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Mark Overview



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In "Mark Overview," Steve Gregg provides an in-depth analysis of the Gospel of Mark, focusing on its unique features and the historical context surrounding its writing. Despite often being considered the least interesting of the four Gospels, the book of Mark emphasizes Jesus' authority and compassion through healings, confrontations with religious leaders, and prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction. The authenticity of the ending of Mark's Gospel is also brought into question, with some evidence suggesting that the last 12 verses are likely to be authentic based on their inclusion in later manuscripts and translations.

Transcript

Alright, tonight we're going to have an introduction and overview of the Gospel of Mark. And for those of you who've been coming here for months, you know that we started in Genesis some years ago, and each month, except when we didn't, we had meetings. And each time we took a successive book, so we finished up the Old Testament a couple months ago, and we're just kind of getting into the New Testament.

Did Matthew last time, and now we're looking at the Gospel of Mark. Now Mark is, in some respects, some people would say, the least interesting of the Gospels, although scholars have found a great deal to be interested in it. The reason I would say least interesting, I mean maybe I'm, I know I'm not alone in saying that, but perhaps not everyone here would feel that way.

The reason is because Mark is shorter, and it's got maybe a third less material in it than say Matthew or Luke have of the life of Jesus. And the parts that are not included in Mark, but are found in Matthew and Luke, are largely the teaching portions. For example, Matthew and Luke both have the Sermon on the Mount, which Mark does not.

Mark does not have very many of the parables of Jesus. I think he only has about four parables out of about 30 that we know of in the Gospels. The teachings of Jesus are simply not the focus of Mark's Gospel.

And to a person like me, I really am fascinated with the teachings of Jesus. Mark was

more fascinated with the things that Jesus did. And it's a very action-oriented Gospel, because over 40 times in the Gospel of Mark, and several of them right at the beginning of the first chapter, you have the word immediately.

Anyone who's read Mark attentively has noted how frequently this happens. It's not just, and then he did this, and then he did that, and maybe a week later he did that, like the other Gospels will say. But Mark's always saying immediately he did this, and after that he immediately did that, and he immediately, he definitely portrays Jesus as a man of action, and not so much a focus on Jesus' teachings.

Now, when I say teachings, I mean as a teaching as opposed to preaching. There is a strong emphasis in Mark on the preaching of the Gospel, and the preaching of the Gospel is, of course, the heralding of the message of the kingdom of God. What I refer to as teaching is where Jesus is basically explaining details about the kingdom of God, or giving instructions of the, you know, what he expects the disciples to be like, and to act like, and to do.

Those are instructions, those are teaching. Mark does not scrimp on references to Jesus' preaching. He's always got Jesus preaching, in fact, chapter 1, verse 14, it says, when John was put into prison, Jesus went into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

And likewise, we have emphasis on Jesus preaching the Gospel, but not so much of his instructions to his disciples about how to live in the kingdom. That would be something we get more from Matthew and Luke about, and that's one reason why Mark is considerably shorter than the other synoptic Gospels. Until recently, Mark was one of the least studied Gospels by scholarship, partly because almost everything in it is also in Matthew and Luke, and Matthew and Luke have other stuff besides, making them, in some respects, more attractive to read.

Though in recent studies, Mark is perhaps the most studied Gospel by scholarship. And I think the reason for that is because of their dealing with what is often called the synoptic problem, and Mark's role in explaining the synoptic problem. Now, I don't know if you've heard the expression, the synoptic problem.

I assume you may have heard the term synoptic, which refers to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I assume Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels. Synoptic in Greek refers to seeing together, SYN, as in the word synthesis or symphony or anything that has a SYN or SYM as a prefix.

It means together. And optic, well, what does optic mean? It means seeing, you know. And synoptic means seeing together.

And somebody, I don't remember who, many years ago gave this label to the first three

Gospels. They're the synoptic Gospels, because you kind of see the story of Jesus the same in all of them. They follow the same lines.

They don't include everything the same as each other, but it's basically, once you've read Matthew, once you start reading Mark, you think, yeah, I think I've been here before. And once you get to Luke, you think, I've been here twice before, you know, with much of the material. Although each Gospel has some unique material to itself, for the most part, the first three Gospels, unlike John, follow the same storyline and contain much of the same stories and details.

Whereas John's Gospel has very little overlap. None of the sermons in the synoptic Gospels are found in John, and none of the sermons in John are found in the synoptic Gospels. Very few miracles overlap.

John is the only miracle of Jesus that's found in all four Gospels, is the feeding of the 5,000, that and of course his own resurrection. But he also walks on the water in John, and that's also recorded in Matthew. But for the most part, the miracles of Jesus are different miracles in John than the ones in the synoptics.

In John, there are no parables, no, no, strictly speaking, no parables, which is the main way that Jesus is teaching in the synoptics. So John is very different. The kinds of sermons that are recorded in John are mostly about Jesus.

Jesus talks about himself and his Father and who he is and that kind of thing, whereas in the synoptic Gospels, he hardly has anything to say about who he is. He talks about how to live and how to be humble and how to not be like the Pharisees and how to love one another and those kinds of things. So, you know, just very different.

The Gospel of John has a very different cast, very different focus than those first three Gospels. And so they are called and have for some generations now been called the synoptic Gospels. Now, the synoptic problem is simply this.

All three Gospels are telling the same story about the same guy, Jesus. They're all historical representations of events and sayings of the same man. And not surprisingly, therefore, they have a great deal in common with each other.

They tell many of the same stories. They often have them in the same order, though not in every case. There are some differences, but when you have a series of stories in Matthew, it's often in the those stories are in the same order in Mark and in Luke many times.

So the order of events follows and many times the exact wording is the same. So now that you say, well, what's the problem with that? Wouldn't you expect that if you got three people writing the same story? Wouldn't you expect the wording of Jesus' statement in one Gospel to be the same as the wording of Jesus' statement in another

Gospel? Well, yeah, you would. And that's part of the synoptic problem, because sometimes it isn't the same.

There's so much similarity that it's very clear that there was one source of information that they all had. And yet there are differences in unusual places. Once in a while, a story is told in a different order in one Gospel or a saying of Jesus is reworded considerably differently.

The Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew are different than the Beatitudes in Luke, although some of them are similarly worded. Some people think those are two different sermons and they may be. Other people think it's the same sermon and one Gospel worded things a little differently.

You do find that there is a difference in the wording of certain things. And in a way that you'd say, well, how do you explain all the ways in which they are identical, even to the exact wording of Jesus' statements or even the exact wording of a narration? I mean, it's one thing to say, well, yeah, they all remembered what Jesus said, so they all wrote the same thing. But sometimes the narration, just the details of the narration, even a parenthesis, like when Jesus has the paralyzed man is lowered through the roof and he's laying there and Jesus says, your sins are forgiven.

And the Pharisees say, well, you can't. How can he forgive sins? He's not God, is he? Is he claiming to be God? And Jesus said, well, so that the Son of Man, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He stops being there.

And then the narrator says, he says to the man with the palsy, get up and walk. Well, that's that he says to says to the man of palsy is like a parenthesis in Jesus' statement. All three gospels have that those same parenthetical words.

So it's like the narration is verbatim too. Now, again, we'd have no complaints if everything that Jesus said and everything in the gospels were verbatim with each other and that was all there was to it. It's just that there's places where it's not the same.

Like the time that Jesus took his disciples to Caesarea Philippi and said, who do men say that I am? And then who do you say I am? Well, after that, the next story in all three of the synoptic gospels is the transfiguration. So you got Caesarea Philippi followed by the transfiguration in all three of the synoptic gospels. But what was the interval between? Well, I believe it's Matthew and Mark that both say it was after six days.

So this happened at Caesarea Philippi. And then after six days, he took them up on a mountain where he was transfigured before them. But Luke says about eight days later.

Now, that's not a problem. If it was after six days, we have to assume it was on the seventh day following. And if it's about eight days, he's not saying it's exactly eight days.

Certainly you can't get much closer to eight than seven or nine. So, you know, Mark and Matthew agree it was on the seventh day. And Luke says it's about the eighth day, which is pretty close unless you're going to be exact.

So there's no contradiction. But the question is, why did Luke say it differently there? Why does he say so many things exactly verbatim the same as Matthew or Mark? And in that case, inexplicably, he says the same thing, but in different terms. That's the kind of thing that gives scholars a problem because they generally believe that Mark, modern scholars generally believe that Mark was the first gospel written, and that Matthew and Luke used Mark for some of their material, that they had Mark as one of their sources, and that that would explain why so many things are verbatim.

Even the narrations are verbatim. Let's say of a story in Mark, and you'll find the narration in Matthew and or Luke, verbatim narrated the same. They say, well, that's because they had Mark as their source.

They're pretty much copying it out there. But there's other problems that make the synoptic problem because Matthew and Luke have a lot of things that Mark doesn't have. Where did they get those? The scholars ask.

Now, what's interesting is of the material that Matthew and Luke have that are not stories in Mark, they are sometimes verbatim the same in Matthew and Luke, and other times not. But where they are scholars, and I'm not one of these scholars. I actually disagree with them to a certain extent, but this is largely the consensus of gospel scholarship today.

They believe there's another source that Matthew and Luke had in addition to Mark. They believe that most of the stories in Matthew and Luke, at least the ones that parallel those in Mark, came from Mark, that they took it from Mark. But then there's all this other material that Mark didn't have, but they did have.

Where did they get that? Well, at least in the material that's not in Mark, but is in Matthew and Luke, scholars feel there was another source that Matthew and Luke had. Now, nobody has ever found this source. It can't even be proven that it ever really existed.

This is only their theory, but it's one of those things that kind of catches on in the scholarly community, and then everyone has to believe it if they're going to be orthodox. I don't believe it, but some do. And they say, well, there was another source for the material that's in Matthew and Luke that is not in Mark.

What is that source? We don't know. We just assume it was there because there's common material there. Okay, well, what are you going to call it? Let's call it Q. Why Q? Because German scholarship is where this came up, and in German, the word source is

Quelle.

So Q stands for source in German. Now, if you read scholars talking about the gospels from time to time, you'll hear them mentioning Q. They assume Q existed. But see, I have a different theory about all this.

The reason I go into all this is because this is how Mark has become a real focus of study. Is Mark the first gospel written, as modern scholars say? Was he a source for other gospels and so forth? My understanding would be somewhat different, simpler. And some say that the phenomena in the three gospels make it somewhat difficult to go by this theory, but I don't have any problem with it.

I've been studying those gospels for 50 years, and I've never seen any problem with this theory. And that is that by the time the gospels were written, these stories had taken on a very standardized form. They were preached every day in Jerusalem by the apostles.

That's what the apostles did every day. They were out preaching the story of Jesus. Wherever they went, they preached the stories of the life of Jesus.

These stories, and there's only really relatively few of them because Jesus did a whole lot more things than are recorded. If you take everything in all the gospels combined, it's only 39 days of activities that are recorded out of a three and a half year period. So Jesus did a whole lot more.

But the stories that we have are those that they preached most often. And if you have an experience, maybe you have a car accident or you go on a vacation and see something, and you come back and your friends want to hear about it, and you tell about it, the more times you tell it, the more it takes on kind of a standardized form. If you and your spouse have experienced something together and you've had to together tell the story to friends a number of times, you begin, if your spouse is telling a story, you begin to know what they're going to say next because you've heard it told and you've been told it yourself, you know, half a dozen times.

It begins to take on, it becomes more difficult to not say it the same way because then you have to be more creative. It's the easiest thing is just to say it the same way as you said it last time. And eventually, if you're preaching these stories in public hundreds of times a year, then there would be a verbatim oral form that they would tend to take on.

And that would explain why later on when committed to writing by different people in different countries, because these gospels are not all written in the same country even, and frankly, we don't even know if these writers knew each other's work at all. But they knew the stories and they probably knew them verbatim. Now, why would they change them sometimes? Well, to me, that doesn't seem strange.

There's all kinds of scriptures that I've memorized, but sometimes in a conversation, I'll

just paraphrase it, you know, I'll kind of half quote it. I mean, it's just not that important that I quote it exact because the point I want to make is made perhaps more quickly by leaving a phrase out or saying something a little differently. It's the same point.

And I'm sure you have the same experience. As far as I'm concerned, where these gospels speak verbatim the same, they're probably just representing an oral tradition that came to be standardized in the preaching by the apostles. And then later was written down in that form, where there's a little bit of difference or a significant difference.

That would be where the author, I believe, is himself just saying, you know, he's not trying to be woodenly literal. He's paraphrasing something. For example, in Mark 13 and Matthew 24, we have the Olivet Discourse.

In both discourses, Matthew and Mark, have Jesus saying, when you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, or one gospel says standing where it ought not, then you who are in Jerusalem, flee to the mountains. Now, Luke has the same saying, has the same sermon. And in Luke 21, 20, instead of saying, when you see the abomination of desolation, Luke says, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation is nearer than you who are in Judea, flee to the mountains.

In other words, we know what Jesus said, because Mark and Matthew have recorded verbatim. Luke has paraphrased it, because he's got a Gentile reader who may not understand the strange Hebraism, abomination of desolation, a very Hebraic statement. So he just explains it, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.

Now, we know that the gospel writers, therefore, did change things up a little for the benefit of their readers. We know that many of the sayings of Jesus are, though the same in content in different gospels, sometimes worded differently. So there's no question, but that the writers of the gospels had no problem sometimes paraphrasing or summarizing or compressing a story.

What's a compressed story? Well, for example, here's a story in Mark. Jesus is going up the mountain, going up Mount Zion to Jerusalem. He sees an olive tree.

It doesn't have any fruit on it, and he curses it. Then he goes on and does something else. And the next day, when he and his disciples go, the olive tree is all withered up and dead.

And the disciples comment on it, and he responds. But in one of the gospels, it just compresses that. It says, Jesus, when he found no fruit on the olive tree, he just cursed it.

And that says, and immediately it shriveled up, and the disciples said, look, Lord, what happened? Now, see, we know that happened the next day, but compacting a story, it's

not necessary. If you want to just talk about the cause and the effect of that event, you don't have to tell everything that happened between. You can just tell it without any of the intervening thing.

And a lot of the gospels do that. They do tell things differently. But so I don't believe we have need.

I don't think there's a synoptic problem myself. I've never thought so. But every scholar, every commentator today will say there's a synoptic problem.

They'll speak of the priority of Mark, meaning Mark's the first gospel written. They'll speak of a two-source theory that Matthew and Luke both used Mark and some other source, Q, and maybe a third one, too, that no one knows about. My thought is this.

According to the early church, Mark wrote the gospel as he heard it from Peter. Now, let's talk about Mark, who he was. And Peter was there, so he didn't need any sources.

Matthew was there. He didn't need any sources. Luke needed sources because he wasn't there.

But Luke tells us right at the beginning of Luke, chapter 1, that he had sources. The first four verses of Luke, he talks about, yeah, there's others before me have written down these things, have written the life of Christ. They've set out to put these things.

And I've talked to the eyewitnesses. We have good witnesses about this. And he says, I have had a thorough knowledge of this subject from the beginning because Luke associated with all those guys.

He says, so I've decided to make an orderly account of it. Now, see, even there I was just paraphrasing, but that's what you can do. And that's what Luke basically says he had sources because he doesn't claim that he ever saw Jesus.

But Mark is writing Peter's gospel. Matthew is writing his own. John writes his own.

So these guys were eyewitnesses. Now, was Mark an eyewitness? That's an interesting question. He wouldn't have to be to write a good gospel because he was Peter's companion and the church father said he was Peter's translator.

Now, what do we know about Mark from the Bible itself? And how do we even know he was the author of this book? You might say, well, because it says right here in the Bible, the gospel according to Mark. Well, in our, that's the name that has been attached to it. The four gospels in our Bible were written anonymously.

The titles in our Bible were added later. None of the authors of the gospels ever said who they were. Well, how do we know who they were? Well, the early church knew who they were.

They knew the apostles themselves. They knew these guys. These guys wrote them and gave them to the church.

The people who received these gospels from the hands of the writers would know who the writers were. And it would not be difficult to preserve generation by generation who these authors were. It's actually not a problem.

See, some scholars say, oh, we don't even know who wrote them. They're anonymous. No, actually it's not a problem at all because the fake gospels that were written in the second and third century, what we call the Gnostic gospels, they all do have authors names on it, but they're fake.

There's the gospel of Thomas. There's the gospel of Philip, the gospel of Mary Magdalene, the gospel according to Peter, but none of them were written by those guys or woman because they were written centuries after they were dead. They put those names on there because those are prestigious names and they wanted to give sort of a faux authority to their works by claiming they were written by these famous people.

The real gospels, they didn't have to claim to be anybody. They were people and the people who received them knew who they were. They weren't making any kind of claims to who they were.

We know who they were. And by the way, Mark, to have a gospel named after Mark is remarkable unless Mark wrote it. Same thing with Luke.

Both of these men were not of a rank like Peter, James, and John or Matthew or the apostles or even Barnabas. Mark and Luke were among the most obscure people in the Bible. As you read the book of Acts, Luke is not even mentioned by name, though he's the author.

He sometimes says, we went here and we went there when he's traveling with Paul, but he doesn't say who he is. He just kind of unobtrusively includes himself at places. And Mark never mentions himself.

In fact, the only place we read of Mark are after the gospels in the book of Acts and a few epistles. And in those places, he's a very obscure character. The first time you hear about Mark is in Acts chapter 12 and verse 12, when it just mentions his mother.

There was a prayer meeting in Mark's mother's house. And that's the first time I hear about Mark. Now that was in Jerusalem.

So he lived in Jerusalem, which means he might have seen Jesus, but he wasn't one of the apostles. He was a young man, apparently, and lived with his mother and in her house in Jerusalem. The next we hear about him is when Barnabas and Saul go down from Antioch to Jerusalem to take a gift that the church in Antioch had raised for them.

And they pick up Mark to go back to Antioch with him. So Mark's a Jerusalemite. He also, as it turns out, we find out from Colossians 4.10, is the cousin of Barnabas.

We don't know that from the book of Acts. We know that from Colossians 4.10, where Paul mentions Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. But apart from that, he's an obscure guy.

He's got a mother. We don't know her name and we only know his. We don't know much about him.

But then he goes with his cousin, Barnabas, back to Antioch and he goes out with Paul or Saul, as he was then being called. Saul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey, Mark goes with them, according to Acts chapter 13 and verse 5. However, he doesn't stay with them. In Acts 13.13, Mark abandons them.

Now, we're not told in that place whether it was on good terms or bad terms or why he did it. But we do know that the next time Paul wanted to go on a missionary journey, he didn't want to take Mark with him. And, you know, after their first missionary journey was over and Paul approaches Barnabas in Acts 15, let's go on another, let's go visit those churches again.

And he's going to go on a second journey. Barnabas says, yeah, I'll get Mark. And Paul says, no, not him.

I don't want him. He abandoned us last time. So even though Acts 13.13 doesn't tell us why Mark abandoned them, it's clear that Paul didn't think it was the right thing for Mark to do.

Maybe he just couldn't stomach it. He's too young. Maybe there's too much, too much danger in the journey.

And, you know, Mark freaked out. In any case, Barnabas wanted to give another chance. Paul said, no, I'm not going to take chances with somebody who might ditch us again.

So Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus and started his own second missionary journey. Paul grabbed Silas, who was in Antioch, and took him on his second missionary journey. So we don't have them in Acts crossing paths anymore.

Mark and Paul do not cross paths anymore in Acts. However, later on, when Paul is in prison in Rome, Mark happens to be there. So we know that Mark ended up in Rome at one point.

And when Paul is writing from Rome, for example, in Colossians 4.10, he mentions Mark is with me. Mark, Barnabas's cousin, is with me. He also mentions him being with him when he writes Philemon in Philemon, verse 24, and in 2 Timothy 4.11. So we know that Mark is with Paul in Rome at a later date.

And Mark tells Timothy that Mark, I mean, Paul tells Timothy that Mark is profitable to him. So even though Mark lost Paul's confidence by ditching him on the first missionary journey, this would be decades later now, Paul commends him and says he's profitable to me. But Mark didn't spend the rest of his ministry with Paul, but with Peter.

Now we don't know when this handoff took place, but we do know that Peter went to Rome and died there, and Mark was with him. In 1 Peter chapter 5, Peter mentions that Mark, he says, he's writing to the churches, he's writing to, he says, your elect sister in Babylon, which is a term for Rome probably, greets you, and so does Marcus, my son. Marcus is this Mark.

And so Paul refers, I mean, Peter refers to Mark as his son. He certainly means his son in the faith, just like Paul referred to Timothy as his son in the faith. He's his assistant.

And according to church tradition, it goes beyond the record of Acts and beyond the record of the Bible, all the church fathers agree that Mark was with Peter in the latter years of Peter's life, and even after Peter died, Mark had been there. And two of the church fathers have said that Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark before Peter died in Rome. And two of them, two church fathers, says, well, it was after he died that he wrote it.

So there's some, the different church fathers are not in agreement, unless, of course, he began working on it while Peter was still alive and didn't complete it till Peter had died, then he did work on it while Peter was alive and after he died. So that's a possibility. We don't have to know.

But what all the church fathers agree on is that Peter preached probably in Aramaic, and that Mark translated for him into Greek. And all the church fathers agree that Mark's Gospel is simply the memoirs of Peter written down by Mark. So we could call it the Gospel According to Peter, which would be more prestigious.

In fact, it's remarkable that it wasn't called that. Why did the church call it the Gospel According to Mark, unless Mark indeed had written it? He was such an obscure person with such a checkered, you know, resume. Why pick somebody like that when you could, if you're going to fake a name, if you're not going to put the real author's name, like in the second, third century, the Gnostic Gospels, they pick somebody's name because it was prestigious.

Nobody would pick Mark's name because of prestige or Luke's. The fact that these men were so obscure is one of the best evidences that they truly are the authors that are traditionally assigned to these books, and there's not a reason in the world to doubt it. Now, I'm going to skip over much in our notes, but we do need to ask about the date of writing.

And the truth is that when it comes to any of the Gospels, no one knows for sure the

date of their writing. Conservatives usually place the date as early as possible, and liberals often will say, well, none of the Gospels were written by anyone who knew Jesus. They were probably written in the second century or something like that.

I mean, a lot of times the Gospels' time of writing is written, is assigned by liberal scholarship to times after these guys were long dead. But the evidence in them is supportive of the church fathers. Now, the church fathers do not say that Mark was the first Gospel, as modern scholars like to say.

All the church fathers thought Matthew wrote the first Gospel. Then as far as Mark and Luke, as far as who was next, we don't have any testimony about that. But Matthew is said to have written his Gospel in Palestine, in Aramaic, for a Jewish audience, where Mark was in Rome, and Luke was probably in Rome.

We don't know where Luke was when he wrote, but Mark and Luke definitely wrote for Gentile audiences. So when was Mark written? I will say this. I don't know.

No one really knows when it was written exactly, but I believe that all three of the synoptics were written, and provably so, before 70 AD. Now, when people say to you, well, how can we trust the Gospels? They weren't even written down until decades after, you know, these things happened. How can I remember them accurately? How could you forget them? If all these synoptics were written before 70 AD, and Jesus lived up until 30 AD, that's only 40 years.

I remember things that happened 40 years ago like it was yesterday. My mom probably remembers when she met my dad, and that was 70 something years ago, you know. I mean, and probably remembers some of the actual conversations they had, and yet the things we remember that long ago weren't anywhere near as memorable as the things that the disciples saw that Jesus did.

I mean, you certainly would not easily forget seeing somebody walk on water, or raise the dead, or open the eyes of the blind, or preach the memorable sermons that Jesus preached. There's no problem with, you know, the fact that some decades went by after the life of Jesus before these things were written down. It's not even problematic at all, but, and especially in view of the fact that these guys were preaching and telling these stories every day of their lives during that 40 years, you know.

It's like, how can you forget something if you tell the story every day? But the reason I say it's provable, now liberals would disagree with me, but who cares what they think. They're always determined to come up with a disbelieving interpretation of things, and therefore they want to late-date things so that they're less credible. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all contain the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

That discourse begins with Jesus predicting the destruction of the temple, which took

place in 70 AD. He said, not one stone to be left standing on another. The disciples came and said, when will these things be, and what sign will there be that this is about to take place? He said, this generation will not pass before these things happen.

He was right on the mark there. What's remarkable is that none of the, all the gospels record him making the prediction, but none of them record it being fulfilled. Now I have to say, the gospel writers loved to point out when Jesus predicted something and it happened.

They loved to point out when the Old Testament said something and it happened. They loved to point out fulfillment of prophecy, yet all three of these books record the most, the most accurate, the most specific prophecy recorded that Jesus ever made, and they don't mention that it was fulfilled. The only explanation for that would be that it hadn't happened yet.

They couldn't make reference back to its fulfillment because they wrote before it had been fulfilled, and therefore before 70 AD. Everything points in that direction anyway, but I think that alone would prove that they were writing before that fulfillment, or else they certainly would have mentioned it. Now, that's all I really have time to say about the date of writing.

The contents of the book, as I said, there's very little emphasis on the teaching of Jesus. The emphasis is on him preaching the gospel rather than him teaching the disciples. Matthew and Luke both contain birth narratives of Jesus.

Mark does not. Matthew takes his first two chapters and Luke takes his first two chapters with the birth narratives to how Jesus, you know, was born. Mark just skips all of that and starts in the adult life of Jesus and starts telling the story.

About two-fifths, about 40 percent of Mark's material deals with the Passion Week, the last week of Jesus' life. Though he's recording events that were spread out over three and a half years, 40 percent of it's focused on that one week. And, of course, the other gospels spend similar amounts of time focusing on that too.

Interestingly, Mark does not have a record of any resurrection appearances of Christ unless a disputed long ending is included. We're going to talk about that. That's one of the most interesting things about Mark's gospel to talk about, is the ending of Mark.

And I'm going to spend some time with that eventually here. A lot of things about the characteristics of the book I'm going to leave out simply because it's not the most important thing for me to point out and tell you the truth. We can see here's a survey of the book, pretty much.

The first 13 verses of chapter 1 record John's baptism in the wilderness. And that's also how Matthew and Luke begin. Although Matthew and Luke both give more detail about

John's preaching and teaching.

In both those other gospels, there's conversations between John the Baptist and the Pharisees, for example. And between John the Baptist and Jesus when Jesus comes to be baptized. Mark leaves all that out.

Mark is just boom, boom, boom. One event after another, hardly any conversations he lingers on. So in chapter 1 verses 1 through 13, we see John's baptism in the wilderness and Jesus' temptation is there too.

Matthew and Luke both give the temptation in greater detail, actually listing three temptations. Mark doesn't mention the temptations except that says Jesus was in the wilderness with the wild beasts and he was tempted by the devil. And that's all we get about it.

Then in verse 14, we see that when John was put in prison, Jesus came preaching the gospel in Galilee. And so we have the Galilean ministry begins in the 14th verse of the first chapter. Now, as I've said, both Matthew and Luke have somewhat more chapters before that.

But they also focus on the Galilean ministry. Most of the stories about Jesus in Mark and Matthew and Luke are from the Galilean ministry, which is the longest single part of his ministry, it would appear. So in chapters 1 through 5 of Mark, once his ministry begins, we have considerable focus on demonstrations of Jesus' authority.

Now, by authority, we mean that he's the king. He's the son of God. He speaks and when he speaks, people listen, or at least demons do and some other folks too.

Jesus has authority over the demons, which is brought out very clearly in chapters 1 and 3. He has authority to forgive sins, which is definitely divine authority, which is brought out in chapter 2, verses 1 through 12. He has authority over the Sabbath day, which means over the law of Moses, where he says he's the Lord of the Sabbath day. That's, of course, in chapter 2, verses 23 through 28.

And again, his working and healing on the Sabbath always pointed that out, that he had the right to work on the Sabbath, even though other people don't. And that also in chapter 3, verses 1 through 6. And he also had authority over nature, which is seen by, of course, stilling the storm, telling the wind and the waves, and they obey him. And he had authority over death, which is seen in the fact that he raised dead people, including eventually himself.

So this is the authority of Christ demonstrated, especially in the first five chapters we have all of these aspects of Christ's authority brought out in the various stories. Most of these stories are also found in the other synoptic gospels because of the high degree of parallelism between those gospels. Now, specifically in chapter 1, verses 14 through 45,

we have Jesus calling the four fishermen and him ministering in the synagogue and then ministering to Peter's mother-in-law and then and to a bunch of other people in town.

In chapter 2, verse 1 through chapter 3, verse 6, there are five different conflicts with the Pharisees. So right at the beginning, we have Jesus locking horns with the Pharisees. We know that these conflicts continued until the very last week of his life.

And there were conflicts between the religious leaders, including the Pharisees and Jesus in the final week as well. So that's one of the main themes you find is that although Jesus had authority from God over demons, over the wind and the waves, even to forgive sins, yet the religious leaders didn't recognize his authority and always challenged it, which shows that although they were religious leaders, they weren't really very close to God. We find in this time in chapter 3, verse 7 through 35, that Jesus attempted to withdraw from the crowds from time to time to have a little bit of time to restore his energy and so forth.

But that was always futile. Whenever he tried to do that, the crowds found him and he would always minister to them. We have in chapter 4 through the first part of chapter 5, the parables discourse, which is in also Luke 8 and Matthew 13.

The longest parables discourse is in Luke, Matthew 13. Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8 all begin with the parable of the sower. All of these chapters in these three gospels have other parables too, but Matthew has the most of them.

And Mark has one parable that is not in the other gospels at all. Sometimes it's called the parable of the growing seed. He said, the kingdom of God is like a seed, as if a man cast seed in the ground and he slept and he woke and, you know, it didn't matter if he was asleep or awake, the seed kept growing.

He didn't know how, it says, but the ground of itself produced the fruit, first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. That parable is not found in Matthew or Luke or John. And that's a unique, one of the few things unique to Mark in the teaching of Jesus.

That's in chapter 4. And then his stilling of the storm and helping the demoniacs on the other side of the lake. That is of course, legion. That's also in that section, chapter 4 through 520.

Then there's a bunch of miracles he did in Capernaum because Capernaum in Galilee was where Jesus made his headquarters during the Galilean ministry. Peter's house there became his outreach center. He and the disciples apparently lived there when they weren't traveling during the Galilean ministry.

And so there were a lot of miracles done in Capernaum. The woman with the issue of blood, the healing of Jairus's daughter are mentioned in chapter 5 also. When you get to

chapter 6, we find that Jesus went to Nazareth, his hometown, and this was apparently his second time going there.

The reason I say that is because Luke has him going there at an earlier time and then after leaving there, settling in Capernaum. But Mark already has him settled in Capernaum and he goes to Nazareth. No doubt Jesus went two times.

Both times similar things happened. Jesus was viewed as just a local boy with making big claims for himself. And they say, well isn't this the carpenter's son? You know, why should we take him seriously? And so he was pretty much rejected in his hometown twice.

Once is recorded in Luke 4, earliest in Jesus' Galilean ministry, and then Mark refers to another one, in my opinion, in chapter 6, verses 1 through 6. Then he sends out the twelve in chapter 6, verses 7 through 13. This is when he sent out the twelve two by two to do ministry in various towns that he would either be coming to later or would not be able to get to. And he gave them power to cast out demons and heal the sick and do things like that.

This is a short-term outreach. It's referred to very briefly in Matthew chapter 10 and it's, excuse me, Luke chapter 9. It's very briefly mentioned, but in Matthew 10 it's a much more expanded version because Matthew expands on a lot of the teachings. A lot more teaching given to the disciples on this occasion before he sent them out.

Mark leaves out all that teaching, just sends them out. And we don't know how long that outreach lasted, but it must have been weeks anyway. And then they regathered with Jesus.

During that time, according to Mark 6, verses 14 through 29, Herod heard about the things that were being attributed to Jesus. This is while the disciples were still doing it too, so news was getting around about Jesus through their preaching. And Herod is, you know, he's kind of paranoid because by this time he had killed John the Baptist, knowing that was the wrong thing to do.

He did it because his wife kind of, you know, pressured him into doing it. His daughter, his stepdaughter pressured him to do it. So he had arrested John the Baptist earlier and on a dare or on a bet or an oath he had made, he became obligated to bring the head of John the Baptist to his stepdaughter on a charger.

And he regretted it. And after he did it, he knew he'd done the wrong thing. And so when he heard about these miracles being done, he thought, oh, John the Baptist has come back from the grave and he's got more power than ever.

That's just paranoia from guilt, you know. And it's interesting too, that later on when Jesus was at Caesarea Philippi and he said to the disciples, who do men say I am? He

said, well, some say you're John the Baptist. Others say you're Elijah or Jeremiah, one of the prophets.

But it's interesting that some people were saying he was John the Baptist, even though John the Baptist had died. No doubt it was the Herodians or the ones who were close to Herod and hearing his theories, this must be John the Baptist. We read about that in chapter 6 verses 14 through 29.

Then we have the feeding of the 5,000 in chapter 6, followed by Jesus walking on the water, also in chapter 6. These stories, the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle, as I said, except for Jesus' own resurrection, that's recorded in all four gospels. John's record of miracles does not overlap the synoptics very much at all, but that one feeding of the 5,000 is in John and in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And then walking on the water is not in all four gospels, but that happened after the feeding of the 5,000.

Then there's just general ministry, which is summarized in chapter 6 verses 53 through 56 in the region of Geneseret, which is Geneseret's another name for the Sea of Galilee in that region. Then in chapter 7, we have a story that is paralleled in Matthew 15, and it is about how Jesus' disciples were eating food without washing their hands in the way that the Pharisees thought people should wash their hands. The rabbis had come up with all kinds of traditions about things that the Bible didn't say, including you have to wash your hands in a ceremonial manner whenever you are unclean.

Now, the law of Moses did say if you touch, you know, an unclean thing, touch a leper, touch a dead body, touch a woman with an issue of blood, touch a bed that somebody who was unclean sat on, if you touch anything, it's as if you're unclean for a period of time. It might be until sundown, or it might be for a whole week, depending on what it was that defiled you. The law has these rules, but it didn't say what the Pharisees were saying.

The Pharisees were saying if you happen to touch a Gentile, you have to wash yourself when you come into the house after that, or even if the wind from a Gentile country or even from Samaria blew into Judea and blew on you, well, you're unclean, so whenever you go in the house, you're going to have to wash up. Now, the law did say if you touch an unclean thing, you're unclean for until sundown or for a week, and then you have to bathe. Washing was the way you ended a period of uncleanness, but the Pharisees had these traditions, like, you better just wash yourself all the time because you're always going to be, you never know, you might walk on ground where a Gentile walked on it, and therefore your shoe picked up some of the dust that was on a Gentile shoe, you better wash yourself.

And Mark points this out. Now, interesting, Matthew has the same story, but Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience, so he simply tells that the Pharisees complained because Jesus didn't, his disciples didn't wash their hands properly. Matthew doesn't have to

explain to his audience what that's about.

His audience are Jews. Mark's audience are Gentiles, so Mark says, because the Jews, when he records the complaint that Pharisees made, he says, because the Jews, they wash everything. They wash their cups and their bowls and their couches and everything.

Whenever they go in from outdoors, they wash. So Mark assumes his audience doesn't know this tradition, although Matthew knows his audience does know it. But we have that record there, and that's where Jesus said that nothing that goes into a man's mouth defiles him, but what comes out of his mouth.

Now, Mark, unlike Matthew, comments on that, that when Jesus said, nothing going into your mouth can defile you, Mark says, thus he purged, or rendered clean, all foods. If nothing you eat can defile you, then eating unclean foods can't defile you. So Jesus declared all foods are clean.

It's basically what Mark takes from that. Now, I believe it's based on that statement of Jesus that Paul, later on, in Romans 14, 14, Paul said, I am persuaded and convinced by the Lord Jesus Christ that nothing is unclean of itself, meaning food. Well, I'm convinced by the Lord Jesus Christ that nothing is unclean.

Where do you get that? It had to be from that statement Jesus made in Mark chapter four, seven, excuse me, Mark chapter seven. And that's when Jesus scolded the Pharisees because they keep the traditions of men and are not so careful at keeping the word of God. Now, the next section, chapters, the latter part of chapter seven and going in up through much chapter eight is ministry that he's doing in places outside of Galilee, in Tyre, which was a Phoenicia, just basically above Israel.

Tyre was a city, a port city to the north of Israel on the coast. And then there's the Decapolis is another region that was on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. It's called the Decapolis, which means 10 cities because there were 10 Jewish cities in a Gentile region.

And that's called the Decapolis. And then there was Dalmanutha and Bethsaida. These are some of the places in Transjordan, I believe that Jesus was doing this ministry.

In particular, in the region of Tyre and Sidon, he healed a Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter. Now, the important thing about this was that she was a Gentile and Jesus had not offered his services to Gentiles yet. In fact, this woman who had a demon possessed daughter came following Jesus saying, please heal my daughter.

And Jesus largely ignored her, kept walking down the street with his disciples kind of paying no attention. And she kept bugging him. And the disciples said, Lord, tell her to go away.

She's bothering us. And Jesus said, I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In other words, I'm not sent to the Gentiles and she's a Gentile.

Some people have taken that statement. There are people today called Israel only who believe that no one can be saved except people who are Jewish. Because he said, I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

He meant at that point in time. As Paul and Barnabas said, uh, when they left the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, they said it was speaking to the Jews. He said it was necessary that we preach the gospel to you first.

But since you reject it and count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we're going to the Gentiles. Jesus and the apostles both felt they should go to the Jews first because they were the people that had a prior claim on God and on the Messiah. They were the people, they were the covenant people, God's covenant people who had been promised the Messiah.

So the gospel had to go to them first. And at this point, Jesus was not ready to expand his ministry to the Gentiles. And here's a Gentile woman asking for help.

And finally, he has pity on her. He says, listen, it's not right for me to take the children's food and give it to the dogs. Gentiles were often regarded as dogs by the Jews.

And the children were the Jews. He said, what I have is something God is giving to the Jews right now. It's not something to give to the dogs right now.

And she said, true Lord, but even the dogs get to eat the scraps that fall from the children's table, which either means that there is enough food in God's house to feed the dogs and the children. You know, you can do that to the Jews, but you can help me too. Or she might even mean the children who don't want the food, they throw it on the floor and the dogs get to eat it.

Noticing as it were that the Jews were not really receiving his ministry, but she would. In any case, this is that story. It's one of the places where Jesus first shows any compassion or does anything for Gentiles.

Important story. In chapter seven, verses 24 through 30. In the Decapolis, he healed a deaf mute man and he fed 4,000, a second multitude that he fed.

In Dalmanutha, the Pharisees come and seek a sign from him. He said, a wicked and adulterous generation seeks a sign. You're not going to get a sign.

When he crossed the sea to Bethsaida, he commented on the dullness of the disciples because he said, beware the leaven of the Pharisees. And they thought he was talking about food. And he said, well, why don't you understand I'm not talking about food.

In Bethsaida, there is the healing of a blind man, which is also, I think, only found in Mark. I think this is unique to Mark, this miracle. A man was blind and came to Jesus.

Jesus touched him and said, what do you see? And the guy says, well, I see men, but it looks like trees walking. And so Jesus touched him again. And he said, oh, now I see everything clearly.

This is a very unusual story because it's the only miracle we have, a record of Jesus doing that didn't happen all at once. He certainly healed the man completely of his blindness, but in two stages, which is interesting. There's no suggestion here that the man's failure to be completely healed the first touch was because of his lack of faith.

No one could speculate that. Well, maybe he didn't really believe for a complete healing, but once he could see men like trees walking, his faith grew. He said, oh, wow, you really can do something about this, you know, but it may be that this one story is there to tell us something that we might not know from reading the rest of the gospel of miracles.

And that is that Jesus doesn't always heal instantly. Even if he heals, he doesn't always do it instantly. Sometimes people are healed slowly, progressively, naturally, even in by the grace of God.

But the interesting thing is this is the only story like that in the ministry of Jesus. That's in Mark 8, 22 through 26. Then in chapters 8, 27 through 9, 50, the ministry to the disciples privately is what Mark covers.

He takes the disciples to Caesarea Philippi. That's that famous story, who do men say I am, who do you say I am? And once they said, once Peter said, you're the Christ, the Son of the living God, you know, Jesus said, yeah, that's right, the Father has revealed that to you. Blessed are you.

And about a week later, he takes three of those disciples, Peter, James, and John up on a mountain. We don't know exactly which one, though, if you go to Israel, they'll point it out to you. They'll point a lot of things out to you that we don't know where they are.

But anyway, the Mount of Transfiguration, three disciples went up there with Jesus. They were praying. Jesus was praying.

And Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. We know that story. Jesus was transfigured.

His face was shining like the sun. They saw the glory of Jesus as they never would again or never had before in their lifetime. And Moses and Elijah were there to pass the torch, as it were, to Jesus.

Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets. These Jewish disciples had been raised in the synagogues, being taught to obey the law and the prophets. That was the

authority for the Jewish religion, was the law and the prophets.

Now, here comes Moses, who gave the law, and Elijah, who's regarded the prince of the prophets. And it says that they were talking with Jesus. Now, Mark and Matthew don't tell us what they were talking about.

Luke does. Luke says they were talking about the exodus that Jesus was going to accomplish in Jerusalem, in other words, his death, which would be like Moses delivering the children of Israel in the exodus. Jesus was going to deliver his people in Jerusalem through his death.

But the interesting thing is that Peter said, well, why don't we build three tabernacles and have Moses and Elijah and Jesus here overnight? And then a cloud came. Moses and Elijah disappeared, and only Jesus was left. And a voice from heaven said, this is my son, hear him, which was a rebuke to the disciples who wanted to keep Jesus and the law and the prophets.

Jesus came to replace them, not to just be, you know, an addendum to them, not just something to add to the law and the prophets. The law and the prophets showed up there to give their endorsement to him as they were going to fade off. And he was going to be alone, Jesus, the authority, and the father said, hear him now.

This is my son. Hear him. That's what I believe is the meaning of that story.

When he came down from the mountain, the disciples were trying to cast a demon out of a boy. The boy's father brought him, and they don't sit, the nine disciples at the foot of the mountain didn't seem to be able to do it. Jesus did it.

And then he announced to his disciples his death. There are three times that Jesus actually, before his death, announced that he'd die and rise again the third day. So he certainly, that was part of his teaching to the disciples.

In chapter 10, we have ministry that was done in Perea. Perea is the region on the east side of the Jordan River. Technically, the Jordan River was the eastern border of the promised land from the days of Joshua on.

It was the eastern border, but there were some tribes, the tribes, half tribe of Manasseh and Reuben and Gad, that had wanted to settle on the east side because there was good grazing land and they had a lot of sheep. And Moses allowed them to do that on the condition that they would first go into the land with the other tribes, conquer the land, then they could go back and have that land. So they had.

So that region on the east of the Jordan was called Perea. And Jesus did some ministry over there. In chapter 10, that's when he was asked the question about, is it lawful to divorce your wife? Jesus basically said, in Mark, he said it a little differently than we read

in Matthew.

In Mark, he said, whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. Period. In Matthew, the same conversation is found in Matthew 19.

And he says, whoever divorces his wife except for the cause of fornication and marries another commits adultery. So there's an exception. Mark, for some reason, just passed over the exception.

Without mentioning it, Matthew includes it. Then Jesus blessed children that were brought to him over the protests of the disciples. Then the rich young ruler came.

This is in Perea also. And he said, the rich young ruler came. We know about how he came saying, what must I do to be saved? And Jesus told him, you know, keep the commandments.

Which ones? Jesus lists some commandments. The guy says, I did that already. Jesus said, well, if you want to be perfect, then sell what you have and give to the poor.

You have treasures in heaven. The man didn't want to do that. So he went away sorrowful.

Then, apparently, while Jesus was still in Perea, John and James come to Jesus. And were actually told elsewhere that it was their mother that came. But they put her up to it.

And asked Jesus if they could sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in his kingdom. They were suggesting that they wanted the second and third positions of power in his kingdom. And he said, well, I can't tell you that.

You'll be baptized with the baptism I'm going to be baptized with. But I can't give you those positions. Only my father gives those positions out.

And then we have the story of Bartimaeus, a blind man outside Jericho. As Jesus was now returning into Israel, crossing the Jordan, coming into Jericho. Matthew tells us there were two blind men.

Mark only mentions one of them. But since Matthew tells us there were two, we know that the one was not alone. There were two of them.

Mark gives us the name of that one, Bartimaeus. Now, the fact that he knew that name may suggest that Bartimaeus became a believer and became part of the church later after Pentecost. And that he was known in the Jerusalem church by name.

Most of the people that Jesus healed in the gospels, their names are not given. Probably because they lived in Galilee. They never became part of the Jerusalem church.

Their names were not known to the church or maybe even to the authors. Jesus healed so many people. I don't think they were known to write down all their names.

But Bartimaeus, his name was known. So he must have been someone they connected with more long term. No doubt he became a disciple and part of the early church in Jerusalem later on.

He was the blind man healed outside Jericho. Now, chapters 11 through 13, we have Jesus back in Judea, his triumphal entry. At this point, of course, we're in the Passion Week.

This is all in the last week. And as is true in Matthew and in Luke, we have a series of challenges that come against Jesus by religious authorities. The first is the Pharisee saying, you know, where do you get your authority? And Jesus said, well, I'll tell you what, you tell me where John the Baptist got his authority, then I'll tell you where I got mine.

And they said, we can't tell you where John got it. He said, I won't tell you. Then he told the story of the vineyard, which was about how the leaders of Israel had failed their charge, their stewardship of keeping Israel as a vineyard to produce fruit for God.

They had not done so. And then they had even killed the prophets and then killed, were going to kill Jesus. And then the kingdom was going to be taken from them and given to another people.

That's what, that's in chapter 12, verses 1 through 12. Jesus was asked another challenge in chapter 12, verse 13 through 17, whether they should pay tribute to Caesar. Now, this is very controversial because Caesar had conquered the region 100 years earlier and put them under tribute.

And yet there were zealous Jews. In fact, they're called the Zealots, the Zealot party, who argued that Jews should not pay tribute to any king other than God, because the Jews are God's people and not some pagan ruler over in Rome. And therefore, a guy named Judas of Galilee started the Zealot party back about 6 AD when Jesus was about 10 years old.

And Judas of Galilee taught that it was unlawful for a Jew to pay tribute to a pagan ruler. So this is very controversial. If you said you shouldn't pay tribute to Rome, then the Romans who are occupying your nation are going to arrest you and crucify you probably.

If you said, yeah, why don't we go ahead and pay them? Then the Zealot party, which was more popular, would say, oh, you're a traitor. So they said, is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar or not? This is a volatile question. And Jesus says, well, show me a penny.

It had a picture of Caesar. Now what's interesting is a Jew shouldn't be carrying one of

those. It's a graven image.

The devout Jews were not supposed to carry graven images. And this penny had a picture of Caesar. That's a graven image.

Jesus didn't carry it. The Pharisees had it. He said, show me a penny.

They gave him a penny. He said, whose face is that on there? Whose inscription? They said, that's Caesar's. Jesus said, well, that must be his then.

Give it back to him. Render to Caesar what's his and to God what is his. In other words, the penny has Caesar's image.

It must be his. Give it to him. You have God's image on you.

Give yourself to God. The word render, by the way, doesn't mean give. It means give back.

To render means to return something to somebody. So this coin has Caesar's face. I think this must have come from him.

Give it back to him if he wants it back. You came from God. You have God's image in you.

You give him back what's his too. That's how Jesus answered that. Confounded them too.

Then the Sadducees who don't believe in the resurrection came and challenged him with a trick question based on the law of Moses that said that if a man died childless and he was married, his brother had to marry his widow and bring up at least one child in the name of his dead brother. But they said we had, there were seven brothers. And the first one got married and died without child.

So the second one married her and he died without child. All seven of them eventually married her and died without child. And then she died.

So in the resurrection, who's going to be her husband? Now, they said this because they didn't believe in the resurrection. The Sadducees were the only party, as far as we know, in the Jewish society that didn't believe in the doctrine of the resurrection. So this is a trick question.

If we have a woman who's had seven husbands in her lifetime and everyone's going to be raised from the dead at the same time, she's going to have seven ex-husbands living. Who's going to be her husband? They were all legitimate husbands. None of them divorced her.

She was widowed seven times. So they were all legitimate husbands. Who's going to

have her? And Jesus said, well, in the resurrection, they don't marry.

So no problem there. Not going to happen. These interactions are also found, of course, in Matthew and Luke, these confrontations.

A Pharisee scribe actually came to him and said, what's the great commandment? And Jesus said famously, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbors yourself. On these hang all the commandments. That's in chapter 12, verses 28 through 34.

Then, after they'd all questioned him and had found him unbeatable, he questioned them. He said, I've got a question for you. The Messiah, whose son is that going to be? Well, the Jews all knew the Messiah has to be descended from David.

In fact, son of David was actually a messianic title. Sometimes people called Jesus son of David, indicating they saw him as the Messiah. They said, whose son is the Messiah? They said David's.

And Jesus said, but in Psalm 110, David, who wrote it, spoke about the Messiah and called him his Lord. He said, Yahweh has said to my Lord, the Messiah, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your foothold. If the Messiah is David's son, why did David speak of the Messiah as his Lord? Well, they were silenced.

They couldn't answer. Of course we can't, because the Messiah is David's son, but he's also God's son. And that's why David recognized him as his Lord.

That's in chapter 12, verses 35 through 37. Then in chapter 12, verses 38 through 40, Jesus tells the disciples to be aware of the scribes and the Pharisees. Now, at the end of chapter 12, verses 41 through 44, we have the widow giving her two mites, two pennies.

And Jesus said that she gave more than everyone else, because she gave all that she had, despite the fact that many people were giving much larger sums. They were not being as sacrificial. So it's interesting that no one else knew how God valued her gift.

Probably no one else paid attention to her. She's just a poor widow. But Jesus himself is watching, and he places the higher value on her gift than on the rich who give more.

Chapter 13, then, is the Olivet Discourse. We won't go into it in detail. We covered some of it in Matthew.

We'll encounter it again when we go through Luke. This is the story where Jesus predicted that the temple would be destroyed in that generation, and he gave a number of signs of things that would happen before that. And the principal sign was that the abomination of desolation would be set where it shouldn't be.

That would be obscure to us if Luke hadn't paraphrased it for us. Luke paraphrased it

when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation is near. So the temple was destroyed in 70 AD after Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem.

And Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem did flee, as Jesus told them to do. Chapters 14 and 15, we have Jesus anointed in Bethany. Bethany is about two miles outside Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives.

He had friends there, Mary and Martha, and their brother Lazarus, who were hosts to him and his disciples, probably whenever he was in the area. We often read in the Gospels that Jesus would be preaching in the temple all day in Jerusalem. Then at night, he'd retire to Bethany for the night and then come back the next morning.

It's a two-mile walk to Bethany. That's where he and they stayed with Lazarus and Mary and Martha. So we have him doing that in chapter 14.

We have the plot of Judas to betray him. We have the Last Supper, which is, of course, in the other synoptics as well, where he instituted the new covenant with a ceremonial drink of wine and eating bread, which was actually a Passover meal, but he was changing the significance of the Passover to not be a memory of the Exodus, but a memory of him bringing salvation to his people. Then we have Jesus arrested in Gethsemane after that.

Then we have him brought before Pilate. Well, actually before the Jews first, of course. He was brought before the Jews in the middle of the night.

The Sanhedrin condemned him for what they called blasphemy, but they couldn't kill. The Romans wouldn't let the Sanhedrin kill people who were condemned to death. They had to get the Romans permission to do that.

And they knew that Pilate couldn't care less about blaspheming Yahweh. So if they, I mean, the Sanhedrin had decided Jesus deserves to die because he blasphemed Yahweh. So they say.

They were wrong, but that's how they understood it. And yet they had to come up with entirely different charges to get the Romans to want to kill him because the Romans couldn't care less about that particular charge. So they trumped up a different charge against Jesus and told Pilate, the Roman governor, Jesus was teaching sedition and teaching people not to pay tribute to Caesar.

Now that was a political charge, not a religious one. And so Pilate interviewed Jesus privately. I don't think he did that.

I don't find any fault with this man. I don't think he's guilty of anything. And then they threatened Pilate and said, well, he said he was the king of the Jews.

Anyone who makes himself a king is no friend of Caesar. You better give us what we want, namely his blood. And so Pilate, afraid that they would blackmail him like that and report that he was no friend of Caesar, he gave him over to be crucified.

So we have the story of the crucifixion in chapter 15 and his burial and the resurrection in chapter 16. Now I would have liked to quit by now, but we need to take some time with the most one of the most interesting things in the Gospel of Mark, and that is its ending. Chapter 16, as is the case with the last chapters in Matthew and Luke, give us the resurrection of Jesus on the third day, on Sunday morning.

And the women come to the tomb and they find him there. That's agreeable with the other gospels. He's first, well, the women first find the tomb is empty.

Not that they don't find Jesus. They find an empty tomb and they see an angel there that tells them Jesus is risen and that they should go tell the disciples that Jesus is risen and that he'll meet them in Galilee. And that's how Mark's gospel ends in the oldest manuscripts.

Verse 8, chapter 16, verse 8 is the last verse in Mark in the oldest manuscripts. Now, what are the oldest manuscripts? Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus. These three manuscripts date from probably the early fourth century, at least 325 AD.

Now, that's only a few manuscripts that date that early. We have thousands of New Testament, most of them somewhat later from the fourth and fifth and sixth and seventh and eighth centuries and so forth. We have lots of Greek manuscripts, therefore, of Mark that have more than verse 8 as the end of chapter 16.

There's actually three different endings that different manuscripts have. What we have in our Bible, if you have the King James or the New King James, if your, if gospel of Mark 16 goes to verse 20 in your Bible, that's what we call the long ending. It's an additional 12 verses longer than the earliest manuscripts have.

And the reason for that is primarily that almost all of the later manuscripts have those 12 verses. And it's been a big discussion, of course, among Bible scholars, are those 12 verses authentic or were they added later? If they are authentic, why aren't they in the oldest manuscripts? And what's interesting is that this long ending is not the only alternative ending. There are two other medium-length endings in some of the manuscripts, although usually not very many manuscripts have the other ones.

There are a few manuscripts which, after verse 8, have this one verse. Then they briefly reported all this to Peter and his companions. Afterward, Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life.

Amen. Now, that's not very commonly found in the manuscripts, but there are some that

have that ending, but not the oldest ones and not the majority of them. There's another manuscript, one single manuscript, that has this after verse 8. I'm sorry, it's not after verse 8, it's after verse 14.

It's got most of the long ending, but it's got another verse after verse 14 where it says, and they excuse themselves saying this age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not permit God's truth and power to conquer the evil spirits. Therefore, reveal your justice now. This is what they said to Christ, and Christ replied to them, the period of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other dreadful things will happen soon.

And I was handed over to death for those who have sinned, so that they may return the truth to the truth and sin no more. And so they may inherit spiritual incorruption and righteous glory in heaven. Now, it's obvious to me and probably to you if you're familiar with the Gospels, that that verse in that particular one manuscript is not authentic.

First of all, the disciples talk not like the disciples talk. Jesus talks not like Jesus talks. For example, it says this is the gospel that they can have righteous glory in heaven.

Jesus in all the recorded Gospels never refers to people going to heaven. He talks about the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, which is not the same thing, but the idea of going to heaven or having spiritual incorruption. No, in the Bible, incorruption is of a physical body that's raised from the dead.

So, I mean, that verse reflects some guy who is copying out an ancient copy of Mark, his own theology, just so I stick in there, but it doesn't even sound like the rest. Now, there are arguments for, including the long ending, and there are arguments against it. I want to look at them quickly, if I might.

The first, as I've mentioned, is that the verses after Mark 16, 8 are not found in the oldest manuscripts. Usually, the oldest manuscripts would be regarded to be closest to the original, because as things are copied through the years and through the centuries, changes sometimes accrue. Sometimes they collect changes, but the ones you get close to the original don't have those changes added.

However, the oldest manuscripts we have are not really that old. The oldest manuscripts that don't have those 12 verses date from about 325, which means if Mark wrote this in the first century, as is certainly the case, then for what, almost three centuries, there had been copies made before these earliest surviving copies came into existence. And who knows what changes may have come.

Maybe the earlier copies had those 12 verses, and for some reason, someone ran out of parchment and left them out of this, and then when his was copied, someone else copied it without those verses. We don't know. No one knows.

But the argument is, well, there's several arguments. One is that some of the church

fathers, like Origen and Clement of Alexandria, who were in the like third century, they didn't seem to be familiar with those last 12 verses. Eusebius and Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, they say that these verses are missing from most of the manuscripts available to them at the time.

Now, what's interesting, here it is, Eusebius lived, he went to the Council of Nicaea at 325 AD. That's about the same time as these ancient manuscripts were produced. But he said that those 12 verses were not in most of the manuscripts of Mark that he'd seen.

That means he knew of those 12 verses, and they were in some of them, which means there were manuscripts older than 325 AD that had them. By Eusebius' time, most of the manuscripts didn't have them, but there were some that did, that are earlier than that. We'll say more about that in a moment.

One of the arguments against these verses at the end being authentic is because the vocabulary in them is said to be not very consistent with Mark's other writing in the Gospel. It is said that there are 53 words in these last 12 verses, vocabulary words, that are not found in Mark's Gospel elsewhere, words he doesn't use anywhere else. They say, therefore, the vocabulary is not really his vocabulary.

However, we'll say something about that in a moment. They say also that the transition from verse 8 to verse 9 is not smooth. So what does verse 8 say? In the oldest manuscripts, the Gospel ends with the women.

They went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. End of Mark's Gospel. No appearances of Jesus after his resurrection are recorded.

It doesn't even mention the fulfillment of what the angel said. The angel said he's going to meet them in Galilee, but we don't read of it happening. That's a strange place.

That's an unnatural place to end the Gospel, but that's where some of the manuscripts do. The next verse is, now when he arose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons. Now the fact that it says Mary Magdalene, out of whom he cast seven demons, seems to ignore the fact that he mentioned Mary Magdalene in verse 1 and didn't give that detail about her.

It's like in verse 1, it assumes people know who Mary Magdalene is. She's just mentioned with the other women who came to the tomb, but whoever wrote verse 9, they say, wanted to introduce her to the audience as if they didn't know who she was. Mary Magdalene, he cast seven demons out of her.

He gives more detail about her there. They say that's unnatural. That's rough.

Now, I don't think it is. I mean, but that's one of the arguments they give for saying that

chapter 9 through 20 is not part of the original. So those are the arguments mainly against it being included, but there are, to my mind, more arguments for including these verses.

First of all, if this was the case, then Mark would not have recorded any resurrection appearances. If he ended it at verse 8, Jesus had not yet appeared to anybody, and that's the end of the story. And yet Mark is writing the gospel as Peter preached it, and we know from Peter's preaching in Acts 2 and in Acts 10, he mentions not only that Jesus rose from the dead, but that he was seen by Peter and by others.

The fact that Jesus was seen after he rose from the dead is an important part of the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul said, I delivered the gospel to you as I received it from people like Peter, I suppose, so that Jesus died for our sins according to the scripture. He was buried.

He rose the third day, and he was seen by Peter in 12 and 500 others that are mostly still living. Some have died, and by me last of all. In other words, the gospel is Paul preached it and Peter preached it.

Didn't just say, yeah, Jesus died, but he rose again. It's all good. No, they said he rose again, and we saw him.

He was seen by various people. Now, if Mark is writing Peter's gospel and doesn't mention anyone seeing Jesus, just angels saying, well, he rose from the dead. Take my word for it.

That'd be a very bizarre and unnatural way for Peter, and therefore Mark, who's writing his gospel, to end it. It does seem like something has been cut off in those manuscripts that end at verse 8. It would end with simply the fact that the women had heard the angels tell them that Jesus rose and that he would appear to them, but it doesn't record him ever doing that. Not before verse 9. Interestingly, verse 8 ends with the Greek word, *gar*, which means because.

If this was the last verse in Mark's gospel, it's the only known book in Greek literature to end with the word because. A strange kind of way to end a book. Verse 7 predicts that the disciples will meet Jesus in Galilee, but there's no record of the fulfillment of that, which is the only prediction in Mark whose fulfillment goes unmentioned.

That is, every time Mark records a prediction, he records the fulfillment, except for that one, and he probably recorded the fulfillment, too, but it's not in the ancient manuscripts. It must have fallen out somehow. I told you there's a few other short endings, shorter than Matthew, than our version, but I want to tell you some reasons to believe that the long ending is original.

First of all, there are translations of the gospel of Mark into other languages, Latin and

Syriac, whose translations were made before the time of our oldest Greek manuscripts. Now, that doesn't mean that the oldest writing was not in Greek. It's just that of the Greek copies, we don't have any of them that have survived that are older than 325 AD, but we do have the Syriac version of Mark and the old Latin version of Mark, both of which were translated from an earlier Greek one, and they contain these verses.

Okay, so the last 12 verses are found in the Syriac and the old Latin versions, which were copied from earlier Greek ones, or translated from earlier Greek ones, that we don't have, and these, the Greek ones they did have, did have these verses, so that means that there were earlier copies of Mark in Greek that we don't have, but those people had them when they translated into Latin and into Syriac. Irenaeus and Tatian were two church fathers who lived in the late second century, 170, 180 as when they wrote, which means, you know, just like a century after the fall of Jerusalem, pretty early on, a lot earlier than 325 AD, and both of them had copies of Mark that contained the long ending. Irenaeus quotes from the long ending, and Tatian made the first harmony of the four gospels, and his version of Mark had the long ending.

Now this was in 170 AD, that's like 150 years before our oldest Greek manuscripts, these guys, these church fathers were quoting from Mark that had the long ending, so the fact that some later Greek manuscripts didn't have it would suggest that they're flawed, and the long ending was in the earliest ones that the church fathers had, and that the translators had. Tertullian refers to Mark 16:19, around the year 215, and Hippolytus around 235, twice quotes Mark 16 versus 18 through 19. Again, that's considerably older testimony than our oldest Greek manuscripts.

As for the non-Mark-like terminology, the vocabulary differences in this, they said there was what, 50 something words, vocabulary words that are not found elsewhere well, let me give you some facts here about this. Mark has 102 unique words outside of the long ending. In other words, in the verses in the known chapters of Mark that are not in dispute, there are 102 different words, vocabulary words, that are found only once.

So if there's 50 something in the last part that are found only there, it doesn't mean he didn't write them. He was known to use words only once sometimes, and he may have used several of them only in the long ending. Compare this, in Luke chapter 1, verses 1 through 12, there are 20 words that are found nowhere else in the New Testament, just in those 12 verses, a similar length as the long ending of Mark.

Matthew has 137 unique words, and Luke has 312 unique words, John has 114. In other words, all the Gospels have a lot of words that are used only one time. And if the words in Mark chapter 16, verses 8 through 20, if there's a bunch of words that are only used there, nowhere else, that's about, that's not strange.

Mark, in the earlier chapters, has quite a few unique words that he uses only once, and so do Matthew and Luke and John, they all have quite a few. The last complaint is that

Mary Magdalene is described in chapter 9 as if she has not previously been mentioned. When chapter 1, I mean chapter, excuse me, chapter 16, verse 1 mentions Mary Magdalene as a known person, but in chapter 16, verse 9, more detail is given about her, and some say, well, I think that sounds like the author felt like the reader had not, didn't know who she was, and so it must be a different writer at a later date.

But you see, if that's really a problem, then that writer at the later date would know that as well as Mark would. I don't think it is a problem. Why not give that extra detail about her at a later point that wasn't mentioned earlier about her? But to say, well, this means someone else added it, well, wouldn't that somebody else know? That she was mentioned in verse 1 also? I mean, is that really problematic? If it was a problem for Mark to have done it, wouldn't it be equally problematic for anyone else to have? It's just not really an objection that makes sense.

I personally believe that the evidence is in favor of the longer ending of Mark. There's not too many things in the longer ending of Mark that aren't found in Mark. There is that famous section where Jesus says, go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature.

Baptizing is whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved. Whoever does not believe shall be damned. And he says, and these signs shall follow those who believe.

This is a passage a lot of people would like to have stricken from the text, I'm sure. In verse 17, these signs shall follow those who believe. In my name they'll cast out demons, they'll speak with new tongues, they will take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them.

They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover. There's a lot of people who, again, would prefer that that wasn't an authentic passage because they don't believe in those things. But I think looking at all the evidence, those last 12 verses which are omitted from some of the earliest Greek manuscripts, they really have testimony of being authentic from times before those Greek manuscripts came into existence.

From the Syriac, from the Latin, from the quotations, from Irenaeus, from Tertullian, there's a lot of evidence that the earliest manuscripts of Mark in Greek did contain them. Now you might think, well, that's an awful lot of time spent on something I didn't even know was a problem. Well, I didn't expect you to know all the problems before you show up.

I'm here to tell you what the problems are and then to tell you how they can be resolved. But if you have a Bible that isn't a King James or a New King James, if you've got an NIV or, you know, some other modern translation, if you look at Mark chapter 16, they're going to do something with those last 12 verses different than the previous part. They're either going to include them, maybe put them in italics with a footnote, these verses are

not found in the oldest manuscripts, or they won't include them but they'll put them in a footnote, the whole section, the whole 12 verses, some ancient manuscripts say this, but they're going to treat them separately as if they're not part of the original Mark.

My contention is I believe they are part of the original Mark and I think the best evidence suggests it. I think the arguments against it are pretty flimsy.