

Overview of the Book of Mark — Class Handout

1. Key Facts

- Author: Mark (John Mark), companion of Peter
 - Date: AD 55–70
 - Audience: Primarily Gentile (likely Roman) Christians
 - Purpose: To present Jesus as the suffering servant and the powerful Son of God
 - Key Features:
 - Fast-paced (“immediately”)
 - Action-focused more than lengthy teaching
 - Highlights Jesus’ authority, compassion, and mission
 - Vivid eyewitness detail (likely from Peter)
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2. Major Themes

A. Jesus the Servant King

Jesus is not a political Messiah but the Servant-Messiah who saves through humility, compassion, and sacrificial love (Mark 10:45).

B. The Authority of Jesus

Jesus has authority over sickness, demons, nature, sin, the Sabbath, and death—crucial for a Roman audience accustomed to displays of power.

C. The Cost of Discipleship

Following Jesus means:

- self-denial (Mark 8:34)
- taking up the cross
- sacrifice and obedience
- giving up earthly security

Discipleship demands total commitment.

D. The Messianic Secret

Jesus often tells people not to reveal His identity.

Reasons:

- avoid political misunderstanding
- His identity is only fully understood at the cross
- to control the timing of His mission

E. The Cross as the Center

The Gospel moves steadily toward Jesus' suffering. The cross is not failure—it is the purpose of His mission.

3. Structure of Mark

I. Preparation for Ministry (1:1–13)

John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism, temptation.

Theme: Jesus is the promised Son of God.

II. Ministry in Galilee (1:14–8:26)

Disciples called, miracles, teachings, parables, calming the storm, feeding the 5,000 & 4,000.

Theme: Jesus' authority and compassion; mixed responses.

III. Turning Point (8:27–10:52)

Peter's confession, Jesus predicts His death, Transfiguration.

Theme: Messiahship = suffering; discipleship = sacrifice.

IV. Passion Week (11:1–16:8)

Triumphal entry, Temple debates, Last Supper, Gethsemane, crucifixion, empty tomb.

Theme: The cross is the climax; God's victory through resurrection.