



Bible Study
2014-2015

Heart of a Servant

The Gospel of Mark

BACKGROUND

William Barclay reflected on the gospel of Mark by saying “This is the closest biography that we have of Jesus.” It was written before 70 A.D. by a young man named John Mark, substantially believed to be conveyed as told by the apostle Peter.

He was the son of a wealthy woman named Mary, whose home in Jerusalem was one of the meeting places for Jesus’ disciples (Acts 12:12). He was also a cousin of Barnabas, a man significantly used by God in the beginning years of the church (Acts 4:36-37; 11:19-30; Col. 4:10). Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25-13:5) but turned back for an unknown reason according to Acts 13:13. Though his actions resulted in Paul and Barnabas separating during Paul’s second missionary journey, in later years, Mark is listed as one of Paul’s fellow laborers (Philemon 24) and is referred to as valuable and useful in the ministry in 2 Timothy 4:11.

Mark apparently was converted through Peter’s ministry according to 1 Peter 5:13 and is referred to by Peter as a “son in the faith.” Many Bible scholars believe that he wrote this gospel as a record of Peter’s account of Jesus Christ’s ministry.

What is distinctive about this particular synoptic gospel is its portrayal of Jesus as the Servant of God (Mark 10:45). It is a simple, succinct, unadorned, yet vivid account of Jesus’ ministry, emphasizing more what Jesus did as a Servant, rather than what He said. The word “immediately” is often used by Mark as he jumps from one account to another quickly. He writes historically yet in the present tense more than 150 times. It is believed to have been written primarily to the Romans, who would not have been concerned about a lineage or genealogy, but were easily impressed by accomplishments. Though Mark is the shortest of the gospels, it is richly condensed by the Holy Spirit, packed with the life-changing truths that will leave any true disciple longing to be a servant like his Servant God, Jesus.