



Introduction

- Who wrote the Gospel?
- Where, when, and why was it written?
- What is it about?

Who?

The best answer to this question is...

Probably some guy named Mark, but I'm not sure which guy named Mark.

Where?

The best answer to this question is...

It could have been Rome, or Syria, or northern Palestine.

When?

The best answer to this question is...

During the first Jewish war with Rome. It was most likely written after 66 AD but prior to 70 AD.

Why?

The best answer to this question is...

To encourage Christians during the Jewish war because of the appearance of those claiming to be the Messiah.

What is it about?

As we turn to the content of Mark, we must consider three areas...

- The Text
- The World of Mark & Jesus
- The Structure and Plot

The Text of Mark

The various existing manuscripts of Mark have three different endings:

- The Longer Ending
- The Shorter Ending
- The Existing Ending

The Text of Mark

Problems have also plagued the beginning of Mark and it is quite possible that the beginning of Mark has been lost as well.

The World of Mark & Jesus

Mark's text represents two worlds: the one he narrates and the one in which he lives.

Both of these worlds were occupied worlds characterized by...

- The Peasant Existence
- The Spiral of Violence

Peasant Existence

More than 90% of the occupants of Palestine were living a peasant's existence.

This meant political powerlessness and difficult economic circumstances.

Peasant Existence

Peasant families had three obligations for production:

- Growth
- Surplus
- Taxes

Spiral of Violence

There are three key dimensions to the spiral of violence:

- Violence 1 - oppression, hunger, and poverty
- Violence 2 - rebellion
- Violence 3 - repressing the rebellion

Spiral of Violence

Violence 1 leads to Violence 2

Violence 2 leads to Violence 3

Violence 3 leads back to Violence 1 by deepening the oppression, hunger, and poverty...

...and the spiral continues

The Jewish Revolt

The Jewish Revolt of 66 CE and the spiral of violence:

- Palestine's occupation meant a peasant's existence (Violence 1)...
- This led to the Jewish revolt of 66 CE (Violence 2)...
- This led to Rome's destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Violence 3)...

The Structure and Plot

Mark is divided into two major parts...

Part I	Bridge	Part II
Mark 1:1-8:21	Mark 8:22-26	Mark 8:27-16:8
Around Galilee	Bethsaida Healing	Toward Jerusalem