

UNIT 2B: NEW TESTAMENT

41: The Gospel of St. Mark and the Synoptic Problem

Three Gospels—One Purpose: To Reveal the Lord

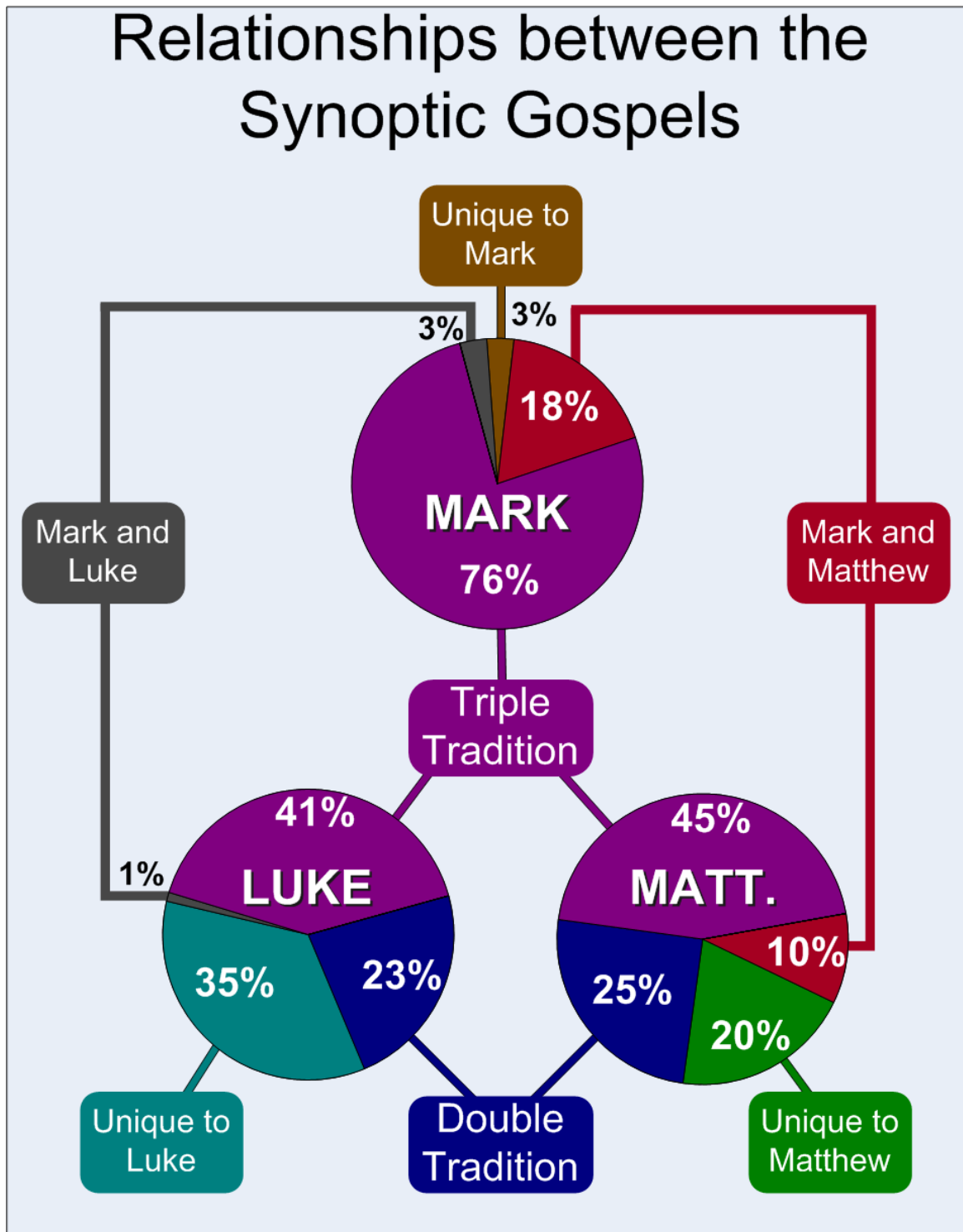
St Mark is the first of three Synoptic Gospels, the other two being St Matthew and St Luke. The term “synoptic” is used to indicate that these three Gospels can be studied side by side, “syn-optically”).¹ These Gospels are grouped together because they share a similar structure and content. The Gospel of St John is arranged differently to suit its own theological emphases and purposes. The Gospels of St Matthew and Luke draw heavily on that of St Mark, with 97% of St. Mark’s Gospel being found in either or both of the other two.

It used to be thought that St Mark's Gospel was an abbreviation of that of St Matthew; and this assumption was strengthened by the practice of the Church in preferring St Matthew's account to that of St Mark for liturgical readings, presumably because St Matthew's Gospel is more greatly elaborated. However, the scholarly consensus for some time now has been that St Mark's Gospel was the first to be collated and written down, the Gospels of St Matthew and Luke both accepting Marcan traditions as prior to their own. The reasons for this conclusion include St Matthew's correction of St Mark's sometimes clumsy grammar, his tidying up of Marcan literary style, his softening of St Mark's honesty concerning the apostles' weaknesses and his tendency to explain otherwise obscure sayings at the end of Christ parabolic teaching, (Mark 4: 10-12, cf. Matthew 13:10-15). If indeed the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke depend on that of St Mark, in addition to their own traditions they have also included material shared in common, to the extent of nearly 25% of their content. This common material called Q (Quelle—German for ‘source’) has no extant textual form and must be considered as an oral collection of sayings, if it once existed, which is plausible. This so called “two source

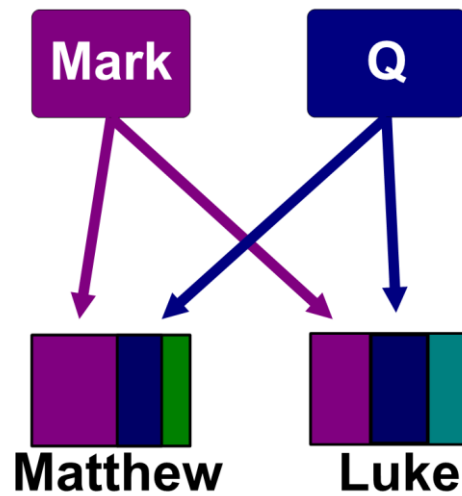
¹ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), p. 111.

hypothesis” leaves the Gospel of St Mark and Q as the original core components of the Synoptic Gospels. Whereas we know little about Q, we now know quite a lot about the Gospel of St Mark; even if its authorship and date of writing are sometimes contested.

The Relationships between the Synoptic Gospels



Two-source Hypothesis



Those readers who wish to reflect on a unified presentation of the life of Christ will find helpful H. F. D. Sparks, *A Synopsis of the Gospels* (Parts I and II; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1970) which places the events in the life of Jesus Christ in chronological order, as drawn from all four gospels.

The Authorship, Place and Date of St Mark's Gospel

The earliest witness to the authorship of St Mark's Gospel is a certain Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis writing in a commentary in about A.D. 140. This is referenced by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (III.39) as follows: "This also the Elder used to say: Mark, indeed, having been the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately, howbeit not in order, all that he recalled of what was either said or done by the Lord."² So it seems that St Mark was St Peter's scribe and this appears to be confirmed by St Justin Martyr who refers to St Peter's memoirs in the context of a passage that only occurs in the Gospel Saint Mark. In the Anti-Marcionite prologue to St Mark's Gospel (160-80) we read: "He (Mark) was St Peter's interpreter. After the death of Peter himself he wrote down this same Gospel in the parts of Italy." St Irenaeus agrees with this assessment. Clement of Alexandria claimed that the Gospel had been

² J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius: Documents illustrating the history of the Church to AD337* (London: SPCK, 1987), p. 49.

written during St Peter's lifetime which may also be true if the Gospel had been completed after his death.

As to the identity of Mark himself, most authorities identify him with the John Mark who fled naked at the arrest of Christ (Mark 14: 51-52) and who was twice a companion of St Paul on his missionary journeys (Acts 12:25; 13:13), but was later rejected by St Paul (Acts 15:37-39). Sceptics have to contend with the fact that an alleged pseudonymous writer would not have chosen a 'nom de plume' from the ranks of those who played a relatively minor part in the New Testament record and whose sentence structure has been described as "monotonous and his Greek rough and deficient."³

A great strength of St Mark appears to have been his ability to recall and write down the words of others, yet St Paul did not find him a reliable companion (Acts 15:37-39). St Mark did not attempt to provide a comprehensive view of all of the work of Christ on earth, yet as Papias relates: "Mark did no wrong in thus writing some things as he recalled them. For he kept a single aim in view: not to omit anything of what he heard, nor to state anything therein falsely."⁴ Furthermore, in the midst of the shortness of St Mark's Gospel, he, like the other authors of the synoptic gospels, did arrange the material available to him "to promote and strengthen a faith that would bring people closer to God" by setting out key events in the life of Christ, as well as reaction to those events.⁵

The place of writing of the Gospel is almost certainly Rome. Clement of Alexandria implies as much. 1 Peter 5:13 refers to St Mark's presence with St Peter shortly before the apostle's martyrdom at Rome. If Mark 15:21 is a reference to Rufus in Romans 16:13 then Rome again is the context. St Mark's interest in the subject of

³ Thierry Maertens OSB, *Bible Themes: A Source Book, Vol. I* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), C89, pp, 497-498.

⁴ Stevenson, p. 49.

⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 106.

persecution and martyrdom (8:34-38; 13:9-13), which might indicate a time of writing soon after the Neronian persecution between 65 and 70 A.D., also suggests Rome - as does the presence of certain Latin loan words in the Gospel itself implying a Western provenance. Finally, St Peter's important position in the Church of Rome from the earliest time would suggest that both he and St Mark worked together on the Gospel in that same place, albeit that the final written form of the Gospel was not completed until after the martyrdom of St Peter. The fact that the Gospel is ascribed to St Mark rather than St Peter reflects the possibility that St Mark was not merely a copyist but rather an editor who sometimes got the sequence of events and geographical details in the Gospel incorrect.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the scholarly consensus has been that that the Gospel of St Mark is “the earliest gospel [to be written] and the primary source of information about the ministry of Jesus.”⁶ As with all the Gospels, however, strict chronology is subordinate to theological intent.⁷ St Mark certainly has his own theological perspective, and this is built upon, nuanced and augmented by the writers of the other Synoptic Gospels. This Marcan theology deserves careful consideration.

⁶ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 10. This commentary is grounded in a careful analysis of the Greek text.

⁷ For a further discussion of these questions, see Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A Hall, “Introduction to Mark,” in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Volume II: Mark* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), pp. xxi-xxxii. These commentaries, now available for every book of the Bible, are immensely useful in understanding how the Church Fathers viewed specific passages of Scripture. However, the editors have adopted a “consensual tradition” in which they have looked “for those comments that would be most widely received by the whole church, East and West” (p. xxxi). This means that for certain topics (e.g. Church governance, the purposes of authority in the Church, the nature of ecumenism, etc.) the passages selected from the Church Fathers are not always the most important passages. The editors are correct that “within the boundaries of orthodoxy there are many views possible about a given text or narrative” (p. xxxii). However, it is misleading of the editors to claim in the General Introduction to every volume that *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* “is a Christian Talmud”—“a Jewish collection of rabbinic arguments and comments on the Mishnah, which epitomized the laws of the Torah” (p. xii). The rabbis who wrote the Talmud were indeed seeking consensus, but only after intensive disagreement grounded in extensive consideration of competing interpretations.

The Theology of St. Mark

The Gospels are not simple biographies of Jesus but rather preached histories moulded by their authors theologically and contextualised within the communities for which they were prepared. So St Mark presents a number of theological themes, one of which is the authority of Jesus which commends him as Messiah. Immediately after his Baptism, he teaches in the synagogue at Capernaum and he does so with an uncommon authority (1:21-22). This divine authority drives him to redefine the Law in a humane, psychologically acute manner (7:1-20), including the purpose of Sabbath observance (2:27-28). Furthermore, St Mark insists that the Good News proclaimed to the Jews must be “preached to all the nations” (Mark 13:10), indicating firmly that the authority of the Messiah applies to all the world. In driving out the money changers from the Temple in 11:15-19 Jesus assumes an *ultimate* authority that only God can have. “The buying and selling in the Court of the Gentiles was effectually preventing the one area of the Temple that was open to the Gentiles from being a place of prayer.”⁸ Mark 11:17 makes clear the universality of the mission of Christ: “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations. . . But you have made it a robbers’ den.”

In the light of His authority on earth, Christ is able to disclose the secret of the Kingdom of God to those who will hear in the form of parables. His miracles of healing, for example that of the paralysed man, are sometimes by a declaration of the forgiveness of sin, a prerogative of God alone. Such utterances often caused conflict with the religious authorities for they understood all too well the Messianic aspect of his work even if they did not accept him in that role. The more dramatic miracles, especially those of deliverance from unclean spirits and over nature in the calming of the storm, are actions that only God Himself could have performed.

⁸ Cranford, p. 358.

St Mark has also to deal with the issue of why the authorities and many of the people did not accept the Messiahship of Jesus. Partly he understands this as a hardening of the heart, but elsewhere he refers to the scandal that the work of Christ presents to its witnesses. Jesus himself refuses to clarify the matter by openly declaring himself as the Messiah. Only at the confession of his disciples at Caesarea Philippi does he come anywhere near to doing this (8:27-33). This so-called Messianic Secret, reflected in Jesus' oft-repeated injunction not to reveal his true identity, seems to be a matter of timing. At Caesarea he prophesies that the Messiah must suffer and die. The people are not yet ready to receive this teaching for many still expect a Messiah who will lead them in a revolt against Roman rule. These people have a very earthbound conception of what sort of Messiah is promised linked to the defeat of the reign of Rome, rather than the victory through suffering that Jesus is living and proclaiming.

Only when Jesus suffers and dies will his true identity as Messiah be revealed, which will, however, remain a stumbling block to many. Until then, Jesus often refers to himself as "the Son of Man." The same transition from Messiah to Son of Man occurs in the interrogation by the High Priest in chapter 14:61-63 where Our Lord does accept the Messianic reference but proceeds directly to prophesy again concerning the Son of Man, this time as a figure sitting at the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven. All these references confirm the dignity and authority of the Son at the Father's side who will come again after his death to establish his Kingdom through a final crisis.

We should not be surprised therefore that the Gospel St Mark devotes nearly half of its testimony to the passion of Jesus Christ, His crucifixion, death and burial. Jesus is the archetypal suffering Messiah. His reign is characterised by self-giving sacrificial love. Until this disclosure is made the Messiahship of Jesus cannot be truly understood let alone received. However, we should not think that the death of Jesus Christ is simply an act of God that concerns an individual believer or even

a community. The kingdom of God in St Mark's Gospel and the other Gospels is always an earth-shattering eschatological event. In the passion narrative (15:38) it is recounted that the veil of the Temple was torn in two on his death, signifying the passing relevance of the old cultic observances. St Matthew adds in his parallel account that there was an earthquake and the raising of the dead, (Matthew 27:51-53).

The Second Coming

In St Mark's Gospel a whole section, chapter 13, is devoted to the global crisis that will be precipitated by the death of Christ. Usually called "the Little Apocalypse" or "the eschatological discourse," this chapter contains teaching which portrays the sufferings of the End Time in vivid terms, comparable even to the act of creation itself (v.19). This will be a time of deception, betrayal and great tribulation, resolved only by the coming of the Son of Man in great power and glory (v. 26). In the Christian Church, over many centuries, we have become used to expecting the Second Coming as an event in the future, sometime distant from the death of Christ itself, yet in the early Church the two events were seen much more closely together, which is why in the Synoptic Gospels apocalyptic material always clusters around the Passion itself.

It should be noted that the words of Jesus in Mark 13:30, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" is open to different interpretations, especially of the words "this generation." One modern Biblical commentary reflecting on this verse and Luke 21:32 points out that the reference might be to the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred about 40 years after Jesus gave this warning, or to "the Jewish people as a nation, who were promised existence to the very end, [or] it might refer to the future generation alive at the beginning of these things." It should be emphasised that the verse "does not mean that Jesus had a mistaken notion that He was going to return immediately." The

Roman Catholic Biblical scholar Father Raymond E. Brown notes that interpretation of Mark 13 “presents many problems” and suggests: “On the one hand Jesus’ followers are not to be misled by speculations and claims that the end is at hand; on the other hand they are to remain watchful.”⁹ This is certainly the firm conclusion of verse 37, the final verse of chapter 13: “Watch.”

The 14th century Greek Orthodox theologian St Gregory Palamas offers the following profound interpretation of Mark 13:

The nature of the contingent existence of realities in the world proves not only that the world has had a beginning but also that it will have an end, as it is continually coming to an end in part. We believe with St. Basil that this world will not in its entirety return to utter non-being, but, like our bodies and in a manner that might be considered analogous, the world at the moment of its dissolution and transformation will be changed into something more divine by the power of the [Holy] Spirit.¹⁰

It is not for us to discover by human reasoning or intellectual searching the precise timing and nature of this coming transformation of both humanity and the world.

The Personal Confrontation with the Risen Christ

St Mark's Gospel is unusual in that not all its manuscript variants contain the longer ending of chapter 16, namely versus 9 to 20. Although this section is included in most texts and is certainly canonical Scripture, its omission from some witnesses may indicate either that the Gospel originally had a shorter ending or the end-piece was lost. If we were to assume the former solution, then there would be some plausibility to the idea that St Mark used dramatic tension in his narrative to keep

⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp, 144-145.

¹⁰ St Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Ch. 2, p. 85; and St. Basil, *The Hexaemeron, Homily I(4)*, in *Nicene, 2nd Series*, VIII:54, P. G. 29:12C. Quoted in *The Holy Gospels, Volume 1* (Buena Vista, CO: Holy Apostles Convent/Dormition Skete, 2nd Ed., 2000), p. 203. This two-volume commentary is an invaluable guide to the interpretations of the Church Fathers on many specific Biblical passages, as well as a linguistic primer on the meaning of the original Greek text. See www.HolyApostlesConvent.org .

his readers guessing about the resurrection. Be that as it may, St Mark leaves us with the conviction that the world really has changed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that it will change again when he comes again in glory. This core testimony of the Gospel is St Mark's legacy to the other Synoptic Gospel writers. The urgency of his message and the need to make a decision about Jesus Christ and whether to follow him unto death confronts every Christian, and indeed every person, in each generation afresh.

This need to make a decision about Jesus Christ requires a personal response of either faith or a rejection of faith. Two incidents in the Gospel of Mark itself illustrate the importance of the decision. When the fishermen were called to follow Jesus, they immediately obeyed (Mark 1:17), and their lives were transformed. Yet when Jesus taught in the synagogue at Nazareth, the people who heard Him rejected Him, and Jesus achieved little in Nazareth and the near-by villages, as “He wondered at their unbelief” (Mark 6:6). Each of us face the same choice—faith in Him who can transform our lives or rejection of Him which leaves us tangled up in our own inadequacies.

The manner in which the Gospel of Mark drives its readers to make a decision of belief in Christ is evident from two twentieth century personal experiences—that of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom and one of the lecturers (Father Emmanuel Kahn). Metropolitan Antony, had been baptised as an Orthodox Christian but by the age of 15 had become aggressively atheist. He began to read the Gospel of St Mark because it was the shortest, and “in order to leave himself in no doubt of Christianity’s worthlessness.”¹¹ However, after reading only two chapters of the Gospel, “he became aware that on the other side of [his] desk there was a Presence;” and he “realised immediately: if Christ is standing here alive, that means he is the risen Christ. . . . [H]e heard no voice and saw no vision,” but he “could see at once that

¹¹ Gillian Crow, *This Holy Man’: Impressions of Metropolitan Antony* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005), p. 40.

[he] had to spend the whole of [his] life telling people about God.”¹² The response of Metropolitan Antony to his new awareness of God is one we can all share: “He simply got down on his knees and poured out his heart, placing himself in the presence of God whom he had discovered in the intimacy of personhood. . .”¹³

Like Metropolitan Antony, Father Emmanuel “heard no voice and saw no vision.” However, raised in the Jewish faith, at the age of 23 after reading in French through the Gospel of St Matthew and coming to chapter 6, verse 6 of the Gospel of St Mark, he was shaken by how Jesus was “Himself astonished [the strong reflexive French verb *s’etonner*] by their lack of faith.” For Father Emmanuel there was no sense of the Presence of Christ, but a sense that “If I had been there, I would not have behaved with the lack of faith of the Jews of Nazareth.” This was immediately linked to an overwhelming awareness that St. Mark was telling the truth. Therefore, what was written in the Gospel of St Mark was the Truth about the Lord Jesus Christ; and Father Emmanuel felt that he could not live with himself unless he believed in Christ and immediately acted on that belief by getting down on his knees and praying.

Conclusion: Do You Have the Discernment to Let St Mark Be Your Companion?

As noted earlier, St Mark played a relatively minor part in the New Testament record in that he was neither one of the 12 apostles as St Matthew or St John, nor as St Luke an outstanding writer, confidante of the early life of the Theotokos and historian of the early Church. However, not only in the first century, but throughout the centuries, many readers have benefitted from the strength of St Mark’s short-term memory, his experience as a scribe, and the competence with which he carried out his aim to draw people to believe in Christ.

¹² Crow, p. 41.

¹³ Crow, p. 43.

Both St. Paul and St Peter came to respect Mark so greatly that St. Paul asked for St Mark to be with him during his final days “because he is useful to me for service” (2 Tim 4:11); and St Peter worked closely with him on many occasions and called him “my son” (1 Peter 5:13). Thus two great leaders of the early Church, Saints Peter and Paul, both chose Mark again and again to be their companion. That same opportunity is available to each of us. St John Chrysostom (c 347-407) wrote: “The Scriptures were not given to us that we might only have them in books, but that we might also engrave them on our hearts.”¹⁴ St Mark would have agreed; and that was why he wrote this Gospel for each of us.

¹⁴ Quoted in the Preface of *The Holy Gospels, Volume 1* (Buena Vista, CO: Holy Apostles Convent, Dormition Skete, 2nd Ed., 2000), p. vii. Available from www.HolyApostlesConvent.org .

A Template for the Orthodox Interpretation of Biblical Texts

In accordance with the proposal of Fr. Theodore G. Stylianopoulos that Orthodox biblical interpretation ought to have a three-level approach, the following template is offered for preachers, teachers, bible study leaders, catechists and students of the Scriptures generally:¹

Mark: Chapter 1

Level	Process	In Tradition / Fathers (Theoria)	Applicable Now (Praxis)
Exegetical	Historical / Contextual <i>(using the full range of critical tools)</i>	As Saints Mark and Peter worked together to compose the first gospel about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, they (and we) are confronted with certain essential questions: What did they hope to achieve? How did their approach differ from the authors of the later gospels? How did their opening chapter differ from the writers of the other gospels?	When each of us start to read a gospel, what do we hope to achieve? Why are we reading it? Why should we return to read it again at a different time in our lives? Are we open to the Holy Spirit as we read?
	Allegorical / Typological <i>(as derived from Tradition)</i>	The opening chapter of the Gospel of Mark focuses on five events—the preaching of St John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, the preaching of Jesus in Galilee, the calling of the first disciples and the healing of various individuals. Origen reflects: “In saying: ‘The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in the prophet Isaiah,’ Mark shows that the beginning of the gospel is intrinsically connected with the OT.”	Of the healing of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law St. Jerome writes: “Can you imagine Jesus standing before your bed and you continuing to sleep? It is absurd that you should remain in bed in his presence. Therefore, let us ask the Lord to grasp our hand.” So be it now as then.
Interpretative	Spiritual / Ethical	<p>In <i>The Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary</i>, C. E. B. Cranfield notes of the baptism of Jesus: “The ideas and the matter-of-factness of the narrative stamp the section as based on primitive tradition” (p. 51).</p> <p>Of the baptism of Jesus, Origen wrote: “In the Jordan the Trinity was manifested to humanity. The Father bore witness, the Son received witness, and the Holy Spirit gave confirmation” (ACCS, Vol 2, Mark, p. 14).</p>	T. F. Torrance, a Scottish Presbyterian theologian, instrumental in effecting the historic agreement in 1991 between the Orthodox and the Reformed Churches on the doctrine of the Trinity describes “the divine economy” as: “the patristic expression for the orderly way in which God communicates himself to us within the

		The complexity of the OT “voice of one crying in the wilderness” adopted by St John the Baptist (1:3) is indicated by St Ambrose’s interpretation in his Sermon 64: “Voice and crying go together: the voice preaches faith; the cry calls for repentance; the voice, comfort; the cry, danger; the voice sings mercy; the cry announces judgment” (ACCS, Vol 2 Mark, p. 4). Each person must listen and then choose how to respond.	structures of space and time in which he remains eternally in himself while communicating himself to us really and truly and without reserve in Jesus Christ and in his Spirit.” See Vol 2 Mark, <i>Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture</i> (ACCS), p.12
	Personal / Social	Tertullian urges us to: “Prepare the home of your heart by making it clean for the Holy Spirit.”	Read Mark 1 and ask: How does this chapter apply to my life now?
Transformative	The Call to Holiness	When St John the Baptist “appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4), he, as St Matthew (3:9) and St Luke (3:8) was indicating clearly that “the implication of his baptism was that Jews did not have a right to membership in the people of God by the mere fact that they were Jews: by their sins they had become as Gentiles and now they needed as radical a repentance as did the Gentiles, if they were to have any part in God’s salvation” (Cranfield, p. 43).	As Orthodox Christians, we tend to believe that the Lord will take better care of us than of other Christians, just as first century Palestinian Jews believed they were more righteous than the Gentiles. The call to holiness is universal, so those who will be transformed by that call will be those that respond with integrity.
	The Call to Witness	The stern warning of Jesus to the healed leper (1:43-44) is an attempt by Jesus to veil his Messianic mission, but the leper and others who are healed often witness to the impact of Jesus on their lives. They want others to know how and why their lives have changed.	When should we witness to the impact of Christ on our lives, and when should we keep silent? This is a perennial question which requires considerable prayer.

¹ In “*The New Testament, An Orthodox Perspective, Volume 1: Scripture, Tradition, Hermeneutics,*” (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1997, Ch. 7), Fr. Theodore sets out three levels serving a sound Orthodox hermeneutical process. These are: **1. Exegetical** - using all critical, contextual, textual and literary methods to determine “the level of understanding of the biblical text in its historical context of literary form and conceptuality ...” (p. 190). **2. Interpretative** – evaluating means derived from the exegetical stage as applicable contextually to the reader’s contemporary issues and concerns (p. 197). **3. Transformative** – experiencing life changing practical applications of insights derived from the previous two stages. In ALL of these three levels, the Orthodox context must be the Church as the locus of divine revelation and inspiration. Here the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth as manifested in the biblical text, the teachings of the Fathers and the liturgical context. In Ch. 4, p. 115 f., Fr. Theodore explains the historical and spiritual exegetical approaches which, following the Fathers, must be applied throughout. Classically these have concerned the Antiochian emphasis on the “literal” or historical approach and the Alexandrian emphasis on the allegorical and typological interpretations that reveal the inter-connectedness of all Scripture in Tradition at deeper levels of understanding.

Mark 1

New King James Version (NKJV)

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the Prophets:^[a]

"Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You."^[b]

³"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.'"^[c]

⁴John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. ⁸I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And immediately, coming up from^[d] the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" ²⁶And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. ²⁷Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine *is* this? For with authority^[e] He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." ²⁸And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

²⁹Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. ³¹So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

³²At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

³⁵Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. ³⁶And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. ³⁷When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

¹²Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

¹⁴Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom^[e] of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

¹⁶And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

¹⁹When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets.²⁰And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

²¹Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ²²And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

²³Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I

³⁸But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

³⁹And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

⁴⁰Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

⁴¹Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." ⁴²As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. ⁴³And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, ⁴⁴and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

⁴⁵However, he went out and began to proclaim *it* freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction. Footnotes:

- a. [Mark 1:2](#) NU-Text reads Isaiah the prophet.
- b. [Mark 1:2](#) [Malachi 3:1](#)
- c. [Mark 1:3](#) [Isaiah 40:3](#)
- d. [Mark 1:10](#) NU-Text reads out of.
- e. [Mark 1:14](#) NU-Text omits of the kingdom.
- f. [Mark 1:27](#) NU-Text reads What is this? A new doctrine with authority.

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