

Mark Introduction

Introduction to Mark

- *Author:* The traditional and well-accepted authorship of this book is attributed to Mark, who was a close companion of the apostle Peter and a recurring character in the book of Acts, where he is known as “John whose surname was Mark” or “John Mark” (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39). Mark was a cousin of Barnabas, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). Some argue that this claim is incorrect, and the author never identifies themselves so we cannot be 100% sure.
- *Audience:* Mark seems to have targeted Roman believers, particularly Gentiles. We can tell this because he often translated Aramaic terms for his readers. He also told time according to the Roman system and carefully explained Jewish customs. This Gospel also makes fewer references to the Old Testament and includes less material that would be of particular interest to Jewish readers.
- *Circumstances:* Mark was not a contemporary of Jesus, meaning he did not know him. Mark never heard Jesus speak or travel with him like some of the other gospel writers; but he wrote down mostly what he learned from Peter. Mark’s Gospel was likely written between AD 50-70. Mark’s focus is on the deeds of Jesus more than His teaching, particularly emphasizing service and sacrifice. Mark also demonstrates the humanity of Christ more clearly than any of the other evangelists, emphasizing Christ’s human emotions, His human limitations, and other small details that highlight the human side of the Son of God.