

Mark

Deity Who Models Suffering as Servant								
Service					Suffering			
Sayings and Signs					Sacrifice			
Galilee and Perea					Judea and Jerusalem			
Coming		Ministry Opposition			Self-Sacrifice		Resurrection	
1:1-13		1:14–10:52			Chapters 11–15		Chapter 16	
Deity & John 1:1-8	Baptism & Temptation 1:9-13	Mission 1:14–2:12	Opposition 2:13–8:26	Instruction 8:27–10:52	Rejection 11–13	Passion 14–15	Proof 16:1-8	Ending 16:9-20
Authority of Christ Emphasized			Authority-Servanthood Tension		Servanthood of Christ Emphasized			
3 Years			6 Months		8 Days			
Rome								
Written AD 64-68 Covers AD 29-33								

Key Word: Discipleship

Key Verse: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Summary Statement: The way of *discipleship* for persecuted Roman believers was to serve others until death like Jesus did as the Suffering Servant with all authority.

Application: How can you be a disciple who suffers after Jesus' example?

Mark

Introduction

- I. **Title** The earliest title of Mark's gospel account (Κατὰ Μάρκον *According to Mark*) was added by a scribe sometime before AD 125 (John Grassmick, "Mark," in *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:95).
- II. **Authorship**
 - A. **External Evidence:** The unanimous testimony of the early Church Fathers is that Mark, an associate of the Apostle Peter, penned this book that bears his name.
 1. The earliest known support for Marcan authorship is from Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (ca. AD 135-140) as cited by Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15-16 (Hiebert, 1:81-84).
 2. Other early evidence stems from noted sources such as Justin Martyr (*Dialogue* 106.3; ca. AD 160), *Anti-Marcionite Prologues* (ca. AD 160-180), Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1-2; ca. AD 180), Tertullian (*Against Marcion* 4.5; ca. AD 200), the Muratorian Fragment, Tatian's *Diatessaron*, Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 195), and Origen (ca. AD 230), the last two being cited by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.15.2; 6.14.6; 6.25.5).
 - B. **Internal Evidence:** The book does not specify its author, but several factors point to Mark:
 1. Mark is the only Gospel to mention the unidentified young man who fled naked at Christ's arrest in Gethsemane (14:51-52). This was probably Mark himself!
 2. Mark's detailed description of the "guest room" (14:12-16; cf. Matt. 26:17-19; John 13:1-12) may indicate that this Last Supper room was in his own home.
 3. The author was familiar with the land of Israel (5:1; 6:53; 8:10; 11:1), its Aramaic language (5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36) and the Jewish institutions and customs (1:21; 2:14, 16, 18; 7:2-4).
 4. The book often cites details known only to Christ's "inner-circle" apostles (1:16-20; 5:21-24; 9:14-15; 11:4-6; 14:32-42), leading to Peter as the author's key source of information. This is supported by the inclusion of the words "and Peter" in 16:7 (Hiebert, 1:86).

Both the external and internal evidence support John Mark of Acts (12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37, 39) and the Epistles (Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Philem. 24; 1 Pet. 5:13) as the author (Hiebert, 1:87-90).

III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** The tradition from Papias states that Peter did not come to Rome until about AD 63, and since Mark collaborated with him in Rome, the Gospel cannot be dated before AD 63. Peter was martyred in AD 64, but the tradition divides on whether Mark wrote before Peter's death (Clement of Alexandria and Origen) or after it (Irenaeus and the *Anti-Marcionite Prologue*; cf. Hiebert, 1:92-94). Finally, since the book does not mention the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, the most probable date lies between AD 64-68, which falls during the reign of Nero (AD 54-68).
- B. **Origin/Recipients:** The external evidence of the early church fathers is nearly unanimous that Mark wrote from Rome primarily for Gentile Christians in Rome. This text itself supports this tradition where it explains Jewish customs (7:3-4; 14:12; 15:42), uses Latin loan words (5:9; 6:27; 12:15, 42; 15:16, 39), contains only one OT quotation (1:2), interprets Aramaic expressions (5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36), mentions that the gospel will be preached to all nations (13:10), and views the temple as a house of prayer for all nations (11:17).
- C. **Occasion:** Clement of Alexandria testified that Mark penned his gospel at the request of Roman Christians under intense persecution near the end of Nero's reign (AD 54-68). For this reason, his purpose is more pastoral than evangelistic, liturgical, apologetic, or strictly biographical (Hiebert, 1:94-97; Guthrie, 57-59). He wrote to prepare his readers for suffering by noting that Christian discipleship involves hardship—even death—as modeled in the Lord Jesus. Mark 10:45 sums up his message, "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

IV. Characteristics

- A. The purpose of Mark has been interpreted in at least six ways:
1. Biographical: to present a biographical portrait of Jesus as the Servant of the Lord
 2. Evangelistic: to win converts (Benware, *Survey of the NT*, 95)
 3. Liturgical: to instruct new Christians to strengthen their faith during persecution
 4. Instructional: to supply material for evangelists and teachers
 5. Apologetic: to correct false notions of Christ and his messianic mission
 6. Pastoral: The best evidence supports the view that his primary concern was pastoral. Mark, in a pastoral concern, presents selected events about Christ as the Son of God and the model Suffering Servant to persecuted believers needing encouragement to be true disciples of Christ. This finds support through these evidences:
 - a. The book emphasizes **discipleship** (8:27–10:52).
 - b. Over one third (37%) of the writing addresses Christ's **rejection in Jerusalem and passion** (Mark 11–15; cf. 10:45).
 - c. Christ's suffering **during** his life also is stressed:
 - 1) He was tempted with wild beasts (1:12-13).
 - 2) His family misunderstood him (3:22, 30).
 - 3) He emphasized the cost of discipleship (8:34-38).
 - 4) He promised persecution (10:30, 33-34, 45; 13:8, 11-13).
- B. Mark is also the only gospel with a title (1:1).
- C. Mark has a brief, concise, rough (nonliterary Greek) style as a “gospel of action” (cf. “immediately” used 41 times). He selects fewer accounts than Matthew or Luke but develops these stories more fully.
- D. It emphasizes Christ's actions more than his teaching (e.g., 18 miracles but only four parables and one major discourse in 13:3-37).
- E. There is a stress on secrecy imposed by Christ after his miracles and other key events: e.g., exorcisms (1:25, 34; 3:12), confession of Messiahship (8:30), and Transfiguration (9:9).
- F. The emotions of Jesus are dominant, including his anger (1:43; 3:5; 8:33; 10:14), distress and sorrow (7:34; 8:12; 14:33-34), and compassion (1:41; 6:34; 8:2; 10:16).
- G. The Gospel abounds in high Christology (1:1; 8:29; 15:39).
- H. Mark portrays his subjects with notable candor: the crowd's amazement (1:22, 27; 2:12; 5:20; 9:15), Jesus' family's belief that he was insane (3:21, 31-35), the disciples' lack of understanding and failures (4:13; 6:52; 8:17, 21; 9:10, 32; 10:26), and Christ's emotions (see point F above).
- I. The gospel has an abrupt ending (16:20), especially in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts (16:8). This ending (16:9-20) is one of the most difficult textual problems in all the New Testament. See pages 90-92 for additional details.

- J. Most NT scholars today believe Mark was the first gospel written (called Marcan Priority), though the early church held that Matthew wrote first. Marcan arguments and Matthean rebuttals are presented below.

Reasons Mark is Seen as First (Marcan Priority Support)	Rebuttals to Arguments on the Left (Matthean Priority Support)
1. Details are most vivid	Assumes earlier gospels cannot be vivid while John is later and very vivid; Peter also was quite a colorful source for Mark
2. Grammar and style roughest	Expected in comparison to Luke's polished Greek as a doctor; Indicates style more than chronological order
3. Embarrassing or misleading details	Supports Marcan authorship but not earlier timing as assumes disciples became more refined
4. Shortest gospel	Assumes gospel lengths got longer with time; all agree John's gospel is the latest, but it is not the shortest
5. Little material not in Matt or Luke	Could just as easily selected the most pertinent stories told by earlier writers as dependency is difficult to prove
6. Text order same in Matt & Luke	True but not relevant to dating as Mark could have followed the order of Matt & Luke who wrote earlier
7. High incidence of Aramaic words	Expected that a Jew from Israel writing to Gentiles in Rome would explain unfamiliar words to them
8. Omits all material common to Matt & Luke	Mark saw no need for Jesus' birth and genealogy as this was not relevant to his purpose
9. Consistent theology of Matt & Luke	Mark's emphasis on suffering was not needed in the 40s (Matt) and 50s (Luke); kingdom emphasis not helpful in Rome

Argument

Mark's Gospel has been outlined in numerous ways due to its unique style with many fast-moving sections. Several have traced the book by Christ's geographical movements (ministry in Galilee, then Judea, etc.) but this contributes little to understanding Mark's argument. It seems best to view Mark's purpose as a pastoral concern for his Christian readership to show that Christ served man even to the point of death as an example of selflessness that each follower also should manifest. With this view in mind, Mark 10:45 is a significant theme verse that sums up the two major movements of the book: "For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve (cf. Christ's ministry of service in 1:14–10:52) and to give his life as a ransom for many (cf. Christ's self-sacrifice in Mark 11–15)." The remaining sections introduce the reader to the Servant as Messiah and God (1:1-13) and prove this claim in the account of his resurrection (Mark 16).

Synthesis

Deity who models suffering as Servant

1:1-13

1:1	Coming
1:2-8	Messianic deity
1:9-11	John's servanthood
1:12-13	Baptism
	Temptation

1:14–10:52

1:14–2:12	Ministry opposition
2:13–8:26	Mission = serving
2:13–3:35	Opposition
4:1-34	Initial
4:35–5:43	Parables: stagnancy vs. growth
6:1–8:26	Miracles
6:1-13	Increasing/authentication
6:14-56	Nazareth–commissions 12
7:1–8:9	Herod–3 miracles
8:10-26	Pharisees/scribes–3 more miracles
8:27–10:52	Pharisees–heals blind man
8:27-38	Instruction on discipleship en route to Jerusalem
9:1-13	Peter's confession
9:14-29	Transfiguration
9:30-32	Heals demoniac
9:33–10:45	Disciples' confusion over death/resurrection
10:46-52	Discipleship lifestyle
	Israel's blindness

11–15

11–13	Self-sacrifice
11:1-26	Rejection in Jerusalem
11:27–12:44	Triumphal entry, temple cleansing, cursing fig tree
13	Opposition
14–15	Olivet Discourse
14:1-52	Passion
14:53–15:47	Anointing, betrayal, Passover, desertion
	Trials, death, burial

16

16:1-8	Resurrection
16:9-20	Messiahship/deity proved
	Disputed ending

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

The way of *discipleship* for persecuted Roman believers was to serve others until death like Jesus did as the Suffering Servant with all authority.

- I. The way of discipleship follows Jesus as humble and suffering Servant despite being God and Messiah (1:1-13).
 - A. Jesus is the Ultimate Authority—Israel's king and God himself (1:1).
 - B. John served humbly since he saw Jesus as the Greatest man ever (1:2-8).
 - C. Jesus was praised by God himself at his baptism (1:9-11).
 - D. Jesus was cared for by angels at his temptation (1:12-13).

II. The way of discipleship for persecuted Roman believers was to serve others despite opposition, which Jesus lived and taught (1:14–10:52).

- A. Christ served us in his message, calling others, and miracles (1:14–2:12).
1. Jesus cared for people by announcing the kingdom that freed them from sin through repentance (1:14-15).
 2. Jesus cared for people by calling disciples to a purposeful life (1:16-20).
 3. Jesus did not use his authority selfishly but served others by casting out a demon and healing Peter's mother-in-law (1:21-34).
 4. Jesus shunned popularity by prayer and pursuing his calling for all people rather than simply for the people of Capernaum (1:35-39).
 5. Jesus used his authority by healing an oppressed leper and paralytic to show his followers servant care for others (1:40–2:12).
- B. Many opposed Jesus as Servant—so we also will be opposed (2:13–8:26).
1. Jewish religious leaders initially opposed Jesus over various issues (2:13–3:35).
 2. Christ responded to the opposition with parables about the stagnant state of those rejecting him in contrast to the growth of his kingdom (4:1-34).
 3. Christ's miracles showed him as Messiah despite his opposition from the Jewish leadership (4:35–5:43).
 4. Opposition to Christ grew through several rejections, each followed by Christ's validation of his person (6:1–8:26).
 - a) Jesus was opposed at Nazareth but validated his person by commissioning the twelve (6:1-13).
 - b) Jesus was opposed by Herod but validated his person through three miracles (6:14-56).
 - c) Jesus was opposed by the Pharisees and scribes but validated his person in three more miracles (7:1–8:9).
 - d) Jesus was opposed by the Pharisees again but validated himself by healing a blind man (8:10-26).
- C. Jesus taught en route to Jerusalem that his disciples will be resisted (8:27–10:52).
1. Jesus predicted his death after Peter confessed him as Messiah to teach that high position does not exclude persecution (8:27-38).
 2. The transfiguration revealed Christ's position as King to show that future glory will follow present suffering for Jesus and his followers (9:1-13).
 3. The healing of the demoniac reveals that Christ's power is appropriated by prayer (9:14-29).
 4. The disciples were confused about Christ's second teaching of his death as it did not match their understanding of a reigning Messiah (9:30-32).
 5. Christ's final teaching before coming to Jerusalem to die highlighted a discipleship lifestyle in all areas of life (9:33–10:45).
 6. The healing of blind Bartimaeus who "sees" the real Jesus contrasts with the nation blind to its Messiah to transition into the passion narrative (10:46-52).

III. The way of discipleship for persecuted Roman believers was to mimic the self-sacrifice Jesus as Servant in his rejection and death (Mark 11–15).

- A. Jesus knows our rejection since Jerusalem rejected him (Mark 11–13).
 - 1. Christ's official offer to Israel in his triumphal entry, temple cleansing, and cursing of the fig tree show that Israel rejected him for religion (11:1-26).
 - 2. The opposition of the Jewish leaders showed their rejection of Jesus as Messiah despite his ability to baffle them in his answers (11:27–12:44).
 - 3. Christ revealed in the Olivet Discourse that Israel's rejection will result in perilous times before he returns to establish his kingdom (Mark 13).
- B. Jesus died for us as the ultimate example of serving others (Mark 14–15).
 - 1. Jesus' anointing, betrayal, Passover, and desertion by disciples at his arrest were all expected by Christ as indication of his deity (14:1-52).
 - 2. Jesus' trials, death, and burial show his self-sacrifice as Servant who exemplifies the ultimate service for others (14:53–15:47).

IV. The way of discipleship for persecuted Roman believers would lead to victory over death just as Jesus rose from the dead as Messiah and God (Mark 16).

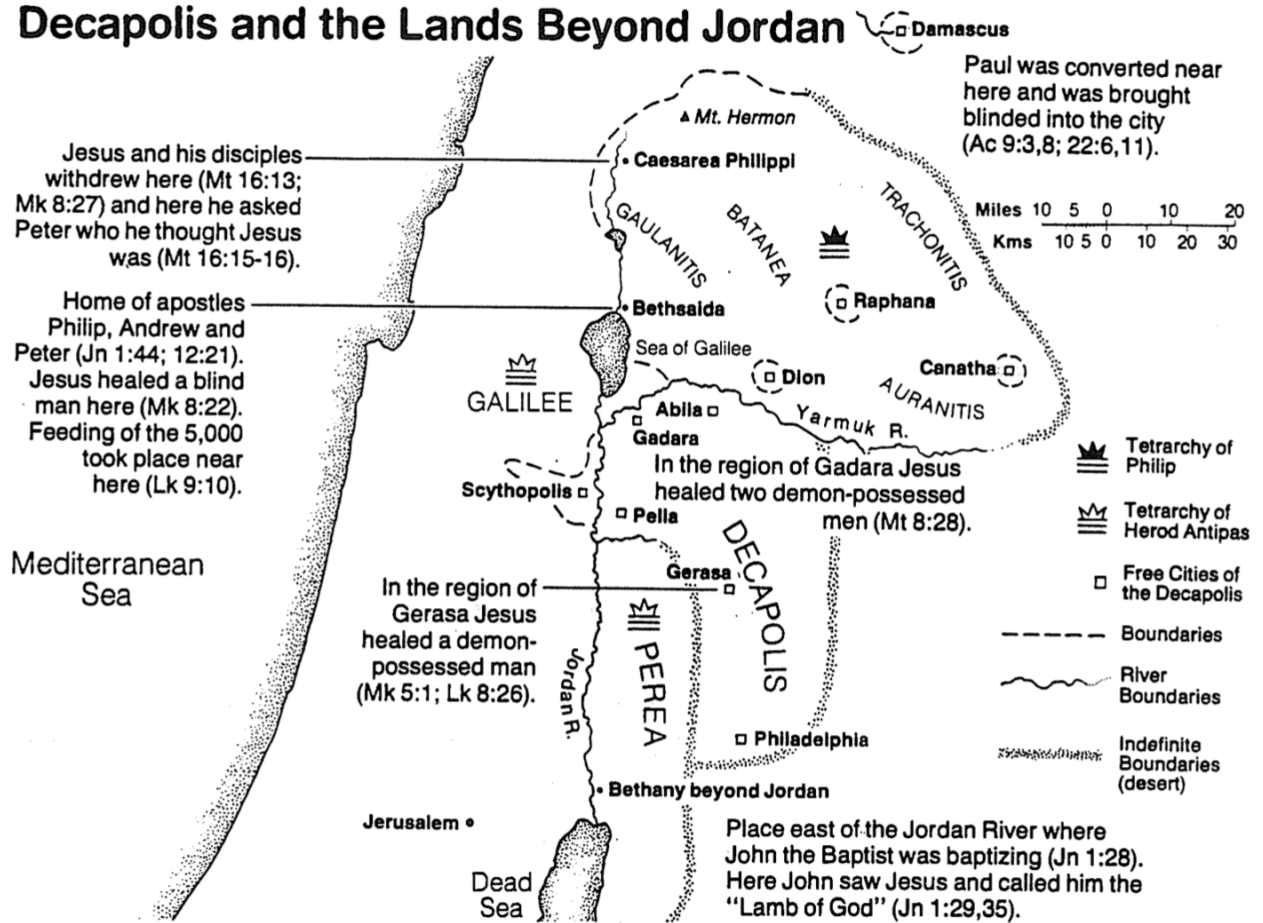
- A. Christ's resurrection proved him to be Israel's Messiah and God himself (16:1-8; cf. 1:1).
- B. His appearances, Great Commission, and ascension show that we will defeat death too (16:9-20).

Decapolis, Transjordan, Tyre, and Sidon

Bible Visual Resource Book, 189

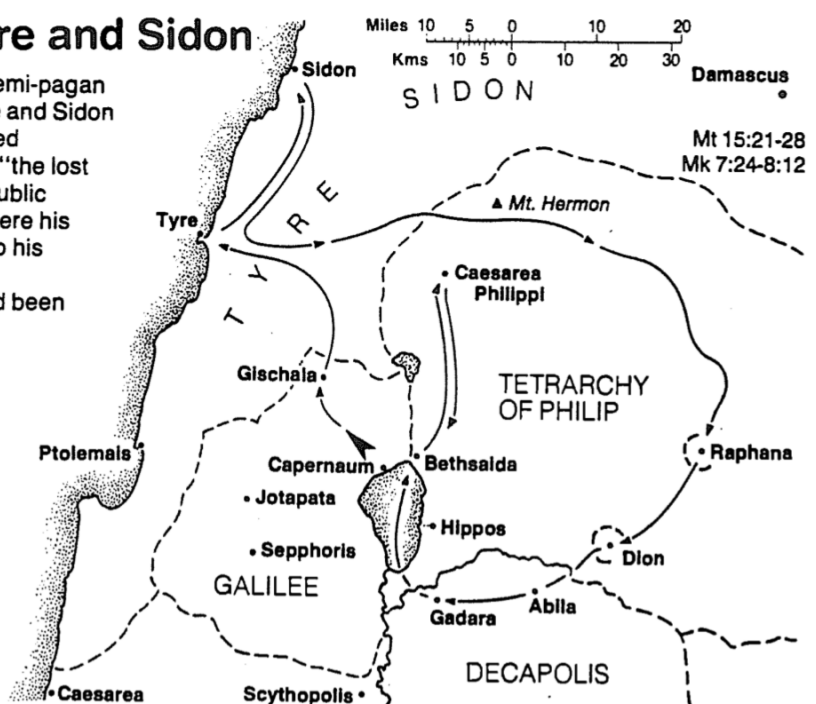
Mark

Decapolis and the Lands Beyond Jordan



The Territories of Tyre and Sidon

In a unique excursion into pagan and semi-pagan areas, Jesus visited the districts of Tyre and Sidon and the confederation of free cities called Decapolis. He was called to minister to "the lost sheep of Israel," but the phenomenal public attention in Galilee was intense. Even here his fame had spread, and he could not keep his presence secret. The commercially magnificent cities of Tyre and Sidon had been a source of cultural seductiveness and religious heterodoxy since the time of Jezebel. The cities having been heavily influenced by Hellenism, the sophistication of Greek culture was apparent in their coinage and architecture. Each was also a proud, historic center of Canaanite paganism, with tombs of ancient kings and temples to Melqart/Heracles, Astarte and various other deities.



The Paradox of Authority and Servanthood in Mark

Summary of Narry F. Santos, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (October-December 1997): 452-60

A key concept in Mark's gospel is the paradox between authority and servanthood. (A paradox is a statement that departs from the accepted opinion and seems contradictory or absurd.)

	Authority	Servanthood
Themes	Christ's Leadership	Discipleship
Strategy	Gentiles lord it over others (10:42)	Disciples serve (10:43)
Motivation	"Save his life" (8:35a)	"Lose his life" (8:35b)
Priority	"First" (9:35a; 10:31a)	"Last" (9:35b; 10:31b)
Reputation	"Great" (10:43a)	"Servant" (10:43b)
Position	"First" (10:44a)	"Slave of all" (10:44b)
Authority Examples	Authority without Serving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious leaders • Rich man • Judas 	Authority and Served: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John the Baptist • Joseph of Arimathea
Servanthood Examples	Authority but Struggled to Serve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciples 	No Authority and Served: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartimaeus • Woman who anointed Jesus
First Section (1:1–8:26)	Authority of Christ	
Second Section (8:27–10:52)		Authority-Servanthood Tension
Third Section (11–16)		Servanthood of Christ

Grace Baptist Youth Camp
9 June 2000
NIV

Transformed Teens Series

Dr. Rick Griffith
Message 4 of 4
40 Minutes

Get Up Again ***A Monologue to the Book of Mark & Acts 13, 15***

Topic: Service
Subject: Be a person of action even though you fail
Complement: by selflessly serving others.
Purpose: The teens will show that Christ has transformed them by selflessly serving others.
Setting: A man in first-century garb walks onto the church platform

Introduction

1. **Interest:** Shalom, fellow saints of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please do not find it strange that I stand before you here. I come by invitation of your speaker! Somehow, he and I bumped into each other not too long ago, and he told me that he would be speaking to you about transformed teenagers. Alas, since God did such a unique work in my life when I was a teenager, he said he would allow me to tell you about it myself...
2. **Identity:** Oh, I have not yet introduced myself, have I? My name is Mark, or, if you are fond of long names, John Mark. John is my Jewish name, and Mark is my Greek name.
3. **Wealthy Family (Acts 12:12-18)**
 - a) I come from a well-to-do family in Jerusalem, and I am privileged to be a child of Abraham. My mother's name is Mary—a distinguished name, you might say since this also was the name of the mother of our Lord. Mother undoubtedly had the gift of service, for she constantly entertained the church of Jerusalem in our home since I was a young boy. And man, could she make great Jewish bagels!
 - b) Perhaps you've read about one particular time when the church gathered together to pray for Peter, who was in prison then. Remember when the angel led him out of jail to a home where the servant girl Rhoda slammed the door in his face in amazement? Well, that was my home! Rhoda always got a bit flustered whenever a miracle happened. If only Rhoda could have seen *Jesus* perform all those miracles, she would have known better. Not that I saw them often since I was so young when Jesus came to Jerusalem, but I sure have heard the stories! Although I did see Him on a few occasions...
4. **Gethsemane (Mark 14:51)**
 - a) I especially remember one time as a teenager when I got news of the search party on the way to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Boy, I didn't even finish getting dressed to get there as fast as I could! Since the servants had not yet done the wash, all I could find was a linen sheet, so I threw it over my body and rushed out to the olive grove.
 - b) Unfortunately, when the religious fanatics grabbed Jesus, all the disciples fled, and one of those cronies grabbed me, thinking I was one of the disciples. I couldn't get away from him—it was either death or leave the sheet behind. What would you do? Well, I chose the latter, which was very embarrassing. Imagine the son of a respectable family running through the garden naked to get home. Good thing it was dark out. It's a good thing Mom never found out, too. That's why I didn't give my name in my gospel account. I just referred to myself as "a certain young man." It's a good way to get in the action without embarrassment, right?

I. First Missionary Journey

A. Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37; Col. 4:10)

1. Anyway, where was I? Oh, yes, my family. Perhaps you also have heard of a cousin of mine. He is the son of my aunt and uncle, who lived in that vacation spot out in the Mediterranean. It's a wonderful island called Cyprus. My cousin's name is Joseph.
2. What a great older cousin he is! So generous! Once, he sold a piece of land and laid the entire amount at the apostles' feet! This encouraged everyone so much that he was called "Barnabas," which means "son of encouragement" from then on!
3. Once, Barnabas even arranged for me to accompany him and the Apostle Paul on their first missionary journey! I was elated! Think of it: the opportunity of a lifetime—traveling with the great apostles themselves, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing the sick, and seeing churches pop up throughout Asia Minor. What an adventure! I had never been more excited about anything in my life!
4. Do you like to go to new places by yourself? I didn't as a teenager! I never stepped out to do risky things, but this time, it was different. I had my older cousin with me.

B. Failure (Acts 13:13)

1. However, by the time we got only a quarter of the way through this short-term mission trip, I discovered no picnic. Some people on our team got sick, and not everyone was super-excited to hear about Jesus. Also, my cousin Barnabas found that Paul had more leadership gifts than he did, and he let Paul lead our group. I thought we would spread the news of Messiah to our Jewish brethren throughout the Roman Empire, but Paul was passionate about sharing Jesus with the Gentiles. I wasn't ready for all that cross-cultural evangelism stuff. I was from a lovely Jewish home. Besides, I couldn't stand pork.
2. Anyway, when we got to the seaport city of Perga, I felt that this was my chance to return home. I knew that malaria was much more possible inland. I caught the next ship back to Israel and soon was home safe in Jerusalem. Paul said I was running home to Momma and needed a "bagel fix." That hurt, but I must admit that, in some respects, he was right. Paul was very angry, but I felt I couldn't go further.
3. I hate to fail—don't you? What's worse is when I fail trying to serve the Lord. Why couldn't I be like David slaying Goliath or Daniel standing up to the most powerful ruler of the day when he refused to eat defiled food? And even Mary, the mother of our Lord, had more guts than me. I felt miserable...

II. Second Missionary Journey

A. Paul & Barnabas Split (Acts 15:36-41)

1. Believe it or not, that wasn't the end of hearing about my flunking out on this short-term mission trip. Two years later, Paul and Barnabas were about to head out on another trip. My cousin Barnabas wanted to bring me again...
2. But Paul wasn't so keen on the idea. He adamantly opposed it. He didn't forget too easily. I knew, and Barnabas knew, that I was ready then, but Paul wasn't convinced. Those two men had such a sharp disagreement I thought they would fight! It ended up that Barnabas was willing to split up with Paul *over me*. What a guy! He had traveled hundreds of kilometers with Paul through thick and thin, yet Barney believed in me to the extent of jeopardizing his ministry relationship with Paul.
3. What happened? Paul took Silas north by land, and Barnabas sailed west with me.
4. I cannot tell you what having a pal like Barnabas meant to me. I learned how valuable it is to have just *one* person who believes in you. I *wanted* to go the right way and knew I was ready—but I was going against the opinions of *everyone*—except Barnabas. This "son of encouragement" sure lived up to his name. He built his life into me.

B. Paul Forgives Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:6; 2 Tim. 4:11)

1. However, please do not think that our disagreement with Paul was never solved. A few years later, Paul spoke very highly of Barnabas in his letter to the Corinthians.
2. Twelve years later, *I was helping out Paul* in his prison in Rome! He even wrote to our fellow worker Timothy that I was "useful" to him for ministry! Who knows what life would have been like if Barnabas did not stick with me?

III. Book of Mark

A. Peter's Influence

1. Eventually, I got to know the Apostle Peter well, too. Boy, did he have a lot to share with me! You see, Paul and Barnabas were not disciples of Jesus, but not so with Peter! Why, he was one of Jesus' top three men. He had lived with Christ day in and day out for over three years. I loved to sit under his teaching about Jesus...
2. About thirty years after Christ had ascended back to the Father, one day, I was listening to Peter preach in one of our worship services in Rome. I thought, "Wow! I've heard Peter tell this story of Christ healing the blind man many times, yet so many have never heard it *once!* Man, if only we could get Peter to travel around to get this message out to more people! But he's almost 70 years old now, and that's too old to be running around the Empire like he did in his younger years..."

B. Gospel Request (Mark 10:45)

1. Then the Christians there urged me, "Hey Mark! Why not write these stories into a fast-moving account of Christ's life? Don't cover everything, but hit those topics that especially relate to us Gentiles, showing Christ on the move." I thought, "Good idea! I could show Christ as the Greatest Servant of all time, even use His well-known statement, 'The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost,' as sort-of a theme verse!"
2. Well, Peter was elated about the prospect. Why hadn't we thought of this sooner? Within months, I had Peter's words down in writing right there in Rome, and shortly afterward, he, like nearly all the apostles, died a martyr's death. The Romans crucified him upside-down. Peter requested to be upside-down, thinking that he was not worthy of dying as our Lord had suffered.

C. Gospel Uniqueness

1. Since my gospel was written to Gentiles, I left out many of the more Jewish elements: Christ's genealogy, fulfilled prophecies, references to the Law, and certain Jewish customs. I also translated some of the Aramaic words. Little did I know that before all the apostles passed into heaven, mine would be one of four published gospel accounts.
2. Matthew wrote his account of Christ's life, and even Luke and John did. Rumor has it that the Holy Spirit has worked so that all of these gospels, along with Luke's Acts of the Apostles, Paul's epistles, the Law, Writings, Prophets, and some other epistles, are all bound together! Man, I wish we had that back in the Roman Empire! I never even *dreamed* of being able to carry 66 scrolls to church!
3. Anyway, I'm glad to contribute what I know. Never did I realize my gospel would make such a contribution to Christianity! But I want people to see Jesus as one who served man, even to the point of sacrificing his own life for our sins.
 - a) That's why a full third of my book covers the last week of Christ's life. Since I didn't include everything about Jesus, my book is not really a biography.
 - b) It's more of a topical arrangement, showing how Christ's works and teachings complement one another. This is why I included a whopping eighteen miracles in such a short, brief account. Whereas some of the other gospels emphasize Christ's words, I showed Him as a man of *action*.

4. I wrote my gospel during perilous times. Nero took great delight in seeing my friends torn apart by beasts and gladiators, and many of my friends went into hiding or abandoned Christ. My book could help the believers see that Christ, too, was persecuted, but he served to the end. My goal in writing is that from reading my account, all people everywhere will first come to know Christ as the Savior who serves and then follow in his steps as Lord by also being people who serve.

IV. Christ's Service

A. The Busiest Day in Jesus' Life (Mark 1:21-34)

1. Jesus was constantly giving Himself to other people, living a selfless life. Peter told me that whenever Jesus wanted to get away by himself or with the disciples for some time alone, crowds would pop up over the hill and find them.
2. I saw this firsthand once when I visited Jesus in Galilee. One Sabbath day, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, and he finished his sermon with quite an ending—he spoke to the demon inside this guy in the service, and the demon came out!
3. That was an incredible adventure—but controlling the crowds after that was exhausting! We went to Peter and Andrew's home late in the afternoon to rest. But Peter's wife was upset over her mother, who had a fever. I remember thinking, "Man, when can we rest?" Jesus wasn't upset, though. People were always his priority. He just went over to her bed, took her hand, and helped her up. Then she fixed us a great meal—complete with bagels!
4. Well, I like to take a big nap after a big meal—or go to bed early—especially on a day like that. But guess what happened? As soon as we were going to retire after sunset, more people showed up at the door. Believe it or not, the whole town came! I was so upset! Why couldn't they come back tomorrow? We'd taught at the synagogue, healed the crazy man, traveled on dusty roads, healed Peter's mother-in-law, finally got some bagels in our tummies, and now people bring all their insane, demonized friends to the door! But Jesus kept healing them, casting out their demons, and giving himself.
5. The crowd didn't leave until midnight, and I was bushed! Although Jesus had taught us all to pray in the morning when no one else was up so we wouldn't be disturbed, if there ever was an exception, the following day was it.

B. The Result on the Next Day (Mark 1:35-39)

1. But what did Jesus do? "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed, 'Everyone is looking for you!'" I would have responded, "Hey, leave me alone. Can't I ever have some time to myself?" But "Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also.'"
2. I could hardly believe it when he said that. Didn't he ever think of himself? You know the answer to that question— Didn't he ever think of himself? Do you? The answer is "No, He *didn't* ever think of himself!" You see, Jesus came to *serve* people.

Conclusion

1. So, how are *you* doing at serving others? Do you have my tendency to push people out of the way to accomplish your project? We all know that people are more important than projects, but it is easy to lose sight of this.
2. Are you a person of action for others? For Jesus, *people* took priority over "papyri." He was a *people* person, not a "paper person." He taught but also "walked his talk."
3. I have no excuse not to serve others sacrificially. So many have served me.
 - a) I first learned service from my mother, Mary.

- b) But then Barnabas risked his relationship with Paul to serve me.
 - c) Paul himself became an example to me of selfless giving and...
 - d) Peter modeled it to the point of death.
 - e) Most of all, though, was Jesus—the Greatest Servant.
4. Have others served you? Of course, they have! But have you shown gratitude to those who have served you by serving others?
 5. Service is the natural result of first showing courage like David, or purity like Daniel, or the faith of Mary. Each was like a salmon swimming upstream to serve God—and they succeeded!
 6. But maybe you are paralyzed by fear of failure. I can relate! I have *learned service* through failure. Three of the four times I appear in Scripture, I failed at service. I failed to serve Christ at Gethsemane. I failed on the First Missionary Journey, and I failed to keep Paul and Barnabas together for the Second Missionary Journey. But God helped me learn to give myself to others, so Paul finally called me “useful” before his death.
 7. I hope you have genuinely learned to give yourself to others, too.
 - a) It may be time to teach that class of younger kids. Please do not be as timid as I was! I regret it now.
 - b) Maybe the time has come for you to volunteer for a role in your group without someone having to twist your arm.
 - c) Maybe your time has arrived to stop asking, “What’s in it for me? How much reward will I get?” and other questions that Jesus never asked.
 - d) Maybe it is time for you to register your commitment before these friends—to stand and say, “This is the commitment God has moved me to make...” or to register this on a card of sorts [allow them to do both].
 - e) (Sniffs the air.) Speaking of serving others, can you smell that? That smells like mom’s bagels beckoning me, so I better go—but I will do the washing up! Serve the One who served you. (Exits.)

The Text of Mark 16:9-20

The ending to the Gospel of Mark remains one of the most puzzling textual problems in New Testament studies today. The author records in his resurrection account that the women who visited the tomb “went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” (16:8).

Several manuscripts end the gospel abruptly at this point (verse 8). Still, others continue up to verse 20, recording Christ’s appearances to Mary, the two disciples on the road, and all 11 disciples at the Ascension when he gave them Mark’s account of the Great Commission.

Therefore, the questions before us are: Which of the two endings to the book is the original? Did Mark pen the shorter or the longer ending? And if Mark did not write a longer ending, who did, and is it inspired as Scripture?

External Evidence

Variant Readings

The manuscript evidence reveals five variations of this ending, but for the purposes of this study, we shall examine only the two that are best supported: those manuscripts that omit verses 9–20 and those that include verses 9–20.

Classification of the Manuscript Evidence

Note below the distribution of the various manuscripts (numbers or letters) and their century in parentheses. Byzantine manuscripts were copied in the Eastern Church, Alexandrian in Egypt, Western in Rome, and Others in various places within the Christian world.

Variant	Byzantine	Alexandrian	Western	Others
Omits 16:9–20		Ⲛ (IV) B (IV)		304 (XII)
Includes 16:9–20	K (IX) Byz 274 (X) 1079 (X) 1195 (1123) 1344 (XII) Lectionaries: 60 (1021) 69 (XII) 70 (XII) 185 (XI) 547 (XIII) 1761 (XV)	A (V) C (V) 33 (IX)	D (VI) it ^{aur, c, d (supp)} it ^{ff2, l, n, o, q} it summary = (V-VII)	28 (XI) 700 (XI) 892 (IX) 565 (IX) 1009 (XIII) 1010 (XII) 1071 (XII) 1230 (1124) 1242 (XIII) 1253 (XV) 1365 (XII) 1546 (1263?)

Evaluation of External Evidence

Date and Character: The first variant that omits 16:9–20 is supported by two of the three best character witnesses in the Alexandrian text type (Ⲛ and B), pointing to a fourth-century ancestor, while Manuscript 304 omits the section. The second variant has a later date (fifth century) but has excellent manuscripts in all four text types: Byzantine (K), Alexandrian (A, C), Western (D), and Others (many). Therefore, the best character witnesses are divided, but the first variant shows an earlier date.

Geographical Distribution: The first variant has support only in the Alexandrian family, whereas the second variant maintains firm support in all four text types, including several manuscripts within each family. Therefore, the second reading cites the best distribution.

Genealogical Solidarity: The Byzantine, Western, and (for all practical purposes) Others families are solid in support of the second variant. The Alexandrian splits. Therefore, the genealogical evidence favors the second reading.

External Evidence Conclusions

While the first reading advocates the earlier date (by one century) and the character witnesses are split, the second variant's better geographical distribution, and genealogical support make it a better candidate for the original reading. Therefore, Mark 16:9–20 appears to be the actual ending of the gospel.

Internal Evidence

Internal Evidence for Variant One

Several observations in 16:9–20 **argue against** Mark recording this longer ending:

1. About one-third of the significant Greek words in the disputed section (16:9–20) are “non-Markan.” That is, they do not appear elsewhere in Mark or are used differently from Mark’s before verse 9 (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:194).
2. “The Greek literary style lacks the vivid, lifelike detail so characteristic of Mark’s historical narrative” (Grassmick, 2:194).
3. “Matthew and Luke parallel Mark until verse 8 and then diverge noticeably, suggesting that Mark began its literary existence without verses 9–20” (Grassmick, 2:194).
4. The inference that all true believers will be exorcists, healers, miracle workers, and tongues speakers (16:17-18) has serious theological problems in systematizing with the whole of scriptural data.

Internal Evidence for Variant Two

Some observations from internal evidence **support** the genuineness of the more extended ending:

1. The gospel's ending at verse 8 would be too abrupt for such a masterpiece of a gospel, so the ending must have been longer in the original.
2. The extended account of the Resurrection appearances and of the Ascension fully completes the gospel story.

Internal Evidence Conclusion

The best arguments evaluating the internal evidence favor the first variant, which indicates that Mark did not actually pen the last 12 verses of his gospel.

Conclusion

In summary, the superior external evidence supports the conclusion that the last 12 verses of Mark were indeed a part of the early writing of the book. However, the internal evidence suggests that the verses were later added by an author different from Mark. How can these opposite conclusions be reconciled?

The following scenario may best fit the available data. Mark recorded his gospel up to verse 8, but the remainder was written by another Christian author who stated historically accurate information under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The new material was added early enough so that most copies of the gospel included it. However, a few copies of the shorter copy were made available for circulation, resulting in manuscripts such as \aleph and B three centuries later. Therefore, the longer ending should be considered divinely inspired revelation and thus part of the New Testament canon. Evidence supporting this conclusion includes the following:

1. The account of Moses's death in the last few verses of Deuteronomy obviously proves that he did not write this portion (perhaps Joshua did?), although this section is also part of our Bible.
2. The earliest manuscripts (the Sinaiticus \aleph and the Vaticanus B) from the fourth century omit the disputed section but leave a blank space following the ending at verse 8. The scribes who transcribed these shorter manuscripts knew about the more extended ending but did not include it, evidently because the copy they were reading did not have the longer ending.
3. The performances of sign gifts (16:17–18) continued only through the apostolic age (cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3–4). Also, the divine protection for those holding snakes and drinking deadly poison is but a promise of God's intervention in the lives of those forced to do such acts by persecutors, not an encouragement to perform such practices.

Therefore, we may trust that the more extended ending to Mark's Gospel is indeed part of God's holy and infallible Word but written by an author other than Mark himself.