

Mark: The Mysterious Messiah

Week 30: A Recap of Mark

Introductory Exercise: What about Jesus would we miss out on if we didn't have the gospel of Mark?

Take a look back at the very beginning of Mark. What sort of book have we been reading these last several months, and how does the genre of the book inform the way we take Jesus as a literary character?

Mark uses two “Son of God” labels, one in 1:1 and one in 15:39, as bookends of sorts, marking the beginning and end of the world's grand project of getting Jesus entirely wrong. Assuming that this book comes about at least several years after Jesus has risen from the dead and ascended to God, what good does a story about people's getting Jesus wrong do for a community who worships Jesus not as military conqueror but as the one who was crucified?

Compared to the other three gospels, Mark easily treats the twelve and the other disciples of Jesus most harshly. What sorts of benefits might the Church glean from such a treatment of the ones whose teachings they gather to hear (Acts 2:42)?

Mark is an excellent text for studying how the Bible comes down to us in edited English translations. What sorts of things should Christians stay aware of with regards to transmission history and text-retrieval studies, and how should those realities shape the way we present the text of the Bible to those who are seeking truth but who do not yet confess Christ?

Compared with the letters of Paul, which focus almost exclusively on the death and resurrection of Christ, the gospel of Mark focuses more than half of the text on those events that lie between the baptism of Jesus and the trial of Jesus. Assuming that both ways of thinking about Jesus are important and valid, what imbalances might the literary emphasis of the gospel of Mark correct for believers in our own day?

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