

Khyro Dawkins
IC 501 OA: Perspectives on Mission (Online)
Course Instructor: Stanley John, Ph.D.
Lesson 5: Discuss a Missiology for the Gospel of Mark.
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Mark is the second gospel in the New Testament canon and is widely regarded as been written before the gospel of Mathew. Mark's gospel contains several themes regarding a universalistic mission that were carried over from Mathew's gospel and have already been explored, such as the parable of the vineyard tenant (Mark 12:1-12) a mini apocalypse of Mark 13, which like Mathew, recorded that "the gospel must first be preached to all nation" (Mark 13:10)); Jesus ministry in Gentile regions (Mark 7:24-30;8:28-34), and the confesion of faith by the Gentile centurion at the crucifixion of Christ Mark 15:39). In addition, Mark also anticipated a worldwide mission when Jesus commends the woman who poured an alabaster jar of expensive perfume on His head. Jesus declares that "wherever the gospels preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her" (Mark 14:9).

All four gospels record Jesus cleansing of the temple. However, Mark placed more of an emphasis on the universal mission to the Gentiles and he is the only one of the gospel writers who recorded the phrase as cited in Isaiah 56:7, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations". This meant that not only will the Sovereign Lord gathers all the exiles of Israel, but he will also gather the Gentiles. Mark's gospel is known for its emphasis on persecution and suffering because it was written at a time when Nero was prosecuting the church and blamed the Christians for the famous fire that swept through Rome in 64 C.E. This gospel is also a reminder to us that missions occur in the context of hostility and opposition.

Mark 16:8 represents the conclusion of Mark's gospel, but it is possible that the original ending had been lost and that the current ending represents an attempt by the early church to restore the original account. Mark records Jesus' preparing His disciples for post resurrection appearance to all. In Mark 14:28 Jesus says, "After I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." Therefore, we have received an anonymous ending to Marks gospel that includes a final commission from our Lord. While the understanding of the late addition, a few observation were made about the text with emphasis on those themes that are present in Mark's gospel. First, the imperative found in the passage is the words "proclaim" or "preach" Mark 16:15. This passage commands the church to proclaim the good news to "all creations." Mark records Jesus "preaching in their synagogues" Mark 1:39 and telling His disciples that they must go to nearby villages "so he can preach also. That is why He came" March 1:38. Secondly, like Mathew's gospel, the text places the command within an eschatological context warning that whoever believes "will be saved," whereas whoever does not believe "will be condemned" Mark 16:16. Finally, the text assumes that miraculous signs will accompany the worldwide preaching of the gospel, including driving out of demons, speaking of tongues, laying of the hands on the sick for healing and being unharmed by snake poison.

Marks' gospel, alone with all the account of Jesus ministry, emphasizes the miraculous ministry of Jesus, However Mark is particularly interested in the lives of the disciples, through such works of casting out demons (Mark 3:15;6:13) and healing the sick (Mark 6:13). The overall message of Mark is consistent with the church's self-understanding as an empowering community with a universal mission.

