

The Gospel of Mark: An Unfamiliar Gospel of an Unfamiliar Jesus

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Introduction

Session #1—

- (A) Regarding the writing of the Gospel of Mark: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?
- (B) A sprint through "Twelve Observations on the Gospel of Mark"

Session #2—

Question: Is it possible to have a gospel without a story of miraculous conception and birth or any mention of divine pre-existence? In the case of Mark's Gospel, the answer is Yes. In this session we will look at how Mark's Gospel in fact begins, with the story of the baptism of Jesus at the hands of John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-15).

Session #3—

Question: Is it possible to have a gospel in which the disciples of Jesus fail to understand and to live by his most emphatic teachings? The answer of course is Yes, and in this session, we will examine Mark 8-10, which is built around the three passion predictions in which Jesus describes the Way of the Cross for himself and for anyone who would wish to be his follower.

Session #4—

Question: Is it possible to have a gospel in which the Resurrected Lord never appears to his confused, wayward disciples, to reconcile with them and to send them forth into the world to preach the gospel to all nations? The answer of course is Yes, and so we will consider Mark's haunting, seemingly incomplete gospel ending (Mark 16:1-8; with a glance at appendices added to the text of Mark by later generations, such as Mark 16:9-20).

Session 1 — The Gospel of Mark: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How

—Who?

- According to church tradition, the author of the gospel was one "John Mark." (according to Christian tradition, the following are references to the author of the Gospel of Mark: Acts of the Apostles 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37, 39; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; 1 Peter 5:13)

- **BUT, since nothing in these passages identifies the author of the Second Gospel, or connects the author with Simon Peter (see below), most modern scholars have concluded that "the Gospel of Mark" is actually an anonymous work**

—What?

- Mark 1:1—"The beginning of the good news [εὐαγγέλιον—euangelion] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"; see also 1:14-15; 13:10

—When?

- 70 C.E.??? (See Mark 9:1; 13:30; 14:62; but especially all of Mark 13—called "The Little Apocalypse")

—Where?

- Rome? Syria?? Galilee??? Or???? But if Mark knows Judea, Galilee, and Syria why Mark 5:1? Why Mark 7:31?

—Why?

- See Mark 1:1, 14-15; 13:10 again

—How?

- Eusebius (mid-4th century CE) → Papias (early second century CE) → The Elder (late 1st century CE) → the tradition about John Mark as the recorder of Peter's recollections

And the Presbyter [John] used to say this, "Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, **not, indeed, in order**, of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him, but later on, as I said, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's oracles, so that **Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them**. For to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.39.15-16; **citing Papias**).

In addition, Eusebius also cites Irenaeus (late second century CE), who says that Mark didn't write his gospel until after Peter had been martyred (64 CE?).

• On the other hand, scholars today generally agree that what we call "the Gospel of Mark" was probably the product of anonymous early Christian storytellers who created a narrative out of pieces of miscellaneous oral tradition about Jesus. (See Mark 13:6, 21-22, and see Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.)

A Dozen Observations on the Unfamiliar Jesus of Mark's Unfamiliar Gospel

1. There is no miraculous conception and birth in Mark (for that, see Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2); no heavenly pre-existence (for that, see John 1:1-18). Rather, in Mark, Jesus becomes the Son of God by a declaration of adoption by a voice coming down from heaven. (See Mark 1:11; probably inspired by Psalm 2:7)
2. The Jesus of Mark's Gospel is a very human Jesus, the most down-to-earth, ordinary, human Jesus of the whole New Testament. He is emotional, vulnerable, and limited in power and knowledge. (Mark 1:41; 3:5; 14:32-36; 10:18; 13:32)
He dies an anguished, human death. His last words are: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:33-34)
3. Jesus' mission in Mark is to establish the Kingdom of God, and to usher people into it (Mark 1:14-15). Opposing the Kingdom are the transcendent power of Satan and demonic spirits and the earthly power of the Jewish and Roman elites. Jesus does not get much help in establishing the Kingdom from his disciples and his family.
4. In the first half of Mark's Gospel, Jesus is a man of great power and authority. There are 'more miracle stories per square inch' (so to speak!) in the first half of Mark than in just about any piece of ancient literature.
Paradoxically, however, in the second half of Mark, from Mark 8 on, Jesus renounces power and authority. From chapter 8 on the emphasis is on self-sacrifice, being least, being last, being the slave

or servant of all. (Mark 8:34-9:1; 9:33-37; 10:41-45) So Jesus is a man of power and authority who renounces power and authority as the hallmark of Messiahship and therefore also of discipleship.

5. "Miracle," however, is a misleading word to describe what is happening regularly in the early chapters of Mark. "Miracle" is a modern word, not a New Testament word. The Greek word that Mark uses repeatedly is **dynamis**, which literally means "power." (Mark 5:30; 6:2, 5; 9:39)

That Jesus has **dynamis** is never in dispute. What is in dispute is *the source* of his power. Is his power from God, or is it from Satan? Or is he simply crazy? (see Mark 3:19-35) The gospel seems to acknowledge all of these as possibilities.

6. Shockingly, the disciples of Jesus never seem to understand what he is about (one example among countless examples: Mark 8:14-21). As the story progresses, instead of learning and growing from their experiences, the disciples of Jesus seem to get 'dumb and dumber.'

Even more shocking, the family of Jesus, including his mother, never understands him and in fact are estranged from him. Or rather, Jesus divorces himself from his family. (Mark 3:21, 31-35; 6:2-4; 15:40, 47; 16:2; see also 10:28-31; see also John 7:3-5) The Mary of Mark's Gospel is not the virgin handmaid of God that we see in Matthew and Luke, nor is she the devoted mother at the foot of the cross that we see in John. All of those portrayals of Mary are alien to Mark.

7. Mark's Gospel likes to maneuver us into having to choose between following, on the one hand, the Twelve disciples and the family of Jesus, or, on the other hand, Jesus. It is as if Mark was written in a time and place where the Christian Church had become too self-preoccupied and self-satisfied, concerned too much for its own wealth, prestige, security, and power. Mark summons the Church of his day to follow, not the leaders of the Church (symbolized by the Twelve and the family of Jesus), but Jesus. (8:31-33; 9:38-41)

The characters in the gospel who seem to be the most successful in living the Jesus way of life are the so-called 'little people,' the minor characters who may only put in an appearance once but who nevertheless display deep insight and faith. How ironic that major characters in the story routinely fail Jesus, but minor characters routinely shine!

8. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is an apocalyptic visionary, preaching the impending end of the age and the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God, in power and glory. The fulfillment of this apocalyptic eschatological expectation will take place, as the story says, in "this generation." That sounds to us like Jesus talking about Jesus' day, but it's probably actually Mark talking about hopes and expectations in Mark's day. (See Mark 9:1; 13:26-30; 14:62)

The apocalypticism of Mark—not of Jesus, but of Mark!—was surely prompted by Mark's experience of catastrophes in the 60s CE: persecutions and martyrdoms in Rome and the war in Judea, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. (echoed in Mark 13, which reflects Mark's time and place, not Jesus' time and place)

Whether we in the 21st century identify "this generation" with Jesus in the 30s CE or with Mark in the 70s CE, obviously *the Eschaton* ("THE END") has not happened in the last 2000 years in any literal, historical sense, right? What do we do with this embarrassing reality?

9. The "Messianic Secret" in Mark—strangely, Jesus tries to hush up people who identify him; he tries to remain incognito; etc. — this is odd, in a gospel that begins by proclaiming boldly that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God." (see Mark 1:1, 34, 44; 5:43; 7:24, 36; 8:26, 30; 9:9) How do we make sense of a Messiah who tries to keep his Messiahship under wraps?

10. Unlike all the other gospels, there is no familiar, traditional, Easter resurrection appearance story in Mark. Rather, there is only an empty tomb, which is open to interpretation! (Mark 16:1-8)

Three women run away from the tomb in fear and trembling, and they say (literally) "nothing to no one, for they were afraid"! A most unusual ending!

Later generations hasten to 'complete' Mark's gospel by adding appendices that end Mark in a more upbeat and satisfactory fashion. Matthew, Luke, and John make sure to provide one or more Easter resurrection appearance stories. Scribes copying the text of Mark borrow from Matthew, Luke, and John to add on twelve extra verses at the end of Mark (Mark 16:9-20). And so the process of clarifying Mark's mysteries and solving his puzzles continued in the early centuries.

11. Why such an ending? And why the surprisingly negative portray of the Twelve and the family of Jesus? I suggest that the point is to put responsibility for the story on the shoulders of the reader or the members of Mark's audience. From beginning to end, Mark's story is oriented to the reader of the text of the gospel or to the audience of story, if it is performed orally. Everything in the story—everything!—is told for the sake of the reader/audience member. Even if everyone in Mark's story fails Jesus, there is still the reader/listener, who might yet succeed where others failed.

12. Summary: What was the fate of Mark's Gospel, and of Mark's Jesus, at the hands of the gospel writers who followed in his footsteps? •The shortest of the gospels was added to and made much longer. •Mark's abrupt verbal style was smoothed out and made more elegant. •Mark's frequent ambiguous moments were frequently clarified. •Mark's haunting paradoxes were straightened out and rendered logical. •Mark's narrative puzzles were repeatedly clarified. •An often mysterious and challenging story was rendered more comfortable and comforting. •A down-to-earth, human Jesus became ever more lofty and divine.

The Jesus we know today is typically Matthew's, Luke's, or John's Jesus. The Jesus of Mark's Gospel remains, after 1900 years, hauntingly unfamiliar.

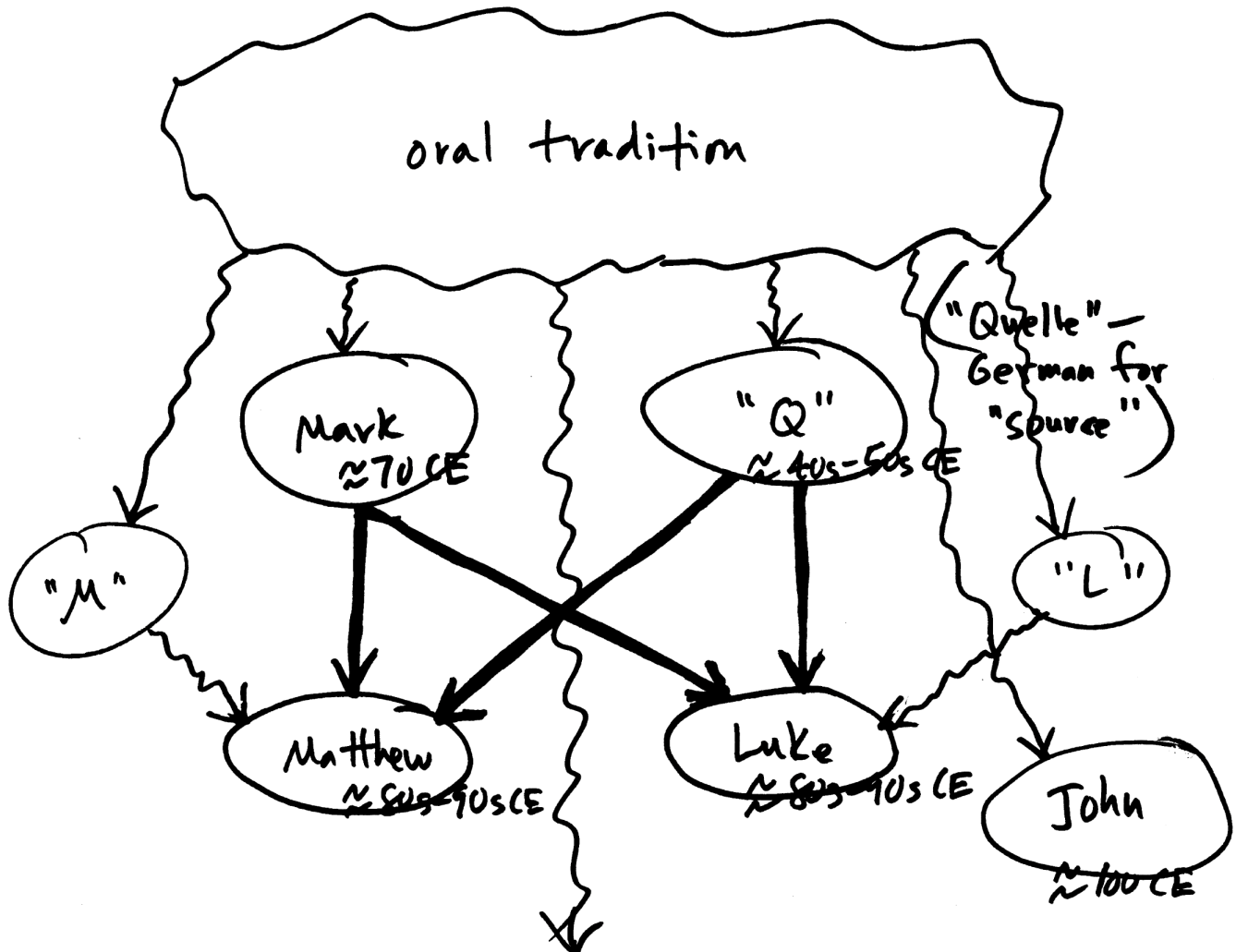
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- Rhoads, David, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 2012.

Oral Performances of Mark

- Alec McCowen, "St Mark's Gospel," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oOaIeythFw&list=PL63YmxIB5KwET9Tw6z_7yXZ5mF0NiNfb1. Shortened: <http://bit.ly/2mf0e8i>.

- David Rhoads, "Dramatic Performance of the Gospel of Mark." (Sadly no longer available, but originally distributed on VHS videotape by SELECT, c/o Trinity Lutheran Seminary, 2199 E. Main Street, Columbus, OH 43209-2334, 614-235-4136.)
- Phil Ruge-Jones, "The Gospel of Mark," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OS_hpt_xeU&t=18s. shortened: <http://bit.ly/2CU9Hve>.
- Wayne S. Turney, an actor well-known to Cleveland audiences, performed the Gospel of Mark at Trinity Cathedral sometime in 2003. If anyone has promotional literature for that performance, let me know. Even better would be a video of one of his many performances of Mark over the years.



Session 2 — The Beginning (Mark 1:1-15)

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. 11 And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Mark 1:12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Mark 1:14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

Psalm 2

Ps 2:1 Why do the nations conspire,
and the peoples plot in vain?

2 **The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and his anointed, saying,**
3 **“Let us burst their bonds asunder,
and cast their cords from us.”**

Ps 2:4 **He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the LORD has them in derision.**

5 **Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,**
6 **“I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.”**

Ps 2:7 **I will tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to me, “You are my son;
today I have begotten you.**

Mark 1:11 And a voice came from
heaven, **“You are my Son, the
Beloved; with you I am well
pleased.”**

Acts 13: 32 And we bring you the
good news that what God promised
to our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for
us, their children, by raising Jesus; as
also it is written in the second psalm,
**‘You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.’**

Hebrews 1:5 **For to which of the
angels did God ever say,**

8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." <u>Ps 2:10</u> Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. <u>11</u> Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling <u>12</u> kiss his feet, or he will be angry, and you will perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled.	"You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you";
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2 Samuel 7:14—"I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me." The kings of Israel in the royal line of David will be "son" to God in perpetuity—and God will be their "father."

The Baptism of Jesus in Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John

Mark 1:4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 1:5 ...baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on¹ him. 11 And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” [In Mark, why is Jesus baptized? What might we conclude?]	Matthew 3:2 “Repent...” 3:6 ...they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins... 3:8 "Bear fruit worthy of repentance." 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance..." 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” [In Matthew, why is Jesus baptized? Does the justification make sense?]	Luke 3:3 ...proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins..." 3:8 "Bear fruits worthy of repentance." 3:19 But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added to them all by shutting up John in prison. 21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” [Who baptizes Jesus in Luke? Be careful!]	John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.” 32 And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.” [In John, where is the baptism? Be careful!]
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Pay special attention to the places highlighted in **red**. Questions: Who baptizes Jesus? (Be careful! Go with what the texts say, not with what you think they ought to say!) What conversation, if any, happens before the baptism? Who sees what happens? Who hears what is said? To whom are words addressed?

¹ "On" is not the best translation here. Literally, in Mark the spirit descends "into" Jesus (*eis* in Greek). The other gospels all use "on" (*epi* in Greek). In Mark, the spirit from the heavens enters Jesus' body. Was that too radical, too shocking for Matthew, Luke, and John?

Jesus' Comments connecting John the Baptist and himself

Matt 11:2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah^a was doing, he sent word by his^b disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers^a are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

Matt. 11:7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. **9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.** 10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way before you.'

11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 Let anyone with ears listen!

Matt. 21:31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes

Luke 7:18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples 19 and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 20 When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'" 21 Jesus^a had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. 22 And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers^a are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. 23 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

Luke 7:24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. **26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.** 27 This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way before you.'

28 I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Luke 16:16 "The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone tries to enter it by force.

Luke 7:29 (And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. 30 But by refusing to be

believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

Matt. 11:16 “But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

17 ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; **19** the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’

Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God’s purpose for themselves.)

Luke 7:31 “To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? **32** They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we wailed, and you did not weep.’

33 For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon’; **34** the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ **35** Nevertheless, wisdom is vindicated by all her children.”

John Dominic Crossan Comparing John the Baptist with Jesus of Nazareth

John the Baptist	John baptized Jesus and "went before" him (Mk 1:2; see also John 1:15,30); i.e., John was the mentor/teacher of Jesus John ran a monopoly: he was the only one to preach and baptize; people had to come to him	Metaphor for John's way of life: " fasting ," in preparation for the imminent future arrival of the Kingdom of God (Mt 11:16-19; Lk 7:31-35)	"apocalyptic eschatology" from "apocalypse" = lit. "uncovering, unveiling, revelation"; "eschatology" = lit. "talk about end times, end things"	The Kingdom of God is coming in the future, very soon	We are waiting for God to act, soon	We expect God to eradicate evil and injustice by means of violence
Jesus of Nazareth	Jesus was baptized by John and "came behind" him (Mk 1:6); i.e., Jesus began as a follower of John Jesus organized a franchise operation in which anyone could be commissioned to go forth to preach, heal, eat with anyone!	Metaphor for Jesus' way of life: " feasting ," to celebrate that the Kingdom is already here, now	"sapiential eschatology" aka "wisdom eschatology" (elsewhere Crossan explains "eschatology" more simply as "world negation"—the conviction that the world is fundamentally flawed and needs to be put right. But by whom? And how?)	The Kingdom of God is here and now	God is waiting for us to act, now	God expects us to confront evil and injustice non-violently

Session 3 — The Middle (Mark, chapters 8-10)

The Passion Predictions in Mark 8-10

1. Jesus predicts his rejection, abuse, suffering, death, <i>and after three days he will be raised again</i>	<u>Mark 8:31</u> Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <u>32</u> He said all this quite openly.	<u>Mark 9:30</u> They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; <u>31</u> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.”	<u>Mark 10:32</u> They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, <u>33</u> saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; <u>34</u> they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.”
2. The disciples say or do something to indicate that they do not 'get it,' that they are not on Jesus' wavelength	And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <u>33</u> But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”	<u>32</u> But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. <u>9:33</u> Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” <u>34</u> But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest.	<u>10:35</u> James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” <u>36</u> And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” <u>37</u> And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”
3. Jesus patiently tries to correct them—these moments are the most thorough descriptions of what it means to be the Messiah, and a disciple of the Messiah, in the Gospel	<u>8:34</u> He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <u>35</u> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <u>36</u> For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <u>37</u> Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <u>38</u> Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” <u>9:1</u> And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”	<u>35</u> He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” <u>36</u> Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, <u>37</u> “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” <u>9:38</u> John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” <u>39</u> But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. <u>40</u> Whoever is not against us is for us.”	<u>38</u> But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” <u>39</u> They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; <u>40</u> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” <u>10:41</u> When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. <u>42</u> So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. <u>43</u> But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, <u>44</u> and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. <u>45</u> For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Notes: (a) no one comprehends or accepts the passion (=“suffering”) predictions, but it is as if the predictions of resurrection do not even hit their eardrums! That much of the predictions does not even register. (b) “Son of Man” is a puzzle, a cipher, in this gospel, but it's hardly a mystery for the audience member. Jesus can only be talking about himself. (c) “this generation” and “some standing here”—is this referring to the audience of the historical Jesus in 30 CE or the audience of the storyteller in 70 CE? I'll bet on 70 CE, the author's own time and place. The gospel was not written to record historical facts about Jesus and the Twelve forty years ago. Rather, it was written to instruct, challenge, and encourage followers of Jesus in Mark's own day.

Matthew and Mark Caesarea Philippi Comparison

Matt. 16:13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say *that the Son of Man is?*" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "*But who do you say that I am?*" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, *the Son of the living God.*" 17 And Jesus answered him, "*Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.* 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he *sternly ordered* [lit. "commanded"] the disciples not to tell anyone *that he was the Messiah.*

21 *From that time on*, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

22 And Peter took him aside and *began to rebuke* him*, saying, "*God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.*" 23 But he turned and *said to* Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!

You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." 24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

27 "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, *and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.*

Mark 8:27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say *that I am?*" 28 And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 He asked them, "*But who do you say that I am?*" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

30 And he *sternly ordered* [lit. "*rebuked*"*] them not to tell anyone about him.

31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 *He said all this quite openly.* And Peter took him aside and *began to rebuke* him.*

33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he *rebuked** Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." 34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, *and for the sake of the gospel*, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 *Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed* when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

28 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see *the Son of Man* coming in his kingdom."

9:1 And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that *the kingdom of God* has come with power."

Words in **red** indicate interesting differences between Matthew and Mark; in a few places I have used a **blue** font to highlight wording that is identical where one might otherwise not have expected it

*Mark uses the sharp, stern verb, "to rebuke," three times, in Mark 8:30,32,33. "To rebuke" is standard vocabulary used in exorcism stories: demons are "rebuked" before being "cast out." Matthew retains only the second of the three uses of "rebuke" in Mark (Matthew 16:22). Otherwise, Matthew softens considerably the language he found in Mark.

James and John Make a Request (or do they?)

Matt 20:20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. 21 And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." 22 But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"

They said to him, "We are able." 23 He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup,

but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

Matt 20:24 When the ten heard it, they were angry with **the two brothers**. 25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 26 It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" 37 And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, **or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**" 39 They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; **and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;** 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

Mark 10:41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with **James and John**. 42 So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 43 But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Session 4 — The Ending (Mark 16:1-8)

The Ending of Mark (Mark 15:33-16:8 + a short later appendix + a longer later appendix)

Mark 15:33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." 36 And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." 37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Mark 15:40 There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.*

Mark 15:42 When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45 When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

Mark 16:1 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." 8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]

Mark 16:9 [Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10 She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. 12 After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13 And they went back and told the rest, but

they did not believe them. 14 Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. 15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. 16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Mark 16:19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.]

* Compare Luke 8:1-3: Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, 2 as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

Burial of Jesus, Discovery of Empty Tomb, and Resurrection Appearance Stories in Matthew and Mark, Compared

Matt. 27:57 When it was evening, there came a **rich man** from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a **disciple of Jesus**.

58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus;

then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60 and laid it in **his own new** tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a **great stone** to the door of the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and **the other Mary** were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Matt. 27:62 The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him

Mark 15:42 When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a **respected member of the council**, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 **Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45 When he learned from the centurion that he was dead,** he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where the body was laid.

away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." **65** Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." **66** So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Matt. 28:1 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. **4** For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. **6** He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." **8** So they left the tomb quickly with fear

and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9** Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Matt. 28:11 While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. **12** After the priests had assembled with the

Mark 16:1 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. **2** And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" **4** When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. **5** As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. **6** But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." **8** So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 telling them, "You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' 14 If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." 15 So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.

Matt. 28:16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]

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does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

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