

66. To what primary sources shall we go for information respecting the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth?
67. By whom were the first four books of the New Testament Canon written?
68. What are the first four books of the New Testament Scriptures commonly called?
69. For what purpose were these four Gospel Narratives originally written?
70. What is the subject-matter of the books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?
71. What are the four books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as to design?
72. Who was Matthew?
73. Of what nationality was Matthew?
74. What was Matthew's occupation originally?
75. What information do we gather from the New Testament writings with regard to Matthew's character?
76. Where in the apostolic writings do we find the account of Matthew's call to the apostleship?
77. From what viewpoint did Matthew write his testimony respecting Jesus?
78. What is the general theme of Matthew's Gospel?
79. What main purpose did Matthew have in mind in writing his Testimony?
80. How does Matthew prove the Messiahship of Jesus?
81. What is Matthew's favorite expression?
82. When was Matthew's Gospel probably written?

Lesson Fifty-nine

MARK'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS OF NAZARETH

Scripture Reading: Acts 12: 1-18, 15: 36-41.

Scriptures to Memorize: "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you,

receive him)" etc. (Col. 4:10). "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is useful to me for ministering" (2 Tim. 4:11). "She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark, my son" (1 Peter 5:13).

83. Q. Who was Mark, the writer of the second Gospel narrative?

A. Mark, though not one of the Twelve Apostles, was a member of the apostolic company.

By the *apostolic company* or class, we mean the Apostles and *their evangelistic co-workers*. Mark was closely associated with the Apostles throughout his entire life, especially with the Apostles Paul and Peter.

84. Q. Of what nationality was Mark?

A. Mark was a Jew.

(1) His Jewish name was John. But, like Paul, he also had a Roman name, *Marcus*, or *Mark* (from the Latin *marcus*, meaning a *hammer*). Hence his full name was *John Mark*. Cf. Acts 12:12—"Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark." (2) Mark was the son of a certain Mary, at whose house in Jerusalem the disciples met from time to time (Acts 12:1-18). (3) He was also a cousin of Barnabas, another well-known and faithful member of the apostolic company. See Acts 4:36-37, 11:22-30, 12:25; also chs. 13, 14, 15 in full.

85. Q. What do we learn about Mark from the New Testament writings?

A. We learn that Mark throughout his entire life was intimately associated with the Apostles, and especially with the Apostles Peter and Paul.

(1) Mark grew up in Jerusalem, where his mother was prominent among the disciples and at whose house they were accustomed to hold meetings from time to time (Acts 12:1-18). He was no doubt well acquainted with all the Apostles. (2) It is quite possible that he knew Jesus personally. In this connection, see Mark 14:51-52. Here we read that on the occasion of Jesus' betrayal and arrest

in the Garden of Gethsemane, near the midnight hour, "a certain young man followed with him, having a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked body; and they laid hold on him; but he left the linen cloth, and fled naked." May we not reasonably conclude that Mark is here modestly alluding to himself and describing his own experience? So argues Mr. Frank Morison, the English writer; who also quite plausibly argues the theory that Mark was the "young man arrayed in a white robe," whom the three women discovered sitting in the empty tomb on the resurrection morning (Mark 16:5-8). (See Morison, *Who Moved the Stone?* pp. 219-294). There is very little doubt in fact that John Mark was well informed, through personal experience, with respect to the stirring events which marked the culmination of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth and the establishment of the Christian religion. (3) Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria on their first evangelistic tour (Acts 12:25), but for some unexplained reason he left them at Perga, in Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). (4) Whatever may have been the reason for Mark's conduct on that trip, Paul disapproved of it severely, so much so that he refused to take Mark along when a second missionary journey was proposed. He and Barnabas disagreed so sharply about the matter that they finally separated. Barnabas took Mark, and sailed for Cyprus, while Paul accompanied by Silas set out in another direction (Acts 15:36-40). (5) For a decade following this incident, we lose sight of Mark altogether. It seems, however, that he made good in the interim and reestablished himself in Paul's esteem. Hence we next find him with Paul in Rome (Col. 4:10). (6) During Paul's second imprisonment in Rome the Apostle wrote his valedictory epistle, to Timothy, in which he requested the latter to bring Mark back to Rome. 2 Tim. 4:11—"Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is useful to me in ministering." (7) Mark was also inti-

mately associated with the Apostle Peter at different periods of his life. In 1 Pet. 5:13, Peter speaks of Mark as his son in the Gospel, *i.e.*, as one of his converts. The fact that Peter, when he was miraculously delivered from prison in Jerusalem, a few days after Pentecost, went directly to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, indicates that the Apostle knew the family quite well (Acts 12:1-18). Cf. 1 Pet. 5:13—"She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark, my son." If the term "Babylon" as used here alludes to Rome (a matter of long-continued controversy), it follows that Peter and Mark were both in Rome at the time Peter's *First Epistle* was written, and that in all likelihood Mark's *Gospel* was also written in Rome. At any rate we know that Mark spent many of the later years of his life in that city.

86. Q. From what sources then did Mark obtain his information respecting Jesus of Nazareth?

A. Mark obtained his information respecting Jesus of Nazareth from the Apostles themselves.

He may have obtained some of the information presented, from his own personal experiences as a young man in Jerusalem; and this was in turn confirmed and increased by additional information which he received from the Apostles. Early tradition has it that Mark was Peter's "interpreter," whatever that word may signify. Papias (about 80-164) testifies that Mark was Peter's "interpreter," and that he wrote his Gospel narrative under Peter's personal direction. Mark's *Gospel* itself bears such evidences of Peter's influence that it has often been called "The Petrine Gospel."

87. Q. What is the general theme of Mark's Gospel?

A. The general theme of Mark's Gospel is: The Works of Jesus.

Mark's narrative is brief, swiftly-moving, and to the point. It covers only the actual ministry of Jesus, beginning with His baptism by John in the Jordan River. Mark pre-

sents Jesus as the Man of action, authority, and power. "While Matthew emphasizes Him as a *teacher*, Mark says that He came to do something as well as to *say* something. This accounts for the fact that Matthew enlarges upon the *words* of Christ, while Mark enlarges upon His *works*; Matthew lays emphasis upon His *parables*, and Mark upon His *miracles*" (Moninger, *Studies in the Gospels and Acts*, p. 41).

88. Q. For whom was Mark's Gospel obviously written?

A. Mark's Gospel was obviously written especially for the Romans.

That it was written for Gentiles rather than Jews, is evident from its contents. In view of the fact that Mark had a Roman name, and that much of his life was spent in Rome, it is apparent that he wrote his Testimony respecting Jesus with the Romans especially in mind; in fact he may have been in Rome when he wrote it (Col. 4:10, Philem. 24, 2 Tim. 4:11, 1 Pet. 5:13). Hence Mark presents Jesus as the Worker of Miracles, as the Man of action and authority, as the One who has all power over both nature and men. This mode of presentation was obviously designed to appeal especially to the Roman type of mind, which had great respect for power and authority.

89. Q. What is Mark's favorite word?

A. Mark's favorite word is "straightway."

Mark 1:10, 1:12, 1:21, 1:29, 1:42, 2:8, 2:12, 3:6, 5:2, 5:29, etc. etc.

90. Q. When was Mark's Gospel probably written?

A. Mark's Gospel was probably written about A.D. 50.

The Marcan narrative is generally conceded to have been among the first of the New Testament writings. As both Paul and Peter are believed to have suffered martyrdom in the reign of Nero, who died about A.D. 68, it follows that Mark must have written his *Gospel* prior to that date. Moreover, as Mark, like Matthew, treats of the destruction of Jerusalem as a *predicted* event (ch. 13)

rather than an actual and fulfilled happening, it follows that his *Gospel* must have been written prior to A.D. 70. Hence, we are safe in assigning it to a date somewhere near the middle of the first century.

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON FIFTY-NINE

83. Who was Mark, the writer of the second Gospel narrative?
84. Of what nationality was Mark?
85. What do we learn about Mark from the New Testament writings?
86. From what sources then did Mark obtain his information respecting Jesus of Nazareth?
87. What is the general theme of Mark's Gospel?
88. For whom was Mark's Gospel obviously written?
89. What is Mark's favorite word?
90. When was Mark's Gospel probably written?

Lesson Sixty

LUKE'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS OF NAZARETH

Scripture Reading: Acts 16:1-17, 20:1-12, 28:11-16; Luke 1:1-2.

Scriptures to Memorize: "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you" (Col. 4:14). "Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim. 4:11). "Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; and so does Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers" (Philemon 23-24).

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91. Q. Who was Luke, the writer of the third Gospel narrative?
 - A. Luke, like Mark, was a member of the apostolic company, though not himself an Apostle.