

# The Gospel of Mark 1: Introduction

## What do we know about the author?

Early Christian writers attributed the Gospel to 'John Mark'.

Assuming this is correct, here are some clues about him:

- See [Acts 12:12-25](#)
- See [Acts 13:5](#)
- See [Acts 15:36-39](#)
- See [Colossians 4:10](#) (written when Paul was in prison in Rome)
- See [2 Timothy 4:11](#)
- See [Mark 14:51-52](#) (why is this unique to Mark's Gospel?)

## Why was it written, for whom and when?

It is believed that John Mark was a companion of Simon Peter when he was in prison 'in regions of Italy' (probably Rome) awaiting execution. Some scholars believe it was written around ca CE 50-60, others suggest slightly later, ca CE 70 (the burning of Rome).

- See [1 Peter 5:13](#) (Babylon being a code for Rome)
- See [Mark 1:1](#)

Note that Mark explains Jewish customs to his readers:

- See [Mark 7:2-4](#)
- See [Mark 15:42](#)

He translates Aramaic words

- See [Mark 3:17](#)
- See [Mark 5:41](#)

He makes several references to persecution and martyrdom:

- See [Mark 8:34-38](#)
- See [Mark 13:9-13](#)

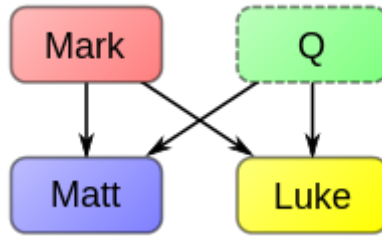
Based on this,

- Who do you think it was written for?
- Why was it written down?
- In his situation, what might Mark have based his Gospel on?

## Why is this Gospel important?

They are not unanimous, but most scholars believe that Mark was the first Gospel, and that Luke and Matthew based their Gospels on Mark and another unknown source ('Q') and

expanded with more detail. (There are other theories – this is known as the ‘Synoptic Problem’.)



- If the other gospels contain almost in Mark, why is Mark still important?

## What are the main *emphases* of this Gospel?

See [Mark 8:31](#) and [Mark 15:10](#)

See [Mark 8:34-9:1](#)

See [Mark 4:1-2](#) and [Mark 10:1](#) and [Mark 9:38](#) and [Mark 6:6](#)

See [Mark 1:34 and 44](#) and [Mark 3:12](#)

See [Mark 1:1 and 11](#) and [Mark 3:11](#), also [Mark 6:6 and 31 and 34](#)

## Style, contents, and structure

- The literary style is less polished than the other Gospels.

### Outline

1. The beginnings of Jesus' ministry (Mark 1:1-13)
2. His ministry in Galilee (Mark 1:14-6:29)
3. His withdrawal from Galilee (Mark 6:30-9:29)
4. His final ministry in Galilee (Mark 9:30-50)
5. His ministry in Judea and Perea (Mark 10)
6. The Passion of Jesus (Mark 11-Mark 15)
7. The resurrection (Mark 16) (note: the original ending of the Gospel has been lost)

### Contents

- Healing (physical and spiritual)
- Teaching
- Parables
- Action narrative
- Confrontation with the establishment
- Responding to questions
- Power over creation
- End times
- Identity of Jesus