

JOHN MARK

AT-A-GLANCE

BOOK(S) WRITTEN:

Gospel of Mark

TYPE OF BOOK(S):

Gospels (Mark is the second of four gospels)

PROBABLE DATES OF WRITING:

50-60 AD



AUTHOR BACKGROUND:

Mark, also known as John Mark, was not an apostle. However, he is thought to be among the 70 disciples who first gathered to follow Jesus. He also was a friend of the apostles Peter and Paul, traveling with Paul on at least one missionary journey.

Mark was born in the North African country of Libya. He was born of Jewish parents, and most histories date him as too young to have been a disciple during Jesus' ministry. Mark's parents, Aristopolos and Mary, migrated to Palestine shortly after Mark's birth because their town and property were under siege by the Berbers. They settled in Cana, which is in Galilee, not far from Jerusalem.

This is where Mark met the future disciple Simon Peter. Mark's father died suddenly, and Simon Peter considered him a son. He saw that Mark got a good education, training in literary classics and law. Thus, when it came time to write his gospel, Mark was well prepared.

Extra-biblical materials state that Mark's mother Mary was a great admirer of Jesus and followed him on his journeys. As well, it is thought that Mark chronicled the path of Simon Peter, and that the Gospel of Mark serves as a biography told by the apostle himself.

Along with accompanying Paul, Mark also went to preach the gospel in Egypt, established one of the oldest churches there that still stands, and wrote his gospel there. He was martyred by pagans in 68 AD.



UNUSUAL PLACES THIS AUTHOR WROTE:

Mark was living in Palestine while Jesus was alive, which gave him all the material to make up his gospel. However, he wrote the gospel after having returned to his homeland in Africa.



UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THIS AUTHOR WROTE:

Mark's gospel is considered the no-frills gospel, as it is the shortest and most concise. Mark felt it was important to show Jesus as a humble servant (whereas Matthew had portrayed Christ as a royal king). His writing contains many famous lines like Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."