

## A The author of the gospel:

### ❖ Failed missionary.

- Like the rest of the evangelists, Mark does not mention himself by name. He was a boy when the events he relates occurred, which he probably learned about through his intimate relationship with the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 5:13).
- John Mark's mother was the owner of the place in Jerusalem where the church gathered to pray on the occasion of Peter's imprisonment (Acts 12:12).
- Shortly thereafter, Barnabas and Saul (who had gone to Jerusalem to bring an offering) took John Mark to Antioch ( Acts 12:25).
- In Antioch, when the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul to be missionaries among the Gentiles, they took John Mark with them as a collaborator ( Acts 13:2-5).
- But missionary life proved to be very hard for young Mark, who decided to return to Jerusalem ( Acts 13:13).

### ❖ Useful for the ministry.

- When Paul proposed the second missionary journey, he refused to accept Mark as a collaborator ( Acts 15:36-38). Paul needed strong helpers, who would be a support, not a burden. Mark did not fit this profile.
- However, Barnabas was sure that his nephew Mark had enough potential to be a good missionary. So he took Mark with him to Cyprus, while Paul and Silas headed to Asia ( Acts 15:39-41).
- We don't know what happened next, but we know that Barnabas was right. Through the three references he makes to him in his letters, Paul came to consider Mark “useful for the ministry,” an effective collaborator (Col. 4:10; Phm . 24; 2Tim. 4:11).
- Thanks to this second opportunity, today we can enjoy the exciting story of Mark's gospel.

## B The beginning of the gospel:

### ❖ The preparation. Mark 1:1-8.

- Mark begins by introducing us to God preparing the journey of his Son (Mk. 1:1-2; Mal. 3:1). A journey that begins in the heavenly courts, and that will take Jesus Christ to the cross, to be received again in Heaven (Mark 16:19).
- To prepare this way, God chooses John the Baptist, the “voice that cries in the wilderness” (Mk. 1:3; Is . 40:3).
- Before Jesus began his journey to give his life for us, John prepared people's hearts by directing them to repentance and inviting them to be baptized (Mark 1:4-6).
- He prepared them to receive the son of God: more powerful than John himself; more worthy; and that he will baptize with a more effective baptism (Mark 1:7-8).

### ❖ The baptism. Mark 1:9-13.

- Jesus begins his journey in a spectacular way: God the Father presents him as his Son, and the Holy Spirit manifests his presence in bodily form (Mark 1:10-11). From the very beginning, Jesus is presented as a divine person, the Son of God. But he is also presented as a human person:
  - (1) He is baptized by John, and not the other way around (Mark 1:9)
  - (2) It is directed by the Spirit (Mark 1:12)
  - (3) He need to be alone with God (Mark 1:13a)
  - (4) He is tempted by the devil (Mark 1:13b)
  - (5) Face physical dangers (Mark 1:13c)
  - (6) Angels serve him (Mark 1:13d)

### ❖ The message. Mark 1:14-15.

- Jesus' initial message covered three aspects (Mark 1:15):
  - (1) “The time is fulfilled”: A reference to the 70-week prophecy ( Dan . 9:24).
  - (2) “The kingdom of God has come near”: A promise that the covenant of salvation was beginning to be fulfilled.
  - (3) “Repent and believe in the gospel”: A call to take an active part in the covenant, by accepting forgiveness through faith in Jesus.
- Our current message also includes these three aspects: The time has been fulfilled; Jesus is coming; and we must repent and believe so we can go with Him.