

## The Gospel of Mark

The Crucified Christ/The  
Misunderstood Christ

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## Historical World

- Written around 70 for Jewish/Gentile Christian community in Rome
- Written by someone with an Aramaic accent
- shortly after Nero's persecution
- Many would have lost loved ones
- Many may have denied their Christian faith to save themselves
- PROBLEM
  - what is "good news" about following Jesus?
  - Is there hope for those who have denied Christ?

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## Literary World

- What is going on in the ending of the text? Mark 16:8
- What is going on in the beginning of the text? Mark 1:1
- Structure of the Gospel
  - first confession in 8:29 - "Christ"
  - second confession in 15:39 - "son of God"

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## A Series of Tensions and a Call to Decision

- 1. Demons recognize who Jesus is but even his own mother, brothers and disciples don't understand him, e.g., 1:24 & 5:7 versus 4:41
- 2. "Messianic Secret" - Jesus works dramatic public wonders & exorcisms but tells people not to tell, e.g., 1:44- 45
- 3. Jesus heals possessed but is accused of being possessed, 3:22-30

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## First Half of the Gospel - Chapters 1-8 : A Series of Tensions and a Call to Decision (cont.)

- 4. outcasts and lowly follow Jesus, but religious leaders criticize him
- 5. Jesus is accepted throughout Galilee, but is rejected in his own hometown of Nazareth-- and while crowds come to him, his own family thinks he's crazy, e.g., 6:1-3 and 3:21
- 6. when his disciples, particularly Peter, recognize he is the messiah, they don't understand what it means, 8:27-33
  - Preceded by story of blind man healed in stages

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## Second Half of the Gospel - Chapters 9-16 : Continued Confusion

- 1. Transfiguration and the confusion of the inner circle, 9:1-10
- 2. Disciples unable to cast out demons even though strangers cast out demons in Jesus' name, 9:17-18 & 9:38-39
- 3. Disciples argue over who is the greatest (9:33-34) and Jesus says the imperial rule of God belongs to children (10:13-15)
  - Digression: teaching on divorce 10:1-12

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## Second Half of the Gospel - Chapters 9-16 : Continued Confusion (cont.)

- 4. Crowds grow more enthusiastic (11:8-10), but religious leaders more afraid of him (11:15-18)
- 5. "Rabbinical" debates with leaders of other factions
  - 11:27ff. - priests and lawyers question his authority
  - 12:13ff. - Pharisees & Herodians ask about taxes
  - 12:18ff. - Saducees ask trick question about resurrection
  - 12:28ff. - lone scholar asks about greatest commandment

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## Paradox of Jesus' Crucifixion

- Humiliation or exaltation?  
15:25-39
  - See Psalm 22

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## Ending Revisited

- Women run away afraid and tell no one
- How will we respond? We know the beginning, but how will the gospel (good news) end?

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