



The Gospel according to Mark

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Mark, the author of the gospel according to Mark, also called John (Acts 12:12), was not among the twelve disciples of Jesus. There is no mention of his name in the gospels. But in the early history of the Church, he was very active in spreading the gospel along with Barnabas, his cousin, and Paul (Acts 13:13; 15:38 – 40; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11). Peter, for his part, called him « my son » (1 Pet. 5 :13).
2. The main characteristic of Mark's Gospel for an uninformed reader is certainly its clarity. It has the touch of an eyewitness. Those who have studied these details have come to the conclusion that Peter, one of Jesus' close friends, was Mark's source. Peter, or probably another apostle, provided relevant, trustworthy details.
3. Except for the passage in which he quotes Jesus' words, Mark quotes directly from the Old Testament law only once (Mk. 1:2 – 3). He does not refer to it either, unlike the other three evangelists. These facts show that this book was written for non-Jews, probably for Romans.
4. Four of Jesus' disciples were fishermen. They were Simon, called Peter, and his brother John; John, son of Zebedee, and his brother James (Mk. 1 :16 – 20). With the exception of James, the brother of John, these disciples are all authors of the Bible.
5. Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark shows very little interest in parables, which is the teaching method Jesus often used (Mk. 4:30). Yet Mark includes as many miracles as the other Gospels. Obviously, this book focuses more on actions than words.
6. Mark shows in a colorful way the crowds that flocked to Jesus. Wherever he went, people followed him, bringing him sick people to be healed and asking him difficult questions. In five different places (Mk. 3 :7 – 9; 6:31; 6:45; 7:24; 9:30) Mark reports that Jesus took his disciples to a quiet place to avoid the pressure of the crowd.
7. Jesus' parents and siblings did not believe in his ministry at first. That is why his parents even thought he was out of his mind (Mk. 3 :21; 31 – 35).
8. The man from the Tombs who was possessed by a legion of demons became, after his healing by Jesus, one of the greatest evangelists of his time. The man that no one could approach was now attracting people from all over with his message of salvation (Mk. 5:1 – 20).
9. The disciples of Jesus did not understand the true meaning of his mission on earth, especially his death and resurrection. That is why they generally opposed it or reserved the right not to ask him about it (Mk. 8 :31-33; 9 :30 – 32). As proof, they did not believe in the message of his resurrection (Mk. 16 :6 – 14).

10. Children had a special place in Jesus' ministry. For example, he took a small child and placed him in the midst of his disciples to teach them about humility. Furthermore, he was indignant that the disciples prevented children from approaching him to receive his blessing (Mk. 9 :33 – 37; 10:13 – 15).
11. Jesus did not mean that the rich would not enter the kingdom of God, but that it will be difficult for them to enter if they are set on their wealth more than on God (Mk. 10 :17 – 31).
12. The twelve disciples were Jesus' closest companions, but among them were three who were part of his inner circle. These were Simon, called Peter, John, to whom he gave the name Boanerges, which means son of thunder, and his brother James. Moreover, these three were among the first four disciples that Jesus called at the very beginning of his ministry (Mk. 1 :14 – 19; 3 :17; 5:37; 9:2 – 12; 14:32 – 42).
13. The Herodians, unlike the Sadducees and Pharisees, were not a religious sect, but a political party that supported the Herodian dynasty. As a result, the chief priests, scribes and elders wanted to use them to try to accuse Jesus of challenging the established Roman political authority of the day. But Jesus was not caught in their trap (Mk. 12 :13 – 17).
14. Nearly 90% of Mark's content appears in the other three gospels, but this book starts out beautifully for anyone not familiar with Jesus. Its style – simple sentences, without complex transitions or long speeches – makes it easy to understand.
15. Passover, the feast commemorating the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, was one of the highlights of the Jewish calendar (Mk. 14 :1). All males over the age of twelve went to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. The city was thus filled with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims at the time of Jesus' death.
16. The words « immediately » and « at once » (gk. euthus) appear more than forty times. As the servant of the Lord, Christ fulfilled messianic prophecies such as Isaiah 42:1 – 21; 49:1-7; 50:4 – 11; 52:13-53:12; Zech. 3 :8. And because he is presented as a Servant, his genealogy is not necessary. More passages than in the other Gospels reveal the Lord's inner motives (Mk. 3:5; 7:34; 10:21).