of St. Peter is the author referred to as Gospel According to Mark. Saint Mark was born in Cyrene, Libya but his date of birth is unknown. Data on his life found in the New Testament are fragmentary. The only unquestionably reliable information is in Philemon 24, where a certain Mark is mentioned as one of St. Paul's fellow workers who sends greetings from Rome to the Christians of Colossae. That Mark was St. Barnabas cousin in Colossians 4:10 in which is authentic. He is referred as John in Acts 12:25, 13:5;13, and 15:37, elsewhere in the New Testament he is consistently called by his Latin surname Mark.

St. John Mark is first mentioned in Acts 12:12, where Luke uses him to distinguish which Mary he's referring to, "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying." From Acts 12:13 a servant comes to the door of Mary, so it is safe to assume she was a homeowner with at least one servant. With Christians gathered in her home and a servant, she was most likely a wealthy, reputable woman. The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary suggests she likely played an essential role in the early Christian church, and that this status has led to numerous speculations about John Mark and his family.

Mark is Barnabas cousin and Colossians 4:10 tells this information. Barnabas is the same Barnabas who accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 12). Mark was tagging along with his cousin Barnabas on this first journey to share the good news about Jesus Christ, but he abandoned Paul and Barnabas after they left Pamphylia to go back to Jerusalem. The Bible doesn't explain why Mark left, but some scholars believe Mark's sudden departure was because of his young age. It is suspected his lack of spiritual maturity prevented him from being

fully involved in the mission, especially after less than expected success in Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12). Many speculate Mark may not have realized how difficult mission work can be, so he returned home.

After their first trip in which Mark abandoned them, Paul was ready for a second trip. In doing this trip Paul wanted to go back to every city they had visited to see how the brethren were doing. Barnabas wanted to bring Mark again, but Paul refused. He was still upset about Mark leaving them from the first trip in which this did not sit well with Barnabas. As Mark continued to grow and mature, and eventually, he was able to reconcile with Paul.

Mark eventually developed a relationship with the apostle Peter in which many believe this to be the reason his growth in ministry may have grown. Peter and Mark shared much in common regarding familiarity with feelings of failure and issues with maturity, so it only makes sense that he took Mark under his wing and mentored him as Mark grew in ministry. Many allude to their relationship being so close that some people have said book of Mark is more akin to Peter's memoirs. When they were together Mark had written down everything, he heard Peter say, particularly when they were in Rome. This lines up with the early traditional belief that the book of Mark was written in Rome for the benefit of Roman Christians. Irenaeus in A.D. 185 called Mark "the interpreter of Peter," and Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, called him both "a disciple and interpreter of Peter" in A.D. 140.

What Stood Out About Mark's Account?

Mark seems to have targeted Roman believers, particularly Gentiles. When employing Aramaic terms, Mark translated them for his readers (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22, 34). In some place's Latin expressions instead of their Greek equivalents (5:9; 12:15, 42; 15:16, 39). In the verses (6:48; 13:35) the time system used is the Roman system and he carefully

explained Jewish customs (7:3–4; 14:12; 15:42). Luke. Gospel of Mark also makes fewer references to the Old Testament and includes less material that would be of particular interest to Jewish readers, such as that which is critical of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Sadducees are mentioned only once, in 12:18).

When Simon the Cyrene was mentioned (15:21), Mark identifies him as the father of Rufus, a prominent member of the church at Rome (Rom. 16:13). This account shows support that the traditional view of Mark was written for a Gentile audience initially at Rome. Mark presents Jesus as the suffering Servant of the Lord (10:45). Mark's focus is on the deeds of Jesus more than His teaching, particularly emphasizing service and sacrifice. Mark omits the lengthy discourses found in the other Gospels, often relating only brief excerpts to give the gist of Jesus' teaching.

Mark also omits any account of Jesus' ancestry and birth, beginning where Jesus' public ministry began with His baptism by John in the wilderness. The account of Mark shows the humanity of Christ more clearly than any of the other evangelists, emphasizing Christ's human emotions (1:41; 3:5; 6:34; 8:12; 9:36), His human limitations (4:38; 11:12; 13:32), and other small details that highlight the human side of the Son of God (for example, 7:33–34; 8:12; 9:36; 10:13–16). With Mark's Gospel since it was intended for a Gentile audience, especially a Roman one, it's very short. Mark is the Gospel of action; the frequent use of "immediately" and "then" keeps his narrative moving rapidly along. Mark's fast-paced approach would especially appeal to the practical, action-oriented Romans.

Mark presents Jesus as a man of action, always on the move, a new David, the Warrior. For Mark discipleship involves following Jesus, doing what He does. Another difference which stands out about Mark is the use of irony. Irony depends on a difference between the meaning on

the surface and the real meaning. In literature, irony often depends on the readers or audience knowing something that characters don't know.

Mark also uses irony to make the Pharisees and scribes look bad. Mark tells the stories so that the Pharisees condemn themselves without realizing it. Mark also makes abundant use of intercalation, or "sandwich stories." He begins one story, interrupts it with a completely different story, and then returns to complete the original story. Pg. 151

The Gospel of Mark shows how he was apparently more impressed by the mighty works that Jesus performed than by the content of Jesus' teaching. More than half of Mark's gospel is devoted to giving an account of the remarkable deeds that Jesus performed. Many of these deeds dealt with healing the sick. For example, Mark tells of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law, who was afflicted with a severe fever. A paralytic who was lowered through a hole in the roof was healed and made to walk again. A man with a withered hand was made whole when he encountered Jesus in a synagogue. Cliffnotes

Mark gives a rather full account of Jesus' teachings and activities during the days preceding Jesus' trial and crucifixion. He tells about the women's visit to the tomb and their surprise at finding Jesus risen from the dead. It is not known what else Mark may have said concerning the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection, for the original ending of his gospel has been lost. The last twelve verses of the gospel as it now appears in the New Testament were not part of the earliest manuscripts. Even in later manuscripts, these verses are not the same.

(Cliffnotes)

What Was the Comparisons of Mark to Matthew, Luke, and John?

For the differences pertaining to the writer, Mark was a second-generation Christian, possibly a follower of Peter. Matthew is an unknown Jewish Christian, traditionally the Apostle Matthew. Luke is considered a Gentile Christian, traditionally Luke the physician and Paul's traveling companion. John is named the "beloved disciple" the Apostle John. When it comes to the dates written, Mark was written during 65-70 A.D., Matthew 75-80 A.D., Luke 80-85 A.D., and John 90-110 A.D.

Relating to the themes of each Gospel, Mark considered Jesus the Healer, Miracle Worker, Teacher, Misunderstood by those closest to Him. Gospel of Matthew considered Jesus, the Promised Messiah of Jewish people, greatest prophet, teacher of the "new law" calling people to be faithful of the Old Testament covenant with God. Luke considered Jesus, Merciful, Compassionate, Prayerful teacher with special concern for women, the poor, and non-Jews (Gentiles). Finally, John considered Jesus, Noble, Powerful divine--fully in control of His destiny.

Each Gospel of also had a specific audience and community it was written to. Gospel of Mark was written to a Gentile Christian community in Rome undergoing persecution. Gospel of Matthew was written a Jewish Christian community. Luke was specifically written to "Theophilus". Gospel of John was written to Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans.

The Gospels also were written during important historical times for the authors of each Gospel. During the time Gospel of Mark was written, The Romans subdue armed Jewish rebellions and Christians were experiencing persecution in Rome. When the Gospel of Matthew was written it was after Romans had destroyed all of Jerusalem. The Gospel of Luke happened to

be written, when the persecution of Jews and Christians was intensifying. Last the Book of John was written when Jewish leaders banned Christians from the synagogues.

The locations of the books being written also varied between the different Gospels. The Gospel of Mark was written in Rome. Matthew happened to be written most likely in Antioch of Syria. Luke possibly was written in Rome or Caesarea. The Book of John probably was written in Ephesus.

Mark focuses on the idea that Jesus was a servant. This can be seen by his lack of genealogy of Jesus throughout his gospel. Mark's work is meant to encourage Christians throughout Rome, despite being persecuted for their faith. Luke happened to be known as an accurate historian, and as a result he carefully researched everything. Luke approaches his work by making Jesus the Son of man. He shows how Jesus was a real person and how He showed a genuine interest in people from all walks of life.

The gospel of John was the only gospel written by a follower of Jesus. The other three writers were followers of Jesus's apostles, and likely never met Jesus for themselves. John's message was a personal account of his following closely with Jesus. Matthew was written to and for the Jews and focuses his work around the idea that Jesus is the King of the Jews; "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:2). There were two main reasons Matthew wrote his book. The gospel of Matthew was written as a message of encouragement and strength for Jewish Christians. The second reason he writes his book is to show that Jesus was truly the Messiah. He shows this by recording Jesus' genealogy and quoting the old testament. "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:" (Matthew 1:1).

