



An Introduction to the Four Gospels

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The Gospel of Mark



A Quiz on the Gospel of Mark

WARNING: These are all trick questions!
According to the Gospel of Mark:

1. How many wise men came to see the baby Jesus?
2. Was Joseph, Jesus' father, a carpenter?
3. How were Jesus and John the Baptist related?
4. What did Jesus look like? Did he have a beard? How old was he?



A Quiz on the Gospel of Mark

WARNING: These are all trick questions!
According to the Gospel of Mark:

5. Where was Jesus when he delivered his sermon which includes the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer?
6. Did Jesus claim to be the Good Shepherd?
7. What color hair did Judas have?

A Quiz on the Gospel of Mark

WARNING: These are all trick questions!
According to the Gospel of Mark:

8. How many nails were used in crucifying Jesus?
9. How many times did Jesus speak from the cross? What were his dying words?
10. To whom did Jesus first appear after his resurrection?

The Gospel of Mark



Who was "Mark"?

- *Traditional Author:* **John Mark** of Acts 12:12-25; 15:37; Col 4:10; Phlm 1:24; 1Pet 5:13; connected with Barnabas and Peter
- *Location:* **Rome...** but maybe Decapolis, Syria, or Alexandria
- *Date:* **Late 60's-Early 70's** – i.e., around time of Jewish War



Mark 1.1

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

For whom was this Gospel written and why?

Why should you be persuaded by it?

There's this guy who dies and...

Story

Discourse

Story

Discourse

•What is said

•How the story is told

| Story | Discourse |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| •What is said | • <i>How</i> the story is told |
| •Characters, events, places | • <i>How</i> it affects the hearer |

| Story | Discourse |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| •What is said | • <i>How</i> the story is told |
| •Characters, events, places | • <i>How</i> it affects the hearer |
| •Attention to how story turns out | •Attention to temporal experience of reading |

In the Gospel of Mark

The temporal (sequential) experience of the narrative contributes to the reader's experience

Mark 10:17-22

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Mark 10:17-22

¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."

Mark 10:17-22

¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."
¹⁹You know the commandments:
 "You shall not murder;
 You shall not commit adultery;
 You shall not steal;
 You shall not bear false witness;
 You shall not defraud;
 Honor your father and mother."

Mark 10:17-22

²⁰ He said to him,
"Teacher,
I have kept all these since my youth."

Mark 10:17-22

²¹ Jesus, looking at him,

Mark 10:17-22

²¹ Jesus, looking at him,
loved him and said,

Mark 10:17-22

²¹ Jesus, looking at him,
loved him and said,
"You lack one thing;
go, sell what you own,
and give the money to the poor,
and you will have treasure in heaven;
then come, follow me."

Mark 10:17-22

²² When he heard this,
he ... shocked and went away grieving,
for he had many possessions.

Mark 10:17-22

²² When he heard this,
he was shocked and went away grieving,
for he had many possessions.

Mark 10:17-22

²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

In the Gospel of Mark

The rhetorical / persuasive techniques of the narrative creates opportunities for the reader to 'invest' in the story

That is, the reader is being persuaded to believe that the story is true

Mark 4.1-20

Parable of the Sower and the Seed



Mark 4.1-20

¹Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ²He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:



Mark 4.1-20

³"Listen!
A sower went out to sow.



Mark 4.1-20

⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell alongside the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."



Mark 4.1-20

⁹And he said,
"Let anyone with ears to hear
listen!"

What does it mean?



Mark 4.1-20

⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell alongside
the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

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forth grain, growing up and increasing and
yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."



Mark 4.10

When he was alone,
those who were around him
along with the twelve
asked him about the parables.

Mark 4.11

"To you has been given
the secret of the dominion of God,
but for those outside,
everything comes in parables;

*What "secret of the dominion of God"?
When was it given?
Does this mean that I am an outsider?*

Mark 4.12

... in order that
'they may indeed look,
but not perceive,
and may indeed listen,
but not understand;
so that they may not turn again
and be forgiven."

*As the reader, what is at stake?
What are the consequences of being an outsider?*

Mark 4.13

And he said to them,
"Do you not understand this parable?
Then how will you
understand all the parables?"

*So, then, are the disciples in or out?
Am I in or out?
Was Jesus being ironic in verses 11-12?*

Mark 4.14-20

¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸And others are those sown among the thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing.



Mark 4.1-20

²⁰And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

As the reader,
now where does this leave you?

Mark 4.11

"To you has been given
the secret of the dominion of God,
but for those outside,
everything comes in parables;

*Who do you now understand the "you" to be?
How do you know if you are in or out?
What is the appeal of knowing the secret?*

In the Gospel of Mark

The use of
IRONY and RIDDLES
brings the
Narrator, Jesus, and the Reader
into even closer relationship

Mark 15:16-18

¹⁶ Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

In the Gospel of Mark

Point of view of Narrator (Mark) =
Point of view of Jesus =
Point of view of Reader

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

³³ Then they came to Capernaum;
and when he was in the house he asked them,
"What were you arguing about on the way?"

³⁴ But they were silent,
for on the way they had argued with one
another who was the greatest.

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve,
and said to them,
"Whoever wants to be first
must be last of all and servant of all."

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

³⁶ Then he took a little child
and put it among them;
and taking it in his arms,
he said to them,

³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one such child
in my name welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes not me
but the one who sent me."

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

¹³ People were bringing little children to him
in order that he might touch them;
and the disciples...

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

¹³ People were bringing little children to him
in order that he might touch them;
and the disciples
spoke sternly to them.

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

¹⁴ But when Jesus saw this,
he was indignant and said to them,
"Let the little children come to me;
do not stop them;
for it is to such as these
that the kingdom of God belongs.
¹⁵ Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive
the kingdom of God as a little child
will never enter it."
¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, laid his
hands on them, and blessed them.

Mark 14:32-37

Another example...

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated.

³⁴ And he said to them,

"I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."

³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ He said,

"Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Mark 14:32-37

³⁷ He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?"

So, who did actually keep awake and pray with Jesus?

The Gospel of Mark

... "does not claim to be history. It is not even referentially oriented. Rather, it is pragmatically or rhetorically oriented. It is not 'about' its characters; it is 'about' its reader. The Gospel writer's chief concern is not the fate of either Jesus or the Twelve in the story but the fate of the reader outside the story."

Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, page 50

Is this author trustworthy?



Is this teacher trustworthy?



Mark 1.1

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

What things do these verses presume about its reader? How much does the reader know?

Mark 1.4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 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. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 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.

Mark 1.4-11

I have baptized you with water;
but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1.4-11

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and ...

Mark 1.4-11

... was baptized by John in the Jordan.



Mark 1.4-11

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.



Mark 1.4-11

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.

schizō



Mark 1.4-11

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/into* him.



Mark 1.4-11

And a voice came from heaven,

"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."



Mark 1.4-11

"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Psalm 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 1.4-11

"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Isaiah 42.1
Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.



Mark 1.4-11

"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Genesis 22
After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 22:2 He said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac,..."



The Baptism of Jesus

- What is the relation between Jesus and John the Baptist?
- Baptism of water? of Spirit?
- Why did Jesus need to be baptized?
- Who saw? Who heard? Was it a private experience?

Mark 1.12-13

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 1.14-15

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, ...

Mark 1.14-15

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 dominion of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

The Gospel of Mark

What is happening to you as the reader?

The Transfiguration of Jesus

Mark 9.1-8

⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

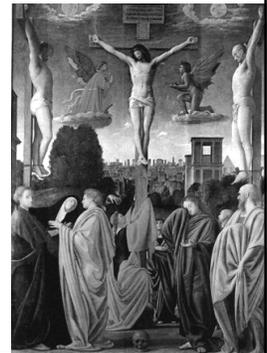


The Crucifixion of Jesus

Mark 15.37-39

Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

"ex-spirited"



The Crucifixion of Jesus

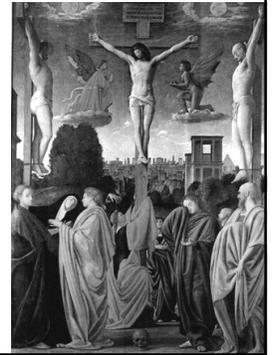
Mark 15.37-39
Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

schizō



The Crucifixion of Jesus

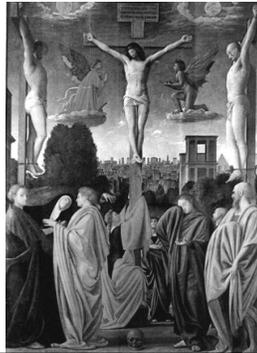
Mark 15.37-39
temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said,



The Crucifixion of Jesus

Mark 15.37-39

"Truly this man was God's Son!"



Jesus, the Son of God

the heavens torn apart

the curtain of the temple was torn in two



Jesus, the Son of God

... the Spirit descended... into him

... and he expired



Jesus, the Son of God

"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

"Truly this man was God's Son!"



Jesus, the Son of God

What did John the Baptist see?



What did the disciples see?



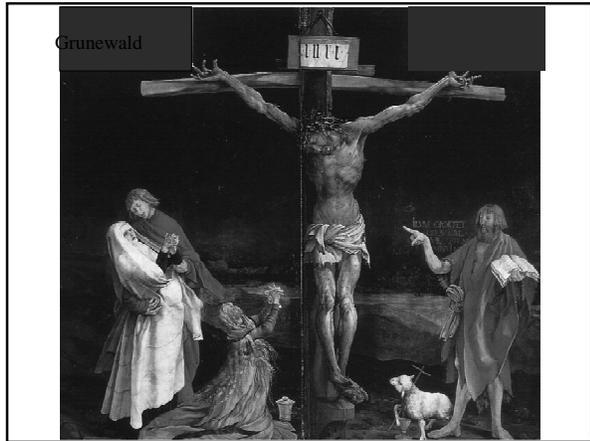
What did the centurion see?



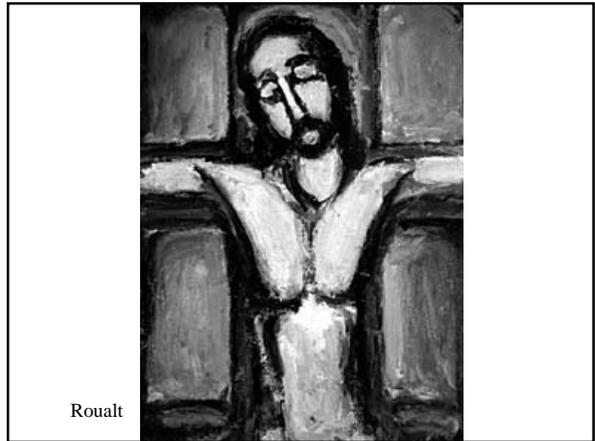
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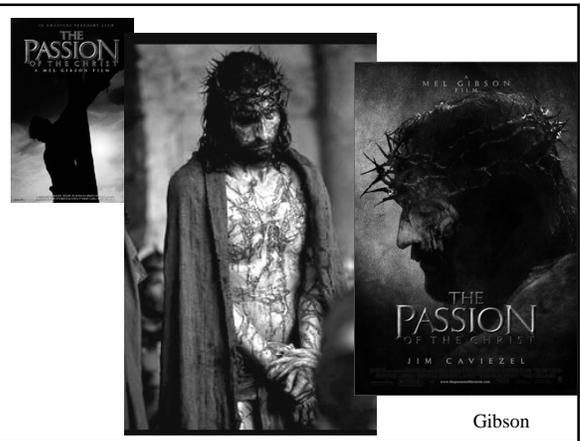
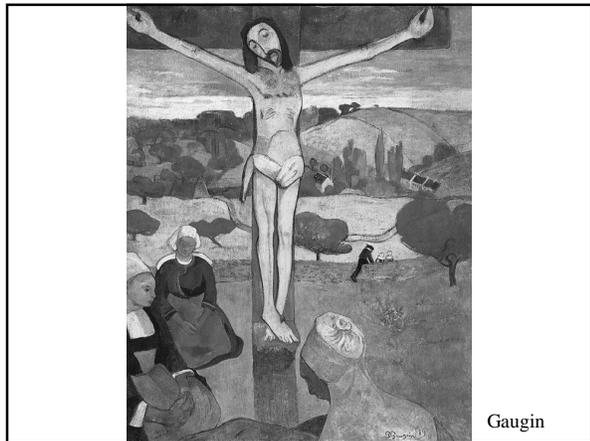
Grunewald



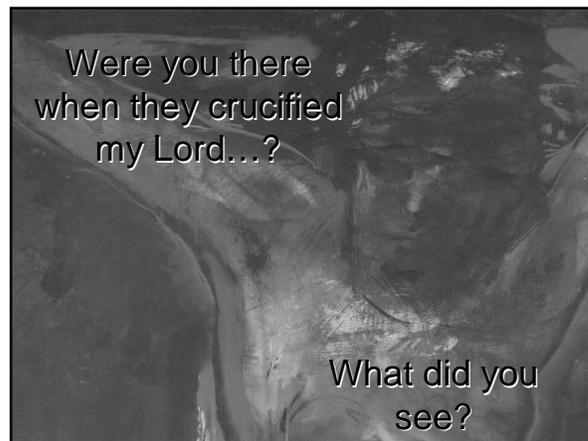
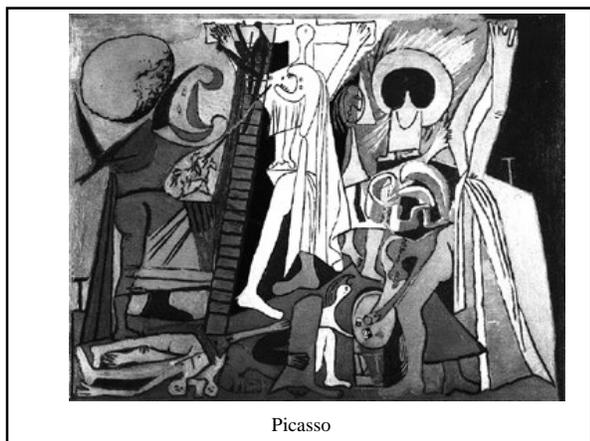
Roualt



Gauguin



Gibson



What do we know from Mark?

Jesus is the Christ the Son of God

- 1.1 told from outset
- Baptism and Transfiguration
- Teaching
- Healings and other miracles
- CRUCIFIXION
- Resurrection
- Single explicit claim: 14.62



What "Messianic Secret"?

The Messianic Secret in Mark

- Don't tell about Jesus!
 - Demons ordered to be silent: 1.34: "He would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him."
 - People who were healed: 1:44 "See that you say nothing to anyone"
 - Disciples: 8:30 He sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

The Messianic Secret in Mark

- Duh-sciples
 - 9:9-10 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
 - ¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.
 - Ignorance about feedings, children
 - Request to sit with Jesus in power
 - Inability to watch and prayer
 - Betrayal and abandonment

The Messianic Secret in Mark

Why the secrecy?

The Messianic Secret in Mark

DISCOURSE
We the readers

Jesus the revealed Messiah



Jesus the secret Messiah

STORY
The characters in the narrative

The Resurrection of Jesus



Mark 16.1-8

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?"

Do you commend these women or not?

Mark 16.1-8

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, the one who has been crucified.

He was raised; he is not here.
Look, there is the place they laid him.

Mark 16.1-8

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"Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of
Nazareth, the one who has been crucified.

He was raised; he is not here.
Look, there is the place they laid him.

Mark 16.1-8

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."

Mark 16.1-8

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.

Mark 16.1-8

So they went out and fled from the tomb,
for terror and amazement had seized them;
and they said nothing to anyone,
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Mark 16.1-8

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.

Is this the end?

Disappointment...

- Failure of the disciples and even the women (worse than John the Baptist's disciples - 6.29)
- Sense of an ending: a desire for structure and closure

At the story level

... but at the discourse level

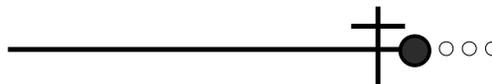
... and Hope

- Motivation
- Anticipation for as yet unfulfilled promises
 - "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"
 - As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
 - Mark 13: ... "the end is still to come."
 - "You will see him, just as he told you."

The Resurrection of Jesus

DISCOURSE
We the readers

JESUS



JESUS

STORY
The characters in the narrative

The Resurrection of Jesus

“The end is where we start from.”

T.S. Eliot

There is no closure to the story.
It is left open-ended,
It begs for disclosure!

The Resurrection of Jesus

**“You will see him,
just as he told you.”**

Who is the “you”?

The ~~End~~ Beginning

The **beginning**
of the good news
of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God.

The Gospel of Mark

